MEDICINE AND THE BODY IN THE ROMANTIC PERIODICAL PRESS

Jessica ROBERTS

School of Arts and Media

University of Salford, Salford, UK

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Abbreviations

DNCJ	*Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the body in political debate during the Romantic period. My original contribution to knowledge is an analysis of a corpus of periodical writing in intense detail, and I track the way in which periodical writing utilises a medical vocabulary and the reasons for this appropriation. I identify the key concern of each popular periodical, and reveal the way in which the editors attempt to achieve their goal by using language borrowed from medical discourse. I also uncover the ways in which periodical writing influenced medicine, by outlining how medical practice was politicised by social and cultural demands. Political essays and letters are the main focus of the thesis, but I also analyse poetry included in the periodical press, paying attention to formal attributes such as article placement. Illustration and marginalia are also considered. I argue that political, social, and cultural agendas shaped the direction in which medical discourse moved. Periodicals have been selected as my primary texts due to their immediacy and highly political nature, and I have selected titles that were prominent in both the literary and political spheres. I conclude that the body becomes a site of political contention in the Romantic period, and is used as an allegory in discussions of systems, power, and resistance.

Introduction

This thesis argues that the ways in which bodies are viewed changes in the early nineteenth century due to simultaneous advances in medicine and interrogations of society caused by the revolutions in America and France. In this period, both human and political bodies become the focus of heightened scrutiny and they are subject to manipulation and control to a greater extent than was previously conceivable. The body thus becomes central to political debate. In my thesis, I identify the main political project of a selection of radical periodicals and one conservative magazine, and reveal how the writers use concepts of the body in their writing for their cause. My research is concerned with paradigm shifts in medical science, and I reveal how strands of political, economic, and cultural commentary are influenced by language and discourse borrowed from medicine. I focus on the symbiotic relationship between medicine and literature. As I reveal, not only does medical discourse influence fiction and political writing, but this literature influences the way in which scientific debate and discovery develops in the early nineteenth century: in the way that an author sought to persuade the nervous middle class to abandon their hypochondria for political reform, as well as how a practitioner responds to criticism in the periodicals by focusing his lectures on the differences between human and animal life, and in the way that periodical authors write for and against medical legislation. I also argue that political, social, and cultural agendas influenced medicine. I use periodicals as my primary texts due to their immediacy and highly political nature, and have selected titles that were prominent in both the literary and political spheres. Radical periodicals produced by editors Leigh Hunt, Thomas Wooler, Richard Carlile, and William Cobbett provided a space for highly seditious and controversial writing challenging government discourses and power. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* provides a conservative contrast, which, I reveal, similarly comments on debates ostensibly about

medical science but that are, conversely to other journals that I have discussed, about the control of radicals and the labouring classes.

I have chosen the early nineteenth century as the focus of my analyses, and often refer to this time as the Romantic period, by which I mean the era between the American and French revolutions and the Victorian period of industrialisation, the Reform Act of 1832, and the increased authority of the medical practitioner. This period was characterised by a preoccupation with the rights of man and the changing power of humankind, like the revolutionary 1790s preceding it. Although there was no unified movement that can be identified as Romanticism, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, there was a sense that the revolutions had proven the political autonomy of the people and this impetus must be galvanised and maintained in Britain, if not for revolution but for the increasing emancipation of the people. There was a sense that literature, philosophy, and scientific progress were the mode of delivering this catalyst. As Sharon Ruston asserts in *Creating Romanticism* (2013), Romanticism was created not just by literary and philosophical ideas, but scientific ones, too (3).

While I do not seek to define Romanticism or Romanticisms, I identify a clear distinction between the period under review — approximately 1800–1835, which is a late estimate by traditional boundaries of the Romantic period — and those preceding and following it. The British government continued to be concerned with political radicalism and French sympathisers in Britain in the early nineteenth century, and medical science and politics became significantly linked. Medicine interrogated the political nature of the human subject. The human body became a focal point for both discourses, and debates about the human soul and the need for a creator-God emerged at the same time that authorities feared a revolution could occur in Britain. Views of the human body that denied the existence of the soul or the need for a higher power threatened the ruling classes. What it meant to be human was

investigated from many perspectives: from the points of view of medicine, but also from the standpoints of politics, religion, and philosophy. This is a thread that runs through my thesis: threats to human and political bodies are identified in similar terms, taken from the discourse of physiology, and the political system is subsequently modelled on this discourse.

I do not use the term "discourse" uncritically: theorist Michel Foucault's model of discourse in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) centralises the importance of power — and resistance — to systems of thoughts, attitudes, and practices, and this is largely what my thesis is about. The shaping, creating power of language was self-consciously employed by both radical and conservative writers to resist authority. Concepts and metaphors taken from medical science were, in this way, of use in the discussion of politics. The French Revolution demonstrated to radicals that society could be reorganised to the advantage of the people, just as the human body could be altered for the better by increasingly effective surgical techniques. These techniques offered metaphors for political writing. Society was redescribed in terms of systems, similar to systems that were understood in a new way, such as the circulation. As such, I argue that the concept of the "body politic" took on new connotations: the structure of the state was not seen as immutable, and radicals in particular used the language of medicine to invoke the idea of changing society.

Each radical editor that I consider, while generally standing for the reform of legislation that limited the freedom of the people to meet, discuss, and disseminate material deemed seditious, has a specific project or stance that is particularly important in their publications. Leigh Hunt opposed the Regency, Thomas Wooler was concerned with making the ruling classes monstrous, Richard Carlile argued for freedom of speech, and William Cobbett distrusted paper money. I identify these as foremost issues, all discussed in terms of medical science, through reading full runs of the *Examiner*, *Black Dwarf*, and *Republican*, and the majority of the *Political Register*. *Blackwood's*, a popular and literary conservative

publication, directly named all these editors as enemies and employed the same tools of analysis to the radical problem as the reformers: satire, as features in the *Black Dwarf*, for example, but more importantly to my thesis, the use of medical language both as metaphor and as a discourse of power and control.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter is titled "The Public Nature of Health in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner and* Reflector." I describe how personal health became a public issue when the King's ill health and the Prince's excesses — some bodily — became a catalyst for political events clustered around the advent of the Regency. This chapter examines health and fitness in terms of suitability and usefulness as well as bodily well-being. I argue that these become a public concern in the Regency period. Using the periodical writing of a public figure who was an agoraphobic, a sensual poet, a hypochondriac, and an outspoken critic of the Regency, I apply Jürgen Habermas' theory of the public and private spheres to illness narratives, and the individual body is scrutinised in Hunt's political essays, revealing that the human body becomes a site of public contention in a new way in the period.

The second chapter, "Bodily Monstrosity in the *Black Dwarf*," discusses the use of unnatural, excessive, and monstrous bodies in the radical weekly periodical, the *Black Dwarf* (1819–24). This chapter analyses the ways that non-normative or deviant bodies were conceived of at a time when medicine sought to define and create the boundaries of the human body. The argument that this chapter proposes is that the *Black Dwarf* borrows from eighteenth-century satire, and as such becomes a form of written caricature. I argue that Wooler as the editor and main contributor to the periodical uses these literary tools consciously and for a purpose: to rouse a mistreated labouring class to action against what he saw as its willing subjugation to authority, by making that authority and the state of the body

politic ridiculous. I also refer to Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of the "grotesque" and the "carnivalesque" in my analyses of the metaphors that Wooler uses.

The third chapter, "William Lawrence, Richard Carlile, and the Physiology of Free Speech," begins in the 1810s, when the surgeon Lawrence was named publicly in the periodical press as a materialist, religious sceptic, and a political radical for a series of medical lectures that he gave at the Royal College of Surgeons of London. This chapter argues that Carlile, a radical printer, used Lawrence's lectures to prove his own avowed materialist, radical, and atheist views and to support free speech not only as a political right but as a natural human right that could be proved by physiology. The lectures that Lawrence gave debated the existence of the "vital principle" with fellow surgeon John Abernethy and the disagreement was a political and as well as a public matter, as the lectures were reviewed in the periodical press. Carlile used Lawrence's argument that speech separated man from animals in his periodical publication, the *Republican* (1819–26), and linked the freedom of speech of the people, the periodical press, and of the medical profession. This chapter reveals the political aspects of the body through the lens of a concept that is both physiological and cultural: speech.

In chapter four, "Blood and Money in William Cobbett's *Register*," I argue that blood was conceived of in a different way in the Romantic period: as a vital component of the human body that could be controlled by medical authority. The first successful blood transfusion took place in 1815, and metaphors that referred to blood as something that could be manipulated quickly became widely used. For example, the British monarchy was seen by reformers to be parasitically feeding on the taxes of the Dissenting middling class (Leader and Haywood 67). This chapter examines the ideas of circulation and of blood as a resource being drained in Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* (1802–35), in the immediate dawn of new medical advances and creative output in the area. I argue that Cobbett used this metaphor

to demonstrate that paper money is a damaging and false replacement for specie: gold or coins. I also examine the concept of circulation in regard to the periodical press, arguing that a diffusion model should be extended to a circulatory model, with London as the heart, and ideas returning to this centre in the form of reader's comment and letters. This chapter elucidates the shift in medical thinking that was reflected in the use of metaphor taken from physiology.

In the final chapter, "Radical Contagion in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*," I examine the representation of the radical as infectious or poisonous. While liberal reformers conceived of an unhealthy body politic, radical politics were constructed as a contagion in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1817–1980). Romantic medicine argued that sympathy could spread contagion, but also that disease and deformity could destroy sympathetic responses. The Victorian debate about the poor being inherently diseased, and of this disease being transmittable by proximity, and even a sympathetic glance, finds early expression in these concepts. I also demonstrate the challenge to the circulatory model of the dissemination of the periodical press that I reveal in the previous chapter: here, instead, the radical press moves through readers like a contagion and must be stopped by inoculation in the form of conservative publications, in this case *Blackwood's*. This chapter analyses the infectious body, and ushers in the concept of the working-class body as a contaminant.

Methodology

I use a historicist approach overall to guide my research. This approach, developed in literary criticism during the 1980s and 1990s, considers a text in the historical context in which it was produced and consumed, and reads the text with regard to how it is contributing to or challenging dominant discourse of the period. A text is therefore seen as the product of its culture. Key critics in this movement who focus on the Romantic period include Marilyn

Butler and James Chandler, who demonstrate their respective historicist and New Historicist readings of Romantic texts in works such as *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background* (1981) and in *England in 1819: Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (1998). In these two texts, the subheadings reveal the approach. Butler is concerned with the "background," the literal backdrop in front of which the literature is being produced and consumed. This critical approach is useful in attempting to talk about a spirit of the age, as outlined in my justification of using "Romantic period". Butler notes that "literature, like all art, like language, is a collective activity, powerfully conditioned by social forces, what needs to be and may be said in a particular community at a given time" (10). Butler also analyses periodicals, focusing on the Review as part of a cultural conversation between writers, readers, and journalists in the Romantic period ("Culture's Medium" 128). Chandler argues for a contemporary awareness of the period's place within history and that the literature produced at the time demonstrated not only this awareness but also sought to create a history: writings from 1819 — a year chosen for its intense political events and literary productions — are, he argues, "self-conscious about the collective mobilization of literary talent and energy in which they participated. . .a national operation of self-dating, or — redating. . .that is meant to count as a national self-making or —remaking" (5). In this respect, periodicals offer a unique look at the culture of the early-nineteenth century, in that they offer a snapshot of the opinions and preoccupations of a moment in time, across a range of subjects and issues. The collective nature of a periodical — articles written by a series of journalists and writers, and filtered through the agenda of an editor and publisher — requires a different research method to the study of a novel. Literature and medicine are both cultural productions, influenced by history and politics.

A distinction between historicism and New Historicism is useful. In "Towards a Poetics of Culture," (1989) Stephen Greenblatt describes a "new historicism," heavily

influenced by Foucault's work, which I certainly utilise (1–2). Traditional historicism sees culture as the backdrop in front of which literature is produced, thus placing literature at the foreground in a hierarchy of value, creating a historical framework in which to analyse the text, as in Butler's *Romantics*. However, New Historicism sees the text as part of the framework, and part of history. New Historicism is less certain about history as factual and finite, and is instead interested in the text itself as a representation of a subjective history, even a self-conscious history, as argued by Chandler. The mutually influential relationship between medicine and literature supports the use of this methodology: the representation of culture is a conversation between these and other cultural productions.

The main premise of my argument — that medical advances that changed views of the human body happened concurrently with shifts in views of society — relies on reading texts in the context of the cultural landscape in which they were produced and consumed, often paying attention to dates in a precise manner: for example, my focus on daily bulletins on the King's health and examination of the surrounding articles in the first chapter. This practice has provided a model for discovering and selecting articles and for organizing my chapters. Material practices such as the distribution of periodicals are considered in detail, together with their formal attributes, such as the arrival of stacks of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* being represented as a delivery of medicine. Discarding traditional boundaries between literature and everything else, such as the formalist preoccupation with estrangement and literary devices, and cultural value judgements, I apply literary analysis to poetry, fiction, medical, and political writing, asserting the view that all these texts, written with a purpose and audience in mind, are equally valuable in understanding the period and supporting my argument. Biographical links between periodical writing and medical knowledge have also been examined: the family, education, and social circles of my selected writers have provided illumination for my argument. This connection model for research was influenced by critics

such as Hermione De Almeida, Nicholas Roe, and Sharon Ruston, who analyse the networks of Romantic poets and the life sciences in their respective studies of John Keats (1991), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (2001), and Percy Shelley (2005). My thesis places itself in the field of studies of literature and medicine, literature and science, and the nineteenth-century periodical press: below I outline the relation of my work to each of these fields. I provide a narrative of the formation and development of these studies, revealing the most appropriate methodology for moving forward in these fields.

The relationship between literature and medicine was first influentially explored by George Rousseau in the 1970s. Rousseau's work emphasises the relevance of imaginative materials to the public understanding of medicine. Rousseau is a cultural historian, and his approach is thus historicist and also concerned with material book history. Rousseau's early work focuses on the role of nervous physiology in literature and history, with collected essays published as *Nervous Acts* (2004). The essays outlined the importance of models of the nervous system to eighteenth-century aesthetics. These analyses of the physiological root of aesthetics has been influential to the field of interdisciplinary study of literature and medicine.

My study also responds to recent critical thinking regarding the relationship between literature and medicine. It contributes to what is by now a considerable corpus of critical studies of medicine and Romanticism. Important texts that have subsequently added to the field of nineteenth-century literature and medicine study focus on the importance of narrative, using a more formalist methodology. Janis McLarren Caldwell's *Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2004) analyses medical texts alongside novels in order to demonstrate both the similar ways of reading employed by nineteenth-century doctors and imaginative writers. Her method still favours the text, but includes medical texts within the boundaries of literature. She reveals the creative exchanges and the complexities of the

relationship between medicine and literature. She also centralises the importance of narrative as a tool used by doctors in the period to diagnose disease: I discuss narrative in detail in the first chapter, in my analysis of Hunt's illness. Using Gillian Beer's concept of Romantic materialism, Caldwell's study also contributes to the field by identifying the dual concern with the imaginative and the real in nineteenth-century fiction and medicine, and demonstrates the ways in which Romantic materialists sought to reconcile these disparate concepts. While I do not explicitly refer to this concept, the dual concern Carlile demonstrates for self-expression and the changing power of literature, and the material body, is the focus of chapter three.

Like Caldwell, Allan Conrad Christensen, in *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion* (2005) assesses the representation of medical practitioners and practice in the fiction of the period, revealing cultural assumptions about contagious diseases that particularly helped me to track attitudes regarding sickness across the mid-nineteenth century, from Romantic to Victorian, for my final chapter. Recent work in the field of nineteenth-century literature and medicine such as James Robert Allard's *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body* (2007) also focuses, like my research, on the centrality of the body in both medicine and literature in the Romantic period. His study analyses the concept of the "Poet-Physician," the figure who unites literature and science and explores the tensions and affinities between these two spheres. My research is similarly concerned with figures who straddle the fields of politics and medicine. The practical links between people, and the networks and circles of influence operating in the period, are integral to an understanding of the diffusion of medical knowledge and political opinion. Allard's study contributes to understandings of the body in the Romantic period, providing both analyses of how the body was seen by medicine in the Romantic period and how it was seen in Romantic literature. Further influential critics on the relationship between literature and medicine in the Romantic

period includes Peter Melville Logan (1997), Alan Bewell (1999), Neil Vickers (1999), Alan Richardson (2001), Clark Lawlor (2006), Denise Gigante (2005 and 2009), George C. Grinnell (2010), Peter Kitson (2011), and Gavin Budge (2013), who have undertaken important research on the relationship between Romantic literature and medicine.

My thesis maps medical debates and political discussions onto a grand narrative that interrogates the nature of human life and society, but my focus is on specific concepts and their application across medicine, literature, and culture. My thesis concludes that advances in medicine gave greater control over the human body, and lead to society being reconceived in terms of a body, built up of systems comparable to those newly revealed in the human body, which could similarly be controlled and altered.

The work of medical historians has also been useful in understanding the changing nature of medical practice in the period, such as Roy Porter's extensive research on nineteenth-century medicine, including studies on doctors and quackery (1989), madness (1990), and the links between medicine, politics, and the body (1998). Porter's work takes a social historical approach that has aided my research, uncovering the changing nature of medical intervention and its place in society. Adrian Desmond (1992), Deborah Brunton (2004), William Bynum (1994), Susan Lawrence (1996), and Alison Bashford and Claire Hooker (2001), have also produced histories of medicine in the early nineteenth century that have been useful to my knowledge of the state of the profession and field in the period under review.

Although my thesis concentrates on the relationship between literature and medicine, an important shift in critical thought regarding the nineteenth century is the change in the ways that literature and science were thought to communicate. The work of leading critics including Gillian Beer (1983), Sally Shuttleworth (1984), George Levine (1987 and 1988),

and Jan Golinski (1992), denies the traditional "two cultures" model posited by C. P. Snow, who argued that literature and science cannot communicate (1959). Levine instead posits a "one culture" model: "not a unified science and literature" but belonging to the same cultural field, with a useful focus on points of convergence and conversation ("One Culture" 4). Beer's position similarly states that in the nineteenth century, literature and science shared a common, literary, language, and thus scientific texts can be analysed in the same manner as novels; she posits a two-way traffic of ideas (5). Beer is interested in the interchange of ideas between literature and science, and the way that metaphor connects the two, and this model provides a grounding for my work which works on the assumption that literature and medicine do communicate, and similarly focuses on metaphor. My argument that literature and medicine are mutually influential spheres is uncontroversial in light of this previous work.

The field of Romantic literature and science research often draws on historicist criticism, and studies such as Roe's *Politics of Nature* (1992) also respond to ecological criticism, arguing against the "two cultures" of literature and science, and also denying the mid-twentieth-century view of Romanticism posited by M. H. Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953). Instead of describing the Romantics as escapist and unengaged with contemporary life, Roe reveals the ways in which writers conversed with not just political and social issues but also environmental ones. Work like this has enabled my thesis to be grounded in a sense of the Romantic preoccupation with the real world as well as the imagination. Roe's method also employs formalist readings of the texts and identifies the relationship between science and literature as it relates to politics, as I later discuss.

My method has also been influenced by texts such as Charlotte Sleigh's 2010 *Literature and Science* and Sharon Ruston's *Creating Romanticism* (2013). These texts use case studies to argue that literature informed as well as reflected scientific advances, but was

also part of an ongoing broader cultural negotiation about how to read the world. Sleigh's research spans 300 years and offers examples of the changing ways science and literature conversed over this period. She begins by outlining the relationship between science and literature as one of mutual interest in spite of possible tensions and distrust, and she employs formalist, historicist, and book history research methods. She develops a synthesis of looking at texts as imaginative "realms" and also as material entities in a historical context: she calls this a "study of form" that moves beyond the limitations of each method (17). My thesis also combines attention to literary devices such as metaphor, the material history of a periodical publication, and the contexts in which articles were written.

I join a field of key critics in literature and science such as Ralph O' Connor (2007 and 2009), Shelley Trower (2012), and Adelene Buckland (2013). They focus on the narrative nature of science and have developed a nuanced understanding of the relationship between literary theory and scientific plots. O' Connor analyses the use of literary narrative techniques in science writing, such as the poetics of earth science (2007) and the epic form in evolutionary narrative (2009). His formalist analyses of scientific texts as literature continues the shared language concept posited by Beer, and my work is in conversation with this developing field, asserting that in fact a new medical vocabulary was developing in the nineteenth century to describe the contemporary methods of controlling the body, and there was a conscious borrowing of this medical language for use in political allegory. O'Connor argues that, in the nineteenth century, science was literature. In fact, he writes, geological texts were marketed as being on the same spectrum, but rather higher brow, than the sensation novels and cheap romances of the Victorian era (*Earth* 2).

Buckland's *Novel Science* (2013) similarly demonstrates that geologists used literary techniques to make their science more appealing, and, in turn, aided the development of science. It argues for the literary dimension of geology in particular, once again employing a

formalist approach to supplement a historicist methodology. These readings of geological texts as literature adheres to the New Historicist model of negating traditional value hierarchies of texts that I also follow. My thesis focuses on the formalist aspects of the communication of medical concepts to a layman reader, but the purpose of this in my texts, I argue, is political, moving beyond O'Connor and Buckland's readings.

Focusing on paradigm shifts regarding the representation of the body, as I do, Trower's monograph *Senses of Vibration* (2012) takes the concept of vibration and analyses its meaning across scientific, literary, and cultural boundaries, arguing that the concept underwent an important change in the Victorian period that affected the understanding of the scientific world and the human body. The ways in which Trower links the cultural preoccupation with vibration in the nineteenth century to the development of the understanding of the nervous system uses a similarly historicist framework as that employed here. Trower's research contributes to the cultural history of the senses, and my thesis adds to the cultural history of the body. I use several strands of contemporary medical theory to build a picture that reveals a change in the understanding of the body.

These new texts reflect the direction in which literature and science is research now growing: it is concerned with narrative, readerships, and cultural changes in perception and understanding, and a historicist methodology is combined with formalist readings of both scientific and literary texts. My thesis has similar concerns, and argues that the centrality of the body in politics is a shift in cultural understanding.

I am also indebted to critical work on the nineteenth-century periodical press. The periodical press is a beneficial resource to understanding the Romantic period, as I have discussed above, but periodicals are also literary texts, and it is with this awareness my research has been undertaken. Since the 1990s, historicist critics have valued periodicals as

the public site of communication between the government, the public, editors, and authors. Including poems, stories, pamphlets, records of meetings, reviews, and letters, periodicals not only offer the critic a variety of material, but also much critical attention is focused on the self-conscious nature of periodicals: how their writers and editors astutely shaped their message and were aware of their audience and influence. My thesis is grounded on this idea, and some instructional critical texts are discussed below.

Paul Keen addresses the debates surrounding print culture at the turn of the nineteenth century in *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (1999). Keen analyses the dominant arguments about the role of literature and of the author, as well as examining the changing ways readerships were developed. He places these changes in the context of the French Revolution and the calls for revolution and reform that were taking place in Britain. He also uncovers a surge in readers' desire for knowledge and information that accompanied the growth and influence of the periodical press. Critics agree that the effects of the revolution in France can be seen throughout the Romantic period, a key idea in my argument. Keen's project is driven by an interest in the "shifting cultural geography within which literary texts are inscribed, and out of which their meanings are inevitably produced" showing a strong alignment with a historicist methodology (2). The argument is influenced by Marxist critics Terry Eagleton and Raymond Williams, an influence which is displayed in Keen's preoccupation with tensions in the structure of society and of the "swinish multitude". My thesis positions these tensions as central to argument, and I am also concerned with intended and imagined readerships. For example, in chapter four I examine the ways in which Cobbett sought to enlighten an ignorant labouring class on the influence of paper money: he was convinced they were disempowered by the elitist vocabulary of political economy.

In *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* (2000), Mark Parker emphasises the importance of the study of literary magazines, as they offered an innovative new space for writers and their work. Examining the relationships and alliances within the world of print culture of the Romantic period, Parker uses a historicist approach to demonstrate the prominence of periodicals during the period under review. David Higgins' *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine* (2005) also focuses on the importance of the Romantic era to the study of the periodical press of the period, not only as the period in which the essay became a recognisable literary genre and the journalistic profession was developed but also for its production of self-conscious literary genius. My research analyses Romantic writers such as Hunt as historical actors in a political drama through their periodical writing, and their practical links to science are analysed. Further critics on the periodical press include Kim Wheatley (1992 and 2003), Aled Jones (1996), Steven Jones (1997), Kevin Gilmartin (2006), William Christie (2013), and Marc Schoenfield (2013), all of whom offer a combination of historicist method and knowledge of practical connections, as I do, aware that this synthesis of methods is a useful tool for the field of periodical study.

Another valuable aid to the scholarly field is *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2004), in which William St Clair focuses on reading reception and book history: a material way of looking at a text that is dependent on a historicist methodology. As he outlines in his introduction, he is concerned with the social and political consequences of reading, and the concept of a readership that developed in this period (xxvii). These threads run throughout my thesis, which aims to interrogate not only the voice of the periodical, but also the potential readership, and looks at the material concepts of circulation to understand the ways in which opinion and knowledge were diffused. Models of dissemination are examined in chapters four and five of my thesis, complementing the use of knowledge of practical connections and historicism.

James Mussell's work on science in the nineteenth-century periodical press and on digital research also influenced the methodology of this thesis. Mussell's *Science, Time, and Space in the Late Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press* (2007) is concerned with material culture, particularly the ways in which the periodical press was configured, spatially and temporally. It offers a consideration of the periodical as a cultural object, and how it moves through culture, and it repositions non-linguistic codes as integral to the understanding of the periodical text. My thesis does consider the material aspect of the periodical, including elements of the text such as the position of articles in relation to one another, such as in chapter five when I analyse the continuing theme of foreign contagion, but my main focus is still on linguistic codes. In *The Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age* (2012) Mussell demonstrates the importance of an awareness of the transformative nature of digitisation, and demands a careful critical engagement with digitised material, but nonetheless reveals the value of the digital archive to scholars of nineteenth-century texts. Mussell asserts that a text is produced through all of its codes: linguistic, bibliographic, and physical, and calls for a methodology that takes into account all of these, and also for an awareness that the digital archive often removes many of these elements. My research has been undertaken with this awareness, and original documents have provided illuminating supplementary material.

The study of periodicals, then, has often employed historicism and cultural materialist methodology as well as reader response theory, and my thesis continues this tradition. These texts have all provided a base upon which this thesis builds by examining the ways in which periodicals responded to and used ideas taken from medical science. Gowan Dawson and Jonathan R. Topham (2004), and George Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth (2004), emphasise the importance of periodicals in the nineteenth century as the main means by which science was diffused to a public audience. They examine the way in which scientific concepts pervaded articles on a variety of subject matter from a formalist position, writing that:

"science often informed and infiltrated articles ostensibly devoted to other topics. For example, an article on political economy might appeal to organic evolution as the natural process for development" (Cantor and Shuttleworth 2). The prevalence of science in periodical writing as a mediator between knowledge and culture, but one with its own agenda, is a key focus of periodicals and science research today, and my thesis focuses on medicine specifically as both the subject of discussion and a discourse from which ideas could be borrowed to assert political opinion to the reader.

The articles that provide the primary sources for my thesis are often anonymous submissions, are sometimes written by the editor in the guise of somebody else or, in the case of *Blackwood's*, which is the subject of chapter five of this thesis, come from a shifting inner circle of writers. To analyse them in terms of authorship, I utilise Jon Klancher's concept of "transauthorial discourse," taken from *The Making of English Reading Audiences* (1987) (52). This is a term used to describe the unifying voice of a periodical, which transcends its disparate individual contributors. Klancher specifically refers to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as the first among four cited examples of transauthorial discourse (51). As I reveal, the problem of views that are contradictory in the detail — whether radicals are one type of disease or another, in *Blackwood's*, for example — is overcome by the transauthorial discourse of the magazine and this method denies the need for an author-centred discourse of literary analysis.

The periodical press grew in number of publications, dissemination, and influence in the Romantic period. Journalism became defined as a new genre of literature, and the editors of periodicals and their practices began to shape this new genre. The periodical press covered both the arts and sciences in a comprehensive and diverse manner that continued until the increasing professionalization of the sciences led to the isolation of the literate enthusiast and subsequently specialist publications. Stephen Behrendt (1999) investigates the formation of

"a community of readers who approached their reading as active participants in a dialogue" with the periodical press (93). The inclusion of a letters page supposedly enabled the reader to be an active participant in this culture of knowledge and debate rather than a passive observer, although letters from the general public, people unknown to the editor, would obviously have been selected on the basis of their content and their politics. Behrendt continues: "by discovering themselves as readers. . .citizens also discovered from their reading shared social and political values, aspirations and resentments that forged group identities among them and distinguished them from the otherwise undifferentiated masses" (93). By creating readerships, periodical culture created communities not based upon geographic restrictions. The conservative *Blackwood's* aim was to shape its readership in exactly the way described above. The radical periodicals that I focus on are also published with the purpose of calling for reform of various elements of government, and this united their readerships.

The Body Politic

Much of my thesis focuses on the ways in which political institutions or systems are likened to the human body, and I now introduce ways of considering the body politic in history and criticism. The idea of the state as a body was not a new concept in the early nineteenth century: the phrase "body politic" dates back at least to the twelfth century. In *Bodies Politic* (2001), Roy Porter assesses the compulsion to figure the world through the body and vice versa (229). He writes that "when the medical and the political concatenate, the subversive potential of the message is re-enforced" (229): I have found that images and metaphors taken from medicine were used by radical writers to powerfully subvert authority. It is worth introducing the concept of the body politic for the purposes of later discussion into how this concept changed and was built upon in the period under review. I take for my starting point the analogies made between the human body and the state in classical thinking, and track the

idea through the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries to demonstrate the changing ways the concept was used before the period under review.[1]

The analogy between the body and the commonwealth was used in classical literature such as Plato's *Timaeus* (360) in which he wrote that the cosmos was of animate form like the human body. The concept was idealised and polemical rather than literal, but Aristotle used bodily metaphor in a more specifically corporeal way in *The Politics* (350) to describe the integration of perfectly working parts (Gosbee n.p). From there, the next changes to the concept of the "body politic" are analysed in Ernst Kantorowicz's study of the body politic in mediaeval politics, *The King's Two Bodies* (1981). This reveals how the King was imagined to have two bodies: the physical, corruptible body, and the "body politic" (7). The body politic, then, was imagined to be linked to the King at this point. John Fortescue's *Governance of England* (1475) is considered by C. C. C. Oxon to be the earliest treatise on the English Constitution written in the English language: this is relevant considering that writing I encounter on the Constitution similarly represents it as a body (Oxon v). Fortescue was a fifteenth-century justice and political writer. When discussing the limitations of the English governing system in his time, Fortescue examines the relationship between King and government:

> whan mankynde was more mansuete, and bettir disposid to vertu, grete communaltes, as was the felowshippe that came in to this land with Brute, willynge to be vnite and made a body pollitike called a reawme, hauynge an hed to gouerne it. (112)

Here, Fortescue represents the realm as a body with a head that controls it, a simple allegory for the human body. This concept is of a Utopian era when man and society functioned perfectly in this model. With time, a more nuanced understanding of the human body would allow for extension of this metaphor: in the period I review, the language applied to society is

[1] I am indebted to Mark Gosbee's study of the body politic in history in the *Oxford Companion to the Body* for guiding my research on the concept.

of a complex and interdependent series of systems that make up the body. Unlike Fortescue's Utopian vision, the metaphor of the state as a body is invoked when its parts are under threat or working imperfectly.

Another notable use of the term "body politic" can be found in sixteenth-century law reporter Edmund Plowden's *Commentaries or Reports* on legal debates and trials, published in 1571. In this text Plowden outlines the "two bodies" concept:

> For the King has in him two bodies, viz., a body natural, and a body politic. His body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a body moral, subject to all infirmities that come by nature or accident, to the imbecility of infancy or old age, and to the like defects that happen to the bodies of other people. But his body politic is a body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of policy and government, and constituted for the direction of the people, and the management of the public weal, and this body is utterly void of infancy, and old age, and other natural defects and imbecilities, which the body natural is subject to, and for this cause, what the king does in his body politic cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any disability in his natural body. (212a)

The King again has a physical body, susceptible to the weakness and infirmity of any human body. Plowden posits that the King also has an invisible body politic, which is made of principles of government. This body, he states, performs the task of protecting the people, and is infallible. He points out that in spite of illness of body or mind on behalf of the King, his rule is still infalliable: in the period I am focusing on, the King, George III, had succumbed to mental illness and was deemed unable to rule. His mind unwell, his son was given the role of the Prince Regent. Prince George's own body came under scrutiny in the periodical press: his gluttony was portrayed by caricaturist James Gillray in *A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Digestion* (1792) — an image given and analysed in detail in chapter one — where he is depicted as overweight, surrounded by unpaid bills, empty pill bottles and dirty plates. His physical excesses were linked by his critics to moral depravity: his gambling, womanizing, drinking, and over-eating were characterized as parts of a whole picture of wickedness, carnality, and aristocratic degeneration.

In 1628, William Harvey published his treatise on circulation, the significance of which I discuss in chapter four, and in this he posited that the King was the heart of the state, employing the body politic metaphor from an anatomist's point of view. Harvey asserted that the King should have some knowledge of the structure of the body, particularly the heart, as a "Divine example" of how to rule the political body (3).[2] By 1651, the meaning of the body politic had undergone a change. Thomas Hobbes described the structure of society in his political treatise *Leviathan*, a text named for an aquatic animal of enormous size real or imaginary: Hobbes imagined the commonwealth as this massive beast. Hobbes describes systems in society as "any numbers of men joyned in one Interest, or one Businesse" and states that they "resemble the similar parts, or Muscles of a Body naturall" (274). Not only does Hobbes comment on the state as a body, but asserts a view of the human body as mechanistic, writing: "For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs…why may we not say that *Automata*…have an artificial life? For what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*; and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the body, such was intended by the Artificer?" (81; original emphasis). Here, God — the Artificer — is not a creator but a kind of mechanic. The parts of the human body become parts of a machine, performing functions such as movement, like an automaton. The "Leviathan," or state, is merely a larger version of this mechanical human body built to protect its subjects. The monarch is the "artificial soul" that endows the "Leviathan" with life. Law and its practitioners, Hobbes continues, are the nerves and joints of the system, the economy is the strength, and he completes the metaphor by describing "*Concord*," or social harmony, as health, and sedition as sickness (81; original emphasis). This is Hobbes' idea of the body politic: the King is now the soul of the body and the soul is therefore the ruler of the human body in Hobbes' model.

[2] I am using the 1847 edition of Harvey's *Works*, translated by Robert Willis.

This concept was described in similar terms in the eighteenth century. In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on Political Economy*, from 1755, the use of bodily metaphor was extended:

> The body politic, taken individually may be considered as an organised, living body, resembling that of a man. The sovereign power represents the head; the laws and customs are the brain. Commerce, industry and agriculture are the mouth and stomach. The public income is the blood. The citizens are the body and the members, which make the machine live, move and work. (*Social Contract and Discourses* 120).

As in Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the state is a human body, but now the King is the head: physically at the top, and absolutely vital to the continuation of the body. Blood is the economy, a concept that is brought to the fore of Cobbett's political writing. We can see the more sophisticated understanding of the human body which is so important to my thesis emerging here: in chapter two, for example, I examine how the concept of the body politic is satirised in poetry in the *Black Dwarf*. The body is now made up of systems, such as the circulation, the mind, and the nerves, and organs which must all be working in unison for a healthy state. This new view of the body was simultaneously emerging in medical and political discourse, as I explain in detail in the next section.

In this new model, the rules of society, both legal and cultural, are the mind. The means by which the body is sustained and nourished is industry, and so on. These metaphors became commonplace in political thought and this body was described as diseased, corrupt, or monstrous during times of discord, either on the part of reformers or those who saw a threat to the body. In the Romantic period, which saw both medical interest and progress in the emerging field of biology and the collapse of political systems in America and France, the British political system was examined, interrogated and threatened by radical reformers, many of whom used the periodical press to express their concern. The counterargument used the conservative press to impress upon their readership the threat to the body politic.

The Body in the Romantic Period

My thesis asserts that a vocabulary of unfitness, physical monstrosity, bodily health, diseased systems, and contagion was borrowed from medical discourse by political writers. For example, contagion, influence, and physiological sympathy became key ideas in the periodical press of the early nineteenth century, and the metaphor of the body was effective as it had parallels in the changing view of the body in the period: the body could be reorganised and controlled. Timothy Morton (2009) comments on the trend, writing: "In the Romantic period, an aesthetics of bodily affect could be used to drum up support for the political order" (286). It is this tendency and this aesthetic that I reveal in this thesis. The language of disease and sickness was frequently used to describe political systems in the period, particularly in reference to the need for reform and revolution. Each periodical I have read for this study utilises medical language to support its key political aim.

The reason that radical writers find these physiological metaphors so appropriate when discussing political events and systems is due to paradigm shifts regarding the human body. Historians of medicine describe the turn of the nineteenth century as a period of radical change in the practice of medicine (Brunton xi). Until this moment in time, fundamental beliefs and practices within Western medicine had remained unchanged for hundreds of years. However, around the turn of the nineteenth century, practitioners began to abandon the idea that illness originated in an imbalance of mysterious fluids and energies within the body. This humoral theory had dominated Western medicine since classical times, and can be traced back to the ancient Greek medical theory of Hippocrates and Galen. In this theory, the human body was kept in health through a delicate balance of the four humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. These humors were linked to temperament and also corresponded to one of the four elements key to ancient Greek natural philosophy: blood to air, yellow bile to fire, earth to black bile, and phlegm to water (Bynum, *History* 10). This

theory did not require any in-depth knowledge of human anatomy in order to understand disease. Instead the focus was on indications of the imbalance of the humors demonstrated within bodily fluids in order to diagnose illness. In the nineteenth century, however, medical practitioners began to explore the idea of disease as a localized phenomenon which originated in organic changes in the tissues and organs of the body (Brunton xi).

The medical profession gained power, not only over the body, but over the public in the period. Foucault explores the idea of the growing power attributed to the medical profession in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963). Building on my reading of the work of historians of medicine, I use Foucault's analysis of a new discourse, which emerged in the Paris hospitals in the early nineteenth century, and which offered a way of seeing and thinking about the human body that afforded the practitioner more power within the clinical relationship (242). Medical theory, or the ways in which practitioners understood the workings of the body in health and illness, began to change and the physical spaces in which medical knowledge was developed were transformed. Medical practitioners in the early nineteenth century began to gain authority as the balance of power in the practitioner-patient relationship shifted from the system that Nicholas Jewson describes in his 1974 essay "Medical Knowledge and the Patronage System in Eighteenth-Century England," where the paying, and often medically well-versed, patient would choose their practitioner according to his or her own tastes. This took place in the domestic sphere, but hospital-based treatment was popularised first in nineteenth-century France, and then in Britain. This important change allowed the medical practitioner more power. Instead of practitioners competing amongst themselves for favour and recognition among their wealthy patients, a hospital treated even the poorest class of sufferer, meaning that the economic reliance of the practitioner upon their patient was no longer a key issue, and instead practitioners looked to one another for recognition. The fate of

the individual patient also became less important, as diseases and illnesses could be more widely understood by the examination of a greater number of cases.

Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (2002) write:

> Though the late seventeenth century was marked by the emergence of political economy, such formulations were relatively primitive. Late eighteenth-century radicalism was in fact empowered with superior tools of analysis because the sciences of man had arrived. (11)

Medical science offered radicals ways of describing society in terms that suggested the possibility of extensive reform and invasive change to governmental structure and systems. The majority of my thesis focuses on radical use of physiological metaphors, but the final chapter analyses the ways in which conservatives also used this language in anti-reform debates. The use of medical vocabulary for political reform continues, I argue, until the close of the Romantic period, when the relationship between medicine, politics, and society changed once again, and medical discourse began to be used in a more practical way: to enact laws that oppressed the labouring classes.

To further establish the reciprocal links between medicine and politics, in my thesis I point to the ways in which political speakers also debated medical issues. For example, as Nicholas Roe reveals in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life* (2001), John Thelwall, the Jacobin reformist and leader of the London Corresponding Society, commented on a medical debate about the source of life. In 1793 Thewall lectured at Guy's Hospital, challenging the views of the surgeon John Hunter. The case of Thelwall demonstrates the self-appointed authority the political speaker could assume over science and medicine in the period before increasing professionalization excluded the literate enthusiast. Cobbett, I argue in chapter four, assumes this authority, condemning medical practice and writing against medical legislation. While I discuss the medical and political dimensions of Thelwall as a professional speech therapist in chapter three, I use my own example, of Hunt, in chapter one

to further reveal how radicals discussed medicine in knowledgeable and politically-charged terms. Roe demonstrates how the concepts and the language of Thelwall's lectures on animal vitality became useful shorthand for those discussing political reform in the 1790s. For the London Corresponding Society, for whom Thelwall was something of a political hero, the "diffusion of political information was analogous to the 'vivifying principle' or 'electrical fluid', coursing through the human body" (92). Here, radical political ideas become a stimulating, animating force for change. Indeed, Thelwall used the metaphor of the body politic when presenting himself in the periodical press as a "political physician," as I analyse in chapter two ("Distresses" 6).

The effect of revolutions in America and France could still be felt throughout the Romantic period, and, as I highlight, were still being discussed in the periodical press. The upheavals had dismantled the structure of American and French societies, and replacement systems were based on new understandings of the nature of humankind. In *The Spirit of Despotism* (2006) John Barrell confirms the ways in which the impact of revolution could be seen not only in British politics, but also on British social and even private life, as the influence of such a cultural transformation could not be contained within the political sphere.

John Whale (2000) also acknowledges the centrality of the body to debates about revolution taking place in England after the events in America and France: commentators Tom Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft not only discuss revolution but are also "both engaged in debates about the nature of change as it affects the body" (16). In their writing, they both use the image of the dying body in order to rearticulate their notions of the state and the soul. Gerald N. Izenberg (1993) posits that "it was the impact of the French revolution on the Romantics' pre-existing struggles for self definition, freedom from heteronomous authority, and original creative achievement that produced a new idea of selfhood" (15), but it is selfhood and Otherness constructed on the site of the body — healthy or else diseased,

monstrous, or under attack from quack state doctors — which I argue was also the product of revolutionary action.

In discussions of politics in the Romantic period the body became a site of power and control. The period was a time of accelerating knowledge of the human body in medical discourse and this lead to greater control over the body and paradigm shifts in the ways that the body was conceived. Due to the conversations between medical profession and the interested public, particularly men of letters, this shift was communicated to the wider consciousness and applied to political systems and organisations. Greater autonomy over the structure of society had been discovered. My analysis finishes in the early Victorian period, as the urban poor were beginning to be presented as Other. Represented as both morally and physically corrupt, the poor became the main focus of conservative commentators, as opposed to radicals, although these were often compounded in the period with the growth of industry, trade unions, and, in the 1840s, the Chartist movement. Laws based on medicine, such as the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s, were used to segregate and control these classes, and the deep ambivalence of the middle class towards the poor as objects of both pity and disgust begins.

Chapter One: The Public Nature of Health and the Politics of Sickness in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* and *Reflector*

The Regency was one of the most disruptive political events in Britain in the 1810s, and it was catalysed by the health issues of the King. Health and fitness became a concern of the public sphere in a new way in this period, not only because of the Regency, but also in a wider sense. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which health and fitness — in terms of suitability and usefulness in society as well as bodily well-being — becomes a matter of public anxiety for the newly forming English middle class, or bourgeoisie, in the Regency period. I draw on Jürgen Habermas' theory of the public and private spheres, as they relate to the periodical press, as a starting point from which to commence an examination of the role of the "public" and of health in the period. I also consider the nervous man of science, using the example of Humphry Davy, whose fame meant that his illness was brought into the public sphere through the periodical press and shaped his profile in public life. I analyse the representations of health in the periodical essays of Leigh Hunt, a prominent figure in literary circles who was agoraphobic, a sensual poet, a hypochondriac, and an outspoken critic of the Regency. Throughout, I draw on eighteenth-century medical theories of nervous disorders to illuminate the way in which the nervous body was linked to public and political health.

Much of this chapter focuses on illness narrative and I frequently draw on Hunt's own accounts of his sickness in his autobiography, which is an early example of the modern biographic genre.[3] In his biography of Hunt, *Fiery Heart* (2005), Nicholas Roe expresses frustration that Hunt does not include more personal feeling in the book: Hunt's relationship with his wife is subordinated in the text in favour of describing his public pursuits (84).

[3] Quotations taken from the 1870 edition of Hunt's *Autobiography* published by Smith, Elder, and co (1870) are referred to as *Autobiography* in parenthetical references; quotations from *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt: with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries* published by Harper and Brothers (1850) are referred to as *Reminiscences.*

However, Hunt, the self-described man of letters, does offer some picture of himself in the domestic sphere by producing one of the first autobiographies. I initially give a brief summary of the theoretical framework provided by Habermas and its relation to the periodical press, before outlining the importance of nervous disorders and hypochondria as public illnesses of narration and interpretation.

I begin this chapter by examining the case of Hunt, a public figure who was forced into seclusion due to imprisonment and recurrent illness, and the ways in which he expressed authority on matters of bodily and mental health. I then discuss public health at home and abroad as it is discussed in the *Examiner*, looking particularly at representations of Napoleon and the public debate about the smallpox vaccine, and I finish by discussing the individual body under scrutiny in Leigh Hunt's most prominent periodical publications, the *Examiner* and the *Reflector*, focusing on the representations of the King and the Prince Regent. Taking the first issues of each publication, to examine the prospectus or opening where traditionally the editor outlines the political alignment and purpose of the periodical, I end the chapter by offering readings of the articles that represent health and fitness for purpose in the public sphere. This chapter uncovers the ways in which the human body was brought into the public and political spheres in the early nineteenth century, and reveals a new focus on the healthy body as an integral component of political health.

James Henry Leigh Hunt is described by Roe as "the scourge of the corrupt regency establishment"; his politics were modern, reformist, and liberal (*Fiery Heart* "Preface" i). He outlived many of his Romantic contemporaries to experience the Victorian era of steam power and electricity: scientific advances that influenced his later poetry (xiv). Roe presents Hunt as a poet and journalist of achievement, who battled "demons" of ill health and nervous disorders (xiv). Roe also describes a recurring pattern in which Hunt would write his most combative, radical journalism before retreating into illness (36). Hunt enjoyed the respite

provided by the sickroom from a young age: when suffering a nasty scald during his schooldays, he asserted in his *Autobiography* that "the getting well was delicious" (74). Rather than represent Hunt as able to write with such skill and effective rhetoric in spite of private ill health, however, I argue that Hunt's public sickness was integral to, and highly influential upon, his political writing. Hunt's key periodical publications were established during the years immediately before the Regency crisis. The *Examiner* and the *Reflector* were edited by Leigh Hunt and published by his brother, John Hunt. The *Examiner* was founded in 1808, and continued by Hunt until he bequeathed editorship to his son in 1828: it is these two decades of the periodical under the management of Leigh Hunt that are the focus of this chapter. As Kevin Gilmartin attests (1996), by the 1830s, Hunt "abandon[ed] print intervention in the public sphere, and [left] politics to the politicians" (226).

First published as a Sunday paper on politics, domestic economy, and theatre criticism, the *Examiner* became a prominent voice of dissent and government criticism. It aimed to treat politics with impartiality, and, as such, strove to carry no adverts, an idea that Hunt had to eventually abandon. A quote from Jonathan Swift declaring that "party is the madness of many for the gain of a few" began each issue. The journal's aim was to employ a "literary sensibility to reform both government and journalism" ("Examiner" *DNCJ*). The *Reflector* was a short-lived literary magazine, although dense in content per issue, running concurrently with the *Examiner* as a quarterly publication between 1810 and 1812 (*DNCJ*). The *Reflector* is a title that suggests both an accurate representation of things are they are and a contemplative, truthful figure. The magazine and the paper have been selected for this chapter out of the publications attributed to Hunt because the *Reflector's* politics were described by Hunt as exactly those of the *Examiner*: without loyalty to a party, and with reform the foremost political concern, making them companion publications in a sense (Roe, *Fiery Heart* 125). It is widely known that articles written by Hunt in his periodicals are

signed with the symbol of a pointing hand (Roe, *Fiery Heart* 94). Assumptions of Hunt's authorship made in this chapter are guided by the appearance of this colophon, and all articles from the *Reflector* have been attributed to Hunt due to his editorship and my use of Klancher's transauthorial discourse as a method of defining ownership of the voice of the periodical.

Hunt's oppositionary stance to government policy crystallised in the events leading up to the Regency crisis. Having ruled since 1760 and the age of twenty two, George III suffered from periods of mental ill health from 1788, probably caused by porphyria, and he finally succumbed to madness in 1809 (Porter, *Manacles* 235). The King's madness inspired both public interest — as one might expect — and also public action. In *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, Roy Porter describes the public sending cures to the King "by the score," including ground ivy and powdered crab's claws (170). Doctors also publically announced their ideas for remedies (174–5). For Porter, George III provides the closest available thing to a case study of madness in the period, as the "most closely observed mad person in English history": however, Porter continues, very little of George's own testimony is recorded, and that which remains is unverifiable (*Manacles* 235). Linda Colley attests that the actual methods of the King's treatment, which are described as brutal and humiliating, were not made public knowledge in the period (195–6). Nonetheless, the mental illness of the King provided public discussion on madness, in the form of a dialogue between the "experts" and the people, and this uneasy relationship is what Porter describes as the catalyst for future change in the field of the medicine of mental illness (*Manacles* 32).

Discussion of a Regency had been taking place since the winter of 1788. The constitutional question of how to proceed if the King were to be further incapacitated, whether the heir to the throne automatically became ruler, how much power the new ruler should have, or else whether parliament gained sole authority, were the concerns of the public

and leaders of government (Hilton 56). These decisions were problematised by the Prince's excesses, including his debts and his affairs. The King's sudden recovery in February 1789 halted discussion for the immediate period, and the events of the French Revolution obviously became a new focal point for political discussion, but the stability of the whole structure of political authority had been publically questioned. The nine-year Regency period commenced in 1811, and it ended with the Prince Regent's accession as George IV in 1820. Parliament legislation gave the Prince Regent no power to take actions that could not be undone in the event of his father recovering once more and objecting, until the expiry of one year (Hilton 220). Previous to the Regency, it was in the King's power to declare war or make peace, call and dissolve Parliament, pardon criminals, appoint (Protestant) Britons as cabinet ministers, courtiers, military officers, and other positions of authority, without any recourse to Parliament (Colley 196). During this "cooling-off period" of limited authority, the Prince decided not to disrupt the Cabinet, or to rally for Catholic emancipation, as reformers had hoped he would (Hilton 220–1). Events such as the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the Peterloo massacre in Manchester occurred during the Regency, and the political impact of the disruption in the political system itself galvanised comment and criticism in the periodical press. The public were encouraged to interrogate the Prince's fitness for purpose. Below I examine who comprised the public, and in what manner they engaged in political debate.

1.1 The Public in the Romantic Period

Keen (2004) writes that the nineteenth-century periodical press: "embodied the eighteenth-century ideal of a public sphere of enlightened individuals engaged in a progressive communicative process" (*Revolutions* 150). The "public" is a key theme in the political culture of the period as political discussion became nationwide discourse. Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) described the public sphere as a discursive space inhabited by the emerging eighteenth-century bourgeois class, preceded by a

literary public sphere, where dialogue hoped to effect political action. Habermas states that: "the political task of the bourgeois public sphere was the regulation of civil society," or, the public sphere was a space between society and state in which discussion of both arenas and how they related to one another took place (52). Art and literary criticism also took place in the public sphere, in spaces such as coffee houses and *salons* (33). This provided a refining of critical skills that could then be transferred to questions of politics. According to Hannah Barker (2002), coffee houses, ale houses, and barber's shops also offered the opportunity for newspapers, magazines, and journals containing political commentary to be read by those who could not afford to buy them (107).

Periodicals connected the public through their distribution and circulation, and allowed for conversation on a national level. The growth of the press and the periodical essay thus developed the public sphere, providing an intangible but public and effective space in which this criticism and communication of political ideas took place. Barker describes the prominence of "public opinion" in the periodical press during the eighteenth century, a concept that was much commented on by contemporaries, although its precise definition and the question of who constituted "the public" were not easy to characterise (94). However, newspapers and journals often wrote in terms of "the people" and "the public," taking on a vocabulary of the individual writer or publication presuming to speak for the whole. Independence from church and court, and the importance of rational critical argument over private or individual identity were the defining features of the public sphere.

However, Habermas' public sphere is not unproblematic in its idealisation of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie as a united and enlightened society. In "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures" Geoff Eley (1992) draws attention to labouring-class radical and dissenting traditions unremarked upon in Habermas' account of the public. Habermas himself re-examined his original model of the public sphere in 1989 at an academic conference in

North America to include a politically radical and populist or plebeian public sphere developing alongside the elite bourgeois space (Benchimol, *Politics* 19–20). Also, according to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere was in decline at the turn of the nineteenth century. In fact, Klancher describes a powerful counter-public sphere emerging with the oppositional or radical periodical press in the early nineteenth century, and in his "Introduction" to the forum "Romanticism and its Publics" describes the Romantic public sphere as divided into "multiple and contestatory publics" (qtd. in Wheatley, *Romantic Periodicals* 17). Gilmartin examines the problems with the concept of "the public," writing: "the radical reform movement was not deeply committed to an abstract concept of the popular will," or, that radicals did not believe in a homogenous public ideology (24).

For contemporary criticism on "the public," I look to William Hazlitt, a foremost journalist, essayist, and poet, in an article titled "What is the People?" (1818), which addresses the question of who or what constitutes "the public" and "the people" and what their role in politics should be. The singular "is" of the title, used rather than the plural "are" suggests "the people" are a single entity: a united body. Written in the second person tense, the essay is an attack on "the people's" relationship with what Hazlitt conceives of as a tyrannical government and monarchy. Hazlitt addresses "millions of men, like you, with hearts beating in their bosoms, with thoughts stirring in their minds, with the blood circulating in their veins" (49). The bodily language suggests a motile and vital "people"; the second person tense distinguishes them from the journalist. Hazlitt's physiological metaphor continues, but this time the country and philosophical concepts such as "Liberty" are embodied:

> And yet you would tear out this mighty heart of a nation, and lay it bare and bleeding at the foot of despotism: you would slay the mind of a country…you would tread out the eye of Liberty…like a vile jelly. (49)

The language use to describe the bodies of the people — mobile and healthy — is now perverted in the description of these vigorous bodies gruesomely destroying the nation and its freedoms. The "vile jelly" is a reference to the scene in Shakespeare's "King Lear" in which Gloucester's eyes are put out; reconciling his blindness to truth with physiological blindness. Here, Liberty is blind, and the people are thus blamed for their own lack of emancipation. The people are monstrous in their visceral attack on the body politic: while their personhood is homogenized into a group identity, the nation and intangible cultural and political concepts relating to it are embodied in their gruesome dismemberment. Hazlitt sets up as binary opposites "the people" and the government, discussing William Cobbett's agreement to "*betray the cause of the people*" in service of government, and asserting that "the cause of the people and the cause of the Government. . .are not the same but the reverse of one another" (51; original emphasis). Therefore, the people are not government, nor journalists, but they are the readers of journals, as suggested in Habermas' model of the public sphere.

While the idea of the public sphere as a culture speaking with one voice may not apply to the period in which Hunt writes, the idea of "the public" nonetheless still proliferated and was evocative in the press. The public nature of politics was now expressed in the concept of a government which was now accountable to its people, who demanded a representative government and civil freedoms: transforming authority from arbitrary to rational, and under the scrutiny of a public body of citizenry under the law (Eley 290). Similarly, health became a matter of public interest when the personal illness of George III influenced the governing of the country. I now examine how — albeit in a fragmented and problematic manner — the public sphere and public opinion became concerned with themes of health and illness narrative in concurrence with the rise of the nervous disorder in the middle-class body.

1.2 Public Health

Hunt used metaphors of bodily sickness in his political essays and also reveals in his correspondence and autobiography an obsession with his own health: a fixation that reflected a wider cultural obsession with public well-being. The sick body became a site of interest in the culture of the Romantic period, and well-maintained "public health" and fitness of the labouring classes for work was idealised by reformers such as the physicians John Ferriar and Thomas Percival at the turn of the nineteenth century (Buer 122). Percival, a "major figure in Manchester's cultural and scientific life," attended writer Thomas De Quincey's sister Elizabeth on the occasion of her death (Kitson 278). In the closing decades of the eighteenth century Percival helped establish the voluntary Manchester Board of Health, advocated public health laws and better working conditions for the labouring classes; Ferriar was in favour of cricket pitches for workers, and the compulsory inspection and licensing of public common lodging houses, both with the aim of improving health and fitness for work (Buer 122). While medical reform in favour of public health and a fitter workforce became prevalent in medicine in the period, the language of the unhealthy constitution was applied to the system of principles on which the nation was governed. The body politic was imagined as sick by hypochondriac Hunt, demonstrating the nature of the growing fascination with health and the shift in the site of concern from the individual's body to the state, or the private, domestic sphere to the public. The King's ill health and the Prince's excesses (some bodily) were catalysts for political events clustered around the advent of a Regency and Hunt wrote fervently against the Regent in this tumultuous period. Individual health became a social concern, and Hunt's experience with medicine from a patient's point of view was integral to, and highly influential upon, his political writing. I focus now on the concept of the "nervous disorder," a disease that emerged in the eighteenth century and was an illness of public display that also became symbolic of class in the period.

Physician George Cheyne titled his 1733 book on nervous disorders *The English Malady*, examining the social causes of hypochondria and demonstrating the preoccupation with the disorder so prevalent in the English public. Cheyne's book was written for a general or lay audience, and its popularity continued into the late eighteenth century (Porter and Cheyne ix). In the eighteenth century, nervous disorders were seen as the preoccupation of the elite, and, as Porter notes in his introduction to the text, Cheyne glamourized nervous disorders by endorsing a connection between the malady and the upper classes (xi). Cheyne did not enter public life through any of the usual forums for those in the medical profession: he did not head the College of Physicians or hold any influential office (xiv). He did not gain a licence from the Royal College of Physicians of London (xv). His presence in the public sphere was therefore mainly literary and it was established by his practical guides to personal health that were still influential in the period under review.

For Cheyne, nervous disorders had a physiological root: they were "*as much a bodily Distemper*. . .*as the* Small-pox *or a* Fever" (262; original emphasis). Despite advocating and usually following a sparse diet and restrictive regimen to cure most sicknesses — a treatment also favoured by Hunt — Cheyne's own personal appetites could not always be controlled: despite advocating a healthy lifestyle, his own habits fluctuated wildly, and at one period he drank three bottles of wine every day, and his body grew to thirty-two stone, the strain of which lead to heavy use of opiates (xvii). Cheyne's work was often more concerned with maintaining well-being than treating sickness, positing the luxuries and factors of an upper-class lifestyle such as alcohol, excessive consumption of meat, late nights, and tight-laced clothes as the enemy of health (xviii). As I reveal, Hunt followed Cheyne's recommendations and also applied them to sick political bodies.

However, the nervous disorder began to also infect the aspiring middling classes around the turn of the century. It was noted by the physician Thomas Trotter (1808) that: "at

the beginning of the nineteenth century, we do not hesitate to confirm that *nervous disorders*. . .may be justly reckoned two thirds of the whole, with which civilized society is afflicted" (13). Trotter attributed many diseases to problems with the nerves, including stomach and liver complaints, low spirits, gout, and indigestion. Excessive sensibility was thought to stem from the increased sensitivity of the nervous system. Those afflicted with nervous disorders, according to Cheyne, were people of the "brightest and most spiritual" faculties and "whose Genius is the most keen and penetrating" (262). Trotter concurred with Cheyne's opinion on genius, writing: "It is to be supposed, that all men who possess genius, and those mental qualifications which prompt them to literary attainments or pursuits, are endued by nature with more than usual sensibility of the nervous system" (37–8). The man of genius was considered to be physiologically different to the ordinary man: his feelings were heightened because his physical nerves were more sensitive. Equating nervous disorders with intelligence, creativity, and sensitivity reflects an aspirational quality, and the cultivation of excessive sensibility was a characteristic of genteel society that was mocked in the public sphere in articles such as "A Man of Sensibility" from the *Universal Magazine* in 1807, which describes the author overhearing an outpouring of feeling from a beggar. The writer calls him a "man of feeling. . .rich in the delights of sensibility," asking him what it is that he shelters in his bosom. The beggar replies: "'A louse, an' please your worship'" to which the writer replies, "'A louse!!!' I vociferated, and sprang back…'Hell and Damnation', I muttered, and walked away" (200). Here, the man of sensibility is not a bourgeois genius, but a filthy beggar with pretentions of gentility. The writer implies that the nervous disorder could soon infect the labouring classes, and even lower portions of society.

As Logan asserts in *Nerves and Narratives*, the middle class now possessed a new body that was marked by its susceptibility to nervous disorders, an inclination that was previously the epidemic of the aristocracy. This new body of the bourgeoisie was not

comparable to the aristocratic nervous body, nor to the rather tougher labouring-class body, as it suffered from factors specific to a middle-class lifestyle, including the nerve-wracking instability of the stock market, the confinement of the urban wife to her townhouse, the sudden inactivity of the retired tradesman, and all year-round urban residence (Logan 1). Trotter also describes how the noxious gases and the fumes of industry trouble the middle-class body: but the body of the labourer, such as the pitman, is described as somewhat tougher; and even with a moderate drinking habit, they "commonly live to a great age" (44). Social and cultural conditions, then, were thought to have a very real effect on the body. Logan describes the nervous middle-class body as an "integral" part of the culture of the nineteenth century: a cultural obsession with the well-being of the body that was linked to changes in society (11).

Hypochondria was one nervous disorder that was particularly prevalent in the population of early nineteenth-century Britain: Hunt admitted suffering from this illness alongside his physical complaints. Describing the Romantic period as an age of hypochondria, Grinnell argues that this nervous disorder had become pervasive in British culture at the turn of the nineteenth century and describes the disease as one that afflicted both the individual and society in general (1). Grinnell stresses that because hypochondria are maladies that prevent the sufferer from being able to distinguish between states of health and sickness, they are a disorder of interpretation and therefore suited to literature (7). One of the symptoms of the hypochondriac constitution is the compulsion to narrate, in the public sphere, other symptoms. "Hypochondria" was a term that described male hysteria in the eighteenth century: "hysteria" comes from the Greek word for the uterus, and the nervous disorder was linked to a displacement of the womb in female patients. Logan explains that during the eighteenth century, the body became defined in terms of the nervous system, rather than the humours, and hysteria became one of many nervous disorders, albeit still strongly

linked to the feminine temperament (23). The definition of the hypochondriac as excessively and wrongly convinced of his or her illness was popularized in 1822 by French psychiatrist Jean Pierre Falret (Logan 19), and in his writing Hunt uses the term to refer to a nervous disorder causing the subject to be overly concerned with illness. The line between imagined illness and very real physical symptoms of a nervous disorder such as hypochondria becomes blurred, as Roe explains when he analyses descriptions of the heart palpitations Hunt suffered from when under undue stress or excitement (*Fiery Heart* 85). In her study of hypochondria, *A Condition of Doubt* (2012), Catherine Belling states that in the early nineteenth century hypochondria was still conceived of as "a disease rather than a charade" by medical discourse, though it was strongly located in the mind rather than the body (47).

The diagnosis of sickness in the body politic becomes an evocative interpretation of civil unrest and the need for reform. Grinnell touches on the theme of the healthy nation when he writes that "commentators addressed concerns over the well-being of the nation at a time of revolution in France and then war on the continent" and continues to describe the "intensification of the Romantic period's medicalized rhetoric" (7). Grinnell briefly examines how conservative commentators writing against reform used ideas of the unhealthy body to reinforce ideas of unity and compliance when he writes: "discourses of nation imagined tending to the disorders of an unhealthy body politic in an attempt to homogenize a diverse citizenry and manage unwanted deviance as an expression of degeneracy and sickness" (11). By representing radical politics as sickness, an idea I examine in depth in my final chapter on *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, readers were encouraged to see reformers as deviant from the united body of the people. Political economy both utilised and shaped a discourse of health and sickness, establishing the citizen as a useful labouring body (Grinnell 11). Fitness for purpose as well as healthiness was required in the labouring classes, and also in the

monarchy, as, as previously mentioned, George III suffered with madness, and the Prince Regent indulged to excess in the period.

Hunt's ill health was at the fore of some of his periodical writing, as I investigate in more detail in the next section. Logan points to Trotter's description of nervous sufferers labouring under a compulsion to recount his or her symptoms, and, as such, the act of narration becomes central to the discourse of nervous disorders (16–17). In the "Political Examiner" for 23 April 1815 titled "More Important State Papers" , Hunt describes his own period of sickness as disabling in many ways — although he is still able to perform this act of narration — and continues his article by wishing similar hindrance upon those in power. Hunt imagines visiting the monarchy, "diplomatists," and congress, with illnesses such as toothache and fevers, and even hypochondria, in the guise of Providence (or fate) and thus rendering them powerless (257). The disabling effect of physical and nervous illness demonstrates the view of the healthy body as default: "disorder," a term often used to describe both types of disease reinforces "order" as a binary opposite.

Hypochondria was not only closely linked to narration, but also to genius. In *Nervous Conditions* (2006), Elizabeth Green Musselman examines the nervous man of science, among these the well-known experimental chemist Davy, arguing that "examples of nervous illness among prominent men and women of science in industrializing Britain are legion" (4). Although Davy suffered from a very real illness, he belonged to the bourgeoisie or middle class that was plagued by these nervous disorders, and men of science as well as men of letters narrated their illnesses and hypochondria in correspondence and private journals. In a letter from Davy to Coleridge written in 1800, the chemist blames his "epistolary indolence" on various sicknesses, which are narrated in some detail before Davy discusses, rather briefly, Coleridge's "treatise on poetry" and his own "galvanic experiments" ("To S. T. Coleridge"

n.p).[4] The discourse of health is here placed comfortably alongside scientific and literary pursuits. Trevor Levere (1981) describes an instance when Coleridge and Davy attended on a patient together. On commencing by placing a thermometer underneath the tongue, the patient asserted that he felt better already. Although the intention was not to deceive the patient, a glance from Davy to Coleridge produced instant understanding between the men of a psychosomatic effect (21). The term "psychosomatic" was, in fact, coined by Coleridge circa 1834 (Knight 31; *OED* "psychosomatic, adj. 1."). Their shared interest in the psychology of sickness demonstrates a keen pursuit of greater understanding of both real and imagined disorders.

On visiting Newgate Gaol following an invitation to improve ventilation in the prison, Davy contracted "gaol fever," or typhus, in 1807, although his doctors believed the illness was a result of overwork (Davy, *Collected Works* 110). Daily bulletins regarding his health were posted outside the Royal Institution where Davy lectured (Knight 69). The illness prevented him from performing his professional duties, but it did not impede him from revising a poem, according to his brother (Knight 69). In his *Collected Works*, his brother John describes this convalescence as "a golden period of his life" continuing, "even his illness . . . seemed contrived to add to his popularity and fame. Had he been of the highest rank in society, greater attentions could not have been paid him" (110–111). John Davy adds that his brother's mind recovered before his body, proof of which could be found in his notebooks, which contained notes on new discoveries and experiments (114). Davy's genius could not be curbed by the frailty of the human body, John implies. Davy's genius was publically noted in an address printed as part of the introductory lecture at the Royal Institution in January 1808, which contained the words:

[4] Coleridge was perhaps the most famously ill Romantic, who also frequently narrated his illness. See Neil Vickers, *Coleridge and Medicine* (1999).

> Mr Davy, whose frequent and powerful addresses from this place, supported by his ingenious experiments, have been so long and so well known to you, has for these last five weeks been struggling between life and death. The effects of those experiments recently made in illustration of his late splendid discovery, added to consequent bodily weakness, brought on a fever so violent as to threaten the extinction of life. (*Collected Works* 112)

The illness of Davy as a public figure, an illness caught while executing his professional duties, became a matter of public concern, and although debilitating in one capacity, sickness allowed for creative pursuits. Davy's sickness elevated him to greatness in the public eye, as his scientific endeavours were the cause of his bodily illness. Once again his mind was seen as more powerful than his body: a reverse of the psychosomatic effect of the mind deceiving the body, perhaps. Much later, in 1827 Davy describes another incapacitating attack of sickness — which would end his life in 1829 — in a letter to Thomas Poole, who was a mutual friend of Coleridge and Davy:

> I would, if it were possible, make my letter something more than a mere bulletin of health, or the expression of the feelings of a sick man; but I can communicate no news. The papers will tell you more than is true; and our politicians seem ignorant of what they are to do at home, much more abroad. ("To Thomas Poole" n.p)

Davy explains that he is unable to elaborate on political and public events due to his illness, and instead can only narrate his sickness. The importance of the narration of these disorders in letters and diaries has been overlooked, argues Musselman. They point to a more public narration: making health a discursive topic alongside art, science, and politics. A healthy and well-maintained nervous system became a model of the ideal social and scientific organization that should be instituted nationally (4–5). The methods of regulating the body are applied to both physical and political constitutions. Hunt considered himself an authority on health because of his own illness, and in the following section I outline the narration of his sickness, the effect illness had on his writing, and the way his work influenced his health. The final section analyses the application of this authority to political bodies at home and abroad.

1.3 Leigh Hunt and Medicine

Hunt suffered from poor health for much of his life, describing in letters to friends his symptoms and illnesses including colds, sore throats, and headaches (*Correspondence* 2:16). He also suffered from anxiety disorders, and it is these nervous conditions, including self-acknowledged bouts of hypochondria, that were the blight of his adult years. The site of Hunt's schooldays, Christ's Hospital, was at the centre of sickness and death, located between the scaffold of Newgate Prison, St Bartholomew's Hospital, and the slaughter of the Smithfield meat market (Roe, *Fiery Heart* 34). It was also at the centre of the London book trade, as Roe points out, indicating specifically the radical political texts available such as William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791), and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) (*Fiery Heart* 41).

Hunt's wife Marianne also suffered from physical and nervous illnesses (Roe *Fiery Heart* 87; 101). The Hunts went to Italy when it was feared that she was dying. Hunt felt his medical knowledge advanced enough to diagnose the cause of his own ailments as "living too well" and he self-prescribed remedies of exercise and diets of solely milk or solely vegetables (*Autobiography* 145). It was a diet of both milk and vegetables that was advocated as "absolutely necessary" for treatment of gout, rheumatism, "nervous cholicks" and "violent hysterick fits" by Cheyne in *The English Malady* (167), and also previously endorsed in his 1724 publication, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (191). However, once, when attempting to starve out his sickness, Hunt was left so weak that he was incapable of walking unaided (*Autobiography* 145). Hunt describes a fear of consulting a professional for advice, in case he heard damning news, and the "absurd" stubbornness of wanting to defeat his ill health by patience and will (*Autobiography* 145–6). Hunt's "ridiculous avoidance of speaking about [his illness]" demonstrates the necessity of illness narration: he describes a proud refusal to,

at this stage, let his circle know how much he suffered (*Autobiography* 146). Hypochondria is described as a ghost, haunting Hunt with its intangibility and lack of physical cause (146). Next, Hunt discusses one further therapeutic treatment he attempted to use to conquer his illnesses: "cheerful[ness]," which was recommended to Hunt by his friend William Vidler, the Universalist minister and Unitarian preacher. Roe describes Hunt's "philosophy of cheerfulness" as a "hard-won strategy for coping with physical and psychological distress" (*Fiery Heart* 29–30). This idea influenced Hunt in his most well-known poem "The Story of Rimini" (1816), which narrates the background story of Francesca and Paolo from Dante's *Inferno*. Of selfish, boastful, and hypocritical Paolo, Hunt writes: "sick thoughts of late had made his body sick" (Canto IV, 62). Hunt suggests in these lines that corruption and vice has a bodily effect on the individual: an idea with clear political implications.

Hunt's health worsened after his release from gaol. He was imprisoned in 1812 for libel as a result of an article written in the *Examiner* that I discuss at the close of the chapter. Hunt and his brother were defended by Henry Brougham, a lawyer who often fought successfully for dissenters and liberals. He had once previously successfully defended the brothers from similar allegations of libellous activity. However, this time he could not vindicate them and Hunt ended up in prison for two years and had to pay a hefty fine. Despite his cheerfulness, on leaving prison, Hunt describes a nervous disorder that sounds very much like agoraphobia:

> Two years confinement, and illness in combination, had acted so injuriously upon a sensitive temperament, that for many months I could not leave home without a morbid wish to return, and a fear of being seized with some fit or other in the streets, perhaps with sudden death. (*Reminiscences* 2: 13)

This Gothic description of the terror induced by the thought of being outside and in the public sphere is at odds with Hunt's literary presence: while he describes himself as a "man of

letters" he is also "the privatest of all public men" (*Reminiscences* "Preface" iii; *Autobiography* 266).

As well as his literary presence, Hunt had personal links within the medical sphere that made him perceive himself as an authority on matters of public health. In the preface to his *Autobiography* Hunt credits physicians and "distinguished friend[s]" Thomas Southwood Smith and Francis Sibson as influential in Hunt's decision to write the autobiography, and states that the literature has reason to "thank and love" the medical profession (1: 6). The physicians are both described as aiding Hunt through his illness and therefore enabling Hunt's publication by tending his health, as Hunt writes that the: "attentions to my health allowed me to proceed with the work" (6–7). Sibson, who had published on mechanics of respiration, the treatment of gout and rheumatism, the use of ether and chloroform in the treatment of neuralgia, and the 1847 typhoid epidemic in Nottingham, was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1849, the year before Hunt's *Autobiography* was published ("Sibson, Francis" *DNB*). The Unitarian Southwood Smith was schoolfellow of William Blake, a friend and advisor to Jeremy Bentham, and he was also a social and medical reformer who was strongly in favour of dissection as the key to anatomical studies ("Smith, Southwood (Thomas)" *DNB*). He drew up plans concerning public health, on issues such as sanitary improvement, child labour, and the health of towns (Desmond 164). This is important to my later discussion of contagion in the final chapter. Publications about societal reform for medical benefit demonstrate a concern with health as a social, political, and therefore public issue. Aside from both William Gifford and Cobbett — leading figures in the conservative and radical periodical press respectively — many leading men of science and medical practitioners were on the list of subscribers for Hunt's first collection of poetry. In the list included in *Juvenilia* (1801) are the obstetrician Robert Batty, the surgeon William Blizard, and Samuel Bosanquet, whose son (also named Samuel) published *The Discovery of the Vital*

Principle: or, Physiology of Man (1838) (*Juvenilia* xiii–xiv). This publication was part of a corpus of texts that discussed the "vital principle," a debate which is discussed in detail in the third chapter of this thesis. Hunt also enjoyed a friendship with the young physician James Clarke, who was interested in the latest advances in medicine, showing Hunt the effects of opium addiction on local women, the political dimensions of the smallpox vaccination, and even demonstrating a galvanic machine on Hunt himself (Roe, *Fiery Heart* 101).

In *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School* (1998) Jeffrey N. Cox describes Hunt as a writer to whom "writing [w]as a social activity or even. . .an ideological activity": writing was for the public, or general, good (7). The public nature of writing also influenced its content; instead of being inspired by an "inner muse," Cox describes Hunt finding his writing shaped by editors and government (7). To some, however, Hunt was "the spoiled child of the public": an often indulged public figure (Hunt, *Autobiography* 35). Gilmartin examines the role of the "public writer" in the radical periodical press and the difficulties of this representation, which suggested both a combative relationship with the government and an expressive relationship with public opinion (42). To provide a critical or a negative stance against authority, the radical "public writer" had to maintain strong links with public opinion (42).

For Roe, Hunt's public identity as a writer is bound up in the physical symptoms of his nervous illness: his susceptibility to irregular heartbeats and palpitations produced by excitement meant that passion produced a very physical effect (*Fiery Heart* 85). It is because of, rather than despite, this debilitating experience of illness that Hunt was also able to inscribe illness narratives onto the body politic to provide a powerful rhetoric for political reform. The periodical form offered Hunt wide public dissemination of his ideas in spite of his physical limitations. Hunt was, Roe argues, adept at manipulating others using his illness (*Fiery Heart* 85). However, Hunt displays little patience for the hypochondriac in his political

essays, and shows a lack of sympathy in spite of grounds for empathy. Hunt's medical knowledge and experience with nervous illness led him to write on the topic in a wider sense than political commentary. Hunt's poetry has been described by Roe as "fluttering pulses, leaps of heart" but by his contemporary critics as "jaundiced": both terms suggest a weakness or frailty, but the heightened sensibility of the man of genius is invoked by Roe, while jaundice is usually related to the destruction of the liver, sometimes through excess of alcohol (*Fiery Heart* 6). Hunt also wrote on health from a father's point of view. The poem "To a Child, During Sickness" (original publication date unknown) on the occasion of watching his son, suffering from poor health, sleeping peacefully, demonstrates illness as the catalyst for creativity. Additionally, Hunt's poetry considered the boundaries between the physical body and the soul or spirit. In the dramatic monologue "Reflections of a Dead Body," (1837) written in blank verse, vocalises the imagined thoughts of a recently deceased man, describing death as a "withdrawal from all pain" (2). The body still feels his wife's tears falling upon his face (23). The body is described as "fleshly clothes" that may be shed "as a hand, withdrawing from a glove" (56; 59). After death, the man's spirit feels "the vitalest [*sic*] creature" in the room full of mourners (79). The body is next discarded as a "hollow-cheek'd. . .poor corpse": the self is not located in the physical body (88; 93). Hunt's use of the body as a vessel in which the self is contained but not originating, a mere fleshly garment that may be discarded, is particularly relevant when discussing his sickness, which, as Roe describes, plagues his body after producing his most combative journalism. However, Hunt's sickness does not prevent him producing "healthful" writing, as I discuss later in this chapter.

In "Lines Written in May," Hunt contrasts the human body with nature's seasons:

> Ah friends! methinks it were a pleasant sphere,
> If like the trees, we blossom'd every year;
> If locks grew thick again, and rosy dyes
> Return'd in cheeks, and raciness in eyes,
> And all around us, vital to the tips,

The human orchard laugh'd with cherry lips! (24–29)

The rejuvenation of nature is applied to a "human orchard," and the poem demonstrates a Romantic focus on nature as life-giving or enhancing. Hunt's sensual focus is on the body — hair, cheeks, eyes, and lips — and the blossoming and fertile abundance of nature. The imagined "human orchard" suggests a public space, and the use of a universal "we"/"us" enforce this sense of community. Not only is the renewal of the body desired, but a sense of cheerful public spirit inspired by the natural world.

In his autobiography, Hunt describes the act of public narration as one that distracts from illness, or even promotes health:

> I will liken myself to an actor, who though commencing his part on the stage with a gout or a headache, or, perhaps, even with a bit of heartache, finds his audience so willing to be pleased, that he forgets his infirmity as he goes, and ends with being glad that he has appeared. (*Reminiscences* "Preface" 4–5)

Not only narration, but performance is implied by the use of the stage allegory. By writing his autobiography, in which his ill health is a repeating theme, Hunt is able to "forget" his maladies and become glad. As nervous disorders threaten the health of the mind, the forgetting of infirmity is apt, as is the example of both physical illness — headache — and emotional distress: heartache. Both psychological and physiological illnesses are seen as tangible sicknesses or "infirmit[ies]".

Hunt's proposed method for dealing with sickness, personal and political, was through treating the root cause of disease, be it physical or psychological, usually by a change in lifestyle rather than alleviating mere symptoms. Following Cheyne's methods, he took this method further and called for these methods to be applied to the troubled body politic as well as the physical body. For Hunt, nervous complaints were rooted in the physical:

> There is this great difference between what is generally understood by the word insanity, and the nervous or melancholy disorders, the excess of which is so often confounded with it. Insanity is a consequence of malformation of the brain, and is by

> no means of necessity attended with melancholy or even ill health. The patient, in the very midst of it, is often strong, healthy, and even chearful [*sic*]. On the other hand, nervous disorders or even melancholy in its most aggravated state, is nothing but the excess of a state of stomach and blood, extremely common. ("Fatal Mistake" 54)

In this passage from the *Indicator* in 1822, unsigned but using the editorial "we," Hunt is concerned that nervous disorders and insanity may be compounded in the medical and public mind. Indeed, when the madness of the King became public knowledge, George III is quoted as using this interpretation, saying "I'm nervous, I'm not ill, but I'm nervous" (Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles* 13). In the *Indicator*, Hunt medicalises nervous disorders and "melancholy" and locates them in the physical body, specifically the stomach and the blood, rather than the brain. Although madness has a root in a "malformation" in the physical brain, insanity and bodily health are not mutually exclusive, Hunt argues.

As I have discussed, hypochondria was generally thought to be sited in the brain in the period, although Hunt also locates it in the stomach in this article. Nervous disorders are twice described as an excess. If they are excessive they present as insanity, but they are, in fact, caused by an excess in the body: of blood and "stomach". The idea of excess, particularly in the stomach, perhaps informs Hunt's idealisation of Cheyne's sparse diet as treatment for his own nervous disorders. As Hunt writes: "hypochondria is the name of one of the regions of the stomach, a very instructive etymology" ("Fatal Mistake" 55). Hunt also uses the ideas of both Cheyne and Trotter when he implies that those of uncommonly high intelligence are more likely to suffer with nervous disorders, and those of lower mental faculties are susceptible to insanity ("Fatal Mistake" 54). The article was written to correct mistakes in the "public papers" that "frighten the general understanding" of nervous disorders: improved public health and greater public knowledge of medical discourse are the aims of the article ("Fatal Mistake" 53). The use of writing to shock the reader into a better understanding of mental illness demonstrates the belief in literature as a tool for change: in this case by altering the public comprehension of medicine.

Hunt also believed that his writing could galvanise political action. Writing in the *Examiner* in 1809, he demanded reform by using the idea of the public collective body:

> An individual has no right to plead his inability to do any thing as an individual: individuals compose bodies, and bodies do every thing: a body obtained for us our Magna Charta, a body settled the bill of rights; and a body, animating other bodies, may restore to us all our blessings by procuring reform. ("France and England" 738)

Hunt uses this allegory of the powerful and mobile public body to inspire action in his readers and elsewhere argues that excessive concern with individual health impedes action for this public body, as I discuss later. Hunt rejects the helplessness of the individual, instead citing the individual as a vital part of larger groups, which he refers to as "bodies". The public sphere allowed individuals to transcend their singular identity, and function as a body, through the periodical press: for instance, by using the editorial "we" or the anonymity of letters and contributions.

As I have discussed, Hunt sought change in the public understanding of the mind and its diseases, and this writing reveals the site of his assertion that, by finding the root cause of a problem, the symptoms would be alleviated. In the *Reflector* in March 1811, Hunt wrote an "Analogical Essay on the Treatment of Intellectual Disorders". In this article, which of course predates modern mental health discourse, Hunt's focus is on contemporary analogies often made between attributes of the physical body and of the mind, or intellect, and he cites examples such as the "man of taste" and the ways in which a mind can be said to be strong or weak, diseased, or sound (145). The cure for bodily symptoms of illness is to find and treat the cause of the disease, Hunt argues; and this is central to my argument regarding Hunt's prescription for political reform. However, Hunt continues, there is no analogous concept when attempting to restore the health of the mind. Describing the clergy as "spiritual physician[s]" who too often fail in their duty to treat mental infirmity, Hunt's own experience with nervous disorders provides insight into the writer's clear frustration at the lack of

medical aid available (146). Hunt imagines himself as a "mental physician" who provides sound advice on discovering the cause of the distress to those suffering from disorders of the mind, under which category he includes extreme anger, envy, and even "stinginess" (146–9). In the article I previously analysed, from Hunt's *Indicator*, which demonstrates anxiety that nervous disorders are too often misunderstood as insanity, it is clear that mental health debate has become a public concern in the period, confirming Porter's argument that the King's madness was a catalyst for new focus and discourse on the mind and its illnesses ("Fatal Mistake" 53).

Hunt's knowledge of illness also led to his publication of a series of seven essays "On the Folly and Danger of Methodism" in which he argued against the Methodist theory of bodily symptoms as evidence of spiritual rapture or divine intervention (Roe, *Fiery Heart* 96). In an essay in the *Examiner* from July 1808 Hunt asserts that "the two great causes of Methodism are ignorance and hypochondria": an inversion of the assumption that disease causes symptoms and it is this underlying illness which must be eradicated to alleviate the symptoms ("An Attempt to Shew the Folly and Danger of Methodism" 445). Here, hypochondria and ignorance are the diseases and Methodism merely a symptom. Cure ignorance and hypochondria — presumably by reading Hunt's "Essays" — and the Methodist will recant their views. This is a theme which I return to at the close of the thesis: writers for *Blackwood's* similarly saw the periodical press as a cure for political sickness, although the disease or poison was delivered by the radical press in the first instance.

In his articles, Hunt presents himself as an authority on the health of the body and the mind through his own struggles with ill health, and he outlines the importance of fitness, in terms of physical and mental health and also fitness for political purpose, in his writings. In

the next section I analyse how this is applied to political situations at home and abroad in Hunt's publications.

1.4 Public Health at Home and Abroad in the *Examiner*

In the *Examiner* in the years leading up to and including the Regency, Hunt uses metaphors of political sickness and examines the dangers of public sympathy for hypochondria in England. He imagines the effect that corrupt politics have on the physical bodies of rational reformers, and describes those in authority as the embodiments of sicknesses. Hunt also examines Napoleon's body: the focus of much political caricature representing the French leader in the period. Hunt's protest poetry explores the ghastliness of war, using imagery of the damaged and bloody body and waste of life caused by the ravages of fever on England's troops. The public debate on the smallpox vaccine also features as a political topic in the *Examiner*. Hunt's correspondents describe the unfitness of foreign bodies, including the stagnation of Spain and the British Empire as a body whose limbs are parasitic.

In the "Prospectus" for the first issue of the *Examiner*, Hunt uses the metaphor of charlatan doctors and sickness to describe the oppositional stance of the paper, writing: "the New Paper shall not be disgraced by those abandoned hypocrites, whose greatest quackery is their denial of being quacks. . .sickness shall not be flattered into incurability" (8). For Hunt, then, the body politic is unwell and subject to useless flattery, and change is needed. Etymologically related to "flatten," the "flattering" of sickness suggests at once insincerity and a wilful ignorance or disguising of illness.

Hunt continues to diagnose political diseases in his discussions of the system of government. In September 1809, Hunt uses extended metaphors of the diseased body politic, and asserts that the present system has a bodily effect on the public: "of all the disorders,

likely to arise from the present political system, the most excusable, I think, is *hysterics*" ("Political Disorders" 577; original emphasis). The most reasonable people are the most vulnerable to this disorder, Hunt states, implying that those of sound mind must find the present system of government ridiculous and frustrating (577). Instead of thinking of nervous disorders as a product of over-sensitivity or excessive sensibility, the symptoms of hysteria manifest in people of heightened reason and political awareness. The "paroxysms" and "alternate fits of grief, laughter, and indignation" are an indication not of physical or psychological illness of the human body but the body politic (577). Hunt next invokes the "court physician"; a concept which has echoes of the common concept of the "state physician," but instead of the doctor attending the government, the attentions of the allegorical figure are focused instead on the monarchy. The state physician or doctor became a common trope in early nineteenth-century political writing, and reoccurs in my analyses of the use of physiological language throughout my thesis: his quack methods were usually damaging to the health of the body politic, or at best, ineffective. Here, Hunt names Lucas Pepys, the physician to the King, who was very obviously publically conceived of as a professional failure as the King's health was degenerating. Hunt next names figures in power as embodiments of specific illnesses, including the Duke of Portland as "the final stages of imbecility," the Earl of Chatham as "manifest Lethargy," and Castlereagh as "a compound of diseases, varying at different times" (577). Hunt incites the middle classes to action, asserting that:

> The hypochondriac gentlemen who pass their lives in sympathizing upon tooth-aches and troubled nights, might turn their peculiar genius to their country's account, and instead of bringing their own diseases into contempt, rouse the general attention to the disorders that threatened the nation. (577)

The public nature of health is demonstrated in this quotation, which describes a society of hypochondriac "gentlemen" discussing their symptoms and flattering each others' illnesses

with excessive and damaging sympathy. The idea of sympathy in the Romantic period was the foremost theory of social interaction, described by eighteenth-century philosophers Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and David Hume in "National Characters" (1742) as uniting a group in thought, emotion, and values: it is a public sensation. Both describe sympathy as a "contagion" (Smith 224; Hume 115). The idea of radical contagion is examined in the final chapter, but sympathy as both socially useful and potentially dangerous in its excess is demonstrated in Smith and Hume's treatises. Sympathy could be found in the sick body in the period: described in the *OED* as a physiological and pathological term meaning "a relation between two bodily organs or parts (or between two persons) such that disorder, or any condition, of the one induces a corresponding condition in the other" ("Sympathy, n. b"). In "Radical Sympathy" (2010), Mary Fairclough analyses representations of sympathy in radical journals in the immediate aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre, arguing that through references to the physical body and its suffering, radical periodicals display moral outrage at the events of Peterloo, but they also put the language of feeling to instrumental political use. Reiterating the physiological meaning of sympathy, Fairclough writes:

> Sympathy is a ubiquitous term in eighteenth-century and Romantic studies, but it is often interpreted either as an index of the poetic imagination, or of social cohesion. However, sympathy was also understood at this period to have more disruptive implications, arising from its use in physiology. ("Radical Sympathy" n.p.)

The transmission of disorder — bodily and political — is the key to understanding the danger of sympathy in the Regency period. More than a society united by values and principles, or a theme relating to the imagination in Romantic poetry, sympathy in this specific political period is problematic in its socially disruptive abilities.

In "Political Disorders," not only is Hunt using the term "hypochondria" to mean an obsession with imagined illness, but using the idea of such a time-consuming compulsion to

galvanize a middle-class reader (aspiring to be aristocratic) to consider how they might better direct their energies: political reform. The public hypochondriac is described as inspiring public contempt: an insight into the beginnings of a backlash against hyper-sensibility. Hunt pleads with the hypochondriac to assume "a manlier tone than whining," turn "from fallacy to fact," and look to "matters of real concern" supporting the assumption that the hypochondriac is here used to signify false and, this time, feminised, illness (577). The idea of the nervous man of genius is subverted as their genius is described "peculiar": medically abnormal, singular — perhaps too concerned with individual, private concerns — and publically useless. The illness becomes a public concern when it obstructs subjects from obtaining political goals. Once again, knowledge of the cause of the diseased body politic — provided by Hunt's essay — is posited as the first step to removing the troublesome symptoms (578). The constitution must be examined, Hunt argues, as:

> To trust entirely to the excellence of that constitution is as senseless as it would be for a man in a fever to trust his robust habit of body . . . the only way . . . is to have nothing to do with the infected who protest against remedy. (578)

Political ignorance is described here as contagious. The article uses an extended metaphor of nervous and physical disorder and continues the theme of treating such illness alike in bodies politic and physical. The public nature of health is clear in this passage: the wilfully ignorant are contagious and must be avoided. The constitution, like the individual body, is not invulnerable, despite its seeming robustness. Hunt ends the article with a direct acknowledgment of the analogy of private and public well-being, writing that the public must: "keep ourselves *individually*, as pure as we would wish to be *nationally*" (575; original emphasis). The use of the term "pure" suggests health and fitness is normative, and sickness — physical and political — as a corruption.

The issue of the *Examiner* for 10 March 1811 also shows a sustained interest in bodily, public, and political health. In *Fiery Heart* Roe examines the medicalisation of corrupt politics by Hunt in the *Examiner* in "Failure of Lord Holland's Motion" where he invents the term "exetasophobia," or a "Horror of Inquiry," for the "sore disease" that afflicted those in power (145). This issue also contains a recurring section titled "The King's Illness" constituting one-line medical bulletins from Windsor Castle, and a statement from the *Morning Chronicle* speculating on the King's health: both provided without comment ("Failure of Lord Holland's Motion" 154). These bulletins, like those produced for Davy by the Royal Institution during his own ill health, were undoubtedly supposed to have the public's interest in mind. However, as Porter argues in *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, the bulletins were in fact placatory, and concealed the truth from the public. Studying George III's earlier illness, Porter examines the King's physician's diary entries that corresponded to a 1789 bulletin that only admitted the King had a troubled night: the diaries reveal that the King was completely incoherent (230). The information in the *Examiner* on the King's health is provided in the manner of a shipping forecast or stock market report: dry statistics of vital economic and political importance.

The next item in this issue is a letter from "A Constant Reader" on the topic of the smallpox vaccination: as I have mentioned briefly when discussing Hunt's friendship with physician James Clarke, vaccination became a subject of political scrutiny in the period. As well as Cheyne's avocation of a healthy lifestyle to avoid nervous disorders, according to Buer, preventative medicine became popular in the eighteenth century (115). Buer writes that, as the most virulent disease of the period, smallpox was an obvious target for preventative measures (181). The smallpox vaccine has been described by Alison Bashford as one of the foremost medical advances of the nineteenth century (39). However, vaccination was a controversial topic in the arena of public health. Until Edward Jenner made known the

abilities of the cowpox-infected vaccine in the late eighteenth century, smallpox inoculation produced a mild form of the smallpox disease, which sometimes developed into a more aggressive and deadly illness. The patient, however, was always infectious, and could pass on the full-blown disease to those he or she came into contact with. Early patients also suffered from overzealous incisions, which could prove deadly (Buer 183). The idea of the smallpox vaccination, then, was linked strongly in the public mind to failures and fatalities from its beginnings in the first half of the eighteenth century. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Jenner's inoculation also faced public criticism: the cowpox vaccination may not provide protection for particularly susceptible individuals, it did not offer lifelong protection, or it may not work in the first place (Buer 187–8). The benefits of this preventative procedure were not universally understood and fearful rumours of side-effects of the vaccine — such as blood-poisoning and limb amputation — were spread by word of mouth. The anonymous writer to the *Examiner* describes Hunt as an advocate of the method but laments the distribution of the vaccination by government-run institutions:

> It does not appear that the Small Pox has declined but *increased* since the establishment of the *National Vaccine Institution*, supported at considerable expence [*sic*] by Parliament. This scheme has greatly tended to *quash* the existing *charitable institutions* for the promotion of Vaccination, which have *never* received any fostering aid from Parliament, although they petitioned for that purpose. ("Vaccination" 155; original emphasis)

The political nature of medical issues here brings health into the public sphere. National, government-run institutions that aim to take control over public health are described as worse than useless, by destroying previously established non-profit organisations offering a more effective public health service. Expenses paid by parliament, are, of course, first paid by the public in taxes.

James Gillray produced a caricature titled *The Cow Pock, or, the Wonderful Effects of the New Innoculation!* in 1802:

Fig 1. Gillray, Wellcome Images, London.

The caricature shows patients breaking out in pustules in the shape of cows: Gillray mocks Jenner's belief that infection with the cowpox virus could safeguard against the far worse disease of smallpox. David E. Shuttleton argues that the image as a portrayal of bourgeois fears of the labouring-class body and its possible harbouring of the germs of political disorder (184). Smallpox had a mortality rate of about thirty percent in the period and those infected would each transmit the virus to between three and six people on average (Stewart and Devlin 329–330). Bashford reveals the growing concern with "public health" in the period: the government ordering its citizens into categories such as clean and unclean, with unofficial segregation as the mode of control (39). The "Constant Reader" describes the National Vaccine Institution as "neither wise, humane, nor *politic*" (155; original emphasis) before

describing the cultural celebration of medical advancements in France and Europe, which are, in England, left to "private benevolence" and "self-interest" (155). Praising French medicine was a dangerous occupation in the period, as I examine in more detail in chapter three. However, the death rate from smallpox in Paris and Vienna is considerably lower, according to the "Constant Reader".

Jenner pursued his aim to gain public approval for the cowpox inoculation using the traditional route of aristocratic patronage: he gained an audience with the King in 1800, and due to Queen Charlotte's loss of her son through the smallpox vaccine, he ensured her interest in particular in the possibility of a safer option.[5] Jenner also obtained the Prince of Wales' endorsement, astutely assuring support for his inoculation should the King's health relapse (Shuttleton 196–7). Public opinion was also concerned with the potential blasphemy of eroding the boundaries between man and beast, as demonstrated in Gillray's cartoon. To counter these anxieties, Jenner cultivated a pastoral rhetoric, in which his medicine signified the power of nature to heal (Shuttleton 187). Courting public opinion in this manner, and managing his public profile, he represented himself as a surgeon — later doctor — from the country, bringing wholesome, natural remedies to the dirty metropolis (Shuttleton 187).

It was not only medicine and politics at home that Hunt professed his authority over. In analyses of politics abroad, Hunt also used bodily imagery to describe the horror of war. Hunt's protest poem "Captain Sword and Captain Pen" (1835) employs the gruesome imagery of blood and guts in lines such as:

Down go bodies, snap burst eyes;
Trod on the ground are tender cries;
Brains are dash'd against plashing ears;
Hah! no time has battle for tears;

[5] Jenner also himself acted as a patron, securing popular poets to write in favour of vaccination. See Tim Fulford *et al*, "The Beast Within: Vaccination, Romanticism, and the Jenneration of Disease" in *Literature, Science, and Exploration in the Romantic Era*. (2004). 198–228.

Cursing helps better—cursing, that goes
Slipping through friends' blood, athirst for foes'.
What have soldiers with tears to do? —
We, who this mad-house must now go through,
This twenty-fold Bedlam, let loose with knives —
To murder, and stab, and grow liquid with lives —
Gasping, staring, treading red mud,
Till the drunkenness' self makes us steady of blood? (105–116)

Here, the bodily horror of combat is used rather than appealing to the political dimensions of war, and the poem's title evokes the tension between literary and bodily force: the pen and the sword. Imagery of "burst eyes" and "tears" are opposed to the cheerful and sensual "raciness" of the eyes in "Lines Written in May"; blood is described as wet mire underfoot, not enlivening rosy cheeks. War, for Hunt, was also strongly linked to sickness. The English campaign to establish a front in Walcheren, Holland, was described by Hunt in 1809 as a "deadly place" rife with "malignant fever," and he challenged reports that the number of sick soldiers was decreasing: as a letter from a soldier that Hunt quotes from explains, the decrease was due to the number of dead or sent home to England ("London November 26." 758). These events inspired Hunt's anti-war poem "Walcheren Expedition," first published in the *Examiner* on 7 January 1810. The poem laments the loss of life not in the glory of battle but in sickness:

Ye died not in the triumphing
  Of the battle-shaken flood,
Ye died not on the charging field
  In the mingle of brave blood;
But 'twas in wasting fevers
  Full three months and more,
    Britons born,
    Pierc'd with scorn,
Lay at rot on the swampy shore. (37–45)

In Hunt's poem, the fevers waste the body and are also a waste of British life. No glory can be found in soldiers succumbing to sickness. Illness takes on a political dimension as the

disastrous campaign in Holland was the subject of public outrage articulated in this poem by Hunt. [6]

While those in positions of power in England are described in the article "Political Disorders" as embodiments of diseases, Napoleon transcends his physical body and becomes a symbol of ambition, ego, and political presence in the *Examiner*. His supposed bodily ill-health is under scrutiny in the article. On 10 January 1813, in the untitled item written in an ironic voice, Napoleon is represented as a preternaturally strong figure, an oxymoronic "sick gentleman" of an "iron constitution" who cannot be halted by his ill health. Hunt speculates that, if Napoleon's physical body is not subject to the degradations of disease, his conscience must be equally impenetrable ("London Jan. 10" 22). While in prison, Hunt wrote a drama about the abdication of Napoleon, *The Descent of Liberty*, and an "Ode for the Spring of 1814" on the same subject, printed in the *Examiner* (Cox 123). *The Descent of Liberty* features Napoleon as an "Enchanter," and his defeat allows the accession of Liberty, the arts, and peace. Hunt used the "mask" form: a Bakhtinian mix of high and low culture, fancy, "magic" and "monsters," "abounding in machinery and personification. . .with a particular allusion" (*Descent of Liberty* xxx; xxiv). Bakhtin's carnivalesque and its employment in the radical periodical, the *Black Dwarf*, is the focus of the following chapter, which examines the subversion of authority as a call to rouse the labouring classes to political action. Hunt's drama was described in the periodical press as "full of healthful English feeling" (qtd in Roe, *Fiery Heart* 222) and an article in the *Augustan Review* describes Hunt rising "above the pressure of sickness and imprisonment, to the height of Poetry and Philosophy" ("Feast of the Poets" 291).[7] These reviews represent Hunt as a publically sick figure, who, like Napoleon,

[6] For further discussion of Romantic disease abroad, see Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (1999). For analysis of representations of disease in the Romantic military, see Philip Shaw, *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (2013).
[7] However, in the final chapter I examine how Hunt's work was described as spreading the disease of radicalism by the conservative writers for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

can rise above bodily ills to greatness; in Hunt's case, literary achievement that is "fit" for purpose.[8]

In September 1810 Hunt asserts that Napoleon should be subject to public analysis, and calls for this examination to take place in the form of a report in the manner of an "anatomist," for "public instruction" ("Certain Terms" 609). Napoleon becomes a specimen in Hunt's article: a political body to be dissected in a public theatre. Napoleon's body was often the focus of his representations in caricature: he is a child throwing a tantrum at his inability to conquer Britain (Gillray's *Manic Ravings* 1803), a "tiddly" doll (Gillray's *Tiddly-Doll* 1806), or a colossus (Gillray's *Stride Over the Globe* 1803), (Cruikshank's *Boney's Meditations* 1815), and alternatively he was portrayed as grotesque, depicted consorting with skeletons (Cruikshank's *Comparative Anatomy* 1813), or sitting on the toilet (Cruikshank's *Little Boney Gone to Pot* 1814). His hat, usually oversized and cocked, describes French aggression and imperialist ego. Theresa Kelley, in "J. M. W. Turner, Napoleonic Caricature, and Romantic Allegory," (1991) discusses depictions of Napoleon as alternatively diminutive and gigantic and often set in comparison to English politicians and leaders, or even John Bull, in political cartoons by Gillray, Cruikshank, *et al*. To the caricaturists representing Napoleon, the importance of the body is, according to Kelley, linked to political representation — or its lack — in England that Napoleon represented to the Romantics (354). The idea of Swiftian disproportion in caricature will be explored in depth in the chapter on the *Black Dwarf*. Disproportion in caricature reflects the idea that the common person was not being represented by the giants of English political life. Kelley also describes the trend for John Bull growing plumper and even obese in caricature after 1805, just as Napoleon becomes

[8] Further analysis of Napoleon in the Romantic imagination can be found in Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (2005). Bainbridge focuses on the work of the Lake poets but also of Hazlitt. Napoleon's diminutive size and large ambition provided a role model for Hunt's protégé John Keats in particular, as a Cockney poet, Bainbridge argues (2). I discuss the treatment of the Cockney poets in *Blackwood's* in the final chapter.

more slender, and the nickname "Boney" is an established alternative to the English figure and, as I examine later in this chapter, the Prince Regent's own representations as obese (365). Fitness is the key to both straight and ironic readings of these trends: Napoleon is unfit without the economic resources of England during the Continental blockade, or else John Bull is so corpulent as to be unfit to defend against attack from France (365).

Bainbridge describes Napoleon transcending his reality to become an mythological figure for writers in the period, an Other against which to define the English self, and an embodiment of contesting political fears and personal hopes (1–2). In Hunt's article, Napoleon is very much portrayed as Other to Hunt, as a man for whom the weaknesses and fragility of the physical body are disregarded, and for whom sickness is not debilitating. Instead of being bowed into submission by attack from disease or moral pressure, Napoleon will become the more fierce, Hunt writes, and he next imagines Napoleon as a blood-drinking monster ("London Jan. 10" 22). Blood and circulation, topics to which my thesis later returns in depth in chapter four, are also used in the *Examiner*'s "Parliamentary Proceedings" from February 1810, where the high price of gold and its effect on paper currency is compared to the country's blood being turned into water, or, "[the] vital principle into a destroying one" (66). Here, the economic system is figured as a body, and the driving force is ineffective, weak, and insubstantial.

At home there were concerns with dirty labouring-class bodies and politics, as I examine in the final chapter. When discussing foreign bodies, Leigh Hunt's correspondents used the vocabulary of the unfit body in their writing, and they also used the idea of vitality and death. Further to commenting on government health policy, in an anonymous letter published in the *Examiner* and addressed to the Prime Minister, "to the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval," (1811) Spain is portrayed as a body that is stagnant until galvanised by revolution:

> How peaceful the slumber of Spain, when the confounded French Revolution knocked at the door; it was like the sleep of death, or that stillness of death, or that stillness of the desart [*sic*], which travellers resemble to an apparent negotiation of vitality. (725)

The idea of the danger of "stillness" is apparent in Trotter's treatise when he describes the rising commercial and bureaucratic middle classes as vulnerable to nervous disorders due to the sedentary lifestyle of bankers, vendors, and investors (43). The danger of stagnation is again linked to Spain in the aforementioned "France and England" (1809) where the country is described as apathetic and suffering from "nervous exhaustion" (738). The body of the country is not vital and active like those of Hazlitt's "people," and political apathy leads to bodily sickness.

In further letters published in the *Examiner*, disease and sickness are seen to be spreading through the political "body" of the British Empire. Malfunctioning elements of political systems are compared to swollen parts of bodies, draining life from other portions. "Marcus" asks in an untitled letter from 1810: "has not the deadly contagion attacked the vitals and spread to the extremities [of the legislative body]?" (701), and, similarly, "Miso Tyrannus" uses the idea of contagion and the spreading of sickness through the body in a letter from the same year, titled "Colonial Justice" (1810). In this letter, Tyrannus asserts that lawlessness in the colonies — in this case, the Cape of Good Hope — must not be tolerated. Tyrannus compares the law and justice of the colonies , without British intervention, to a disease: "if the gout be allowed, unchecked, to invade the extremities, it may soon reach the nobler and more vital parts" (490). In an extension of the body politic metaphor, the empire is a body, the colonies are its extremities, or limbs, and England is its noble and vital centre. Similarly, in a letter from "A Calm Observer," "Better Now Make Peace With America," (1814) the colonies are likened to parasites feeding off England: "the limbs of the British Empire are evidently larger than the trunk, and, like other swollen extremities, only serve to draw off the vital supply from the centre" (644). I return to the excessive body in detail when

examining the Prince Regent, a section I now begin by discussing the public nature of health during the Regency in Hunt's *Reflector* and *Examiner*.

Cheyne suggests that nervous conditions are a reflection of England's economic success and the wealth and breeding of the aristocratic classes (*English Malady* 158). Trotter and Cheyne concurred that the nervous disorder could be described as hereditary (Trotter 149; Cheyne, *English Malady* 6). The idea of the highly-bred as frail, in body and in mind, was accredited in the period because of the madness of the King and the excesses of the Prince Regent. As Colley writes, a mad sovereign was a risk of hereditary monarchy that was experienced by almost every European state (195–6). During the Regency period, Hunt described England itself as a "quack" doctor, attempting to cure the political ill of an incapable King with a false cure of the Regency, and questioned the power afforded the King. As I have already discussed, the public nature of the King's health is demonstrated in the daily bulletins published in the public domain and the free discussion of the King's symptoms in public, in Parliament, in the press, by doctors, laymen, and occasionally by the King himself (Colley 196). Discussion of the Prince Regent's suitability to rule also took place in this broad and public manner and focused on bodily health: Hunt describes the Prince Regent as an "idle" and "idiotic" head; highlighting his general unfitness to rule. Imprisoned for an attack on the Prince, Hunt's own health becomes a matter of public concern, as he describes in his work written and published while in prison.

In 1810 the King relapsed into madness. The failing health of the King had a direct impact on the governance of the country as a Regency was now impending. Health was, at this moment in time, more than ever a political concern. The first issue of the *Reflector* begins with an article titled "The English Considered as a Thinking People" (1810), demonstrating the theme of the power of reason and the mind that Hunt wished to establish in this new title. The article, discussing the national character, employs the use of sickness and

disease as metaphor for political corruption. The article suggests that "manners" or culture, and government, provide this national character, which, for the English, can be characterised as a "[free]thinking" character: liberal, "disinterested," and philosophical (1–2). However, the English have lived "in credit" on this reputation for too long, and Hunt writes:

> it is with political corruption, as with sickness: it's [*sic*] worst effects are not those that are more immediately perceivable, or even more acutely felt, but those which gradually deaden our senses and at last unsettle our powers of reason. (2)

Here, Hunt is concerned that the disease of corruption is a hidden sickness, and it is eroding the public's ability to perceive any wrong in the system. In this article, reason — the power that the English people have been endowed with in the title of the article — is under threat from an unseen illness. Instead of using the common metaphor of the "state physician" as a political figure, Hunt uses the allegory to posit England itself as a charlatan healer to other countries, writing:

> Our practice, as the healers of nations, had lain altogether in the flattery of diseases, and England was destined, to the last moment of Pittism, to be the sovereign quack of Europe, who cured all sorts of rotten constitutions with a gilded pill. (7)

Flattering disease and ignoring symptoms are recurring themes in Hunt's political essays, as I examine again later. The "gilded pill" suggests the showmanship of the charlatan doctor: in a time where medical intervention on the body was still limited, physicians often relied on showy displays such as blood-letting and attractive-looking potions and pills.[9] The article ends with a request for reform, in the name of those who had awarded England its status as a "thinking nation": earlier invoked as Hume, Locke, and Bacon (2). The use of public, philosophical, and scientific geniuses is contrasted to the "quack" doctor that England has become.

[9] I also discuss the showmanship of blood-letting in chapter four.

In an unattributed article, again from the first issue of the Reflector, on "The Reformers; or, Wrongs of Intellect" (1810) the idea of vitality is employed to examine the monarchy, and physiological metaphors, decay, and the idea of simulated life are used to discuss the constitution and reform. This article takes the form of a dialogue between "A," "B," and "C" discussing the need for reform. "C" describes Burke's view of the constitution: "he pitied the plumage, but neglected the wounded and suffering bird: stuffed and exhibited in a shew glass, it would appear that this beautiful constitution would have sufficient charms [for those against reform]" (17). Shelley used the motto: *We Pity the Plumage, but Forget the Dying Bird* for a political pamphlet, officially titled *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*, written in November 1817. In the article in the *Reflector*, the constitution is that which appears life-like, but is actually deceased. Its exhibition is a public simulation of life and its beauty, although without substance, is pleasing to the Edinburgh Reviewers who have spoken against reform. The article alludes to the physician to the King, Pepys, and proposes that he should "purge the constitution," suggesting illness that requires purging, or ridding from the body (28). The Edinburgh Reviewers are accused of defending the structure of parliament in a seemingly vague way, but "the health of their complexion peers through the transparent veil of their political superstition" (17). The writer describes the "roseate hue of health and vigour" (18) of assertions that parliament, in its current state, is constructed fairly. This demonstrates the idea of health as fitness for purpose.

The image of decay is used in the article to express the state of certain boroughs, a common analogy in the period, and America is represented to be suffering from "a general rottenness" that is the result of political decay (24-5). The article also discusses the state of the monarchy, asking of the King:

> What is the state and condition of this elevated first Magistrate? He retains indeed the outward show— the pageantry and form— the speckled egg-shell— of royalty, of

> which the faction of borough-mongers have secretly sucked away the vital principle. (19)

Here, royalty is compared to an aesthetically pleasing speckled shell, whose contents have been clandestinely removed by borough-mongers: the egg is empty. "Boroughmonger," or "borough-monger" was a satirical term coined in the period and used to describe those who traded in parliamentary seats for boroughs. These figures, often described as inhuman, monstrous, and in particular, bloody, were focal points of the wrath of radical writers such as Wooler and Cobbett as well as Hunt. Chapter four examines the representation of the boroughmonger as a blood-drinker in depth. In this instance, the boroughmonger is secretly feeding on an egg. When vitalist surgeon John Abernethy strove to define the boundaries between life and death in his *Physiological Lectures* (1817) he also used the example of eggs, "living" and "dead" (33). The idea of the egg represents an object that it is impossible to evaluate the status of by looking only at the outer shell: inside the egg may be empty, or rotten, but on the outside it appears the same as a "living" egg. The "egg" of the King's health is a public concern, argues Hunt.

In an unattributed article from the *Reflector* "On the Best Means of Promoting the Fundamental Principles of the English Constitution" (1811) extensive medical imagery is employed when writing about the need for change in government and parliamentary proceedings:

> When the body is diseased, we refer, as to the cause, to the taking of too much or too little food, of too much or too little exercise, to inordinate passions, or other casualties or influences incident to our nature. (275)

Here the anonymous writer's ideas reflect those of Cheyne, Hunt, and Trotter when they assert that the body must be maintained through the restriction of excessive appetites; only in this passage, the body is a political system. In an article from the *Reflector* published earlier in the same year, titled "On the Public Spirit of the Times, and the State of Parties" (1811)

Hunt uses a similar vocabulary to describe a change in the system of government in terms of sickness, writing: "the disease becomes too deep and general to be eradicated without loss of blood and alteration of feature; and one disease, after all, as has been the case with France, may be substituted for another" (462).

Returning to "Best Means," however, the writer compares the diseased body to the diseased society in a manner very similar to Hunt's assertion that "living too well" was the cause of his own sickness, and in both articles a link is drawn between the search for the cause of illness in the physical body to the search which must be done into the causes of the conduct of man, whose "organization is the work of nature" that is subject to "various laws" ("Best Means" 275). Ideas such as "laws" which govern man, nature, or all life, and the word "organization" are common key themes in medical debate in the period. In civil society, the writer asserts, "liberty" and "power" are combined "like contradictory masses amalgamated in one body, in the same system" ("Best Means" 275). This is a mechanistic view of the human and political body as a machine or system that must be given just enough sustenance, activity, and stimulation. By attempting to apply laws to these bodies, the writer advocates the exertion of control over both human and political systems, with a state of health as the norm, but carefully regulated by external factors. The writer asserts that the "accidents" occurring indicate:

> That the Political Body moves with energy and force, by due assistance of its parts; and that the limbs, which have unnaturally been dissevered, should be speedily reunited, if we desire to restore the body to form a harmonious whole. (290)

The power that the monarchy is awarded is questioned by the writer, who examines the King's dual position as the executive magistrate and as one of the estates of parliament. In the former capacity, the writer argues, the King is unable to create or alter laws. The King's influence in this position is described as a corruption and "an excrescence — no natural vital

part of our body politic": demonstrating the preoccupation with the normative body as well as the King as a physical nuisance (290). The King, described as a growth which is on the outside of the body, and is usually a nuisance rather than a damaging, is rendered ridiculous and redundant.

I now turn to Hunt's treatment of the Prince Regent. In January 1811, the *Reflector* published a "Retrospect of Public Affairs" focusing on the establishment of the Regency, the restrictions the Prince would be subject to, and the freedoms he would be granted. The regulations of the Regency are outlined as follows:

> The council is every three months to declare the state of the King's health, of which a copy is to be sent to the privy council and published in the *Gazette*, and they have the power to examine the physicians upon oath. (441)

The King's health is a political concern, demonstrated here by the publication in the public domain of his medical records, and is reiterated when the writer contrasts him with a "private man" (441). The body of the King, Hunt implies, belongs to the public: he has no private self.

In "Proceedings from the Regency" from the 29 March 1812 issue of the *Examiner* Hunt outlines the importance of revitalising the constitution in order to guard against the actions of the Prince Regent, who refused to hear complaints from the people at a debate at the House of Commons. Hunt rhetorically asks how best to safeguard against this situation, and answers:

> By giving [the constitution] its former strength and consciousness, and finding our limbs again — by restoring the natural union between the members of our body, and not suffering the head to grow to an idle and idiotic hugeness, that shall make it hang upon the next limbs for support, and drain up all the vitality from beneath. (194)

In this passage, the constitution is figured as a living being, no longer conscious, but not deceased. The "idiotic hugeness" of the head that draws the life from the body politic is no doubt a slur on the Prince Regent: in his notorious article "The Prince on St Patrick's Day,"

published in the issue for 22 March 1812, when in 1812, Leigh and his brother were prosecuted for challenging the Prince Regent. Long before his ascension as Regent, the Prince was widely portrayed as an unpleasant and immoral man, a gambler, glutton and womaniser, as seen in many caricatures. The Prince is shown by James Gillray as dissolute slob surrounded by unpaid bills, empty pill bottles and dirty plates (1792):

Fig 2. Gillray, *A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Digestion*, British Museum, London.

In *The Prince of Whales* by George Cruikshank (1812) the Prince is depicted as a beached whale:

Fig 3. Cruikshank, *The Prince of Whales*, British Museum, London.

Both of these images focus on the Prince's bodily excess, and provide a counter to the often diminutive figure of "Boney" Napoleon. In Gillray's image, described by Tamara L Hunt (2003) as "deadly accurate," the Prince is drunk, surrounded by pill bottles and debt papers, and the eye is immediately drawn to the swell of the Prince's huge stomach, which is barely clothed in eye-catching yellow (66). Cruikshank's pun — taken from Charles Lamb's poem published two months earlier titled "Triumph of the Whale" — is on the country/sea creature "Wales/whale" is more explicit: the Prince is a whale out of the water, excessive but also unfit for purpose. He has been "hooked" by his latest mistress, demonstrating the public perception of his sexual excesses (Tamara L. Hunt 252). Politically, there had been the expectation of a Whig parliament after the Prince was made Regent, but this never came to fruition. The Tories stayed in power, frustrating hopes of Catholic emancipation. Hunt responded to a glowing piece about the Prince Regent published in the *Morning Chronicle*, and then an even more sycophantic poem in the *Morning Post*, which had sung the Prince's praises. Hunt explains his motives on writing the article:

> The *Morning Post*, which then affected to be the organ of the court, in a strain of unqualified admiration, replied to the *Chronicle*, partly in vapid prose objurgation, and partly in a wretched poem, graced with epithets intended to be extravagantly flattering to the Prince. (*Autobiography* 226)

Hunt begins his article by describing the impact of the Prince Regent, which he saw as invading every part of public life, so he appeals to this public sphere and ideas of "public opinion". His article does not immediately attack: it builds a sense of a public sphere taken over by talk of the Prince, writing:

> If a person takes in a newspaper, the first thing he does, when he looks at it, is to give the old groan and say, 'Well, — what of the Prince Regent now!' If he goes out after breakfast, the first friend he meets is sure to begin talking about the Prince Regent. . .He who is lounging along the street will take your arm and turn back with you to expatiate on the Prince Regent. (177)

Hunt presents a community of readers and a whole country united by discussion in the press: a public sphere. However, Hunt employs satire as he carries on with this tract with: "if the company go to the theatre to see the *Hypocrite*, or the new farce of *Turn Out*, they cannot help thinking of the Prince Regent" (177). Hunt describes the influence on "public opinion" of what he calls the "Ministerial Journalists, and other *creatures* of government" (177). Instead of employing flattery, Hunt describes the Prince as : "a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity" (179). He also refers to the Prince's bodily excess and advanced age, naming him "a corpulent gentleman of fifty" (179). The rhetoric is that the Prince is unfit: as unfit to rule as he is bodily unhealthy.

In "The Wit in the Dungeon" (1999) Greg Kucich examines Hunt's further treatment of the Prince's excesses in an article from the *Examiner* a year later, in which Hunt describes his health during his imprisonment, and states that he regards "society" as necessary to his own health ("Sentence Against the Examiner" 98). Hunt uses the term "society" for

company, but, as detailed in his compulsion to narrate his health to the public, perhaps also meaning the wider community or public sphere. In this article, Hunt shares the advice given to him by his physician. The public nature of Hunt's health is described the opening statement, which reads:

> I resume my observations on this subject [my illness]. . .for many obvious reasons — but partly to give as much information as possible respecting the condition of my brother and myself to those who have so kindly enquired after us, — and to keep open the communication that becomes the subjects of a free state, between individuals politically effected, and all classes of the community. . .The very circumstance of my being enabled to acquaint the public in this manner of my situation and opinions, makes me feel like an Englishman. ("Sentence Against the Examiner" 98)

Hunt's patriotic public sphere encompasses "all classes," and Gilmartin argues that Hunt "wrote along the widening faultline within radical culture that was increasingly defined in class terms" (199). However, Hunt idealised a "middle, plain thinking class" strongly reminiscent of Habermas' public sphere, and interpreting states of health and sickness became a preoccupation and a characteristic of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century ("Certain Terms" 609). The middle-class mental and bodily fitness for purpose became themes in public politics as well as personal concern.

This chapter demonstrates that the body became central in discussions of politics: not only was the body politic metaphor extended to encompass the British Empire, but the bodily health and fitness for purpose of the King, Prince Regent, and public men of science and letters was examined in the periodical press. As well as this, the bodies of the public were scrutinised. Health and political agency were strongly linked by Hunt, who assumed authority on the subject because of his own illnesses. Hunt believed in the power of writing to influence politics, but also to influence bodily health: his own and others. Hunt, like Cheyne in the eighteenth century, believed that the cultivation of excessive nervous sensitivity in the nineteenth century was due to an overindulgent lifestyle, or a "disease of civilization"

(Cheyne and Porter vii). While Trotter worried that susceptibility to nervous disorders rendered the English middle classes vulnerable to attack by invaders, by appealing to these complaints and imagining the body politic struck with illness, Hunt embodies the political economy of the country (Trotter xi). This body is therefore the responsibility of the middling or bourgeois classes. In the final chapter, I return to analyses of the nineteenth-century, middle-class responsibility for controlling the diseased or contagious political and organic body, but in the following chapter I examine Wooler's use of bodily metaphor and excess in the *Black Dwarf* to appeal to and rouse a labouring-class readership.

Chapter Two: Bodily Monstrosity in the *Black Dwarf*

This chapter discusses the use of unnatural, excessive, and monstrous bodies in the radical weekly periodical, the *Black Dwarf*. The argument that this chapter proposes is that the *Black Dwarf* 's tone complies with critic Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of the "grotesque" and the "carnivalesque" put forward in *Rabelais and His World* (1965). It also borrows from eighteenth-century satire and as such becomes a form of written caricature. I argue that Thomas Wooler, editor and main contributor to the periodical, uses these literary tools consciously and for a purpose: to rouse a mistreated labouring class to action against what he saw as their willing subjugation to authority by making that authority and the state of the body politic ridiculous. In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin states: "medieval and Renaissance folk culture was familiar with the element of terror only as represented by comic monsters, who were defeated by laughter. Terror was turned into something gay and comic" (39). In a society that was familiar with the idea of government-induced "terror," this type of comic subversion and defeat is the *Black Dwarf*'s aim. I also demonstrate how, by appropriating the idea of radicals as monstrous grotesques, Wooler transforms potentially insulting representations of him into a more troubling concept, thus negating them of their derogatory influence and instead endowing his public image with a fearsome power.

After introducing the periodical, I discuss the debates surrounding the "monstrous" body in the period under review and the links between medical and political discourse when considering the body politic as deformed, excessive, or perverse. I next analyse the uses and conventions of caricature, and the idea of the carnivalesque, in order to examine how the *Black Dwarf* adheres to and transforms those codes through the use of prose. I then examine the origins of the character that the periodical is named for, and in whose voice Wooler often writes, the Black Dwarf. I discuss the Black Dwarf's relevance as Wooler's alter-ego: the

Black Dwarf, in fact, becomes representative of Wooler in caricature. George Cruikshank depicts Wooler in this manner in 1820:

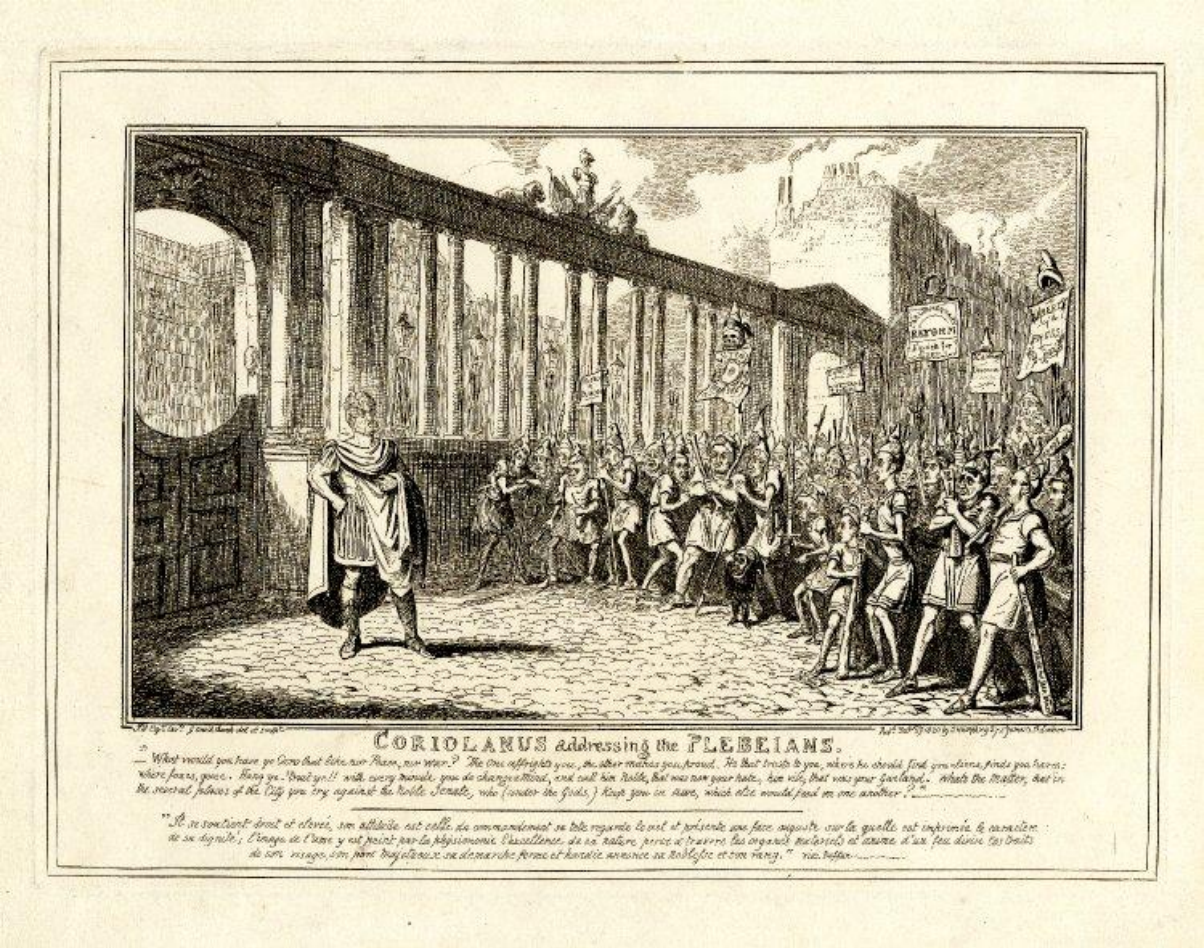

Fig 4. Cruikshank, *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians*, British Museum, London.

In this pro-government illustration, Wooler, as the Black Dwarf, stands at the front of a radical mob, while George IV is dressed as Shakespeare's Roman soldier Coriolanus, and is pictured defending Carlton House, his residence. Other radicals were viewed in similar monstrous and sinister terms. Richard Carlile — whose ideas on free speech are the focus of chapter three — can be seen "among the pious" as "a black griffin with red glaring eyes – a tail with forked end, talons instead of fingers, hooves instead of toes" (Holyoake 37). The Black Dwarf's small stature may translate to the viewer as ineffectiveness, but, as I demonstrate, the many connotations of the Black Dwarf's stature, blackness, and lack of

status, provide Wooler with a character whose origins are rich in literary and cultural traditions that award him a radical power.

I similarly consider Wooler's identity outside of the *Black Dwarf* periodical including his other publications, and his wider presence in the public sphere. I then discuss the beginning issues of the *Black Dwarf*, as they establish the tone of the run of the journal. I consider the 1 April 1818 issue: an example which includes a poem that makes explicit reference to the body politic and, taken holistically, represents the satirical tone and rhetorical style of the *Black Dwarf* through its entire run in a year when the labourer seemed to have more power than in previous times. Finally, I consider the *Black Dwarf*'s use of monstrous beasts, in particular those from literature and myth, to examine the ways in which Wooler not only makes the body politic ridiculous in its excess, but evocative of terror through its monstrosity. Throughout the chapter I refer to the ways in which the *Black Dwarf* adheres to or uses the conventions of caricature, eighteenth-century satire, and Bakhtin's carnivalesque. I also uncover Wooler's use of medical concepts and language to shore up his radical subversion of the status quo.

The *Black Dwarf* was founded in 1817, and was edited, printed, and published by Wooler. The first issue of the *Black Dwarf* appeared on 29 January 1817 and the publication ran until 1824. The *Black Dwarf* quickly became a dominant radical periodical: it had a large readership (more than twelve thousand in 1819) and it offered a mixture of satire and sincere political commentary (Jones, "The *Black Dwarf* as Satiric Performance" 203). The newspaper itself can be described as a monstrous assemblage of parts unnaturally pieced together: a "hybrid" of high and low culture.[10] Serious reviews sit alongside satirical items. Deliberate misprints invited deliberate misreadings (Gilmartin 95). It is important to note that the *Black*

[10] Most obviously, this brings to mind Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which I later discuss in relation to an unnatural creature pieced together from disparate parts that is represented in the *Black Dwarf*.

Dwarf was legally prohibited from including straight news reports (95). Discussions of legitimacy and knowing one's place — usually in an ironic tone — excess, both bodily and in appetite, and the burlesque feature large and frequently in the entire run of the periodical.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Youngquist uncovers the meanings of the monstrous body in nineteenth-century literature and reveals that the Romantic period saw the establishment in physiology of the parameters of the "normal" body (xiv). There was also a concern with bodily monstrosity, which "haunt[ed] the political anatomy of the human in British Romantic culture" (xxvi). In medicine, anatomists Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire — who used the term "teratology" to describe the study of medical "monsters" —, John Hunter, and later William Lawrence sought to define the "monstrous" and the "normal" body.[11] Their work demonstrated the attempt by medicine to control the monster through discourse by studying, categorising, and even displaying specimens, in the case of Hunter and his collection at the Royal College of Surgeons. In the Romantic period, the "monster" straddled the boundaries of medical enquiry and popular entertainment. Surgeons and anatomists like Hunter pursued the bodies of these so-called monsters to obtain them for their collections. Hunter's pleasure at procuring the skeleton of Charles Byrne (or O'Brien) is documented in a letter that Hunter wrote to Joseph Banks, a fellow scientist: "I lately got a tall man. . .I hope next summer to be able to show him to you" (*Works* 1: 105). The "Irish Giant," as Charles was professionally known, became the centrepiece of Hunter's collection, despite accounts of his fear at the thought of being acquired by the surgeons, and his request to be buried at sea (Sawday 4), or in a lead lined coffin (Youngquist 4). Youngquist gives a disturbing account of Charles' last days, as it was apparent that he was fatally ill, and as such was stalked by surgeons wanting his body for dissection: his horror of which is explained by his Catholicism. Youngquist ends the account by asserting that Charles' bones "demonstrate the

[11] See Ruston "Romantic Creation" in *Creating Romanticism* 97–132.

normalizing force of modern medicine as a means of producing proper bodies" (7): Charles' body, endowed with the promise of commercial interest and furthering medical knowledge — and therefore power —, entitles medicine to its possession. Although a surgeon to whom merely medical curiosity could be attributed, Hunter's interest in the skeleton was to display and exhibit it, as a spectacle. I return to the idea of bodily spectacle in terms of the Black Dwarf later in the chapter.

The work of poststructuralist theorist Michel Foucault on the normative body set against the monstrous body provides insight as to why Wooler found this vocabulary so effective and appropriate. While bodily monstrosities both challenge and uphold the concept of the normal or healthy body, monstrous political bodies threaten a politically healthy state. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) Foucault describes the importance of bodily "norms": medicine, he writes, must establish a model of a healthy body, free from sickness or "disease" (34). The establishment of the boundaries of the human body in terms of the "normal" is so important, because, as Foucault asserts: "in the ordering of human existence, [medicine] assumes a normative posture, which authorised it not only to distribute advice as to a healthy life, but also to dictate the standards for moral and physical relations of the individual and of the society in which he lives" (*Birth* 34). In other words, by giving medicine and its practitioners the power to dictate the requirements for physiological health, they also are awarded the authority to dictate what constitutes a healthy society.

Concern with the "proper" or "normal" political or national body can be seen in popular cultural practices such as caricature. As Youngquist states: "caricature exploits the tendency of norms to produce deviations" (xxii). Responding as quickly to political events as the periodical press, caricature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was often the primary, or only, visual representation of these events (Tamara L. Hunt 2). While not being strictly factual in their depictions of events, caricaturists strove to capture public feeling

and attitudes in their work in order to compete in a commercial marketplace. In "Conventions of Georgian Caricature" (1983), Robert L. Patten asserts that the caricaturists of the early nineteenth century "exercised a profound influence on English culture" and, by the 1790s, political satires were both plentiful and popular (331). Satirical Georgian caricature features bodies centrally: the focus is on excess, and physical attributes of those depicted were often exaggerated to ridiculous proportions. Visual image used word play and punning in the same way as written satire, as demonstrated in Cruikshank's *The Prince of Whales* (1812) where the Prince Regent and Prince of Wales becomes a literal whale due to his bodily corpulence, sexual excesses, and gluttony: this image is also discussed in chapter one. Scale had little to do with perspective, instead becoming part of the iconography of caricature. Symbols and signs such as the objects surrounding the figures that were represented, and the clothes that they wore, were endowed with specific meaning which became well-known: a visual shorthand vocabulary was established.

Diana Donald (1996) describes how "high" and "low" life, "beauty" and "deformity" was juxtaposed in these cartoons (9). She also describes a public "craze" for these satirical cartoons that, as well as a commercial trend, was a natural extension of participation in political debate and discussion in the period (2). The public nature of the viewing of caricatures in print-shop windows has parallels in the way that the *Black Dwarf* was read aloud and discussed at radical meetings. As Donald asserts, the focus shifts from the cartoon to the spectators, and the public become spectacle in the same way that the *Black Dwarf* aims to reflect the responsibility for the state of the country on its readers (7). Irreverent and subversive, caricature can also be described as the style in which the *Black Dwarf* was written.

This style has also been described as "material carnivalesque" (Steven Jones 204) a term which represents the preoccupation with the physical as well as the satirical. The

"carnivalesque" is a term coined by Bakhtin, which describes a literary mode concerned with the subversion of dominant ideologies through humour, and chaos. The carnivalesque is perfomative, dialogic, and public, and it is promotive of a subversive or counter-culture in the same way as, for example, a radical periodical. Bakhtin traces the carnival to medieval folk culture and describes the use of the excessive or grotesque body in the work of the subject of his book, a Renaissance writer, and, interestingly, a doctor: François Rabelais. The carnival body is seen as exceeding and transgressing its own limits. This excess is demonstrated through a focus on the body's functions in the extreme: over-eating and drinking, fornicating and excreting, foregrounding the processes which tie the body to the physical world. I will later return to the significance of Bakhtin's term in regard to the *Black Dwarf* and, indeed, the character of the Black Dwarf for whom the periodical is named, in more detail.

The *Black Dwarf's* own focus on the excessive and the monstrous has not gone unnoticed by critics thus far. Steven Jones focuses on Wooler's knowledge and use of the codes and conventions of satire. Gilmartin, on reading an article from the *Black Dwarf* titled "Grounds for Resisting the Ministers" (1817), suggests that: "The writer soon lost his way amidst a proliferation of corrupt figures (language, religion, the body, monstrosity, warfare, disease) that threatened to destroy both reader and writer" (15). This confirms the *Black Dwarf*'s use of physiological imagery alongside discussions of serious topics such as religion and conflict. Gilmartin has also examined Wooler's use of the concept of physical corruption and sickness when discussing political "plague" in relation to the radical analysis of corruption as a pervasive system (15–16). In this chapter, I provide an in-depth analysis of the ways in which the voice of the *Black Dwarf* and the Black Dwarf as a grotesque character use the characteristics of the carnivalesque, and specifically the metaphors of excessive and monstrous bodies, to direct the reader through a highly political call for change and reform. The reason that Wooler found bodily excess and monstrosity such apt metaphors to describe

the state of a country that he thought required political reform is connected to his readership: writing to inspire what he conceived of as an oppressed and mistreated labouring class, the more literate Wooler employed the carnivalesque, satire, allegory, hyperbole, and humour to render those in charge ridiculous and to mock the state of the nation. Political writing in the period strove to be both engaging and readable. As Wooler himself stated during his trials for libel against past Kings of England in June 1817 (for which he was found not guilty): "I am firmly persuaded that nothing but the boldest language and the most determined energy. . .can rouse the nation" (*Verbatim Report* 55). Wooler's language in the trial, addressing his "learned accusers," is just as violently passionate but far more representative of his personal status: eloquent and intellectual. He does not employ bawdy bodily metaphor or allegory in the same way that the *Black Dwarf* does for its labouring-class readership, aside from his brief reference to the deceased rulers,whom he names "dead kings [that] were pressed forward as the leaders of the hosts against me — these ghosts, these phantoms led the van on this most unsubstantial charge" (*Verbatim Report* 109). The style of the *Black Dwarf* is clearly adopted for a purpose, and is connected with the implied reader and the "low" culture so important to the carnivalesque. In addressing a labouring-class audience in his 1817 *Appeal to the Citizens of London* Wooler states firmly: "want of cleanliness covers the human body with filth and vermin; and want of attention has covered the body politic with vermin infinitely more mischievous, and buried the spirit of the law in the dirt" (11) showing a return to the highly allegorical and visceral language of the *Black Dwarf*. In this quotation, the attention that is needed towards the body politic must come from the labouring class and this is Wooler's argument throughout the run of the *Black Dwarf*.

The idea of the monstrous political body was prevalent because the period was much preoccupied with questions of bodily health and "norms," and as such a tradition of describing political events in terms of the physically monstrous had already been established.

Writers for the periodical press in the early nineteenth century used the idea of bodily monstrosity to describe political tension. Youngquist describes the ways in which France and specifically Napoleon were represented in war-time propaganda as monstrous: as I have discussed in the previous chapter, Napoleon's body was subject to analysis and representation in caricature and writing. In *In Frankenstein's Shadow* (1987), Chris Baldick examines in detail the ways in which writers such as Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and Mary Wollstonecraft used the language of bodily monstrosity to describe the events of the French revolution. The representation of the state in this manner is undoubtedly due to the political disruption of the period: as Baldick asserts, the body politic is depicted as "not just diseased, but misshapen, abortive, monstrous" (14) during times of political discord and rebellion.

Radical writers supporting reform, however, saw the status quo in British government and empire as monstrous. It was also becoming understood in the early nineteenth century that some forms of bodily deformity may be hereditary. Writers in the radical press had rejected the idea of unquestioned hereditary power and privilege since the eighteenth century, when radical publishers such as John Thelwall, Thomas Spence, and Daniel Isaac Eaton kept in the public mind the idea of a forceful opposition to the governing power (Behrendt, *Romanticism* 14). The concept of a meritocracy based on industry was the alternative suggested by these reformers. Industry is often asserted to require bodily fitness, purpose, and will for a healthy society: for example, Rousseau's idea of the body politic is a system in which industry provides sustenance and nourishment for the whole. The preoccupation with bodily health, then, applied not only to the human body but to the body politic as well, in the early nineteenth century.

In "Medicine, Politics, and the Body" (1998), Roy Porter describes representations of the human body in sickness and in health as "icons in political debate" in the period (217).

Sickness and deformity, Porter argues, were seen in the period as manifestations of the inner self (221). This, I argue, applies in the period to political systems as well as the human organic system. The role of the *Black Dwarf*'s use of bodily monstrosity was to highlight the instability and tyranny of political systems to a labouring-class readership, and call for reform. Porter's essay focuses on visual representation such as caricature but I argue that written language can be described as having much the same effect as caricature in the *Black Dwarf*. I now begin my analysis of an image as a way in to the complex character of the title: the Black Dwarf.

2.1 The Black Dwarf

Fig 5. Wooler, *The Black Dwarf*, Working Class Movement Library, Salford.

The frontispiece to the first volume of the *Black Dwarf* features the Dwarf hand in hand with a Satyr (for "satire"), presiding gleefully over a bonfire made up of various symbols of political authority: two judges' wigs, on wig blocks, used to represent those in highest power within the legal sphere and also perhaps evoking the image of the head on a stake. One of these, however, has tumbled over and is rendered ridiculous. Bundles of official papers and money, opened manacles, and even a royal crown topped by a fool's cap, complete this bonfire. The Dwarf wears feathers in his hat, to represent the quills of the writing profession. The collection's disarray and the crowing of the dancing figures suggests the embracing of subversion of normal order and of chaos described by Bakhtin in reference to the carnivalesque. The Satyr is explicit in his pointing motion: he is both condemning and ridiculing these symbols of authority. The focus, however, of the following discussion is the character in arms with the Satyr, the Black Dwarf.

The Black Dwarf himself is a character with multiplicity of meaning. Steven Jones (1997) has examined the relationship between Wooler's invention and the character of the same name in Sir Walter Scott's tale "The Black Dwarf: a Legend of Montrose," and the Dwarf's status as a caricature from prints and cartoons: but Jones states that caricaturists quickly moved to represent the figure *after* Wooler adopted it ("*Black Dwarf*" 204). The importance of Scott's tale to the periodical is that the Dwarf in Scott's work is a figure from popular folklore: a "low" character, identifiable by a labouring-class reader. The idea of "low," or "folk," culture is another key element of Bakhtin's carnivalesque. The *Black Dwarf* was squarely aimed at a labouring-class readership, and there is evidence to suggest that this aim was achieved: the periodical was described in 1819 by the Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh —the target of some of the Dwarf's ire, as I discuss later — as being found "in

the hat crown of almost *every pitman* you meet": "pitmen" being miners belonging firmly to Wooler's oppressed labouring-class audience (Wickwar 57). Bakhtin's emphasis on the carnivalesque's reliance on satire, laughter, and the importance of counter-culture in a time of political unrest and reform can be found in the *Black Dwarf* in its discussions of the excessive and ridiculous body. Both Bakhtin and his subject, Rabelais, produced the works under analysis during times of political upheaval. In Rabelais' most well-known text, the multi-volume *Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* (c1532–1564) the plot follows the life of two giants, a father, Gargantua, and his son, Pantagruel. The *Black Dwarf* acts as a kind of "mask" for Wooler: a "mask" in both the carnival and the grotesque sense. As Bakhtin writes, "the mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries": by transgressing his identity Wooler is able to transform things as they are into a carnivalesque, grotesque satire (40).

Wooler borrows from other literary and also pseudoscientific sources to create his character, and I now discuss some of the relevant cultural sources and literary traditions that may have inspired Wooler in creating his pseudonymous character. It can also be suggested that the Black Dwarf inspires his own later literary incarnations in texts such as Thomas Lovell Beddoes' character Homunculus Mandrake: a goblin-like, witty creature from *Death's Jest Book* (1850) who wishes for the power of invisibility that, as I uncover, Wooler grants his Black Dwarf. The use of the term "Black" also invokes that which is exotic, Other, dangerous, or occult (Jones, "The *Black Dwarf* as Satiric Performance" 204). In the 8 April 1818 edition of the *Black Dwarf* Wooler answers direct criticism from one Col. Barre who speaks out against radical influence "in spite of the *Black Dwarf*, and every thing that is black, on the earth, or under the earth" ("Elector No II 211–2). Wooler asks why Barre speaks against his own "friends" in reference to the black figure from under the earth: the devil (212). Barre's "impudence and folly" are described by Wooler as "black" deeds (212).

A sense of guilt perhaps also is evoked in the reader by the use of the Dwarf's blackness: Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter Kitson (2004) describe the link in the public imagination, through the work of authors such as James Montgomery, between the black bodies of the chimney sweeping boys and the black bodies of slaves. Although the slave trade was abolished in 1807, slavery was not abolished until 1833 and radicals saw slavery and oppression also occurring in the British Isles in the form of the oppression of the labouring classes and the small, dark figure of the chimney sweeping boy became a focal point for debate. The physical bodies of both of these disenfranchised sections of society were the focus of shame-induced scientific scrutiny in the period under review (17). The chimney sweepers were the focus of attention from the medical profession due to their numerous work-related illnesses, and the slaves' bodies due to the need for supporters of the slave trade to prove the inherent biological inferiority of the non-Caucasian races.

The political rhetoric of the *Black Dwarf* certainly places the onus for the state of the country on the shoulders of its readers, as I discuss later. Not only is Wooler embracing his demonization by the conservative press and politicians, but he is now evoking a sense of responsibility in his readers, making use of his character's bodily small stature and blackness to give an outsider's view of events and render them ridiculous. Radical idiom in the 1820s and 1830s, such as the writing of Wooler's contemporaries William Cobbett, Leigh Hunt, and William Hone, explicitly compared the state of the labourer to that of the black slave. This was an association that, according to Fulford *et al*, frightened the government as the image was designed to incite rebellion (247). The chimney sweeper's small stature and blackness made him into a rhetorical figure: an Other hidden in plain sight in British society. The Black Dwarf describes disguising himself as a child in one of the articles I be examine in this chapter: he is a small, dark figure like the chimney sweeping boy.

The Black Dwarf's letters to the "Yellow Bonze" of Japan also further the idea of Otherness: Wooler uses a convention of Enlightenment literature where the exotic Other describes the writer's own land, including its social customs and its codes, from an outsider's perspective, bringing a stranger's clarity and balance to descriptions of these events (Epstein 38). However, these letters to the "Bonze" also invert the idea of the Other, as the political life of the supposedly free Englishman is often demonstrated to be remarkably similar to that of the Japanese — who were under despotic rule — in these articles. In literature, the dwarf is often similarly used as a scapegoat or an outcast, a figure that binds a social group together through viewing the dwarf as an outsider (Jones, "*Black Dwarf*" 206). The figure of the dwarf is also often used as a spy or a trickster, and is associated with invisibility (Arnds 36).

The idea of a black dwarf in relation to the carnivalesque evokes the entertainment spectacle of the sideshow exhibit popular in the period: the 1815 Bartholomew Fair counted among its exhibits a "Dutch Dwarf," and an earlier Smithfield May fair during the reign of Queen Anne, which displayed a three-foot-high "Little Black Man, lately brought from the West Indies": once again the exotic is also apparent (Wood 311–312). These are some of the many models already established in culture and literature for Wooler to base his Dwarf upon. In the "Prospectus" for the first issue of his publication Wooler himself makes a somewhat opaque attempt to identify his creation. The "Prospectus" begins:

> It may be required of us to declare whether the Black Dwarf emanates from the celestial regions, or from the shades of evil— whether he be an European sage, or an Indian savage — whether he is subject to the vicissitudes of mortality, or a phantom of the imagination — in what shape he appears, by what authority he presumes to write — what object he has in view, whether his designs are wicked or charitable. In answer to all those probable topics of enquiry, our simple reply is, that we are not at liberty to unfold all the secrets of his prison-house, to ears of flesh and blood. ("Prospectus")

The Black Dwarf is here established as a non-descript: his meaning is deliberately obscure. Wooler pre-empts interrogation and uses the editorial "we". Wooler quotes Shakespeare's "Hamlet" when he describes the "secrets" of the Black Dwarf's "prison-house": the "prison-house" in Shakespeare's play is purgatory in which Hamlet's father's ghost is trapped. The Black Dwarf's origins are unclear: he "emanates," suggesting immateriality and obscure origins. The readers' ears — of "flesh and blood" — are set up in opposition to the character of the Dwarf: he is not of flesh and blood, then. Indeed, he may be either heavenly (from "celestial regions") or from Hell ("the shades of evil"). He also may be European or Eastern Other, an intellectual sophisticate or a savage. The question of how seriously a reader should regard his insights is first highlighted in this opening, and this is an idea that is re-iterated in the closing statement of the "Prospectus". The colonial potential of the Dwarf is re-enforced in the sixth issue of the periodical when he is described as a "pigmy" as opposed to Cobbett. Cobbett is figured as a political giant; satirically, given his short stature and his very recent escape to America in fear of charges of sedition, an abandonment that was felt keenly by the *Black Dwarf* ("Letters" 1:6 89). The Dwarf's intentions are also ambiguous, in the space where an editor would usually outline the political alignment and ideology of the periodical. He is described as a captive, held in a "prison-house" or purgatory: the idea of a scapegoat is here conjured up. The Dwarf is also described as a "stranger" further on in the "Prospectus," again invoking the idea of the Other. This status, however, affords the Dwarf a certain power, as described in the following paragraph:

> Secure from his invisibility, and dangerous from his power of division, (for, like the polypus, he can divide and redivide himself, and each division remain a perfect animal) he will be engaged at the same instant, in listening for the evil at the portals of the temple, under the canopy of the throne, and in the gallery of the lower house; in weighing the patriotism of our patriots; in comparing the disinterested independence of our journalists; besides the stranger occupation of seeking for honesty in the mazes of the law, and humility on the bench of the bishops. ("Prospectus")

Here the "invisibility" that the Dwarf's Otherness affords him to hear, see, and expose political corruption. The idea of monstrous reproduction is invoked: he is described as a "polypus," referring to an octopus-like creature that was said to have transformative powers of reproduction: an ability to divide and continue to live. In this way the Dwarf is again seen as un-human, uncivilized, and animalistic. The naturalist Carl Linnæus (1821) had given the name "hydra" to a genus of polyps (1: 145). The idea of revolutionary politics as a many-headed beast is a common trope in the period, and the use of hydra in the *Black Dwarf* is a concept that I return to later on. The relevance of the concept here is that the Dwarf and his radical politics seem irrepressible. Wooler's threat here is explicit: the Dwarf is dangerous. He listens in on the highest echelons of society, including the highest of religious authority and the monarchy, and exposes their vices, but always from an outsider's perspective. With no status in high society, he has nothing to lose by exposing its corruption, Wooler suggests subtly. As well as respectable professions such as law and priesthood, the Dwarf examines the integrity of journalists: this sets him apart from his profession.

The "Prospectus" then offers a seemingly more typical "mission statement":

> The lighter and more agreeable business of the Black Dwarf, will be a survey of the DRAMA, and the literary world in general; to foster genius, and chastise impudence; to encourage the modest, and prune the luxuriance of the redundant fancy; in short to exhibit, unbiased by the spirit of any party, a correct reflection of merit in the mirror of impartial criticism. ("Prospectus")

Here the Dwarf has an influential role in drama and literature, rather than a critical one, despite the invocation of the merely reflective "mirror". Wooler's earlier periodical publication, *The Stage* (1814–1816) was a political but sophisticated weekly journal of theatre criticism. Treatment of stage drama in the *Black Dwarf* is not impartial. When discussing Wooler's enthusiasm for the dramatic art, James A. Epstein (1994) states that there were parallels between popular notions of a democratic courtroom and a democratic

theatre in the period (37). Iain McCalman examines the connection between popular theatre and radical rhetoric in *Radical Underworld* (1988) and also suggests real-life sources for Wooler's pseudonym: Roberts Wedderburn, a black Spencean orator, or else the outspoken and often mischievous radical shoemaker Samuel Waddington, who was around four foot in height and commonly known as "the Black Dwarf" (149). David Worrall (1992) describes Wedderburn's oratory style as "burlesque and carnival" (129). Posters for the *Black Dwarf* imitated theatrical playbills and basing plays on political events, as I reveal further on in this chapter, was not only common but pervasive.

The Black Dwarf's link to the theatre can also be found in the idea of the Harlequin, a "commedia dell'arte character" who became the central figure of British pantomime in the eighteenth century (O'Brien xiii). The Harlequin is a comical masked figure whose origins lie in the French "Hellequin," a medieval black-faced servant of the devil who was charged with driving the souls of evil people to Hell (Schmitt 93). The Black Dwarf is similarly a demonic figure (from "the shades of evil") with obscure origins, albeit also a comedic character associated with servitude. Bakhtin analyses the character of the devil in folk culture, emphasising the comic and jovial aspects of the character: in medieval and Renaissance literature, he is not merely a figure of terror — such as in typical Romantic literature — but a capering, subversive symbol (41). The "imp of mischief" or "genius of nonsense" was a common character in nineteenth-century pantomime (McCalman 149). There are also connections between caricature and theatre. Both forms are populist and often vulgar, and this mutual influence is demonstrated in such texts as Thomas John Dibden's pantomime *The Talisman, or Harlequin Made Happy* (1796) in which a scene takes place in a caricature print-shop. John Rich and Dibden both produced popular Christmas pantomimes in 1812 featuring a Harlequin and dwarves: Rich's pantomime was titled *Harlequin and the Red Dwarf*, and Dibden's *Harlequin and Humpo* demonstrates a chaotic mixture of dramatic

genres, and features a kingdom of dwarves, as well as giants, fiends, spirits, and fools (O'Brien 231). The pages of the *Black Dwarf* can be described as comparable to Dibden's world.

The idea of the "mirror" as an authentic reflection becomes inverted as events on stage become, through the Black Dwarf's satirical narration, a distorted, fun-house version of events in government. The "Prospectus" continues:

> To fools, and to men of sense, the Black Dwarf hopes to be equally agreeable; the former will imagine they understand him when they do not; and the latter will be able to comprehend more than he means to utter. ("Prospectus")

The meaning here seems two-fold: Wooler is, on one hand, encouraging readers to read between the lines when he writes that men of sense will be able to understand more than what the Dwarf means to say. As if expectant of accusations of sedition, however, Wooler perhaps also attempts to protect himself by opening up the Dwarf's words to misinterpretation. It is impossible to identify which of these you are as a reader: a fool or a wise man. The article concludes, "A well-wisher to all, but an uncourtly friend, the Black Dwarf will steadily hold up a glass, in which no honest man need be ashamed to look, and every fool and knave may readily trace his resemblance" ("Prospectus"). Again, the idea of the mirror as a true and impartial reflection of events is subverted as the reader is unsure of their own status: honest man or fool. Unlike the dwarf at the court of Brobdingnag in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), the Black Dwarf is "uncourtly" in a literal sense: he is both uncivilized and an outsider. Swift's satirical novel is a text that the Black Dwarf is very much aware of, as I discuss later. Taken holistically, impartiality, guaranteed by the Dwarf's outcast status, is the theme of the "Prospectus".

In the public sphere, Wooler became very much equated with the character of the Black Dwarf, and was represented as such in George Buxton's *The Political Quixote* (1820)

and George Cruikshank's illustration for the text. In Cruikshank's illustration, the Black Dwarf is again represented with two quills and an inkpot on his overly-large head. In Buxton's text, which is described as a "Romance," the Black Dwarf becomes Don Blackibo Dwarfino, whose trusty Squire is named "Seditiono" (read "sedition"). The Spanish setting adheres to the literary tradition of the Romance and performs the task of establishing the Dwarf as a foreign stranger. The reference to "Quixote" of course links Buxton's text with Miguel de Cervantes' seventeenth-century satire on the tradition of the Romance, *Don Quixote* (1605). The plot of the text follows the Black Dwarf attempting to sell subscriptions to his newspaper and is a scathing satire on Wooler, the radical press, and seditious publications. Using Wooler's own favoured tools of subversion and ridicule, Buxton's counter-attack is incited by what he saw as a bullying radical press.

Wooler published other items circa 1820 in the Black Dwarf's name, such as the poem "The Kettle Abusing the Pot," which was produced in reference to the "Queen Caroline Affair". During the summer of 1820, Caroline of Brunswick's "trial" began, as she returned to England from to take her place as queen. In August, George IV pressured the cabinet to prepare a bill to remove Caroline's title and end their marriage. During this spectacular event, large crowds gathered to watch the queen travel to Westminster to attend the event and support from the radical press, which published accounts of the proceedings, meant that the trial was doomed to fail. In the same year, Wooler also produced a satirical pamphlet titled *A Political Lecture on Heads*. Named after George Alexander Stevens' play *A Lecture on Heads* (1764), the front page of the pamphlet depicts the Black Dwarf standing atop a head with several faces. The Black Dwarf's nose and lips are exaggerated in a grotesque effort to represent racial difference, his head is even more disproportionately larger than the previously discussed representations, and he is grinning: Wooler thus appropriates the potentially insulting depictions of him as the Black Dwarf in caricature. This is a visual

example of the way in which, according to Steven Jones (2000), radicals in early nineteenth-century London used their own demonization "in order to leverage a more effective political threat" (*Satire* 84).

Fig 6. Wooler, *Political Lecture on Heads*. British Library Nineteenth-Century Collections, London.

In this image, the Black Dwarf holds a pair of compasses, such as were used in the study of physiognomy: a branch of nineteenth-century pseudo-medicine that presumed to expose character traits through the study of the shape and contours of the skull and the face. He is measuring one of the eyebrows, although the face is multi-sided; itself monstrous and

impossible to measure even according to the authority of what was widely known to be a quack method.

Donald examines the close links between Georgian caricature and physiognomy (12). The theme of personality traits being displayed outwardly on the physical body links these concepts. Stevens' eighteenth-century play that inspired the pamphlet's title was a satire on the popularity of physiognomy, using what Donald describes as "caricatured 'heads' of a range of well-established types. . .carved in wood like wig blocks" (11). Once more the Black Dwarf's links with caricature are explicit, and the iconography of the "wig blocks" that were featured in the frontispiece to the first volume of the *Black Dwarf* perhaps originate in Stevens' play. The Black Dwarf holds a reference book, presumably on physiognomy, containing diagrams of heads. The Dwarf wears the curly-toed shoes of the fool or the Eastern Other and balances volumes of the *Black Dwarf* and the two quills and inkpot on his head, establishing him as the both author of the periodical and a trickster. This representation also establishes the Dwarf as authoritative through his stance on top of the heads and his catalogue of previous publications. The pamphlet begins with an address from the Black Dwarf "to his readers" and uses a colloquial tone: the word "noddle" is used for head (*Political Lecture* i). The Black Dwarf describes a "public heap" of heads, perhaps evoking the image used in a caricature by James Gillray in 1797. Gillray's illustration, published more than twenty years previously, depicts a pile of heads including that of radical orator John Thelwall, whose influence on early nineteenth-century radical medical and political debate is further discussed in the following chapter. By referencing well-known radical iconography, Wooler credits his readers with a knowledge of and interest in the history and the symbolism of oppositionary politics:

Fig 7. Gillray, *The Tree of Liberty Must Be Planted Immediately*, British Museum, London.

Also using shorthand straight from contemporary caricatures, the Black Dwarf refers to the "Spouter of Froth," (George Canning) "Derry Down Triangle," (Lord Castlereagh) and the "Doctor" (Lord Sidmouth): the "Guilty Trio" from William Hone's 1819 *House that Jack Built* pamphlet and cartoon (*Political Lecture* 1). The representations of Castlereagh and Sidmouth in caricature are discussed in more depth later in this chapter. In the same piece, the Black Dwarf also refers to William Cobbett as the "Botley Ressurection-Man" after the fashion of numerous caricatures, including a cartoon by Cruikshank in 1820, which named the radical as the Botley Showman on the occasion of Cobbett displaying the bones of Tom

Paine in his hometown of Botley. The use of these names from both radical and anti-radical caricature demonstrates an awareness of, and an alliance to, the visual form.

The form of Wooler's *Political Lecture* pamphlet is "sketches"; or drawings of the heads of recognisable figures, from the side as traditional in physiognomy, accompanied by highly satirical poems. It applies a pseudo-medical sensibility to a ridiculous premise, making it known that the authority medical discourse assumed over the body could be challenged. Those depicted in the pamphlet are both based on real people, in the case of the first sketch, which is of the Prince Regent, and figurative, such as the one representing "John Bull". The "John Bull" sketch is analysed further shortly. I now move on to discuss the first issue of the periodical, as the *Black Dwarf* establishes its own political discourse established on ideas of excess and monstrosity.

2.2 Monstrous Political Bodies in the Black Dwarf

The first issue of the *Black Dwarf* begins with an article titled "The Constitution Placed in its True Light," which accuses the laws of the country of being complicated and unjust. The article describes the monarchy as monstrous, naming the rulers of the country as "the offspring of immaculate wisdom — the produce of the weakest intellect" (1). Here, the idea of hereditary power is evoked and then subverted, as the rulers of the country are described as children of low intelligence. Wooler is concerned that: "[the people of England] contented themselves with paring the nails of the royal tygers, instead of chaining them in their cells," and continues, "the consequence was, that the nails grew as fast as they were pared, and a constant struggle ensued between the people, and the monarch" (1). The monarchy are figured as monstrous beasts, here tigers, that have been allowed by the people to oppress, terrify, and control them. The "nails" of the tigers have been ineffectively "pared," or blunted, but the beasts still have a monstrous power as they have been allowed to roam free

and have not been restrained. The responsibility is placed firmly in the hands of the people: tigers cannot be blamed for their natural fierceness.

The idea of the people enabling their own oppression continues in the article, which next describes those in power as a "degenerate race" and places the blame on the people: "we have suffered the fabric [of society] to decay, and fall to pieces. . .it has become the residence of unclean birds, the most obnoxious animals" ("Constitution" 2). Here the rhetoric of political decay as a physical rottenness is employed: the rulers are "degenerate" and society is thus degenerating, and becoming a home to corrupt and unclean influences. The body politic is explicitly referred to in this article:

> The body politic had surfeited on roast beef, plum pudding, and strong beer, until it became affected with a delirious fever. The state physicians were called in, and they prescribed *leeches* in abundance, to reduce the habit, and soften the inflammatory symptoms. The success of the prescriptions may be most justly attributed to the excellency of the breed of leeches who volunteered their patriotic services on this important occasion. It was no trifling amusement. They had to *stick fast*, and to *suck hard*, and they have most diligently performed their duty. ("Constitution" 3; original emphasis)

Here, the body politic is an excessive human body, whose surfeit leads to sickness. The diet of "roast beef, plum pudding, and strong beer" of course suggests the body politic of England specifically, by using imagery strongly associated with the character of "John Bull": the usually stout and healthy everyman popularly used by caricaturists to represent the political state and the status of the people of England. Similarly, in Bakhtin's work on the carnivalesque, the spirit of carnival was personified as a corpulent, unruly man who consumed vast quantities of food and alcohol (Bakhtin 22). The leeches are a symbol of corrupt power exploiting the lower classes, a concept which is analysed in more detail in chapter four. To return to John Bull, however, in the Black Dwarf's *Political Lecture on Heads* he is described as passive, "tamely endur[ing]" whatever ill treatment is inflicted upon him (2). Wooler's exasperation with the labouring classes is, once more, clear: they have

been first greedy then apathetic. The carnivalesque is also represented in this depiction of John Bull: he awakes from a dream "of frolic and fun" demonstrating a lack of political awareness and a concern only with lower things. John Bull's body is excessive, grown "corpulent" and he moves like an automaton, or a "drone," bodily ignorant and unquestioning (*Political Lecture* 9–10). His body is unhealthy, although it appears "sleek, and in excellent trim/And wholesome in every feature and limb," and the sickness has eaten away from the inside of his body, which is next described as "a mere flatuosity," in a typically vulgar example of the carnivalesque and its obsession with bodily processes (*Political Lecture* 13–14; 21; 26). This sketch provides a picture for the reader of a monstrous, excessive, and ridiculous body as clearly as a contemporary caricature. Here, instead of making those in power ridiculous, and evoking laughter in order to conquer the fear of authority, Wooler's aim is to incite shame in "John Bull," or, the English public.

In "The Constitution Placed in its True Light," Wooler also refers to another convention of Georgian caricature: the idea of the state physician. John Thelwall used the metaphor of the body politic in the periodical press in 1795 when presenting himself in the periodical press as a "political physician" who would attend to the diseased body and remove dead tissue ("Distresses" 6). The state physician has here become a quack doctor, administering too many leeches to the fevered body politic ("Constitution" 3). This passage reads like a caricature: clear echoes of Gillray's and Cruikshank's use of "John Bull" and the "state physician" can be found in the imagery of those grotesque bodies. In the same article, county magistrates are described as both "animals" and "babies in fur": sub-human creatures ("Constitution" 5). A magistrate who is unfit for his station is a grotesque body that cannot function properly: "a head without brains, or a heart without feeling" (5).

The remainder of this first issue — comprised solely of this same article containing many subheadings — focuses on issues of bodily excess and monstrosity. *Country*

Magistrates describes excesses and magnification (5–6); *Military Protection* uses the metaphor of hunger and appetite (6); *Universal Suffrage* refers to the great chain of creation (8); *Princely Employments* talks of tastes and biological classifications (9). This first issue establishes the tone of the periodical as belonging to the literary mode of the carnivalesque, through its use of the excessive, unnatural, and monstrous to describe events and people, make them ridiculous, and therefore interrogate the right to authority of those in power. It is a call to arms as well as placing the responsibility for the state of the country upon the people who are being oppressed.

The second issue of the *Black Dwarf* (1817) continues to use this vocabulary of bodily excess, and also discusses political injury and pain. In the opening article, titled "Who are the Seditious?" which is concerned with the freedom and rights of the people and of the press, the people are described as being in physical pain because of political oppression, or, "wracked to the vitals" and the anonymous writer asks: "Are the ministers not satisfied with the *bodily misery* they have entailed upon us. Would the harpies prey upon the mind as well?" (24–5; original emphasis). Using monsters from ancient mythology, here harpies, and later the hydra, is a trope I examine further on. This article is concerned with the "monstrous injuries" occurring during the suspension of Habeas Corpus, which commenced in 1817, perhaps demonstrating word play on "corpus" as a physical body (24).

This second issue of the *Black Dwarf* features the first inclusion of the "Letters of the Black Dwarf" section as well as "State Theatricals," an article that relates theatre to political events and concepts. In his "Letters," the Black Dwarf describes himself as "a stranger" and his readers as "rugged islanders" and colonial implications are clear (27). Perhaps inspired by Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe* in which the title character is shipwrecked on an island, the Black Dwarf draws attention to the fact that English people are islanders themselves. In *Robinson Crusoe* the shipwrecked man's companion is a stranger, given the

name “Friday,” described as uncivilised and “quite dark, but not black” with long black hair and black eyes (176). Friday tolerates the cannibalism of the natives, and, in a savage manner, describes the customs of the island to Crusoe. Perhaps the Black Dwarf is playing the “Friday” to the reader’s “rugged islander”. Likewise, Crusoe instructs Friday to be his servant, quickly teaching him the word “master” (176). The Black Dwarf has previously been associated with servitude and guidance. Robinsonades, or narratives with a plot of a similar nature to Defoe’s original, were popular in eighteenth-century fiction as a method of exploring the Other and the exotic, but also revealed the anxiety pertaining to what distinguished so-called civilised white people from supposed savages when the restrictions of society were removed. Identity is once more under interrogation: as Richard Phillips points out in *Mapping Men and Empire* (1997), from the time of Defoe’s contemporaries alternative and often critical Robinsonades were produced that questioned colonial constructions of identity (143). The Black Dwarf’s “Letters” are written from an outsider’s perspective using the second person pronoun, discussing: “your attempts to mislead each other. . .your outcries about economy” (27). Once more, blame for the current state of the country is placed upon the reader.

The idea of hereditary monstrosity is also evoked in this article when the dwarf states:

> Let no man profanely indulge in the metaphor that Lords of the Bed chamber resemble wet nurses to children; and that, therefore *one* would be sufficient. Is not royalty more precious than the infant progeny of vulgar race, and must it not therefore be guarded with more peculiar care. (29)

Wooler here denies comparing the rulers of the country to children: a comparison that the Black Dwarf makes himself in a later issue. Wooler ironically suggests that the children of royalty must be more precious than those belonging to the vulgar or labouring class and must therefore require more attention, suggesting perhaps that royalty are less capable than the labouring-class reader. The labouring person’s place in society and in comparison to those in

power is a key issue for Wooler throughout his periodical, and he uses the language of bodily monstrosity or deformity, excess, or lack, to display these themes in a manner similar to the political caricature that was so popular in the period: political status becomes a physical state.

The year of 1818 saw the repeal of the Seditious Meetings Act and the reinstatement of the Habeas Corpus Amendment Act. Improvement in trade meant that greater value was placed on labourers and there was a growth of trade union or "combination" activity (Evans 21–22). Workers had more power than previous years. The 1 April 1818 issue of the *Black Dwarf* uses images of bodily monstrosity throughout, but it is also selected for analysis because it includes a poem which makes explicit reference to the body politic and the labouring-class readers' imagined role within it. The idea of the body politic is here an ironic tool of oppression that represents the exasperation Wooler felt with his readers, upon the shoulders of whom he placed the burden of reform. I analyse the articles in this issue chronologically, starting with the front page, and examine the ways in which the political body is made monstrous, how the bodies of the monarchy are commented upon, and finishing with the poem that uses the habitual metaphor of the body politic.

The first article of the issue from 1 April 1818, titled "The Elector No I," despairs at the method of election, which is seen as a futile process involving the dissolution and reunion of the same corrupt parts. The article leads with a subheading describing a magic trick that is said to be performed by jugglers in Japan, in which a live child is eaten in front of an audience; the remains are thrown into the air, and upon descending the child is returned to its living state. In the article, this shocking image is compared to the state of parliament:

> Just such a trick as this is performed in England, by our state jugglers, at the dissolution of that child of the borough-mongers *called a parliament*. They shake the members apart, they are thrown apparently amongst the people, but somehow or other they contrive to

> meet again, and when the elections are over, the monstrous bantling is re-united and performs all the functions of vitality as before. (194; original emphasis)

The idea of parliament as a monstrous "bantling" (a toddler or infant) made from several parts thrown apart and coming together again describes an unnatural construction. The child of that blood-thirsty monster, the boroughmonger, is monstrous itself. As Baldick states, "the problem of wilful and unnatural assembly comes to be discussed as a major problem in the new aesthetics of Romanticism" (14). The unnatural construction of seemingly organic form troubled the aesthetics of the period. While "perform[ing] the functions of vitality," the child who has been unnaturally assembled is not actually alive but is, in fact, a perversion of nature that only appears so. The disturbing idea of the unnatural assembly of a creature that is a perversion of nature is found in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818: the same year as the issue of the *Black Dwarf* under review. As is well known, this text focuses on a grotesque creation, similarly made from various parts somehow endowed with a mysterious vital spark and given life. In the image from the *Black Dwarf*, however, the "bantling" is parliament and its vitality is a "function" that it "performs".

One text cannot be said to have been influenced by the other and the Black Dwarf was not a fan of Shelley's novel, as he later demonstrated in his review of a stage production of the novel in 1823. He expresses concerns, in his typically bawdy and hyperbolic rhetoric, that Shelley's novel may influence spinster women to construct themselves a monstrous male lover ("Letters of the Black Dwarf" 11.6). The idea of unnatural assembly and the grotesque monsters such experimentation could create, however, seems to have pervaded the cultural imagination and influenced concepts of political science in the period under review.[12] The article in the *Black Dwarf* continues:

[12] It is interesting to note that this issue of the *Black Dwarf* was published in the month after Walter Scott's review of Shelley's text had featured in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, in which Scott examines the similar use of the marvellous in political satire.

> Sometimes an incongruous atom or two, may be thrown into the mass; but they either assimilate to the corruptions with which they are mixed, or sit like mere excresences not at all interfering with the vital functions of the whole. ("Elector No I" 194)

The body of the "bantling" is corrupt, and outside influences are either incorporated into the corruption of the body, or sit outside it ineffectively, and have no influence over the monstrous body as a whole. As discussed in the previous chapter, on the instance when the king is described in exactly the same manner, excrescence refers to the action of growing on the outside, so it is a superficial part of the body, and moving away from it. Excresences have no influence on the internal workings of the body. The "incongruous" politicians who do manage to gain parliamentary seats, Wooler asserts, are not allowed to instigate any real change. Instead of relying on them, the monster must be dismembered and prevented from reforming:

> At the approaching election, when the baby of corruption is dismembered, and the disjointed parts float in the atmosphere of the people, it will be their duty as far as possible, to prevent the re-union from taking place. (194)

The corrupt parts are described as "mortified and rotten branches" (194), limbs that are diseased and putrid, and the implication is that they must be removed. The "native deformity" (194) of these corrupt parts is described: they are naturally or congenitally monstrous. The remainder of the article takes on a self-consciously Gothic tone. The political representatives are alternately referred to as tyrants, knaves, slave-holders, and false gentlemen. The people are in "agon[ies] of despair," or else "thraldrom". They are talked about in the terms of oppression and slavery (195–196). Use of traditionally Gothic characters and themes here contributes to the bodily horror Wooler wishes to present to his readers.

As previously mentioned, the "Letters of the Black Dwarf," a regular feature in the periodical, is often addressed to "the Yellow Bonze of Japan": an exotic Other, a priest, and foreign counterpart to the Black Dwarf in whose character Wooler writes. To add to previous

discussion of Wooler's alter-ego, the Black Dwarf in these letters, from the 1 April 1818 edition of the paper, refers to his own "repulsive appearance" and "inflexible gravity of my countenance," and he is described as a "little odd figure" and an "ugly. . .animal" suggesting a physically monstrous figure (2.13 201–202). The Black Dwarf's monstrosity, however, is moral as well: as in caricature, his physical grotesquery reflects his moral deformity. He states that "when Castlereagh beats the reformers I am pleased" (201).

At this time Castlereagh was the Foreign Secretary, and in the following year he would be blamed by reformers for the events at Peter's Fields in Manchester and in Ireland. Castlereagh was a figure often represented by caricaturists: George Cruikshank produced numerous cartoons depicting Castlereagh's political ineptitude as a kind of professional suicide, before Castlereagh's actual suicide in 1822. Castlereagh was known for his advocacy of flogging as punishment in Ireland and therefore he was also strongly associated with violence against the labouring classes. Wooler as the Black Dwarf describes Castlereagh as "beating" the reformers, and radical journalist Harriet Martineau's autobiography (1877) describes being shown by a radical pastor "the caricatures of the day. . .which always showed Castlereagh flogging Irishmen" (86).

The Black Dwarf next describes dressing as a child to disguise his deformity in public, a perversion of nature like the "bantling" of the previous article. The object of the excursion is a play based upon *Gulliver's Travels*, named the "Court of Lilliput," invoking the legacy of one of the previous century's masters of satire. The use of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, particularly the subversion of high culture, is explicit as the play mocks the ridiculousness of the tiny people because the roles of the king and queen are performed by children. He describes the fitness of the child actors for their roles and asks whether these child actors are not just as fit to run the country, since a child actor's wage is minimal. The use of humour and subversion of the prevailing political order so important in the

carnivalesque is clear. The Dwarf continues to describe the aristocracy as squabbling children whose petty arguments drain the budget of the country, and the swapping of "high" and "low" applies here not only to culture but to a very physical and bodily sense of status ("Letters of the Black Dwarf" 2. 13 203). Next, he uses the idea of largeness and excess, comparing Sidmouth to a giant, writing that his imitation of his "high" role renders him ridiculous:

> The giants. . .were not half so well played as the dwarfs. They were as aukward [*sic*] as Lord Sidmouth when he endeavours to look like a statesman; and as clumsy as a great man who flatters himself that he is a great beauty. This shews the present genius of the rulers of the nation. They can *imitate little things*, and make themselves as *little* as they like; but their endeavours at *greatness* only render them ridiculous. (204; original emphasis)

As Home Secretary, Sidmouth subsidised the *White Dwarf*, a periodical edited by Gibbons Merle and established in 1817 opposition to Wooler's *Black Dwarf*. Sidmouth was also a popular choice for caricaturists of the period. He was often represented as a doctor: Sidmouth's father was a physician who had once run a madhouse (Porter "Medicine" 235). Gillray's caricature, *Britannia Between Death and the Doctors* (1804) depicts the country, personified in the form of Britannia, in the throes of death.

Fig 8. Gillray, *Britannia Between Death and the Doctors*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

William Pitt is forcefully removing "Doctor Addington" from the sick room: Sidmouth had conceded the office of Prime Minister to Pitt just ten days earlier. Both politicians are presented as physicians. Charles James Fox has been knocked to the ground. Pitt has overturned Sidmouth's bottle of "Composing Draft," and is holding a bottle labelled "Constitutional Restorative". In his pocket can be seen a pamphlet titled "The Art of Restoring Health". This illustration represents the body politic to be in danger from charlatan or quack doctors, and it also challenges the authority of both politicians and medicine by making the political physicians utterly ineffective and ridiculous.

Images of politicians as doctors are recurring in Gillray's caricature. In *Doctor Sangrado Curing John Bull of Repletion* (1803), Gillray again uses medical imagery to represent a political situation:

Fig 9. Gillray, *Doctor Sangrado Curing John Bull of Repletion*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

Sangrado, a character from Alain Rene Le Sage's early eighteenth century novel *Gil Bas*, is a doctor whose only remedies are hot water and blood-letting, and whose name became shorthand in the period for a medical impostor or charlatan. Caricatures in the period often used these 'types' to present political figures. Here, Sidmouth is Sangrado, bleeding John Bull, representative of the English public, so that his son may take a portion of the blood. To the left stand Sheridan and Fox, also holding out their hands for a share. Sidmouth had recently conferred upon his son, who was described as a "mere boy" (Wright and Evans 224), a profitable clerkship.

Fig 10. Gillray, *Physical Aid*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

Physical Aid (1811), again by Gillray, features Sidmouth as a doctor once again, administering aid to Britannia this time as she recovers from a trance. Use of the imagery of medicine and disease demonstrates the way the country was commonly perceived as a living body under threat from illness and injury. Thelwall's idea of the political physician who would provide remedies for political disease is expanded upon: the physician may also be a charlatan or quack who further injures the patient. The bodies of the monarchy and government are also mocked in the *Black Dwarf*, and related very much to their practice: incompetence becomes physical lack, false self-assurance becomes gigantism.

These rulers no longer have two bodies, natural and political, as described in traditional treatises on the body politic, but one body, which is the site of both physical and moral unfitness: this is a convention of caricature as mentioned earlier. In light of this, the description to which I also referred to earlier of Cobbett, Wooler's ideological peer, as a "political giant" now seems to render him excessive and condemnable ("Letters of the Black Dwarf" 1:6 89).

In other cases, the body politic was not represented in terms of the danger of expiring but it was already deceased. The "Letters of the Black Dwarf" from 25 April 1821 is addressed to John Lambton — a politician nick-named "Radical Jack"— "on the laughable dismission [*sic*] of his proposed measure of moderate and practicable reform" (573). On 17 April 1821 Lambton renewed a proposal he had previously offered for parliamentary reform, which included a redistribution of seats, shorter parliaments, and a wide franchise. Lambton was humiliated by being mistakenly prevented from voting for his own motion. The article in the *Black Dwarf* is, as usual, written by Wooler in the character of the journal title. The Whig-party is a "skeleton" without a head, and the Black Dwarf asks: "Is there any hope of vitality being restored to the *drybones*? Can possibility effect such a miracle as its re-

scusitation [*sic*]? ” (578). Here, Wooler satirically asks whether life can be restored to a skeleton. In the Romantic period, the boundaries between life and death were unclear, and were debated in medicine. The success of resuscitation methods on drowning victims in particular led to concern that it was not easy to tell death from life. In fact, the French *Encyclopédie* defined two types of death: “incomplete” and “absolute” (Arasse 37). Others posited that the only way to be sure of death was the commencement of putrefaction (Curry 4). Being reduced to a skeleton, in all certainty, indicates “complete” death. Once again, Wooler satirises the ability of the medical profession while ridiculing political opponents. The language of resurrection, used to shock and disgust the reader continues in the *Black Dwarf*’s treatment of the dissolution of the Birmingham Pitt Club.

Pitt Clubs were established in most towns across the country in the early nineteenth century. Set up in commemoration of William Pitt, the younger, the Clubs promoted “Pittite” politics. The Birmingham branch began a three-year suspension in 1821, and articles in the *Black Dwarf* portray the end of the Club as a literal death, using medical and bodily metaphors. In “Death of the Birmingham Pitt Club” (1821) the organisation is described as a “mischievous spirit” (515), and a club that has “expired” (516) as the writer believes that the suspension will be as “fatal to its existence, as an hour to the vital principle of any ordinary malefactor” (516). In an article titled “Ghost of the Birmingham Pitt Club” (1821), the club is depicted as ghost-like, as the “death” and “burial” of the club has taken place due to “*unequivocal signs of putrefaction*, on *many of* [its] *limbs!*” directly referencing the idea that only decay could unequivocally indicate death (737; original emphasis). Ideas of the imitation or perversion of life are evoked in the article, which makes reference to “resurrection m[e]n” and “bone-raising” (737). These terms also invoke criminal activity associated with the medical profession: grave robbers who sold bodies to respectable anatomists for dissection. Wooler thus levels charges of grotesque crimes at his opponents.

This article continues to use imagery of resurrection in a provocative manner, suggesting that the raising of William Pitt's body would be the "least offensive representative of vitality" (738). The article describes a Club at which the bodies of the people who were slaughtered at Peterloo are on the board, the waiters are the cavalry who killed them, spies, and executioners, and the wine is served from the skulls of the soldiers who fought in the "*glorious wars*" in France (738; original emphasis).

In the next article of the 1 April 1818 issue of the *Black Dwarf*, "Emigration to America," Wooler responds to concerns about the possibility of a mass emigration of English people to America. Wooler describes the tax man as "a more frightening monster than any wild beast of the desert": again making those in power monstrous (206). He also uses the idea of the politician as doctor once again, stating that blind patriotism is "the epidemical disease, and the state doctor has no power to cure it" (206–207). Once more those in authority become excessive, and they are ineffective and unable to perform the role they have been entrusted with.

The final article of interest in this particular issue of the *Black Dwarf* is a poem submission titled "A Loyal Sermon". This poem makes satirical use of bodily metaphor to describe the political system:

> *Pay the taxes with glee!* Don't the fable plain tell ye,
> You're the *ignoble parts*, and the state is the *belly*!
> The *Exchequer's* the *paunch*, for receiving the food,
> And *pensions* are *veins*, for conveying the blood!
> *Sinecures* are *pores;* and the – 's great *vent*,
> For digesting the refuse of the state ailment!
> You are parts of the body, but if *fingers* will not
> Work hard for the *mouth*, why the fingers *must rot*.
> Or if *toes* at the belly should venture to scoff,
> And refuse to jog on, then toes *must be cut off*. (14–22; original emphasis)

The poem is attributed only to "P****," and the author is asked to "excuse some alterations" (208). Unlike a rather more literary sonnet also included in this issue that is addressed to

Major Cartwright, a reformer with strong links to the *Black Dwarf*, the "Sermon" is addressed to "dear Brethren" and the form is simple rhyming couplets (207). It is delivered as an ironic message to would-be reformers to know their place. A self-conscious reference to Aesop's "fable" of the body politic demonstrates awareness of the way this metaphor could be used to control, oppress, and suppress the people (14). The satirical message is that the reader should know their place in the body politic. If extraneous parts of the body do not perform their labour then they may decay or be removed. Political authority is figured as the greedy, devouring parts of the body. The poem is written in colloquial language and terms such as "plain tell ye" suggest a writer of a lower class, but the "Sermon" is subtitled "Supposed to have been preached by authority". The tone is that of an authority figure condescending to talk to those lower in society to reiterate the listener's place in society (207). The implications of "Loyal" — perhaps a play on "Loyalist"— and of the title are to suggest that the body politic metaphor no longer rings true. Labourers do not work merely for those above them in the structure described as the body politic. The "Sermon" is perhaps in dialogue with poems such as Hannah More's "Will Chip's True Rights of Man," published under the name "a Journeyman Carpenter" in *The Loyalist* (1803) a periodical "addressed to all patriotic persons, especially to the soldiers, sailors, and loyal volunteers". More's didactic ballad states:

> That the rich do not work some pretend to complain,
> While they hint that the poor do but labour in vain;
> But is there no labour, then, let me demand,
> But the march of the foot, or the work of the hand?
>
> Tis the head that directs, 'tis the heart that supplies
> Life, vigour, and motion to hands, feet, and eyes.
> Though diff'rent our stations, some great and some small,
> One labours for each, and each labours for all. (5–12)

The “Loyal Sermon” uses very similar language to More’s ballad; in fact, More had previously published *Village Politics* “by Will Chip” (1792), in which characters invoke Aesop’s fable in order to appease radical sentiment. In More’s poem, workers are reduced to body parts: feet and hands to march — as a government-protecting army — and to toil. The head and heart, the nobler parts, are those in authority and their presence benefits the workers. Those in “small” or labouring stations in society, More explicitly asserts, should be happy to toil to support the system. An alternative John Bull, representing only those of the lower, labouring classes, Will Chip’s name demonstrates his place in society: “Will” suggests compliance and willing, and “Chip” — a commonly-used nickname for carpenters — is also descriptive of “something forming a portion of, or derived from, a larger or more important thing, of which it retains the characteristic qualities” and is usually applied to persons (*OED* “chip, n.1. 6.a.”).

In this and other cheap repository tracts, More uses the vulgar ballad form to suggest both an author and a reader belonging to the labouring class: a different kind of authority is gained from a sense of being on equal terms. Will Chip is a cheerful, acquiescent labourer who knows and accepts his place in society, and is content to work hard for those in power without questioning their authority. Wooler’s “Loyal Sermon” appropriates this idea and makes it ridiculous through the use of carnivalesque excess rooted in bodily grotesquery. The “Sermon” caricatures More’s instructive ballad. The imagery used in this issue is common throughout the run of the periodical: using the language of bodily excess and the carnivalesque, Wooler makes ridiculous those in power in a manner equivalent to contemporary drawn caricature.

2.3 Monstrous Creatures in the *Black Dwarf*

The political body is made monstrous in Wooler's *Black Dwarf* but it is also described as being under attack from monstrous creatures. The use of fable, mythological creatures, and animals from traditional mythology as allegory assumes that readers have some knowledge of the classics, therefore positioning them as educated and literary. Radical periodicals were even given the names of mythical terrors such as the *Medusa* and the *Gorgon*. The eighteenth century saw the publication of new translations of classic literature such as Virgil and Homer and reference texts such as Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1695), John Lemprière's *Bibliotheca Classica* (1788), John Bell's *New Pantheon* (1790), and Godwin's *Pantheon* (1806). These texts provided descriptions of creatures of classic fable. Geoffrey Miles (1999) describes the Romantic writers' use of myth as a "perennially valuable vehicle of insight" (12). For Wooler, mythical creatures provided evocative and literary images to accompany political rhetoric. They also demonstrated the vulnerability of the body politic. Instead of inciting the laughter and ridicule of his audience, Wooler uses mythological creatures to emphasise a serious threat to the reader.

These mythological creatures are not just threatening because they are excessively large. "Records of Persecution" (1818) is a regularly occurring article from the *Black Dwarf* concerned with recording "the cruelties the people have sanctioned by not resisting them," here accusing the labouring classes of enabling their own mistreatment in a manner typical throughout the run of the periodical (77). In the 4 Feb 1818 article, the Gagging Acts have left a "deep sting and vital wound upon our Constitution" (77). The term "sting" here suggests an attack by a venomous creature: perhaps a serpent. A similar image is evoked in an article in a later issue of the *Black Dwarf* titled "Political Judges" (1820), which examines the integrity of those who have the highest power in the legal sphere. In this article sedition is

ironically figured as a creature, with a crest — a ridge or a tuft of feathers upon its head— that attacks the constitution: "sedition raise[d] its crest, and aim[ed] a blow at the vital principle of the constitution itself" (526). The Constitution has been embodied: it is stung and wounded. The use of the term "vital principle" medicalises this body further. The term describes an intangible force or power residing in a living human body, the existence of which was contemporaneously being debated in medical circles.[13] Whether or not this principle existed, it stands little chance against an attack from a mythical creature. John Milton describes the serpent in *Paradise Lost* (1667) as "crested" (174) and the Basilisk is described as a venomous part-snake, part-cockerel beast with a "comb," or crest, in the 1852 edition of seventeenth-century physician Thomas Browne's *Works* (251). The classical definition of a monster was hybridity; a feature which had new meaning in nineteenth-century medicine when surgeons such as Hunter were interrogating the boundaries of species by, for example, attaching teeth to the crest of a cockerel (Ruston, *Creating* 121).[14]

The Basilisk, also called a "cockatrice," has an entry in Edward Phillips' dictionary *New World* (1658), where he states that the Basilisk "driveth away all other serpents. . .bears her body upright to the middle: she kills fruits by her breathing upon them, burns herbs, breaks stones" ("Basilisk"). The idea of the country's constitution as a human body pervades articles in the *Black Dwarf* and the threat upon the body comes not from inside the constitution but from a venomous force or mythical creature outside it. A crest also refers to a coat of arms from chivalric times, sometimes placed on weaponry. The image here has connotations of battle during feudal times, providing a contrast to a civilised modern government. Here, defence against attack is required. Acts which limit freedom, then, are

[13] See chapter three for a detailed discussion of the vitality debate.
[14] Gillray's *The New Morality* (1798) interestingly, portrays radicals such as John Thelwall, William Godwin, Coleridge, and Robert Southey as monsters and hybrids, demonstrating that the "monstering" of political opponents took place on both sides of the political sphere.

given vitality by being described as monstrous beings or unnatural forms of life, and most importantly, outside influences not integral to the political system.

As well as employing the imagery of myth and fable, Wooler uses real creatures often represented in literature to describe a threat to the body politic, specifically utilising snakes and serpents to represent a hidden or venomous malevolent force. The third issue of the *Black Dwarf* begins with an article titled "The Folly of the Middle Classes" (1817) which states that this class has: "devoted their ingenuity and industry to foster a serpent that has stung them to the quick" (37). Here, the middle-class body is under attack. The image of the snake or serpent, most obviously related to the image of the devil in the garden of Eden, or a "snake in the grass," is used in the *Black Dwarf* throughout its run to represent appetite, concealed danger, conspiracy, or a wounded system. This third issue of the *Black Dwarf* also features the "Letters of the Black Dwarf" (1817), which in this issue is addressed to "John Bull" and focuses on the right to petition. The Dwarf mocks: "You have the rights of *petitioning* you say. . .you see those whom you petition have a voracious appetite for such kind of food. They swallow them as fast as the serpent of Moses swallowed all the other serpents" ("Letters of the Black Dwarf"1.3 39; original emphasis). Here the serpents are made monstrous by cannibalism coupled with an excessive greed.[15] The Dwarf also uses the image of serpents as excessive but also obscure when discussing the French Revolution, stating that during the uprising "the gilded, but tremendous serpents of the moral world, were to be forced from their coverts" ("Letters of the Black Dwarf" 7.2 72). Use of the term "covert" as a hiding place suggests the invisible quality of the serpent, and the focus of revolution is here to expose this dangerous animal.

In an article titled "The Close of the Year, 1821" the current political system is described as a "wounded snake," dragging itself lamely along (930). A reoccurring article

[15] I further discuss the significance of cannibalism in political rhetoric in chapter five.

describes the "Monarchical Principle" or, as detailed in 1823, "power assigned without responsibility" ("Examination and Illustration" 11.7 220). The use of the term "principle" suggests a scientific or medical analysis: it calls to mind the "vital principle," which is an intangible concept of mysterious origins, like this ruling power. In a later issue from the same year the principle is likened to the teeth of a mythical beast:

> Like Dragon's teeth in the fable, which being sown, sprung up *armed men*. The slightest particle of it left, and it only wants a wicked heart, and a plotting head, in either a monarch or a minister, to spring to full maturity again. . .it matters not that the weakened principle may be dormant for a while, as the snake is torpid in winter. ("Examination and Illustration of the Monarchical Principle" 11.9 295)

The principle is clearly described as monstrous. It must be fully eradicated, for if even a small amount remains, argues Wooler, than any amount of corruption will be enough for it to be reborn, despite its seemingly deceased status. This image evokes the irrepressible qualities of the dragon or serpent's lizard-cousin, the hydra, a symbol that I discuss shortly. However, it also draws on contemporary medical knowledge of suspended animation: in his *Observations* Hunter writes that "snakes and fishes, after being frozen. . .retained so much of life, as when thawed to resume their vital actions" (87). Wooler is calling for the abolition of hereditary power using these images of a threat that can revive at any moment as a warning to the people. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the King's madness and the Prince's excesses had demonstrated the unfitness, in mind and body, of the line for ruling.

Similarly, in 1821, when examining the King's role in the state of the Ilchester Gaol, which was found to be inhumane by Henry Hunt, Wooler describes the ignorance of the King to the serpents in administration:

> A monarch, in the custody of the present administration, may truly be called their monarch; since they use his name and authority to sanction deeds, from the perpetration of which he would revolt with as much horror, as from the venomous fangs of the most hideous serpents! ("Investigation at Ilchester Gaol" 457)

Here the King is not aware of his name and authority being used by the custodians of government institutions, and the writer suggests that he would be as repulsed by the idea as from a venomous snake. This is another example of the way in which the *Black Dwarf* uses the snake or serpent to represent that which is poisonous but hidden, a danger that must be revealed. In another article a method of funding, of "a satanic nature," is described as a concealed threat:

> smooth as its tongue and fair to the eye as it first appeared, and gentle as its earl acts, its deformities now are everywhere seen; its cruel fangs are everywhere felt, and, in the grasp of the monster, liberty and property must alike perish. This system, so desolating and so prolific of misery, must be brought under subjection to the constitution, or the constitution must expire in the folds of the serpent. ("Proceedings at the Middlesex" 247)

Here the hidden threat has been revealed much to the chagrin of the people who were at first fooled by its "smooth" tongue, or persuasive words, and its pleasing appearance, bringing to mind the snake in the garden of Eden whose eloquent speech enticed Eve to consume the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. The real serpent is deformed, monstrous, and dangerous, with venomous fangs. The British constitution, described as a physical body under attack, is being consumed in the "folds" of the snake, an image that suggests constriction, suffocation, and oppression.

As well as the serpent revealing itself or being exposed, the "scotched snake" is an idea used multiple times in the political satire of the *Black Dwarf*. Quoting act three, scene two of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) in which the title character is concerned that, although the immediate threat to the throne has been eliminated, there are still others who would attempt to overthrow his position, the writer for the *Black Dwarf* uses the image to discuss those who would tyrannize the freedom of the press. The Bridge Street Gang or Den of Conspirators against the Press, the name the radical press gave to the Catholic Association,

is described in this manner, but the snake is no longer a threat: "the snake is scotched so deeply, as to have but little chance of doing any further mischief" ("Anticipated Dissolution" 786). In 1822 an article is titled "The Scotched Snakes Still Hissing; Or, Sharpe and Murray in the Field Again," Sharpe and Murray being the "base agents" of the "Bridge Street Gang". The article calls for the "final blow" that is needed to destroy the scotched snake in question that constricts the freedom of the press (325). Discussing the conviction in 1824 of John Hunt for libel, Wooler writes again that the "snake" of the "Bridge Street Gang" was "'scotched' but not 'killed' [and] has contrived to use its poisonous fangs again" ("Proceedings of the English" 65). Further examples of the "scotched snake" in reference to groups that were used to control the press may be found throughout the run of the periodical. The idea of exposure and of the journal being able to reveal corruption as outlined in the "Prospectus" of the *Black Dwarf* corresponds to the idea of the hidden political "snake". The "scotched" and yet still alive serpent is also redolent of the irrepressible quality of the hydra. However, as I have discussed, medical authority was aware of the snake's ability to regain vitality from a seemingly dead state, confounding the search for clear boundaries between life and death, and between classifiable animal and monstrous hybrid.

Images of monstrous reptilian creatures can be found in "Substitutes for the British Constitution" (1821), again from the *Black Dwarf*. These images are attached to despotism, which is described alternatively as "a thing that can roar," "an amphibious animal," "a fiend," and a "many-headed. . .monster" (495–6). More general use of medical language is made in this article, as politicians are figured as "quacks," "state physician[s]," and, satirically, "esculapius" (more usually spelt "Aesculapius"): the Greek god of medicine (495). Classical myth continues in the *Black Dwarf's* use of monsters: letters to the editor of the *Black Dwarf* and articles including "The Folly of the Middle Classes," feature the "hydra of corruption"

(38). The hydra image is used to portray that which is seemingly irrepressible. The final head of the hydra is often described as immortal. Godwin defines the hydra in his *Pantheon:*

> Hydra was a furious dragon with a hundred heads, and endowed with this peculiar property, that if any one came against him, with intent to destroy him and cut off one of his heads, two others immediately sprung up in its place. (136)

Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable states that the term "hydra-headed" "is applied to a difficulty that goes on increasing as it is combated" ("Hydra"). The hydra is also apocalyptic in its threat of bringing down society. Used both by conservative writers as well as radicals, the hydra became a common metaphor for revolution in both France and America in the period (Wilf 165).

Monsters in human and animal form populate the pages of the *Black Dwarf*. The grotesque figure of the publication's title guides the reader through a series of satirical articles that describe unnatural and terrible bodies. Bakhtin's ideas of the grotesque and the carnivalesque features to unite people in a communality, and Wooler creates a written caricature for his readers to attempt this kind of communal force, using the signs and signifiers of excess and lack and including recognisable themes such as the "state physician". The rulers of the country are transformed into squabbling children or else brutal beasts. The body politic has gorged itself into sickness and monstrous serpents threaten the freedom of the press and the people. Bakhtin states that:

> The medieval and Renaissance grotesque, filled with the spirit of the carnival, liberates the world from all that is dark and terrifying: it takes away all fears and is therefore completely gay and bright. All that was frightening in ordinary life is turned into amusing or ludicrous monstrosities. (47)

While the tradition of the grotesque and the carnival might be medieval, the *Black Dwarf* continues to adapt the codes of contemporary caricature to provide a strong political stance embellished by an imaginative satirist's style.

In addition to borrowing from traditions in literature and myth, Wooler's *Black Dwarf* became itself influential, galvanising its own satirical treatment in Buxton's *Political Quixote* and direct opposition in Sidmouth and Merle's government-endorsed *White Dwarf*. It also instigated more flattering testaments: the *Blue and White Dwarf* was established after the General Election of 1818 (Thompson 677). Hazlitt and John Hunt also published a radical Saturday paper named the *Yellow Dwarf* from January to May in 1818 ("Hazlitt, William" *DNB*). The *Black Dwarf*'s vulgar, bawdy tone offends the sensibilities of its conservative detractors: Wooler's style is described in the *White Dwarf* as "insulting" and "provoking" as well as being "trash" belonging in the "gutters" and on the "dunghill" ("Cobbett and Wooler" 136–137). The theme of "trashiness" is also addressed in *Political Quixote* in which a character describes the influence of the *Black Dwarf* on the labouring class man:

> Our oppressors are that man's contemptible trash, and the liquids you continually pour down your throat.— Before you took to reading those vile Dwarfs, Antonio, you were orderly and prosperous — you were accustomed to honour your Creator, and to take your family to church; but now those abominable vehicles for sedition and blasphemy, and your ale, are your oracles; and your evenings and the sabbath are spent, with other anarchists, in guzzling, in tumult, and complaint. (4)

The theme of the worker being content in his or her place is demonstrated in this quotation: before reading the *Black Dwarf*, Antonio was satisfied with his place and complied with the demands of those in authority. Wooler, the Black Dwarf, sees this authority as ridiculous and truly monstrous, and as such believes that there is no reason why the labouring class should willingly submit to what he conceives of as their ill treatment. By making explicit reference to the codes of caricature, and making use of the subversive powers of the carnivalesque and the grotesque, Wooler renders those in power ludicrous and outrageous in their excessive bodily monstrosity. He also draws parallels between medical practice and political agency. Wooler challenges medical authority alongside political authority, attacking pseudoscientific theories such as physiognomy and ridiculing contemporary debates about life and death.

Other limitations of the medical profession — the quackery and the ineffective or dangerous treatments — are satirised in the representation of the state doctor. Although this is a figure of fun, the representation of a bodily attack on the country and the people aims to incite a sense of personal injury in the reader. In the following chapter, I analyse attacks on the medical profession by conservatives who were concerned that science challenged political and religious authority.

Chapter Three: William Lawrence, Richard Carlile, and the Physiology of Free Speech

In the 1810s the surgeon William Lawrence was publicly condemned in the periodical press as a materialist, religious sceptic, and a political radical for a series of medical lectures he

delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons of London. This chapter argues that Richard Carlile, one of the radical printers who published Lawrence's lectures after they were withdrawn, used Lawrence's lectures for his own avowed materialist, radical, and atheist views. Carlile also used Lawrence's lectures to construct free speech not only as a political right but as a natural human right that could be proved by physiology.

Lawrence's lectures debated the existence of a "vital principle" with fellow surgeon John Abernethy and their disagreement was a political and also a public matter. Lawrence's lectures were dangerously aligned to French science and radical politics, and they were widely reviewed in the periodical press. A copyright case in 1822 brought the debate to a wide and general audience that the lectures themselves did not reach. Carlile used the content of Lawrence's lectures in his periodical, the *Republican*, and drew connections between the freedom of speech of the people, the periodical press, and of the medical profession. Carlile took three key ideas from Lawrence's lectures during the vitality debate: that speech proves the superiority of mankind over animals and is therefore a natural right; that the mind is material, and not immortal and spiritual; and that Lawrence could be utilised as a symbol, comparable to Galileo, of government opposition to the search for knowledge and truth.

In 1817, the Treason Act and the Seditious Meetings Act, known together colloquially as the "Gagging Acts" were passed, and Habeas Corpus was suspended. In this newly repressive environment, Carlile strove for freedom of speech and of the press, which were often combined in the period; he made the natural rights of man into a physiological issue by using Lawrence's model of human life, and he wrote extensively in a dialogue with his readers and several correspondents about the ways in which these rights were denied by government and its institutions, especially religion.

Carlile began his career as a printer, but re-launched William Sherwin's *Political Register* as the *Republican* in August 1819, from his printing shop at 55 Fleet Street in London. It had a readership of around five thousand in the early 1820s (Wiener 117). The weekly paper, costing twopence for sixteen pages of large octavo, was re-established in the immediate aftermath of Peterloo (Royle 32). At Peterloo, Carlile, present on the platform, had only narrowly escaped injury, according to his friend and biographer Holyoake (16). Despite being imprisoned in the same year for seditious libel — namely his persistent reprinting of the works of Paine — Carlile's monthly journal was maintained for six years (apart from a year-long hiatus in 1821) during which time it published anti-clerical and anti-establishment articles (Keane 20). This was due to the efforts of Jane Carlile, his wife, who was herself imprisoned in 1821 along with Richard's sister, Mary Ann (Keane 21). In 1820, the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act made small, cheap papers such as the *Republican* illegal. This press act is described by Carlile's most reverential biographer, Guy Aldred, writing in 1941 while the act was still in place, as existing "mainly for [Carlile's] benefit" (83). To combat this act, Carlile doubled the size of the paper and put the price up to sixpence, providing more content for the higher price (Royle 32). The format of the *Republican* was a mix of extracts from free-thinking classics, comment on the latest government tyranny, correspondence, and local reports.

Carlile was involved to various degrees with many periodical publications during and after the *Republican* years: the *Deist* was set up alongside the *Republican* (1819–20), and the *Moralist* — a twopence paper in the form of essays on vices such as drunkenness and idleness, and Carlile's proposed remedies for them — was established in 1823, and the *Lion* (1828) and then the *Prompter* (1830), *Isis* (1832) and the *Gauntlet* (1833) followed after the *Republican*. Even later the *Scourge* (1834), the *Christian Warrior* (c1842–3), and the *Church* (1848) were also conducted by Carlile (Cole 36). However, it was the *Republican* that was

the most controversial and long lived publication, and it gained the most attention for its repeated demands for freedom of speech, being published mainly while its editor was imprisoned and the government introduced act after act to curb liberty.

The first section of this chapter considers Lawrence's lectures and the key strands of criticism levelled at him because of the interpretations of his views. The politics of the vitality debate and its influence on Romantic writers has been examined in detail by, among others Marilyn Butler in "The *Quarterly Review* and Radical Science" (1994), and "*Frankenstein* and Radical Science" (1996), Nicholas Roe in the introduction to the essay collection *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life* (2001), and Sharon Ruston in *Shelley and Vitality* (2005). In contrast, I focus here almost entirely on Lawrence's lectures, and the accusations they provoked, in order to demonstrate how Carlile utilised them for his own radical agenda. Lawrence's *Lectures* were withdrawn shortly after they were published and Lawrence was suspended from his posts at Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals. Despite refusing to admit any "sacrifice of independence," in 1819 Lawrence felt compelled to renege publicly on assertions that suggested a materialist viewpoint in order to continue in his profession (*Lectures* 3). Although the copyright case of 1822 ensured that his ideas moved beyond the medical sphere, the periodical press also helped to disseminate his lectures, and his retraction was published in the press as well, in a format that intentionally drew comparisons with the iconic martyr to science, Galileo.

The second section of this chapter examines Richard Carlile and the *Republican*, his most outspoken radical periodical publication, situating Carlile in a loose network of radical printers and publishers in the early nineteenth century. It also examines Carlile's representation of government and religious tyranny and of Lawrence as a martyr to the cause of scientific truth. The third section analyses in detail Carlile's application of his interpretation of Lawrence's ideas, offering quotations and ideas from the lectures to his

correspondents who, according to Carlile himself, had presumably not seen the original texts. Carlile used Lawrence's lectures to prove that speech was natural to man, its free exercise promoted healthy development and would lead to intellectual enlightenment, and he argued that its suppression denied a basic human and physiological right.

3.1 William Lawrence's Lectures

Lawrence's lectures to the Royal College of Surgeons were published as *An Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology* (1816) and *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* (1819). They were part of a wider debate on the cause and nature of human life. The search for a principle of vitality posed simple but profound and philosophical questions: whether life was simply chemistry, or a living body was the sum of its biological parts, or even if it was a more mystical force, "super-added" by a divine spark which only a creator-God could bestow. The differences between organic and inorganic, and dead and living matter became focal points of the debate. In 1814, Lawrence's former mentor John Abernethy had produced his *Enquiry into the Probability and Rationality of Mr. Hunter's Theory of Life*, in which he defended and built on work by his own mentor, John Hunter. During his earlier career, Abernethy had attended the lectures of Hunter, with whom he became personally acquainted. Hunter had great intellectual and personal influence on Abernethy and the surgeon became the spokesperson for Hunter's views on vitality after his death. Abernethy claimed that he was privy to Hunter's unpublished and unmentioned views: he suggested that the vital principle resided in the blood, and compared this principle to electricity (*Enquiry* 88–9).

Although Abernethy's lectures were widely accepted without comment in the popular periodical press, the September 1814 issue of the *Edinburgh Review* contained a critical review of Abernethy's publication of his inquiry into Hunter's theory of life. The review

attacks Abernethy's assumption of authority on Hunter's opinions. The *Edinburgh* was established in 1802 by a small group of Scottish Whig lawyers including Francis Jeffrey, who later became a politician and judge. It was aimed at an educated, liberal readership: accordingly, the review of Abernethy refuses to accept long-held views merely on faith. The review of his *Enquiry* accuses Abernethy of misusing or misreading the views of his mentor and of being naive in his assumptions about a vital animating principle. Abernethy's lectures are described as "deficient both in sound reasoning and good taste. . . a collection of bad arguments, in defence of one of the most untenable speculations in physiology" ("Inquiry" 381). The review continues:

> Now, whatever our author may have intended this 'Inquiry' to be, we think it must be pretty apparent to every one, that it is any thing but a defence of Mr. Hunter's theory. It is the development of a speculation altogether peculiar to himself. (396)

The review suggests that Abernethy's view was the controversial stance, but when Lawrence gave his lectures in 1816, he was quickly seen as a dangerous and atheistic radical. Abernethy claimed to support Hunter's ideas on life by suggesting electricity was a similar mysterious force that could be added to the body. However, Abernethy admitted that Hunter's notes were often illegible and much of his material for asserting his mentor's beliefs came from private conversation, and the accuracy of his representation was called into question, as can be seen in the following quotation. The reviewer attacks Abernethy's mode of vitalism, writing:

> If there must be a theory of this sort, right or wrong, the advocates of a vital principle will supply us with one in a moment. It is this all-powerful agent, they assure us, that forms every texture and humour in the body: in whatever part it resides there the ordinary chemical affinities are set at defiance; and when it departs, waste and corruption succeed. Such, we believe, are the chief applications of the doctrine of the vital principle, which are not peculiar to Mr. Hunter; and we have no doubt that we shall give heinous offence to their authors and abettors, when we avow, that the doctrine seems to be altogether absurd and preposterous under all its modifications. ("Inquiry" 389)

The "doctrine" of the vital principle, the reviewer writes, offers a too-simple explanation for life. The term "doctrine" presents the concept of a vital principle as a long-held view which

cannot be easily challenged and does not encourage new or independent thought: the indisputable nature of the vital principle is borne out by Lawrence's reception. The *Edinburgh* reviewer is willing to challenge this "doctrine": a preoccupation of the liberal press in the period was often to encourage such personal independent thought in its readers, instead of offering prescriptive opinion as conservative papers did.

This review appears to stand alone in the mainstream periodical press in its criticism of Abernethy aside from a brief line in the *British Critic* that calls these lectures harmless "nonsense" ("Introduction" 63): his *Enquiry* perhaps would have gone unremarked upon aside from this review in the *British Critic* if not for Lawrence's rejoinder in his *Introduction to Comparative Anatomy* (1816), in which he begins by thanking his former mentor, but continues by attacking Abernethy's theory as a "disgrace" to the name of his own mentor, and a "fiction," a simple and unenlightened idea akin to a belief in "sorcery or witchcraft" (165; 177). He dissects Abernethy's assertion that the vital principle is comparable to electricity as unfounded, and writes that it is unscientific: too much is taken for granted that cannot be proven (169). He writes that "electricity illustrates life no more than life illustrates electricity" (171). In 1817 Abernethy published his *Physiological Lectures*, and without naming Lawrence, he attacked a "party" of "Modern sceptics," who threatened the reputation of the surgical profession (53; 37). In his *Introduction* Lawrence had stated that:

> Life is the assemblage of the functions, and the general result of their exercise. Thus organization, vital properties, functions, and life, are expressions related to each other; in which organization is the instrument, vital properties the acting power, function the mode of action, and life the result. (120–1)

While using the vocabulary of vitalism, Lawrence denies any extra or "super-added" principle which endows life: it is merely a consequence of the organization and functions of the body. The body's organs, operations, and its processes are entirely connected, and life can be explained by examining the physical body. It is through the material body, as I later

reveal, that Lawrence differentiates between human and animal life. In his 1819 *Lectures on Physiology* Lawrence defends his views on vitality, writing: "that life then, or the assemblage of all the functions, is immediately dependant on organization, appears to me, physiologically speaking, as clear as the presence of the sun above the horizon causes the light of day" (7). Lawrence offered what he believed was undeniable proof that no vital principle caused a body to live, but did not deny the existence of the human soul, even though he was charged with this by his critics. In his 1819 *Lectures*, Lawrence also strongly defends his own right to free speech, as I reveal later in the chapter .

The vitality debate took place within the medical sphere and was quickly brought to a wider readership by periodicals. However, according to Carlile's version of events, the early reviews did not reach a large audience and neither had Lawrence's *Lectures* ("Dr. Rudge" 15). This is hardly surprising: the *Lectures* were published and withdrawn in the same year. According to Carlile, it was difficult to find a copy of Lawrence's *Lectures* as they were sold only in specialized booksellers during their original, and legal, publication. Carlile stated that he knew nothing of them until they were withdrawn, writing in a letter to the Reverend James Rudge published in the *Republican* on 14 January 1820: "they were previously published by a medical book-seller, and almost wholly contined [*sic*] to the profession" ("Dr. Rudge" 15).

Lawrence's lectures were reviewed widely when they were first published. Approximately one hundred and twenty articles in the *British Periodicals Online* database referred to Lawrence's two published lectures between 1816 and 1822; peaking in the key years of Lawrence's public attention, 1819 and 1822. Fifty six of these articles were published in 1822, while only thirty were published in 1819 when the *Lectures on Physiology* was first published and quickly suppressed, perhaps proving Carlile's assertion that the *Lectures* was not widely known during their first publication and indicating that it was the copyright case of 1822 that brought the *Lectures* to greater public attention. Lawrence

attempted to stop the reprinting of his lectures in 1822, and an injunction was granted, but was revoked by the Tory Chancellor, Lord Eldon (Ruston "Natural Enemies" 80). Lawrence's public reputation had been restored by the retraction, as an article on the case in the *Morning Chronicle* describes Lawrence as "a Gentleman of scientific celebrity. . .enjoying the highest reputation in his profession" ("Assizes"). This case once more brought Lawrence's lectures to public attention.

According to James Smith, a pirate publisher like Carlile, the lectures were deemed blasphemous and therefore no copyright could be awarded, but Lawrence still contended that the *Lectures* were "hostile neither to religion nor to morality" ("Assizes"). The Lord Chancellor and the censor of the press, Lord Eldon, did not agree with Lawrence (Carlile, "Lawrence's *Lectures*" 538–9). He admitted that the situation was complicated, but felt he must stand by the principle of denying the author a copyright for such work and he refused Lawrence copyright in March 1822 (Zall 436; 439). For better and for worse, the *Lectures* became connected in the press with Paine's work and also with Byron's biblical drama "Cain": publisher John Murray applied for a copyright for Bryon's play after cheap pirated versions appeared on the market but was denied this by Eldon due to the dangerous or immoral tendency of the work in the same year as Lawrence's *Lectures* were refused protection ("Christian Retrospect" 318; "Lawrence's 'Lectures'" 538; "Reports of Cases" 283). The *Radical Triumvirate*, subtitled *Infidel Paine, Lord Byron, and Surgeon Lawrence, Colleaguing with the Patriotic Radicals to Emancipate Mankind from All Laws Human and Divine*, which was produced by "an Oxonian resident in London," also made this connection in 1820. In "Cain", the Mosaic account of creation and human origins are questioned, and scientific ideas are used to challenge religious doctrine, just as Lawrence's lectures had

done.[16] In 1823, the *Edinburgh Review* states that this controversial loophole in copyright law "scarcely attracted the public attention until the excommunication of Lord Byron's Cain, and of the Physiological Lectures of Mr. Lawrence," at which time the notice of the public was caught and Lawrence's *Lectures* once more brought into the public sphere ("Reports of Cases" 287). In April, the month after the copyright case was decided, twelve reviews were dedicated to Lawrence's *Lectures*: the average for the year is about six reviews of Lawrence's *Lectures* in the periodical press per month.

Although the focus of this thesis is the periodical press, it must be noted that books such as Thomas Charles Morgan's *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life* (1819), Thomas Rennell's *Remarks on Scepticism* (1819), and John Barclay's *Inquiry into the Opinions, Ancient and Modern, concerning Life and Organization* (1822), also commented on the debate surrounding a vital principle and were also reviewed in the press alongside Lawrence's lectures. Carlile's stance on Lawrence was unusual among the critics in the mainstream press: the public support he showed does not seem to be present in other periodicals. Although the *Edinburgh Review* had attacked Abernethy's lectures, when Lawrence's lectures were published no review was written and no support could be found for Lawrence in that publication.

While scholarly attention has focused mainly on the *Quarterly's* review of Lawrence's *Lectures* — see, for, example, Butler's "The *Quarterly Review* and Radical Science" — Lawrence's work was discussed at length in a varied range of periodicals with different readerships and content, commencing from the publication of his *Introduction* in 1816. Significant reviews can be found in the *New Annual Register* (1780–1825) in 1816; in the *British Critic* (1793–1843) in 1817 and in 1819; in the *Kaleidoscope* (1818–1831) in

[16] In "*Cain* and the Painites" (1975) Stephen L. Goldstein gives a comprehensive study of *Cain*'s science and its importance to Carlile and other radicals.

1821; long reviews can be found in both the *Eclectic Review* (1805–1868) and in the *Republican* in 1822 and 1823; and in the *Imperial Magazine* (1819–1834) (over the course of several articles) in 1822.[17] The variety of publications that reviewed the lectures shows a wide dissemination to several types of reader, and each took a slightly different stance on Lawrence. The first review can be found in the *New Annual Register*, and it does not condemn Lawrence entirely: although the editor, Andrew Kippis, died in 1795, he was a non-conformist clergyman and as such, the paper was less conservative and perhaps less reactionary than Lawrence's other religious objectors ("Kippis, Andrew" *DNB*). Much of the yearly periodical's pages were dedicated to political and parliamentary comment, history, and world affairs. Wordsworth's poems "Snow" and "A Sonnet" appear in the issue that reviewed Lawrence's introductory lectures. The reviewer describes Lawrence's publication as "extraordinary" and as having a great deal of both "merit and. . .demerit" ("Chapter II" 252). Due to this, the reviewer explains that the review of Lawrence's *Introduction to Comparative Anatomy* has been given more space within the pages of the *New Annual Register* than it would normally allow.

The *Introduction* is not reproduced at length in this article, as would be usual for a review, but is quoted from specifically on numerous occasions, giving the reviewer freedom to interpret Lawrence to the readership, rather than offer large portions of the text itself as was usual practice. The reviewer states that the Corporation of Surgeons have proven themselves worthy of the increase in status granted by the change in "academic name" to the Royal College of Surgeons through their endeavours for the public good, including the

[17] "Chapter II: Physical and Mathematical." ; "Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology." and "Remarks on Scepticism."; D'Oyly, George. "An Enquiry into the Probability and Rationality of Mr. Hunter's Theory of Life."; "Materialism Explained."; "Lectures on Physiology."; "Lawrence's Lectures" and "Lectures on Physiology."

quality and availability of medical lectures (252).[18] However, the reviewer is concerned about Lawrence's attack on established opinions and what he describes as unashamed scepticism, materialism, and atheism (253). This review first shows the concern that would later be demonstrated by D' Oyly in the *Quarterly Review* that Lawrence's views are a danger to the younger generation of surgeons and that "foreign study," meaning the study of French science, is in part to blame ("Chapter II" 253).

Lawrence's lectures caught the attention of conservative publications mostly concerned with religious matters as well as general interest journals. The *British Critic*, edited by Rennell from 1811, comprised mainly reviews of poetry, sermons, and religious writing. In the article on Lawrence's lectures, the reviewer expresses a respect for the surgical profession and, while naming Abernethy's introductory lectures a "deviation into nonsense" that is amusing but not harmful, Lawrence is once more accused of being an atheist and a danger to his students' education ("Remarks" 63; 64). The reviewer concludes with an attack on Lawrence's demand for free thinking, writing that "free thinking is but another word for no thinking at all," demonstrating an argument against Carlile's advocacy of free discussion (73).[19] Rennell was blamed, in part, by Carlile, for Lawrence's withdrawal of the *Lectures*.

Lawrence's reviews were sometimes less harsh, demonstrating that his professional reputation, although damaged by the *Lectures*, was not destroyed. The *Kaleidoscope*, a weekly publication, expressed this point of view. The paper focused on popular culture and scientific news. The article on Lawrence, included under "Scientific Notices" was written in response to a letter to the editor from "A. Theo. Philanthropist." The article describes Lawrence as an established and well-known surgeon of "talent and attainments" with "high professional character," but his lectures are described as "unphilosophical" and "dangerous"

[18] In 1800, the College received their charter, establishing surgery as a profession, although it was still an apprenticed craft in the period (Bynum 5).
[19] See also Martin Priestman's discussion of Lawrence, Carlile, and freethought in *Romantic Atheism* (2004).

("Materialism" 251). However, the reviewer states: "let us not be charged with dragging in religion to decide a physiological controversy. The blame rests with those who have perverted physiology to the support of scepticism" (251). Accusing Lawrence of manipulating his work to fit his supposed sceptical views, this review offers some of the more forgiving criticisms.

Some saw Lawrence's work as a dangerous attempt to gain notoriety. The language in the *Eclectic*'s review of Lawrence is inflammatory, accusing men of science of "annihilat[ing]" God by "ceaseless effort" ("Lectures on Physiology" 481). The *Eclectic Review* contained mainly reviews of scientific and religious publications, seizing on Lawrence's work as an example of the tensions between the two spheres. Lawrence's *Lectures* suggested that if organised matter was capable of supporting a healthy body and its natural interactions with the living world, a higher power was not required to govern man. The reviewer accuses Lawrence of knowingly attacking Abernethy's lectures with a view to escaping "disadvantageous comparison" with his mentor and talks of the tendency, of which he claims Lawrence was well aware, among the younger generation of surgeons to equate scepticism with philosophy and, as such, admire it (482). Lawrence is accused of using the platform of his lectures to acquire fame and admiration.

In 1822, the July, August, and October issues of the *Imperial Magazine* contained an extended review of Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology*. The first review is prefaced by a quotation taken from a poem published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in August 1748, which states: "For let the whitling argue all he can/ it is religion still that makes the man" ("Lectures on Physiology" 668). The *Imperial Magazine* focused on Christian life, conduct, and religious thought, and this quotation establishes Christian thought as the basis of human identity, and implies that Lawrence is a "whitling," a small type of fish, suggesting that Lawrence is a lower form of life, unable to contemplate the existence of a higher being, and

that he is therefore godless. This is similar to the comparison that D'Oyly cited, which I examine shortly, that life, for Lawrence, is the same in an oyster and a man.

From the evidence of these periodicals, during the years of the debate with Abernethy Lawrence seems to be the more widely reviewed figure due to the radical and controversial nature of his lectures. These reviews were mainly written only to attack Lawrence: there is very little support offered. As Abernethy's lectures are the voice of the establishment, they do not seem to attract much notice from the mainstream press, except to provide proper contrast to Lawrence.

In this way the periodical press brought the vitality debate to a wide general audience. In these articles, the content of the actual lectures given by Lawrence was described by reviewers to readers who may not have actually attended or read them. Up to two pages of Lawrence's lectures were extracted in the reviews, but most usually a single paragraph was cited to prove one point or another against Lawrence's words. In the *Republican*, Carlile wrote approximately fifty letters that referred to Lawrence's *Lectures* between 1819 and 1825: thirty two of these were written in 1822 alone. In these letters, Carlile did not reproduce large sections of the text of the *Lectures*, for practical reasons of the brevity demanded by the letter form, but also in order to shape their contents for his own purposes. He also assumes that his addressees have not read the lectures themselves: this view is demonstrated in his letter to Rudge, as he writes "it is very probable that you, Sir, have never attended [Lawrence's] lectures or read them" ("Dr. Rudge" 12). By 1822, after they had been withdrawn by the author, three new editions of the *Lectures*, of various sizes and prices were on the market ("Lawrence's *Lectures*" 538). One of these was printed by Carlile himself, advertised for sale in the *Republican* alongside copies of the Koran ("Advertisement" 189). The holy book was published, in formats to suit all pockets, in order to provide direct

comparison with the Christian bible, and to further promote Carlile's ideal of free discussion in a typically contentious manner (Ali 528).

I now outline the reasons that Lawrence's lectures were the subject of controversy, looking particularly at the article in the *Quarterly Review* written by the Reverend George D'Oyly that accuses him of not separating mind from matter and of aligning himself with the French. In his *Lectures* Lawrence refers to French anatomist Marie-François Xavier Bichat's ideas that life is comprised of the functions of the body that resist death. This was an idea taken from Bichat's *Physiological Researches on Life and Death,* published in 1800. Bichat refused to believe that life derived from a single source and instead believed that life "*is the totality of those functions which resist death*" (1; original emphasis). Bichat divided life into organic and animal, and considered the different functions of each. He also examined the nature of the tissues and organs that made life possible, but he did not speculate on any underlying causes. Bichat's work is nonetheless often described as vitalist, showing that the distinction between vitalism and materialism is not always clear. While vitalism is a broad term that acknowledges a difference between living and dead matter, materialism usually does not. Lawrence admitted that his theory of life was influenced by Bichat and also by fellow French natural philosopher Georges Cuvier's idea of life as a series of connected biological "phenomena" (*Introduction* 121). The German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was also a key influence, and Lawrence translated his *Comparative Anatomy* into English in 1807. Lawrence believed there was a profound difference between living and dead matter, including "vital properties and forces" (*Introduction* 121). In spite of this, for Lawrence's critics, an alliance with the French school did not go unnoticed, and he was vilified for this association. As Lawrence states in his 1819 lectures, the French were

"considered. . .natural enemies in science, as well as in politics" (*Lectures* 5).[20] Lawrence had also, in his 1816 lectures, praised the facilities available for scientific study and endeavour in France, compared to the more limited resources that were available in Britain, describing its universities and research centres as "liberal institutions for the advancement of knowledge," praising "that uniform encouragement of talent, to which science will forever be indebted to the French Government" (*Introduction* 75). At a time when British-French relations were severely damaged by the Napoleonic wars, this was a dangerous view to adopt. Despite some in the scientific community making efforts to rise above this vast national divide, taking ideas from French science was still problematic for Lawrence.[21]

D'Oyly, a conservative Church of England clergyman, found fault with Lawrence's supposed assertion that "medullary substance is capable of sensation and thought," or that thought originates in the physical matter of the brain (*Introduction* 144). In *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001), Alan Richardson examines in detail the status of the study of neuroscience in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, concluding that this period saw intense focus and progress on the science of the brain, mind, and nervous system. However, Lawrence's statement, according to D'Oyly, denied the existence of the human soul, and as I have demonstrated, it was as an infidel and a materialist that Lawrence was attacked in the conservative and religious periodical press of the early nineteenth century. D'Oyly found Lawrence's theory of life profoundly disturbing, as demonstrated in the *Quarterly Review* issue for July 1819 article where he reviews several publications key to the vitality debate, including Lawrence's *Introduction to Comparative Anatomy*. Founded in response to the *Edinburgh*'s liberal views, the *Quarterly* provided a

[20] Ruston uses this quotation as the title for an article on Lawrence and the politics of science in the Romantic period (2005); her *Shelley and Vitality* (2005) offers an extended analysis of the cultural impact of the vitality debate.

[21] The chemist Sir Humphry Davy won the Napoleon Prize prize from the Institut de France in 1813, which he crossed the channel to collect during a brief peacetime interlude (Knight 96).

conservative contrast. It was established by a group of politicians, editors, and writers initially including John Murray and Sir Walter Scott, in the autumn of 1808. In his review, D'Oyly expresses his concerns that Lawrence is a dangerous materialist teaching atheism to his students (4). According to D'Oyly, Lawrence's view of life held that life was basically the same in all living beings whether "an oyster or a cabbage" or a man, and that "medullary substance," or, the matter of the brain, was capable of thought and sensation (3). D'Oyly is outraged by this suggestion, writing:

> Mr Lawrence. . .now affirms, in language which none can misunderstand, that all the phenomena of life and of mind result entirely from the bodily structure, and consequently that death, which destroys the bodily structure, destroys the whole of man! (6)

In essence, D'Oyly believed that Lawrence was equating mind with matter, as well as doing away with the idea of the eternal soul: a key part of Christian doctrine.

Contemporary concern with the brain and the mind also challenged concepts of human life and experience. Leading medical figures in Britain such as Charles Bell and Erasmus Darwin expressed new accounts of the mind and its functions that were biological (Richardson 5). Richardson writes:

> Historians of neuroscience, of biological psychology, and of neurology concur in viewing the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a crucial period for the emergence of an unprecedented series of hypotheses and discoveries concerning the brain and nervous system. (1)

It was during the period under review, in fact, that the brain became definitively identified as the organ of thought. Instead of seeing the brain as an undistinguished whole, anatomists now began to conceive of the brain as an assemblage of different parts performing various different functions. These new ways of looking at both the intangible imagination and the physical brain were so important to concepts of human identity because, as Richardson writes:

> Language, free will, the connections among ideas, the organic development of the mind both in the human species and in each human individual. . . these were all profoundly related issues for various Romantic-era thinkers. They had become closely intertwined through a whole set of postulates, theories, and research agendas that came to prominence in the work of a handful of influential writers on the brain-mind in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who collectively established the precedent for a biological psychology. (5)

Language and freedom of speech, the focus of this chapter, are seen as intimately related to the natural development of the mind: free speech can thus be described as a basic and key human requirement. Here Richardson explains that Romantic thinkers were concerned with the way the brain works and began to develop the study of biological psychology by looking at how ideas are formed and at the anatomy of the brain as a physical organ in relation to the more intangible processes of thought. If Lawrence was suggesting that there was no difference between the basic make-up of the material of the brain — the "medullary substance" — of humans and of animals, then he was effectively doing away with human authority, identity, and autonomy. As Richardson states: "One readily begins to see how high indeed were the stakes of neuroscientific speculation in the era: no less than the existence of the soul, the necessity of God, and the integrity of the self were in question" (12). Carlile found confirmation in Lawrence's lectures for his belief that "the mind is material" and there is no separate soul, or immortal spirit, in which personal identity resides. Instead, it is the physical matter of the brain that produced thought. However, by using Lawrence's work on speech and language Carlile repositions the authority of humanity.

In fact, in his *Lectures* Lawrence admits that science is "entirely ignorant" of the working of the brain but asserts that the mind cannot be separated from the brain: it grows, strengthens, and then weakens as the body grows, matures, and ages (91–4). The brain, Lawrence suggests, is an organ like any other (94). The difference in physical size and shape of the brain of various creatures and their relation to intellect was further proof of this hypothesis (94–5). The intelligence of species such as dogs and horses, and the superior

intellect of great men such as Newton and Shakespeare compared to the common man, also disproves the theory that only humans, and all humans, have a "super-added" principle that raises them above animals (96). Lawrence calls those who believe in this principle "immaterialists" (96). However, the materialism that could be found in Lawrence's work was more tentative than D'Oyly asserted: the proving of the presence of an immortal soul, Lawrence writes, is beyond the capacity of the anatomist or surgeon and such discussion does not belong in the lecture hall (8). Carlile's powerful statement that "the mind is material" and the ideas that followed naturally from this went further than Lawrence's *Lectures* had; Carlile denied the existence of the human soul as religious doctrine defined it, instead synonymising soul, spirit, life, and mind ("James Humphreys" 424; "Thomas Shepherd" 4; "Reverend Robert Hindmarsh" 330).[22] According to Aldred, after 1824 Carlile's views became more extreme — turning from deism to atheism — and he vowed to exclude from the *Republican* the "useless" terms "God," "Nature," "Mind," "Soul," and "Spirit" (Aldred 87). Words that did not have precise and unarguable meanings allowed for dangerous ambiguity, as proven by Lawrence's reception: this was challenged by supporters of "plain-speaking," as I discuss later. As noted previously, accused of materialist views and of French influence, Lawrence agreed to suppress the publication of his *Lectures*, a concession that Carlile wrote "he should never have gratified his enemies with" ("Dr. Rudge" 12).

Abernethy gave the final word on the vitality debate in his *Hunterian Oration* for the year 1819 after Lawrence's *Lectures*: reiterating the "distinct and independent nature of mind [from matter]" (59). In the period, Abernethy's vitalism sustained a model of stability challenged by Lawrence's radical views (Ruston, *Shelley and Vitality* 6). In this debate in which religious views challenged science, religion was the clear winner. Lawrence had

[22] Robert Hindmarsh was a high-profile figure in the early Swedenborgian group, promoting the doctrines to Joseph Priestley in 1791("Hindmarsh, Robert" *DNB*). In this letter, Carlile was replying to Hindmarsh's pamphlet titled *Christianity Against Deism*, which was in turn written in reply to an earlier letter by Carlile. Carlile adopted Swedenborgian terminology and ideas towards the end of his life (Holyoake 25).

threatened national boundaries and a religious society. However, Carlile appropriated Lawrence's lectures to prove views that even Lawrence himself had not exactly asserted, and entered into lengthy debates in correspondence with religious leaders on the subject of what human physiology meant for the laws of society. Lawrence had strongly defended the "freedom of inquiry and speech" that became one of the primary concerns for Carlile in his writing on the subject (*Lectures* 3). Lawrence writes that, while defending his views:

> I willingly concede to every man what I claim for myself, — the freest range of thought and expression. . .to fair argument and free discussion I shall never object, even if they should completely destroy my own opinions; my object is truth, not victory. (3)

The idealisation of truth, the pinnacle of scientific endeavour, is here equated with free discussion.

In a letter from 1819 that Carlile wrote in Dorchester Gaol, describing legalised religious tyranny, he describes Lawrence's own freedom of speech as repressed by "sycophants of the same profession, backed by the alarmed clergy" ("To Mr. Richard Carlile" 230). The tools of government are here represented as unnatural, if they quash the very nature of man, represented by speech. Carlile places the blame for Lawrence's punishment squarely on the shoulders of "priests": D'Oyly, writing for the *Quarterly Review* was one of many outspoken critics in the public sphere, as was Rennell, who was the Christian advocate at Cambridge and editor of the *British Critic*. In a letter printed in the *Republican* in January 1820, Carlile asserts that an anonymous priest in Bath also wrote a pamphlet congratulating Lawrence on his retraction ("Dr. Rudge"15). Even Abernethy is described as joining the priests in criticising Lawrence only after their objections had first been raised: this is not true, but Carlile's assertion demonstrates that Lawrence's most vocal and public critics came from outside of the medical profession ("Dr. Rudge"15). Carlile asserts that "nature had planted in

[Lawrence] a genius to excel in his profession": this natural genius has been oppressed by government-backed religion ("Dr. Rudge" 11).

Despite Lawrence's retraction, the reviews in the periodical press and the decision by Lord Eldon to deny copyright meant that a wider audience had heard of his lectures, even if readers had not been able to purchase a copy at the time of the original publication. In this way the debate on and the "case" of Lawrence took place outside of a medical sphere and became a public matter. The next section discusses Richard Carlile's place in radical publishing in the early nineteenth century and how he used Lawrence as a representation of scientific endeavour oppressed by government.

3.2 Richard Carlile and the *Republican*

The importance of science to Richard Carlile's model of reform has not been given the critical attention that it deserves: while Carlile is correctly identified by his biographers as a pioneer of secular politics, class warfare, and the free press, his view of science was the base upon which he believed that all reform must be built. Writing at the beginning of the first issue of the *Moralist* Carlile asserts that science "may greatly augment the amount of our happiness" because "it requires an improved state of morals, as a co-operation, to extend its benefits, and to lead us towards that perfection, which all must desire" (*Moralist* 2). Carlile refers in particular to chemistry, which he characterises as the "master-science of the age" (1). He is described as a "worshipper of gas" by Robert Hindmarsh (1824), but it was in Lawrence's physiological lectures that he found proof of man's material nature (Hindmarsh 5).

In spite of Carlile's allegiance to Lawrence, the vocabulary of vitalism was so pervasive in the early nineteenth century that, before swearing off the use of "spirit" among other intangible words, Carlile's political writing employed this type of language. In an

article published in the *Republican* in 1820, "Grand and Glorious Progress of Revolution", he asserts: "The spirit of liberty is like the electric fluid — it is one and the same thing; it is the life of man" (472). Liberty is a "spirit", in the terms of the ephemeral, calling to mind the vocabulary of a mysterious "power" or "force" that was used by vitalists as a way of describing an animating principle. Liberty is a spirit that is required for life, a force that is like electric fluid. John Abernethy's particular contribution to the vitality debate was to posit electricity as comparable to the vital principle (*Enquiry* 88). Carlile describes revolution and reform as a galvanising, vitalising force. He asserts the danger of stagnation without this force or spirit: "Everything that is stagnant corrupts and putrifies, both in the moral and the physical world, therefore, revolution becomes as essential to life and health, as happiness" (472). Carlile talks about the danger of stagnation by using words such as "corrupts", which has a double meaning here: the physical corruption of matter which is left in a state of stagnation, and moral corruption within politics.

In the opening lines of the *Moralist* Carlile calls for a view of mankind that is systematic and technical rather than philosophical or religious, lamenting that: "the views of the mass of mankind have been hitherto more chimerical than social or scientific," or, the study of society has been controlled by religious and mystical views, and this secular society should rely on precise and procedural research (1). The purpose of this periodical was to inspire political liberty on an individual level, through eradicating moral laxity, and science was the foundation of this struggle: the ideal of a united population working towards the goal of ultimate truth and greater knowledge of the world. Ignorance, Carlile argues, debases the human race: "all the evils with which human societies are afflicted, arise from the aggregate ignorance of their own state and capacity as individual human beings" (3). To defeat these evils, particularly the state of disenfranchisement of the majority of the population,

knowledge and morality must be obtained, as he writes: "liberty. . .must be recognised as the offspring of morality; and a truly moral people can never be an enslaved people" (2).

For Carlile, free discussion was the key to human liberty. As such, the paper had a heavy content bias towards letters, both to and from the editor, with prominent figures taking part in extended correspondence in its pages. His wife, Jane, also assured that Carlile's trial became public, publishing the trial report in the *Republican* (Keane 21). Circulation reached a peak of fifteen thousand during Carlile's trial according to the editor himself ("To the Readers" 10). From discussing political science, Carlile moved into publishing on the subject of medical science as far as it could be related to politics after he discovered Lawrence's lectures. Despite an early job in a druggist's shop in Exeter, Carlile himself admits that he is "not a man of experimental Science," and had never witnessed a scientific experiment (*Address* 3). However, Carlile entered into the vitality debate from an anti-theological perspective, publishing extensive essays and letters that debated the existence of the "vital principle" and the human soul. Carlile republished Lawrence's lectures after they were suppressed, and his reading of the texts was a blatantly materialist interpretation of Lawrence's views (Lightman 34). Carlile also published an *Address to Men of Science* in 1821, in which he denounced Christianity and urged men of science like Lawrence to retain their intellectual autonomy. G. D. H. Cole writes, in a pamphlet for Victor Gollancz's Fabian Society (1943), that in his *Address* and more generally Carlile "set out to preach a positive doctrine of perfectibility through absolutely free speech and discussion, which would not only banish error but also set free the immense powers of scientific discovery to work for the benefit of mankind" (17). For Carlile, the freedom of scientific debate was strongly related to fair political representation.

According to Holyoake, Carlile was inspired to begin his printing business to distribute copies of Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, the publication that is the focus of the preceding

chapter (10). Carlile posed a threat to the authorities that was well known by his contemporaries: his jail sentence for seditious libel was just six years; however, marginalia from a first volume of the *Republican*, which is held in the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, UK, speculates that Carlile's sentence may be indefinite:

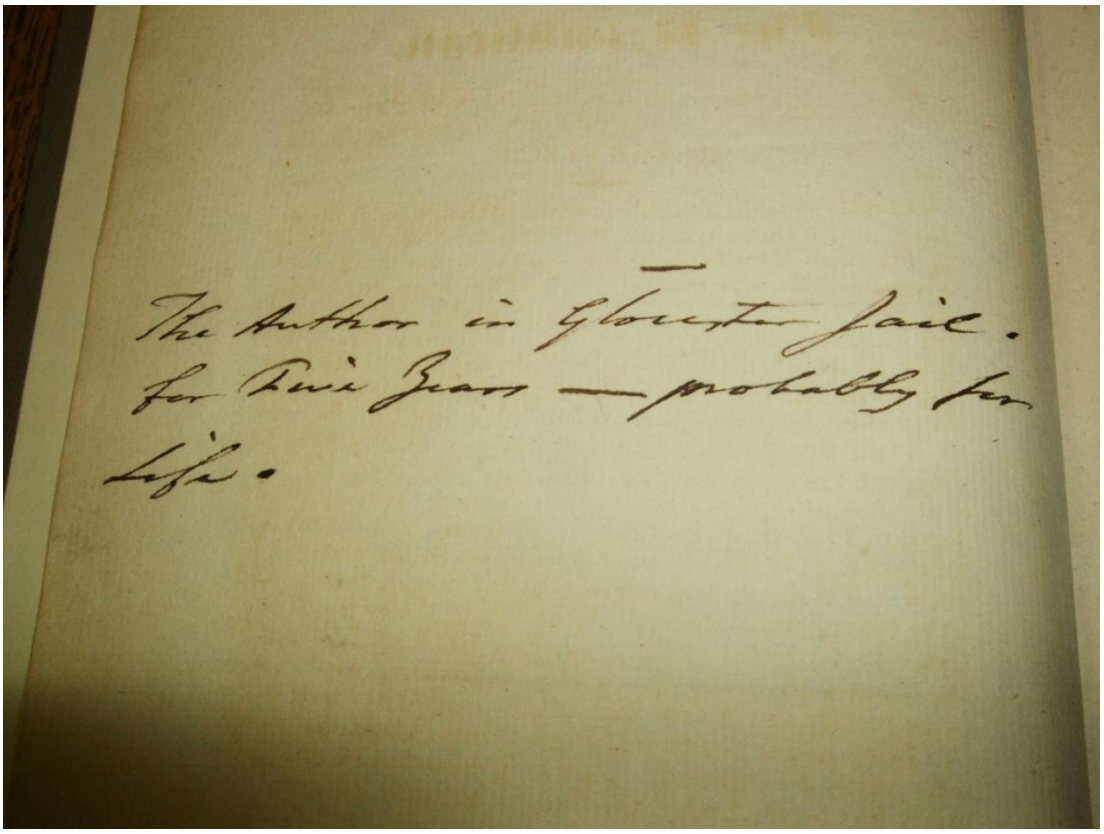

Fig 11. Unknown, *Author in Jail*, Working Class Movement Library, Salford.

The unknown author writes: "Author in Gloucester jail for five years — probably for life." The anonymous writer is confused about the location of Carlile's imprisonment: he was actually in Dorchester. Carlile's conduct while he remained in prison unable to pay his fines was described as "violent and improper" and there was a time when it was thought that he may never be released due to the enormity of the fine imposed (*Parliamentary History* 583; 585). Carlile was released in 1825, but imprisoned twice more for shorter periods, before his death in 1843 (Holyoake 11–12; 15).

Carlile's particular contribution to the radical network is his championing of freedom of speech and thought, and as such, he became an icon for communist and socialist thinkers in the mid-twentieth century. Gilmartin writes that Carlile was the "most vigorous advocate of free public debate" of his peers and this is certainly borne out by his focus in *The Republican* and the motto he used in 1825: "Free Discussion Against All Law" (18). Carlile's renaming of Sherwin's *Political Register* to the *Republican* was, in fact, a return to the original, provocative title, a name Sherwin discarded in 1817 in the wake of the suspension of Habeas Corpus, Cobbett's departure from England, and a wave of radical arrests (Worrall 86).

Carlile, unlike Lawrence, described himself a materialist and a deist during the *Republican* years, eventually announcing himself an atheist in 1822 after he had read Lawrence's lectures and re-launched the *Republican* after a year's hiatus. He was dedicated to exposing "priestcraft" and "kingcraft" as denounced in his *Address to Men of Science*, but also to pursuing scientific freedom to obtain rational truths (Epstein 101). This pursuit of scientific truth, free discussion and inquiry, and republican politics were strongly connected in Carlile's radical sphere (Epstein 101). Carlile and Lawrence's relationship was not entirely unproblematic, as Carlile saw Lawrence's retraction in 1822 as a betrayal of the cause. In his final illness, however, Carlile asked for Lawrence, and he left his body to the surgeon for dissection (Holyoake 27). This was a highly meaningful act in a time when dissection was given as part of the punishment for murder: the 1752 Murder Act gave the College of Surgeons the rights to the bodies of those convicted and executed for this crime (MacDonald 12).

The tyranny of government and religion against science, truth, and free speech quickly became a key theme for the *Republican*. In the opening article for the first edition of the paper Carlile quotes Paine, "these are the times that try men's souls" — an ironic choice

given Carlile's dismissal of the human soul — and, unlike many other radical journals, outlines a refusal to admit letters or articles without the name and address of the author, defending the right to freedom of speech without recourse to anonymity ("To the Public" 1). In an address contained at the close of the first volume "To the Readers of the Republican" (1819), Carlile calls for the establishment of a republican government, suffrage for all men, and the freedom of the press. Carlile also explores the possibility of the abolition of the monarchy and religious creed, outlining his ideal that religion should be a private matter, and not the business of state. Carlile contrasts the public nature of a religious service to that of scientific lectures, writing:

> I see no need for any species of public worship of any Being, real or imaginary. I am very willing to contribute to the support of public lectures on the various sciences: of the one I can see utility, of the other I cannot. (11)

The concept of utility is strongly associated with Godwin, who attended scientific and medical lectures regularly, and whose *Enquiry* also attacked the institutions of government and law that he considered oppressive and unnatural. Connected to Godwin by Percy Shelley's poem *Queen Mab* (1813) which was heavily influenced by Godwin's atheist, republican politics, Carlile was among a few radicals who republished the poem after its own suppression.[23] In Carlile's article, religion is oppressive, science useful. In this article, Carlile invokes Lawrence as a martyr to the cause of science against religion, mentioning the contemporary surgeon alongside Galileo: "Christianity prevailed over science for several centuries, and not only checked its progress, but almost annihilated its former growth. Science is the Antichrist. Let the shade of Galileo speak to this: — let the living Lawrence speak" (14). Religion is the tyrant of science, dogging the pursuit of enquiry and truth.

[23] The important connections between Shelley, Godwin, and Lawrence have also been examined in depth by Ruston in *Shelley and Vitality*.

Carlile was not alone in his comparison of Lawrence to Galileo: Lawrence's letter of retraction was printed opposite the abjuration of Galileo in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1822 ("Varieties" 542–3). Carlile describes the case of Lawrence as "strictly parallel" to that of Galileo, who was accused of heresy by the Roman Inquisition in the seventeenth century ("To Correspondents" 256). Carlile's correspondents also describe religion as the enemy of science, writing near the close of the run of the *Republican*: "Religion has been a dead weight round the neck of improvement. It has been a dangerous and heavy clog on science, and little better in the day of Lawrence, than in the era of Galileo" (Teucer 284). The opinion of Lawrence as a Galileo figure was shared by Carlile's readers.

The importance of Lawrence to Carlile was as a symbol of the search for truth being oppressed by government and the religious institutions it supported. As such, Carlile strove to print not only Lawrence's suppressed *Lectures* but also his letter of retraction, Chancery proceedings, and various other correspondence connected with the lectures in one pamphlet. On finding the collection of all these materials impossible, Carlile grudgingly abandoned this plan ("Lawrence's Lectures" 543). The case of Lawrence became, for Carlile, as important as the content of his lectures as the struggle to print all matter related to the circumstance demonstrates. In the *Republican* in the years after the vitality debate, Carlile focused on other persecuted figures in the public eye and in his circle. A letter from John Harper to Carlile printed in the *Republican* in 1824 confirms that Thelwall was a model for Carlile's discussion of government tyranny towards reformists:

> John Thelwall observes, "The spirit of a great Reformer martyred for a glorious principle, will rise again. The Phoenix mind springs triumphant from the Pyre; and the winds which scatter the ashes propagate the principles for which he fell." You will oblige us by remembering us to Mrs. Carlile, and your worthy sister Mary Ann. . .and all our persecuted friends. ("To Mr. R. Carlile" 587)

Harper mentions Carlile's wife and sister, using Thelwall's mythologizing of radical martyrs. Carlile also used the cases of the women prosecuted for aiding in the *Republican's*

publication for public sympathy, as he had with Lawrence. The articles present the women as martyrs to the cause of free speech, like Lawrence. In the first issue of 1820, on the occasion of his wife Jane's imprisonment, the *Republican* contained the case against Carlile's women: including "The Case of Mrs. Jane Carlile," the "Address of Mrs. Carlile to the Court," and "The Protest of Mary Ann Carlile." The "Case of Mrs. Jane Carlile," written by Richard Carlile, deals with the subject of his wife's struggle with pregnancy, her husband's imprisonment, the seizure of her house and property, and her own imprisonment. It is described by Angela Keane as "part Gothic melodrama, part radical propaganda," and demonstrates the ways in which Carlile presented the real-life radical figures around him as martyrs (22). Carlile begins this article with: "in the annals of religious persecution, since the use of the rack and the faggot have been laid aside, but few cases of punishment, and it may be said sufferings, exceed that of Mrs. Carlile" (14). Carlile compares Jane to Algernon Sydney, a fellow republican who was charged with treason and executed in the seventeenth century (18). Invoking the physical torture of events described in Gothic texts — such as the terrors of the prison cell and the Spanish Inquisition — Carlile places his wife in the role of persecuted Gothic victim set upon by religious tyrants. Adrian Johns (2001) describes Carlile's courting of martyrdom as a method to drive up the sales of his publications, including Lawrence's *Lectures*: similar motivations may have inspired this article (86). Carlile also republished the "Answers of the Queen" and the legal proceedings of the "Queen Caroline Affair" in 1820, once more taking up the cause of a public martyr. In other words, Lawrence was one of many of Carlile's public martyrs.

Carlile also often focused on this theme of legalised religious tyranny. In a letter published in the *Republican* in 1819, written in Dorchester Gaol three months into the run of the periodical, Carlile describes his view of religion as a governmental tool of oppression, writing:

> Every species of religion that has existed and been practised on the base of the earth, has been the invention, fraud, and imposture of priests, supported by Monarchical Governments as a necessary instrument to enslave the bodies and the minds of their subjects. ("To Mr. Richard Carlile" 229)

The government, monarchy, and religion are here described as inseparable strands of an oppressive force, and both repressive and ideological tyranny. Although denying the existence of the human soul, Carlile asserts that humankind nonetheless has a quality that raises the species from brute life: the gift of speech (230). While situated in a radical tradition that included other editors for the periodical press, Carlile held perhaps the most radical views on religion and was particularly concerned with the freedom of the press. In the next section, I examine in detail the source of Carlile's ideas about speech, natural rights, and the ways in which both were oppressed by government.

3.3 The Physiology of Free Speech

This section examines Carlile's reading of Lawrence's lectures and how he applied this to his political writing. I discuss free speech as a theme or theory that developed alongside the periodical press in Britain and the ways in which Carlile took steps to outline man's need for this right. While in gaol, Carlile came to have less faith in political reform for its own sake, and instead looked to education and, most importantly, the power of a free press (Royle 32). This was inextricably linked to free speech as a natural right, and trumped political reform in Carlile's view. According to Cole, Carlile believed that "political reform would be useless without intellectual enlightenment [through free speech]" (19).

A new concept of speech and language was developed during the Enlightenment, when views of man's nature were changing. Language was bound up with cultural, social, and physiological questions. In the seventeenth century the philosopher John Locke wrote about the importance of and the problems with man's capacity for speech in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Locke argued that speech was the bond that held

society together, but society could be easily corrupted by its abuse (373; 364). Carlile's view of language has its origins in this radical thought of the seventeenth century: Susan Manly (2007) writes that, for radicals in the 1790s, "language was a sublime art, an art of great power, but one made by 'artless men', primarily designed to link human beings in fraternity rather than to legitimize hierarchy" (2). Language, then, had an inherent political energy or influence even when those speaking did not, and it strengthened the bonds of society rather than enforced rhetorical didacticism. Locke believed that language expressed complex thought, strengthened social bonds, and increased common knowledge: thus, its importance to society is made explicit (Manly 1).

In the eighteenth century there were debates about how language had originated, and whether it was innate or acquired. In 1759, Adam Smith wrote an essay supplementary to his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, titled *Considerations Concerning the First Formations of Languages and the Different Genius of Original and Compounded Languages*. In this he endeavoured to prove that language was a natural development and not a divine gift (Harris xi). Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* (1786) explored language not from a philological point of view but a philosophical one, rejecting Locke's concerns about the imperfections of language (Aarsleff 13). Another key figure in the debate surrounding the origins of language in the eighteenth century was Lord Monboddo (James Burnett). Monboddo was a Primitivist, who believed that man should endeavour to attain his most natural state. He produced a controversial six volume treatise named *On the Origin and Progress of Language* in 1773, locating the study of language as the study into "the original nature of man" and therefore of great importance (1: i). Monboddo's key concern is whether language is, in fact, natural to man, as he wishes to promote a return to this original state of being, as created by God (1: ii–v).

Monboddo also wonders whether language is necessary for the construction of a society, or whether society is first required for the invention of language (1: ix). He describes language as an acquired skill, rather than a natural attribute, and famously suggests that the orang-utan was a kind of primitive man, too lazy to develop speech (1: 174). Monboddo defines language as "the expression of the conceptions of the mind by articulate sounds" and speech as "not only the mere words and sounds of a language, but the conceptions of the mind that are signified by those sounds," showing the established link between speech, language, and the complex thought unique to humankind (1: 5; 1). The human mind, which demonstrates sentience and intelligence above animal life, is expressed by language, and speech is defined as both language and complex thought.

However, the way writing and speech — particularly grammar — was taught proved to some people their firm belief that most of the population did not have the right or the ability to employ language properly. Cobbett discussed the subject of grammar and its political dimensions in letters to William Benbow, the radical publisher who published Lawrence's lectures before they were suppressed. Although talking about written language, the political acts of writing and speaking freely are inextricable for reasons that are discussed later in the examination of the fight for a free press. Cobbett writes that petitioners for reform who could not use correct grammar were seen by the opposition as "a set of *poor ignorant creatures*, who knew nothing of what they were talking about: a set of the '*Lower Classes*,' who ought never to raise their reading above that of children's books" ("Mr. Benbow" 1063; original emphasis). In *The Politics of Language* (1984) Olivia Smith describes Cobbett's letters as a call to arms, writing that "the division between those who knew grammar and those who did not was, according to Cobbett, one of the primary means of class manipulation. . .learning ignorance, mystery, and authority re-enforced each other to oppress the majority of the population" (1). Therefore, language both defined and separated the classes, it was

required for or else was a bar to political influence, and it was a tool of control and repression. Cobbett's words show the ways in which the labouring classes were both infantilised and made to seem animalistic by lack of eloquence. The political dimensions of grammar are clear: it is related to the elitist educational system in Cobbett's letters, such as the entry requirements to the bar — which was five hundred pounds if one did not know the classical languages — among other tangible restrictions. Educational policy was structured to teach either only enough writing skills for "trade," to be shopkeepers or servants, for example, or to enable students to participate in public life (Smith 12). Grammar was an integral part of the class system and the act of learning refined language could therefore be an act of class transgression, Cobbett asserts, calling to mind Wordsworth's idea of poetry written in the real language of men ("Preface" 287). Experimentation with linguistic reform is described by Richard Marggraf Turley in *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature* (2002) as an attempt at social reform through writing and experimenting with language (2). While this is unarguably true with Romantic poetry, it was the radical writers for the periodical press who took this to a far greater extreme even as the mainstream press criticised and denounced the new linguistic styles. Conservative reviewers and Romantic writers alike saw language as the outward signifier of the health of the nation (Turley 2). Eighteenth-century thinkers such as Robert Lowth — who wrote one of the most influential grammar books of the period in 1762, which continued to be taught in grammar schools into the following century — were concerned with a decay in language, and so Cobbett found rigid and fearful enforcement of "proper" grammar in schools (Turley 2).

Grammar not only enforced the authority of the upper classes, but it controlled them as well. Grammar school students were described by Cobbett as having no "bold thoughts," or original ideas, due to the extensive drilling of "proper" language ("Mr. Benbow" 1076). The relationship between complex language and political thought was therefore deeply

symbiotic. As Cobbett writes in his *Grammar of the English Language* (1819), "he who writes badly, thinks badly" (Letter xxiv). Writing to outline plain and precise grammatical rules in order to subvert "the ingenuity of man to give to our words any other meaning than that which we ourselves intend them to express" (Letter il), Cobbett's attempt to enfranchise the labouring class occurs on a linguistic level. Carlile's *Address to Men of Science* also posited that children be taught to read and write in their native tongue, and not taught the classical languages or even classical literature (4). Faulty grammar allows for political uncertainty, and Romantic writers such as Hazlitt also posited "plain-speaking": employing simple and natural language, as opposed to the elaborate and ornamental classical styles. The prevailing supposition that "only the refined language [of the upper classes] was capable of expressing intellectual ideas and worthy sentiments" presented the labouring class as fundamentally without political agency (Olivia Smith 2). Theories of grammar in the eighteenth century took steps towards using physiology to justify its elitism: sensibility and moral virtue were assumed to accompany this refined language used solely by the upper classes and the complex English verb system was thought to demonstrate the superior civilization of the higher levels of the English race (Olivia Smith 9). However, the radical reformers writing in periodicals in the 1810s and 1820s vulgarised this refined language — Wooler's particular use of the vulgar and the monstrous in the *Black Dwarf* has been examined in chapter two — and fought for the freedom of speech of the press and the individual.

Free speech and natural rights discourse in Britain was catalysed by both the growth of the press and the changing view of mankind. Freedom of speech and of the press are inseparable for Joris van Eijnatten (2011) who writes that, during the eighteenth century: "writers did not usually discuss freedom of speech as a separate topic [to freedom of the press], and in any case, the kinds of arguments they used in defense of print were similar to

those made in favor of freedom of speech" (19). The periodical press was idealised as a public space for free discussion on a national level, and the public sphere created by the press has been analysed in my chapter on Leigh Hunt and public health. Thelwall's widow and biographer discussed concern with freedom of speech, group meetings, and the liberty of the press together as integral to society:

> Two towering bulwarks of British liberty were still left [in the 1790s] as a protection to the people; the freedom of the press, and the *right of associating* for the purpose of discussing their grievances, or, in other words, the liberty of speech. (*Life*; original emphasis 1: 83)

In his later career, Thelwall taught elocution and speech therapy, an enabling of political agency through free speech in a very practical way.[24] In 1823 Carlile agreed that liberty of the press and freedom of speech "are one and the same thing" ("William Tillotson" 109). Van Eijnatten reveals that the tradition of free speech discourse with its roots in the sixteenth century was based on a series of different arguments, with literary figures such as Milton contesting that the free circulation of ideas led to knowledge of truth and refutation of error (24). In "*Libertas Philosophandi* in the Eighteenth Century" (2011) Jonathan Israel examines the extent to which the Enlightenment in Europe in the eighteenth century sought to disseminate knowledge and question authority:

> Only one part of the Enlightenment, the radical Enlightenment, held that all men in society should be enlightened and that the entire truth of what is known to men should be expressed so as to be accessible and available to all. Hence, only the radical Enlightenment was inherently committed to the principle of full freedom of expression and liberty of the press. (1)

Nonetheless, committed they were and the tradition of political radicals calling for freedom of the press continued in the nineteenth century with Richard Carlile and his peers. Freedom of speech has been associated with religion since the sixteenth century, when free discussion of ideas was said to lead ultimately to the rejection of the false (Catholic) religion and the

[24] As I have discussed in my introduction, Thelwall had entered into the vitality debate against John Hunter in the 1790s, and also, as I mention in my previous chapter, he also described himself as a doctor for the body politic.

acceptance of the true (Protestant) doctrine (van Eijnatten 23). The debate was also supported by physiology and religion: the argument that God gave humankind the capacity to reason, placing them above the animals, meant that therefore it is the task and the natural right of humanity to freely do so (van Eijnatten 28). Carlile uses medical discourse to support the need for free speech after reading Lawrence's lectures.

Freedom of speech, for Carlile, was linked to the natural rights of man, a concept that was being discussed by many figures in the period in which he wrote. The idea of the rights of man, and the natural liberties of humankind, were key ideas developed in the changing political landscape of Europe and America in the late eighteenth century. R. S. White (2005) describes the Enlightenment period as a "historical crucible" in which the idea of natural rights were formed, citing Enlightenment concepts of reason as the basis for the concept of moral absolutes (1). Paine's political pamphlet, *Rights of Man* (1791), called for reforms that were based on these rights, which he considered natural and purposive to order within society (181). Paine's pamphlet was also written in language that subverted the elitist doctrine of refined language: Olivia Smith describes his style as "an intellectual vernacular prose" which inspired Carlile, who spoke with a West Country accent, to begin his fight for the freedom of speech (37; 59). Smith also reveals that the "bold vernacular" style adopted by radicals such as Carlile, Cobbett, William Hone, and Wooler would not have been possible to print in the final decades of the eighteenth century (59). The various degrees of aggression, rudeness, and blasphemy of radical writers and the responses to it by the government demonstrated the political effectiveness of the so-called vulgar language.

Carlile also subscribed to Paine's beliefs on human rights and read Paine's pamphlet *Age of Reason* (1794–1807) aloud during the court proceedings against him to ensure its further publication. This pamphlet offered proposals for a society based on morals and ethics that were not outlined or enforced by religious doctrine but human decency: the influence of

this concept can clearly be seen in Carlile's ideal of a secular society based on morality. Carlile was so strongly influenced by Paine that he named his son Thomas Paine Carlile and when his son died, Carlile gave his next male child the same name. Paine's influence on Carlile led to Paine's fresh influence on Romantic-era radical thought: Edward Royle states that Paine was mediated by Carlile to a new audience in the nineteenth century and that Carlile made Paine seem more appealing, if more crude (2). Joel H. Wiener studies the influence of Paine on Carlile in depth in "Collaborators of a Sort," (1987) positing that Carlile renewed interest in Paine's publications, which had not been widely available after the 1790s, and ensured his continued place in radical history: it is certainly true that for Carlile, Paine's ideas of rights and ethics that were not based on religion demonstrated the ideal of a secular model of living. The new nations that emerged in America and France after revolution were based on the natural rights that Paine, among others, outlined.

In the Romantic period, however, these natural rights were borne out for Carlile by physiology: his view of humankind and its rights was proven by medical discourse that separated man from brute creation by the gift of speech, which lead to the complex thought, reason, and the mind that is unique to man among all life. However, even the natural rights of animals were conceived of and defended in the period, with the SPCA being founded in 1809, and the first legislation to protect animals, a bill "To Prevent the Cruel Treatment of Cattle" being passed in 1822 (Perkins 16). Speech, for Carlile, is a natural right and one upon which society must be founded, Carlile calls the need for free speech a "first principle" in a letter to a representative in Aberdeen in 1823, and continues:

> The words *free discussion* seem to strike the mind *instinctively* as every man's natural right, as much as to speak, to move, to feed, or clothe the body. . .it is undeniable that man derives from his powers of speech all those advantages that he possesses above other animals. . .the power of speech is improved by the practice of discussion. ("William Strachan" 460; original emphasis)

Here, Carlile echoes views that were now widely held in America and France: freedom of speech is a natural right of man. Language raises man from other animal life, and this superior gift is improved by its exercise. Without free discussion, hints Carlile, man might as well be a lower animal. In a visual representation of this concept, Cruikshank displayed mute man as pitiful and the rights Carlile mentions alongside free speech are also denied. His *Free Born Englishman* (1819) wears ragged clothes, is malnourished, and is chained in place:

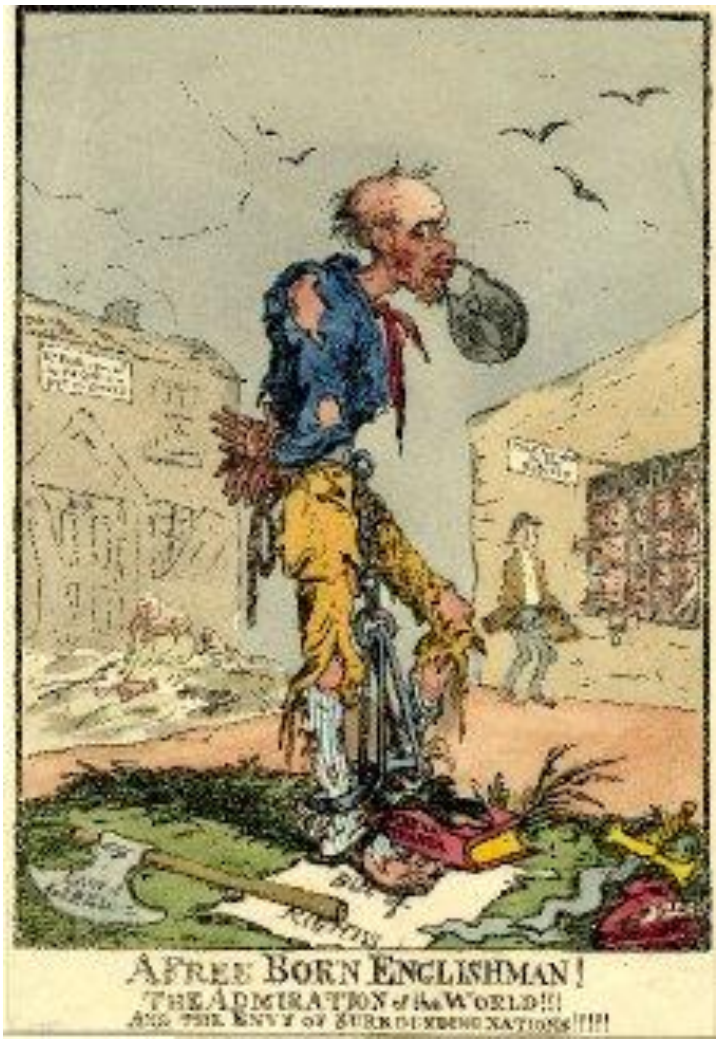

Fig 12. Cruikshank, *A Free Born Englishman*, British Museum, London.

This cartoon demonstrates attitudes to free speech in the period. A liberty cap is crushed, as is the Bill of Rights, and the libel laws under which Carlile and many others were prosecuted are depicted as an axe: an emotive representation of punishment in a period in which French

royals had been guillotined in living memory. The Englishman cannot speak as his tongue has been pierced by an oversized padlock. All natural rights have been taken away; the result is a striking image, considering the two-year-old Gagging Acts.

The idea of free speech as a natural right is proven by physiological study for Carlile through the work of Lawrence, who has demonstrated — in Carlile's words — that it is the "peculiar organization" of the human race "differing from any other animal" that allows for language and "secures" man to "a peculiar faculty of thought and idea" ("To Mr. Richard Carlile" 230). In Carlile's model, speech is a precursor for complex thought and reason. Carlile's language is descriptive of the physical body: "organization" is a loaded term that was strongly linked to Lawrence's supposed materialism. The term refers to the physical body, which was separate to the soul or spirit, or Abernethy's vital principle.

Carlile was, however, selective in his use and understanding of Lawrence's lectures. While Lawrence did strive to separate man from animals, on several instances, Carlile only used the work on speech to prove man's superiority. For Lawrence, anatomical study provided surfeit of proof for the higher nature of humankind: implicitly, there was no need to rely on the religious doctrine of the immortal human soul to provide for mankind's finer nature. In *Romantic Literature, Race, and Colonial Encounter* (2007) Kitson examines Lawrence's *Lectures* in terms of the contradictory notions of the boundaries between human and animal life it posited (73–4). Kitson reveals that while Lawrence describes the human species as an entirely separate order of life, he also uses the concept of the "great chain of being" composed of gradations of organisation (73).[25] Although Lawrence identified the similarities between the organisation of humans and animals, he asserted that man's grasping hand and erect stature are both made possible by unique human anatomy (*Lectures* 158; 134).

[25] I return to Kitson's text in chapter five during my discussion of race and disease in De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821).

Standing upright, Lawrence argues, leads to looking upwards, and, literally, to man's contemplation of the universe and therefore to sentience (*Lectures* 134). Lawrence sets humanity above merely sensory animals, who are "enslaved" to the ground and to the physical world rather than able to contemplate and express complex ideas (*Lectures* 134). While many animal bodies have the physiological capacity to make sound, Lawrence argues, language is the sole preserve of man, and it is from this ability to make meaningful sounds that the intelligent and sentient human mind sprang. In his *Lectures* Lawrence defines speech as "a most important characteristic of man," echoing Monboddo's description of language as key to the original nature of man. However, unlike Monboddo, Lawrence does not believe in a speechless original state of being, writing that "a state of pure nature, in which man is supposed neither to think or speak, is imaginary, and never had an existence" (*Lectures* 227).

Lawrence admits that although animals have no anatomical difference or deficiency that means they cannot speak — proven by the way in which some animals may be taught to copy human sounds — language is a power beyond the grasp of lower beings (*Lectures* 232). Thought, or, the association of ideas, is what distinguishes man from animals, and this is proven by the development of language (232–3). The germ of Carlile's idea of free speech as a natural right can be found when Lawrence writes: "The possession of speech. . .corresponds to the more numerous, diversified, and exalted intellectual and moral endowments of man, and is a necessary aid to their exercise and full development" and calls speech a "noble prerogative," demonstrating the right to speech as a requirement for healthy physiological development (233). Lawrence associates speech next with writing, then printing, demonstrating the link between free speech and the freedom of literature (202). In the opening pages of the *Lectures*, he strongly defends his own right to free speech, writing:

> Without. . .freedom and enquiry of speech, the duty of your professors would be irksome and humiliating: they would be dishonoured in their own eyes, and in the estimation of the public. These privileges, GENTLEMEN! Shall never be surrendered

> by me: I will not be set down or cried down. . .I willingly concede to any man, what I claim for myself; — the freest range of thought and expression. (4; original emphasis)

In spite of this, as I have discussed, Lawrence was forced to publically apologise and was silenced until he acquiesced. Carlile, however, used Lawrence's lectures for his own call for freedom of speech. He describes the ability to process complex sensations as the origin of speech, writing in 1823, "Man's power of speech has its first principle in the capacity of uttering peculiar sounds: his sensations reduce these sounds to signs, and generate what we call speech" ("William Fitton" 825). While animal life is able to process sensations, Carlile believes that the thinking human mind was developed by vocalizing these sensations as speech, rather than speech as a product of an already complex and sentient mind, writing in 1824: "Life, animal life, is sensation; the experience of this sensitive life constitutes mind increased by the powers of human speech" ("A Grand Review!" 71). Carlile repeats the idea that language, not the existence of a soul, proves the superiority of mankind in 1824, writing:

> Every animal has some degree of mind, and man possesses more than any other animal from his capacity so as to modify his sounds as to form a more extensive medium of communicating and for forming ideas. ("Robert Hindmarsh" 341)

The idea that animals cannot modify the sounds they make, proving man's superiority, is taken from Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology* when he writes that, although animals may copy speech, the association of ideas distinguishes man from animals (232). However, Carlile's assertion of the superiority of mankind is not as definitive as Lawrence's. Instead, he echoes Monboddo's idea of the closeness of human and orang-utan nature, when he had quoted Lawrence's description of the peculiar anatomy of the orang-utan's throat in a letter published in the *Republican* in 1823, and concluded:

> Man was a mere *ouran-outang* [*sic*] before he began to speak and to form a language. Recollect, that the uttering of sounds, and the reducing of those sounds to signs makes what you call the soul or mind. The ouran-outang cannot utter similar sounds, nor make similar signs; or, perhaps, he would be a better man than us! ("William Fitton" 829–30; original emphasis)

Here, language is the attribute separating man from brute creation, and not the soul. Carlile satirises man without speech as a benign ape. The idea of the man-like-ape was also a common figure of fun in political discussion in the period. An anonymous cartoon presents a humanoid orang-utan as the “candidate for Westminster” from 1818:

Fig 13. Unknown, *Ourang Outang Candidate for Westminster*, British Museum, London.

Some believed the orang-utan *was* primitive man, who could speak if he were only more motivated. In his *Lectures*, Lawrence ridicules this view of man’s close relation to the orang-utan and the suggestion by Primitivists such as Lord Monboddo that man may even once

have had a tail, but agreed that one of man's two "great distinctions" from animals — the first being reason — was speech (123; 226).[26]

Carlile's physiological model of free speech can be found outlined in his publication in 1822 of the "Resolutions" decided upon at a meeting of the Friends of Religious and Civil Liberty:

> I. That all men have a natural right to express their opinions on every subject; and any endeavour to punish them for using that right, or to deprive them of it, is nothing less than a barefaced attempt to shackle their minds, and keep them perpetually in mental bondage; against which thousands of intelligent men have expressed their abhorrence.
>
> II. That free inquiry and discussion on every subject is the only means of promoting intellectual improvement, and the interest of mankind in general.
>
> III. That as the Printing Press is the grand medium of information, it is the duty of every friend to civil and religious liberty, to use all their endeavours to prevent it from being fettered, and also to assist those who have honestly used it, as the means of expressing their opinions. ("Resolutions" 441)

The "Resolutions" continue with plans to help Carlile's cause specifically and the dissemination of subscription papers. These first three points use several buzzwords of free speech discourse that I examine in depth in this section. The concepts of natural rights, intellectual improvement, and the periodical press as the means to free discussion were all important facets of the debate on free speech. The language used is that of tyranny and bodily oppression: shackles, bondage, and fetters describe an enslaved people, provoking connections with the slavery debate of the period. Speech, for Carlile, has been proven to be a natural right and one upon which society must be founded.

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[26] Monboddo's view is satirised by Thomas Love Peacock in *Headlong Hall* (1816). Mr Escot laments that man has degenerated:

> Happy, indeed! The first inhabitants of the world knew not the use either of wine or animal food; it is, therefore, by no means incredible that they lived to the age of several centuries, free from war, and commerce, and arbitrary government, and every other species of desolating wickedness. But man was then a very different animal to what he now is: he had not the faculty of *speech*; he was not encumbered with clothes; he lived in the open air; his first step out of which, as Hamlet truly observes, is <u>into his grave</u>. (47–8; my emphasis)

This quotation is followed by a footnote referring to Monboddo's work.

Lawrence's work helped Carlile express the importance of speech as proved by physiological study, and also provided a symbol of this speech being unnaturally repressed by religion and government. For Carlile, science — particularly the study of life and nature, or what would shortly thereafter be called by Lawrence himself "biology" — holds the key to truth, and not the study of the bible, as Carlile writes in the letter from 1819: "the book of nature is the only book of genuine truth" ("To Mr. Richard Carlile" 230). The idea of the "book of nature," which enjoyed a renaissance in the Romantic period, was also used by Galileo, although its origins are older but unknown (S. C. Harvey 78). It was believed the study of this "book," unimpeded by religion, would lead to the discovery of truth (S. C. Harvey 78).

Convinced by Lawrence's lectures of a materialist view of the mind, Carlile also took from medical discourse a view of free speech as a natural right of mankind. Religion is seen by Carlile as unnatural and impeding the progress of humanity. Holyoake asserts that by 1829 freedom of the press had been achieved (14). While no laws were changed, the system of fines and sureties was altered so that, according to Royle, they became commutative: Carlile had successfully ensured the freedom of the press to criticise government and religion (31–2). Carlile's sights were now set purely on the liberty of public oral discussion, setting up a School of Public Discussion to this end, with public debates held on a Sunday: the religious Sabbath (Holyoake 14). His next venture, a larger model of the School, was so feared by government that Holyoake describes the conviction that a revolution in Britain would be catalysed by Carlile's "Rotunda" (14–15). My final chapter examines the backlash against radicalism and the ways in which physiological language was employed to describe controversial politics as a dangerous contagion, but I next analyse Carlile's peer, Cobbett, and the way he hoped to galvanise economic change in the same period, also by using ideas taken from medical science. Cobbett's application of language borrowed from the vocabulary of

blood and circulation aimed to portray money in an accurate way for the benefit of the labouring classes, who he felt were being cheated by worthless paper currency.

Chapter Four: Blood and Money in William Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*

In early nineteenth-century Britain, use of paper money increased and the financial system relied more on interest and credit: abstract economic concepts that had first been widely introduced in the previous century. The 1797 Bank Restriction Act — allowing banks to renege on the promise of gold on request in exchange for paper money — had been presented as a wartime necessity. In 1815, the original justification for the Act had disappeared, and the paper money system received highly critical attention from radicals and reformers (Mitchell 174). The national debt had risen from fifty million to six hundred million in the opening decades of the nineteenth century (Sambrook 70). The increasing interest on the national debt could only be met by increasing taxation and producing more paper currency: each new run of paper money that was made to pay the interest on the debt caused a further depreciation of the currency (Sambrook 70). William Cobbett's *Paper Against Gold* (1815) was written after the government's Bullion Committee Report that suggested gold payments on the debt should be resumed.[27] Cobbett saw the repayment in gold of debts taken out using paper as unfair, and wrote that when gold payments resumed, the interest on the debt should be stopped (Sambrook 70). Peel's Act of 1819 provided a full return to the gold standard in the 1820s with no reduction of interest on the debt. The cheque system of the previous century had been introduced to increase the supply of money without the actual abandonment of the gold standard (Sambrook 110–1). Peel's Act resulted in a contraction of bank notes and falling prices (Osborne 140). This lead to scrutiny from Romantic reformers, who wrote against paper money and its damaging effects.

In 1819, Cobbett likened paper money to a cancer killing the economy, writing in the *Register:*

[27] This text is referred to as *Paper Against Gold* in parenthetical and in-text references; Cobbett's 1834 *Paper Against Gold or the History and Mystery of the Bank of England* is referred to as *History and Mystery.*

> They have been in a state of non-payment for twenty two years. But, stop! For some one may say "if they can go on for twenty two years, they can go on *for ever*;" but by the same reasoning, a cancer, that does not kill in a year, will *never* kill. A cancer surely kills *at last*; and so does a paper money not convertible into specie. ("Recent Tricks" 66; original emphasis)

The cancer that is the paper money system — unseen, and seemingly benign — must be exposed before it inevitably kills the system, and the articles that I discuss exhibit the complicated paper system to the reader by using metaphors taken from the lexis of haematology. This chapter examines the idea of money as the metaphorical "life-blood" of the country, and as a resource being drained by government economic policy regarding the national debt in Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*.

Cobbett launched the *Political Register*, a weekly paper, in January 1802, and it ran until his death in 1835. Politically anti-Jacobin until 1804, Cobbett began to question government financial policy under William Pitt's administration. He became concerned with taxes, the national debt, and the increasing reliance on paper money, and he became one of the most outspoken critics of these issues (Dyck, *Cobbett* 33). While during the first decade of the run of the *Register* economic discussion rarely went beyond brief references to stock and commodity prices, the country's financial problems became of key interest to Cobbett in the period of increasing poverty in the 1810s and public finance had more dedicated articles within the *Register* than any other topic (Osborne 113; 131). So central was the topic to Cobbett's thinking that the symbol at the masthead was a grid iron, representative of Cobbett's pledge to let Castlereagh "broil [him] alive" if there was a return to specie while there was no reduction of interest on the national debt ("Note" 1050).

Cobbett, unlike most of the other radicals and reformers who form the focus of this thesis, was not only concerned with urban political life but also very much interested in rural affairs, as Ian Dyck asserts in *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture* (1992). The demobilization following the Napoleonic wars in 1815, coupled with a poor grain harvest in

1816, brought poverty and hunger to rural parts of the country. In response, Cobbett launched a cheap broadsheet edition of the *Register* priced at 2*d*; he also published a two penny pamphlet that had previously appeared in the *Register* as an address "to the Journeymen and Labourers" (1816) that reached a circulation of forty or fifty thousand a week and ten times that many readers (Sambrook 86–7). In the *Register* and the pamphlet Cobbett strongly promoted the call for parliamentary reform over violent rioting (Sambrook 85–6). Cobbett left England for American in 1817 under fear of government prosecution: many fellow radical speakers and periodical editors saw this as a cowardly retreat. As I have previously mentioned, Cobbett returned to England in 1819 with the bones of Paine, which he hoped would be a powerful symbol around which reformers could rally. The *Register* had remained in print during his absence.

To further introduce the question of paper money and its effect on the poor, while the Bank Restriction Act of 1797 was in its twenty-fourth year of operation in 1821, instead of the three months it was originally legislated for, the Bank of England printed paper money at an unprecedented level (Rowlinson 11). The rural poor suffered especially from this act as new country banks also printed vast quantities of paper money, the value of which often did not measure up as equal to its London equivalent (Cole, *Life* 112). The instability of the new country banks was a key concern, as collapses brought ruin to the rural poor, and creditors often refused to accept paper notes anyway (Cole, *Life* 113–4). Cobbett distrusted this system based on abstract concepts like paper notes, cheques, and credit, for these notions had an alienating effect on the labouring classes, and made it difficult for the poor to understand the economy. It also took financial power away from small farm owners, debt having, as Cobbett wrote in 1806, "drawn the real property of the nation into fewer hands [and] moulded many farms into one" ("Summary" 361). Therefore, Cobbett asserted, the poor were unable to challenge or understand increasing taxes that were the product of a system increasingly

reliant on paper money (Benchimol, *Politics* 176). He wrote both to denounce and to expose the system, and saw the importance of making paper money understandable to the labouring classes as the first step towards the necessary destruction of the system and a return to specie of certain and concrete value.

An economy that is based on paper money is a system that is based on belief in symbols. As Marc Shell writes in *Money, Language, and Thought* (1982), "while coin may be both symbol (as inscription or type) and commodity (as metallic ingot), paper is virtually all symbolic" (19). In other words, specie has symbolic value; it carries the image of the ruling monarch, endowing it with emblematic power, but it also has some inherent value because of its material substance. Paper, however, only bears this first, representative, power. Its power is, as Shell neatly states, *virtually* — and it is virtual — all symbolic (19). Alex Benchimol analyses the tyrannical and alienating effect that Cobbett saw the paper money system having on the labouring classes in *Intellectual Politics* (2010) and this supports my argument that exposing the system was Cobbett's first aim.

I first outline the ways in which blood and the human body were understood by the medical profession in the period, and the paradigm shift that accompanied several advances in knowledge and practical medical skill. I next discuss the financial system in the Romantic period, and the growing interest in political economy as a method approaching a scientific discipline, that was ostensibly used to theorise and describe culture and society but, actually, employed as a form of discursive power. I analyse Cobbett's use of metaphor taken from organic systems in a period of paradigm shifts and new complex economic theory. I then focus on the various physiological analogies that are employed by Cobbett within his discussions of the economy: circulation, the state physician, violence against the body politic, ideas of familial status and lineage, and blood drinkers. I argue that these metaphors were useful to Cobbett and others because of contemporaneous shifts in thought regarding blood.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of another type of circulation; that of the periodical press, which disseminated opinions and ideas throughout the country and within wide networks of readers. Particular attention will be accorded to Cobbett's innovations that allowed for wide and healthy circulation of radical ideas.

4.1 Blood in the Romantic Period

The turn of the nineteenth century saw key medical advances in haematology, and this was reflected in the creative output of the period. The circulation of blood had been fully described by William Harvey in *De Moto Cordis* in 1628, and he applied his understanding of anatomy to the state in a new representation of the body politic. Thus, the wide use of the terminology of circulation to describe money quickly followed (Cribb 11). The *OED* cites an early usage of circulation for the movement of money in a translation of Thomas More's *Utopia* from 1684 ("Circulation, n, 7A."). The next major development in the understanding of the properties of blood took place in the early nineteenth century and influenced creative as well as political writing. Hunter's *Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and Gun-Shot Wounds* (1794) posited that life is entirely dependent on blood and its circulation, and, in what amounted to a complete shift in general understanding, also asserted that blood itself is alive rather than a "dead animal fluid" supporting the solid matter of the body (98).[28] He was also one of the first professionals to suggest that blood-letting might be ineffective or even harmful, despite popular demand for the procedure from both patients and practitioners (Moore 249). The justification that blood often collected and stagnated during illness was called into question by Hunter's examination of coagulation, but the practice of letting blood as a remedy for almost any complaint was still so widespread in 1823 that Thomas Wakley's reformist medical journal adopted for its title the tool used by surgeons for venesection

[28] Hunter's work on the source of life has also been discussed in my previous chapter, in regard to the vitality debate of the 1810s.

(blood-letting by incision): the lancet. Hunter's view of the importance of the circulatory system constituted a paradigm shift in the study of comparative anatomy. Rather than judging the relative superiority of species by their ability to generate heat or electricity, or by the irritability and sensibility of the nervous system, the structural sophistication of its circulatory system placed a creature in the overall economy of nature (De Almeida 235).

At the same time, there were important ideological shifts regarding blood in the period during which Cobbett was writing. The eighteenth-century view of the human body was holistic and disease was attributed to an imbalance of the "humours" (Porter, *Benefit* 9). Making changes to the patient's environment or lifestyle, or readdressing the balance through such techniques as purging and blood-letting were seen as a cure for the imbalances that caused illness. Venesection was the most frequently performed surgical intervention for centuries, and its popularity continued long into the nineteenth century, despite increasing suspicion of its effectiveness, especially when performed to excess (de Moulin 18). Blood-letting was not only performed by medical professionals: Roy Porter writes that "wet-nurses, maids, stable-hands, cooks, and so forth" all confidently performed minor treatments including venesection (*Health* 36). Blood-letting was seen as a manual task, rather than a scientific art, and surgeons were considered to be mere tradesmen rather than professionals until the advancements that developed the skill and speciality of the practice of surgery (Porter, *Blood* 115).

The use of more complex surgical techniques, and even the concept that the body could be opened and its interior structure changed to remove disease began to take hold towards the end of the eighteenth surgery. Before this, the interior of the body was seen as something that could not be altered (Schlich 68). The body was now configured as a series of networks and individual parts: systems and organs that could be individually diseased, and thus treated, for the health of the whole. This was an important paradigm shift that had

repercussions in the way that people thought of and spoke about the body politic. The circulatory system became one of the most important of these in nineteenth-century medical discourse, joining these systems (digestive, nervous, and so on) together. Key treatments included trephination (drilling a hole in the skull), lithotomy (removing bladder stones), exarticulation of the large joints (relocating dislocated joints), Caesarian sections, and the treatment of aneurysms, fractures, dislocations, hernia, and tetanus (muscle spasms) (de Moulin 263). The circulatory system was also made visible for the first time by teaching tools. Wax was used to represent the human body for medical purposes. Surgeons such as Hunter collected not just preserved organic specimens, but organs into which coloured wax had been injected.

Fig 14. *Wax Injected Human Left Arm, Europe, 1801-1850*. Wellcome Images.

In this model, the muscles, arteries, and veins of this human arm have been injected with coloured wax to preserve its structure and demonstrate the network of blood vessels within. The circulatory system was exposed more than it ever had been, and the idea of exposure and making the hidden visible is at the centre of Cobbett's argument with paper money.

Surgeons like Hunter also pioneered radical surgical techniques such as the successful removal of formerly fatal aneurysms by tying arteries to redirect blood flow. Aneurysms became a prominent complaint in the period due to the continuing trend for venesection, although the link was unknown at the time (de Moulin 221). Hunter wrote his *Treatise* after serving as a surgeon in the army and learning about treating wounds caused by gunshot and surgical techniques in the field (v). The text placed a new importance on the bloodstream in health and disease (Mauritz 114). Hunter tested theories about blood by experimenting on animals and people, and aimed to draw practical conclusions that were clear and incontrovertible to the reader. His methodology was unusual, as Nicholas L. Tilney writes in *Invasion of the Body* (2011):

> Using findings based firmly on physiologic and pathologic data from both the laboratory and the autopsy room, [Hunter] transformed surgery from a hitherto primitive field to one based on hypothesis, clinical findings, and the use of applied animal research. (132)

Hunter was repositioning surgery as a science, in the modern sense of the word. His inductive method and the wealth of evidence he presents for his claims amount to incontrovertible facts. Blood, Hunter posits, is essential for life (108). Hunter describes the body as a series of interdependent systems all reliant upon blood:

> If we were to take a view of all these systems, each should be considered apart, with all its peculiarities or connections; together with the different systems, as they gradually creep into one another, some being perfectly distinct, while others partake, more or less of both. (93)

Although each system in the body can be seen as a part of the whole, they are all connected and reliant on each other. Hunter thus asserts a complex and nuanced understanding of the way in which a body functioned as a series of systems interdependent on each other. Hunter's language also suggests the idea of the medical gaze "taking a view" of the body holistically, and uncovering its mysteries and seeing its systems plainly. His work aims to illuminate the truth using evidence gleaned from observation. He elaborates:

> No part of the body is to be considered a complete living substance, producing and continuing mere life without the blood: so that blood makes one part of the compound; without which life would not begin nor be continued. This circumstance, on its first appearance, would seem a little extraordinary, when we consider that a part, or the whole, are completely formed in themselves, and have their nerves going to them, which are supposed to give animal life; yet that perfect living part or whole, shall die in a little time by simply preventing the blood from moving through the vessels: under this idea, it is not clear to me, whether the blood dies sooner without the body, or the body without the blood. Life, then, is preserved by the compound of the two. (108)

Although parts of the body may seem to be complete wholes, by restricting the blood flow to one part of the body that part soon dies. The difficulty with this statement, Hunter argues, is that it challenges contemporary medical thought: the nerves are supposed to contain animal — basic, unconscious — life. As William F. Bynum writes (1994), "blood was the. . .real rival to the nervous system as the primary custodian of the life force in late eighteenth-century physiology" (14). Hunter combats earlier views by the example of the apparent death of any organ or part of the body when blood flow is lost. Thus blood and the body are mutually dependent, and life is dependent on both.

Hunter also asserts that the motion of blood through the body, or circulation, provided a vital third aspect of life:

> Life is in some degree, in proportion to this motion, either stronger, or weaker; so that the motion of the blood may be reckoned, in some degree, a first moving power: and not only is the blood alive in itself, but seems to carry life every where; however it is not simply the motion, but it is that which arises out of, or in consequence of the motion. Here then would appear to be three parts, viz. body, blood, and motion; which

> latter preserves the living union between the other two, or the life in both. These three make up a complete body. (109)

The amount of living power, Hunter writes, is dependent on the strength of the circulation of blood. Blood and the body, already established as the two key components of life, require motion, or circulation, to maintain life. In fact, Hunter wrote against phlebotomy in *Animal Œconomy* (1786), asserting, "I would by all means discourage blood-letting, which I think weakens the animal principle, and life itself" (174). This was a view that challenged several hundred years of medical practice. According to Hunter, not only was the motion of blood in the body the key to life, blood itself is alive Elsewhere in the *Treatise* he names blood a "living fluid" (97).

Admittedly, Hunter writes, this idea requires a shift in understanding, or, a "new bent to the mind" (*Treatise* 99). This paradigm shift can be seen in the way that blood is represented by Cobbett, and others, when they discuss blood as life itself. The quantity of blood in the body, according to Hunter, is largely fixed, but is diminished in states of sickness, as more blood is to be found in people who died suddenly compared with those succumbing to a long disease (*Treatise* 88–9). Hunter also posited that blood had an extraordinary power to heal and regenerate organs (De Almeida 90). Therefore, a healthy body, or state, must have the correct amount of blood, or, in Cobbett's model, money, and proper money — specie, particularly gold — would have a restorative effect on the body politic. With blood transfusions, it was believed that a small amount of healthy blood could regenerate in a system that had lost any quantity of blood, pioneering surgeon James Blundell (1824) writes that, "to save a patient, by transfusion, from hemorrhagy [*sic*], it would not, by any means, be necessary to pour in a quantity of blood, equal to that which had been lost" (*Researches* 95). Only just enough blood to keep the patient alive while they regenerate their own blood is required: medical thought endorses a natural state of being and the body's ability to heal itself given the right treatment (95).

This was confirmed by an old idea regarding the health and strength of blood: in a later paper on transfusion, Blundell (1828) writes that, during the seventeenth century, "marvellous are the effects said to have been produced by transfusing the blood of healthy young animals into the veins of old or diseased ones" ("Remarks" 520). The quality, and not the quantity, of transfused blood is the main factor in its success. This is a similar concept to Cobbett's representation of money: while banks could print endless paper, the only money of quality, with inherent rather than symbolic value was specie. Blundell saw blood in a slightly different way to Hunter: as a source of nourishment almost equivalent to food. While experimenting on dogs, he notes that a dog he starved and treated only with blood transfusions and water did not fatigue and die as quickly as expected (*Researches* 76). This leads him to conclude that blood in some way nourishes the body in a similar manner to food. Thus he recommends transfusion not only in cases of blood loss, but also when "the patient is dying for want of nourishment" (80).

The notion that the parts of the body could be removed or altered, and the idea that blood was both a life giving and somehow itself a living fluid in its proper circulation through the body, were ideological as well as scientific developments. While Cobbett adheres to the body politic metaphor in his representation of money as the blood of the nation, Robert Mitchell (2007) reveals Cobbett's very modern understanding of British society as a series of interlocking systems, much like the new view of the human body described by Hunter (2). Maintained "at least in part by imagination," the systems are fragile (2). Their inter-reliance is exposed by Cobbett during his proposed "puff-out" of paper money, which I analyse later. By destroying the financial system, the rest of the discourse of power that the aristocracy maintain over the poor will also collapse. Cobbett's model of society as systems — similar to Hunter's view of the human body — implied that they could be altered in part to change or even destroy the whole. Hunter's new view of the importance of blood, proven by empirical

data, was "so certain, so verifiable, and recognisable. . .that it gained quick and wide currency in the teaching, textbooks, and encyclopedias [*sic*] of the early nineteenth century" (De Almeida 89). New knowledge, clear proof, and interrogating the faith in the construction of society were also promoted by Cobbett to change the systems; and, as such, he aimed to expose the hypocrisy of the paper money system to his readers in a "plain and practical way" (*History and Mystery* 39). This bears a striking similarity to Hunter's call for a "new bent to the mind" and his practical examination of the circulation of blood based on observations taken from experiments.

Further advances followed Blundell's successful human blood transfusions in the 1810s. Blundell's "Experiments on the Transfusion of Blood by the Syringe" was published in the *Medio-Churgical Transactions* in February 1818. Transfusion was a risky procedure and only recommended by Blundell as a last resort in otherwise fatal cases. Having ascertained that inter-specie transfusions were not viable, Blundell recommended using human donors motivated by "affection" or money ("Remarks" 530).[29] The vocabulary of transfusion passed into popular use: former trainee apothecary-surgeon John Keats' poem "This Living Hand" (c1819) contains the lines "thy would wish thine own heart dry of blood/So in my veins red life might stream again," evoking the idea of a successful transfusion being due to affection on the part of the donor (5–6). However, Blundell's ideas about transfusion were based on the idea that only a small amount of healthy blood was required to replace any quantity that had been lost: it was thought by Blundell that healthy blood could regenerate itself (*Researches* 95). Aside from transfusion, blood flow could be controlled in cases of haemorrhage by suturing arteries or use of a tourniquet thus repairing

[29] Specie, of course, is also a synonym for coin or gold. The link is the specific nature of the animal/coin: "In the real, proper, precise, or actual form; without any kind of substitution" ("specie, n. 2." *OED).*

devastating injuries (de Moulin 224). Blood was thus demystified in the period, and it could be controlled, not only by medical professionals but by the lay person, as I now discuss.

Cobbett may have used blood to describe money in his writing because, in this period, medical discussion was still accessible to the non-professional. While the rural poor may not have been able to attend medical lectures in London, the periodical press covered developments in science and, as I shall discuss at the end of this chapter, provided a circulation of ideas that stretched from the metropolitan centres to the rural areas of the country. For example, the *Register* advertised the *Lancet* and its contents, including reviews of lectures by Abernethy and Lawrence ("The Lancet" 512). Blundell's lectures are also advertised here (512). More practical medical knowledge was also provided for the readers of the *Register*: the advertising section from the 16 January, 1830 issue offers "New and Important" publications on "Health Without Physic," "Economy of the Hands, Feet, Fingers, and Toes," "Recreations in Science," "A Treatise on Nervous Affections," "Simplicity of Health" and the "History and Treatment. . .of Coughs and Colds," demonstrating both a keen interest in developments in medicine, so far as they pertained to home treatment, and clearly targeting the rural poor ("New and Important" 91–3). These medical publications far outnumber the other genres advertised, which focus on bookkeeping and education.

Relatively little scholarly research has explored if and how medical treatment was available for the rural poor in the early nineteenth century, compared to work focusing on the treatment available for the urban labouring classes. While the hospital as a site of treatment was developed in seventeenth-century Britain mainly for the benefit of the urban poor, home remedies were still far more widespread among both the middle and labouring classes in the eighteenth-century city than a doctor's visit. We can therefore infer that this was also the case for the rural poor who were even further from treatment centres (Porter, *Disease* 6; Fissell 37). As Mary E. Fissell writes in *Patients, Power and the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Bristol*

(1991) during the eighteenth century, treatment was usually the responsibility of the poor themselves; this only changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Fissell 94). In fact, it was not until the new Poor Laws of 1834 that professional medicine was widely accessible to the labouring classes, when it became obligatory for early career stage doctors to work for the government to provide treatment for the poor (Porter, *Disease* 51). Professional medicine was therefore largely inaccessible to the rural labourer in the early nineteenth century before the Poor Laws. A basic understanding of healthcare was encouraged for home remedies, among which blood-letting would still be prominently featured, as I have discussed. Cobbett represented the doctor as a figure who sought to mislead and deceive the rural poor: in *Rural Rides* (1830) he names politician George Canning as the "state doctor,"a trope of nineteenth-century political writing that has been previously analysed, and that I explore in depth further later in this chapter (123). Enforced quarantine for epidemics also affected the poor's conception of doctors: J. N. Hays (1998) writes that "the poor feared doctors as representatives of another class and as purveyors of remedies often nauseous and painful, and so they resented legally mandated confinement in isolation hospitals in the hands of doctors" before describing attacks on doctors and hospitals across Britain by crowds of the poor, particularly after the Burke and Hare trial (140).[30] Hays continues by asserting that the poor "could hear Malthusian voices who seemed to urge the purging of excess population": a theory that is explicit in an article Cobbett wrote for the *Medical Reformer*, as I reveal later in this chapter. Cobbett's use of the lexis of blood and circulation is therefore implicitly aware of a mistrust or lack of medical authority over the labouring class body and also the practical knowledge of the poor regarding basic surgical treatments. I now analyse the second strand of my focus for the chapter, political economy, and how this was used to alienate the poor.

[30] The political dimensions of quarantine and the effect these measures had on the poor are discussed in detail in the final chapter.

4.2 The Economy in the Romantic Period

Political economy, as a pseudoscientific method to analyse society and culture, became the "dominant mode of social analysis" in the Romantic period due to public debates surrounding the poor law reforms, the wartime peculiarities of the money system, monetary conversion, and protectionism (Connell 6–7). Thomas Robert Malthus and others who wrote on political economy were household names during the period (Osborne 113). Cobbett, however, was wary of the sophisticated vocabulary of political economy, writing in the *Register* in 1825:

> What is this *Political Economy*? The writer speaks of it as if it is an *Act of Parliament*, or, some great *public cause* or *institution*. Who would think that he meant a heap of rubbishy paragraphs. . .written by a Parson who proposed to starve the *working people*, to cheat their *breeding children*?" ("'Liberal' Press" 116; original emphasis)

The "Parson" to whom Cobbett refers is Malthus, whose *Essay on the Principles of Human Population* (1798) asserted ideas about society and resources that were strongly opposed by Cobbett. Malthus theorised that population growth would always eventually outstrip resources, that subsequently the labouring classes should not be allowed to breed freely, and that the previous Poor Laws encouraged this growth. Using the jargon of political economy, Cobbett argues, has allowed Malthus to propose ideas that were taken up by government, and have injured the labouring classes and robbed them of autonomy and humanity. As discussed in chapter three, Cobbett had written a book on grammar, *Grammar of the English Language* (1819), after realising that the way in which grammar was taught impeded those without a certain education from asserting their political autonomy. Cobbett's mistrust of jargon and promotion of plain language can also be seen when he turns to writing about the economy.

Work by economists had some effect on government policy in the period, although how far it directly influenced the Poor Law Acts passed in the period is difficult to ascertain. Malthus' *Essay* posited that population growth would inevitably overtake available resources, and population growth was also used by those in power to account for poverty and lack of

capital. Despite being one of the most influential works on political economy that was published in the period, Cobbett refused to believe in an increase in population on the scale that Malthus and the English government were both blaming for an increasing shortage of resources. Instead, the paper money system was blamed by Cobbett for the increase of poverty (Connell 193). Criticism of paper money and the national debt was closely associated with an attack on Malthus: his position was that resources could simply not keep up with population and therefore innovations such as these must be made (Connell 228).

Donald Winch (1996) and Philip Connell (2001) argue that the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was based on Malthusian principles of population growth (224; 16). As John W. Osborne suggests (1966), the campaign against poor relief was "carried on in the spirit of the latest economic knowledge," using the method of economic theory to shore up arguments for the reforms (105). The Act reformed laws that had been in place for the relief of the poor since the early seventeenth century. It was seen as unfair and unsympathetic to the poor by its detractors. For example, Cobbett wrote against the Poor Law Amendment Act, publishing a satirical comic play titled *Surplus Population: and Poor Law Bill* in the *Register* (1831), refuting Malthus' theory of population growth ("Surplus Population").

In *Monstrous Society* (2009), David Collings argues that Malthus' theory effectively reduced human life to "mere" biology. In Mathus' model "each individual in this world is little more than a body, a capacity to labor, eat, and reproduce," and thus Malthus dehumanizes the population (169). Cobbett, meanwhile, used explicitly physiological language to humanize the financial system. Resistance to a dehumanizing discourse was an important ideological stance for reformers. Gilmartin writes that "where mechanical terms indicated the work done by system and countersystem, Cobbett used. . .organic figures" in his writing against the corruption of the paper money system (16). By doing this, he is, in fact, employing the accepted, dominant discourse of metaphors taken from the organic world to re-

imagine the systems of society. The idea of the political nation as a living organism is also employed by Thomas Love Peacock, another key commentator on the paper money system. His *Mood of My Own Mind* (c1825) also uses blood as an analogy for money: "The paper-money goes about, by one, and two, and five/A circulation like the blood, that keeps the land alive" (16). This poem is taken from *Paper Money Lyrics* (1837), which were written, according to Peacock, "during the prevalence of an influenza to which the beautiful fabric of paper-credit is periodically subject" (*Works* 3: 221). Peacock uses the metaphor of sickness to represent the paper money system. He had also explored themes of political economy in *Crochet Castle* (1831), debating the nature and value of this new strand of social discourse. Political economy, like the paper money system itself, was seen by its detractors such as Peacock and Cobbett as too complex. It became a way of discussing and theorising money that marginalised the poor and labouring classes at the same time that the paper money system removed tangible coins and led to higher taxes in order to take control of the national debt.

While poetry was inspired by contemporary medical advances, analogies that applied the characteristics of blood to social systems also became valuable to discussions of politics. For Cobbett, money was considered the life-blood of the country, and he also repeatedly referred to paper money as blood money because it drained resources so thoroughly and so deceitfully from the labouring poor in rural areas who had little understanding of credit, interest, and the impact of paper money on taxes. Blood money contemporarily refers to money awarded for causing harm, or gained at the expense of others, particularly through dishonest means ("blood money, n. b." *OED*). Cobbett wrote that boroughmongers and the new aristocracy of financiers rewarded themselves with the wealth gained from the taxes of the poor. In response, medical language was commonly employed when discussing money: a solution to the national debt was popularly discussed in the terms of a "remedy," a term for a

treatment or cure that has distinctly medical connotations (B.R. 113). Jerah Johnson, writing in the *Journal of Finance* in 1966, traces the money as blood analogy to the late middle ages: Romantic reformers did not invent the metaphor. However, its importance in the period is due to a shift in the cultural conception of blood in the early nineteenth century. Medical practitioners like Hunter used empirical evidence and experimentation to draw irrefutable conclusions about the role of blood and revealed the mystery of the circulation. According to the new conception, blood and its circulation could be regulated by science, and the body could be made healthy once again by this controlling influence: even what had been formerly a mortal injury could, in some cases, be overcome now by medical knowledge. The use of this analogy suggests that the weak or false circulation of paper money in the body politic could also be recovered by a return to the true, healthy, gold standard.

Johnson writes that beyond the turn of the nineteenth century, "economics became more sophisticated, and the old analogy [of money as the life-blood of the nation] was therefore rarely employed," but I argue that while economics certainly did move towards becoming a scientific way of thinking about money and politics, the use of money as the blood of the body politic did continue (Johnson 122). Rather than merely being a device to make sense of a complex system, the metaphor of money as blood was employed to incite political change. Richard Bronk, an economist, focuses on the legacy of Romantic ideas to economic thought in *The Romantic Economist* (2009), particularly analysing the role of metaphors that are taken from the organic, rather than the mechanical, world. In this chapter I am considering specific metaphors taken from physiology, those of money as blood, but Bronk's work is useful when considering his exploration of the creative potential of economic metaphors, rather than their merely descriptive power. Identifying the application of metaphor taken from the organic world to civil society as a legacy of Romantic era economics, as a holistic and organic society was seen as the goal to be achieved, Bronk's

examination of the structuring, or creating, role of such analogies provides insight into the importance of the money as blood metaphor in the period (119).

Discussing similar ideas, but from the perspective of a Romanticist, Denise Gigante provides a more nuanced study of the importance of organicism in Romantic period culture (2009), and analyses the dynamic and generative powers of the organic (*Life* 5). As she argues, these powers provided a model for Romantic creativity, and metaphors taken from nature, physiology, and the organic in general both describe and create. Charles I. Armstrong (2003) similarly describes Romantic organicism as "not understood as a fact of nature or as a merely aesthetic phenomenon, but rather as a *grounding systematic for understanding all holistic structure*": in other words, a way of thinking meaningfully about wholes that, like economics, is moving towards a practical, scientific method of theorizing (2; original emphasis). Cobbett has been described by Leonora Nattrass (1995) as a champion of "organic social systems" (20). Organicism's concern with integration and wholeness is a dynamic force when used to challenge a system where the people are alienated and the economy is intangible. It also implicitly has simulation as its binary opposition.

However, it is important to note that vocabulary drawn from the organic world is not incompatible with mechanistic language in the period: for instance, Hunter repeatedly refers to bodies as machines in his *Treatise*, and Cobbett describes "the machinery of the system" in an address to the boroughmongers in 1818 ("Ignorance" 153). Systems could at once be organic and machines. However, the importance of the money as blood analogy can be attributed to a new sense of medicine's control over blood. Since blood could be replaced and replenished, and health restored, radicals such as Cobbett saw similar hope for the money circulation of the unhealthy body politic. If exposed as damaged, it could be repaired by a return to a currency of quality, or a reflection of a profound reality: specie.

Cobbett's aim was to expose the fragility and complexity of this system, and denounce paper money as valueless. His writing on the paper currency is described as "by far his most difficult topic" for the rural poor to understand (Dyck, *Cobbett* 193). Thus, he combines the real experiences of the labourer — often employing agricultural analogies — with more complex economic science to unpack sophisticated ideas. Likewise, Cobbett's *Paper Against Gold*, first published as a series of articles in the *Register* in 1810, aimed to be a plain man's guide to the abstractions of paper money. Cobbett was determined that the complicated paper system be exposed as the fraudulent and damaging situation that it was, particularly for the labouring classes, in, as Sambrook has written, "blunt, direct, and energetic language" (70–1). The poor, who would often be bled for minor or major ailments and have leeches applied to combat sickness, could understand the idea of money as circulating through the nation like blood in their bodies, and of the dangers of a weak or corrupted circulation: the practice was still extremely popular in the period, despite Hunter's warnings discussed above.

4.3 Blood Metaphors in the Romantic Period

This section analyses different metaphors taken from physiology and the circulation of blood in Cobbett's *Register* and other publications produced in the period. I outline the specifically Romantic understanding of the idea, as well as the conceptual changes and medical advances in the area. According to De Almeida, blood now stood for the integral and vital life force due to Hunter's treatise (90). By examining contemporary engagement with the language of blood, I unpack the motives for its use in discussions of money and politics.

The understanding that healthy circulation was the key to overall health has been traced to before the Romantic period. However, the circulation of blood could now be controlled to some extent by transfusion, tourniquets, and suturing. Therefore, it can be

argued that the relevance of the metaphor of the circulation of money was heightened in the period, and was also used in a manner that explicitly referenced the bodily health of the system. In "Hints for the Use of Those who Convene County Meetings" (1822) from the *Black Dwarf*, Wooler focuses on "boroughmongers" who rely on taxes to maintain power, bringing in the theme of money to the discussion of blood drinkers. He writes: "if *the supplies* were *stopped* the Borough system would expire, for the want of its vital principle" (849; original emphasis). Here, money becomes the very animating principle of the system — the vital principle as understood by Abernethy and discussed in chapter three — and without this vital principle, death occurs. Leigh Hunt also wrote on this concept in the *Examiner*. As I have already quoted in chapter two, in "The Political Examiner" from February 1810, the high price of gold and its effect on paper currency is compared to the country's blood being turned into water, or, "[the] vital principle into a destroying one" ("Parliamentary Proceedings" 66). Here, not only is the circulation of the body politic damaged, but it is corrupted or diseased, and blood or money become a destroying influence on the nation.

Rather than money as a distinct vital principle, Cobbett describes money specifically as the blood of society. Using the words of Jonathan Swift, who had called money "the life-blood of the nation," Cobbett uses a metaphor taken from physiology in an address "To the Prince Regent" published in the *Register* in 1819:

> It is really nothing less; for, without it, not a member can stir. If disordered, the whole frame instantly feels the effects. If too abundant, the lenders are ruined. . . If wholly stopped in its circulation, the society, if populous, is dissolved. (770-1)

Here, Cobbett assumes Hunter's position that blood equates to life, and he presents his idea of the body politic being kept alive by the correct amount and proper circulation of money. Using the language of sympathy, where a disturbance in one part is felt by the whole, Cobbett describes surplus money as ruinous to an increasingly capitalist society but this is not the immediate concern. The stopping of circulation "dissolves" society. Here he uses a lexis of

intangibility; falsehood and deception being an integral component of his battle against paper money. Cobbett writes in the same article that "money is so necessary to every minute of the life of man; it is. . .completely the 'life-blood' of civil society" (779). In this passage, he effectively moves from the metaphor of blood as the life force of society, to money being as vital as blood to the life of the subject, before returning again to the circulatory account of society. As the motion of blood had been claimed to be the source of life by Hunter, the obstruction or weakening of the circulation of money implied an unhealthy and dying body politic. Having established money as the "life-blood" of the nation, Cobbett writes in 1825 that the country is "bleeding at every pore, in consequence, and solely in consequence, of this PAPER-SYSTEM, invented for the avowed purpose of keeping down [the poor]" ("To Doctor Black" 31; original emphasis). Paper money has been "invented": it has been created and is, by implication, not organic. Also, here the paper money system is represented in the terms of a haemorrhage, one of the most common problems with the circulation in the period as it was understood by medical science: although violent and gruesome, such injuries could sometimes be healed by suturing or by using a tourniquet. In other words, the country is not dead; merely in mortal peril.

The establishment of the circulation of blood as an analogy for the circulation of money influenced other public figures such as Henry Brougham to use language taken from physiology, as quoted in Cobbett's *Paper Against Gold* in which he discusses the circulation of the country as "deranged" and proposes "remedies," a term that was commonly used in discussion of the national debt, as I have previously stated. The remedy proposed is the free exchange of what he calls "lawful money," or, specie, echoing Cobbett's view that money of quality must replace intangible paper (2: 8). Cobbett himself makes use of sustained physiological language when later discussing the health of the nation, writing that "if the restriction had been necessary as a strong but salutary medicine to a diseased state of the

circulation, it must infallibly prove a poison, if the application should be continued long after the disease had been removed" (2: xliv). The language of disease and poison presents the image of a doctor figure — to whom I shortly return — restricting the circulation of money through the state to repair the damaged economy, but continuing after health has been restored to the detriment of the system. The implication of the use of these metaphors is that influence, over the body and the economic system, must be used wisely.

As in the passage above, the state doctor or physician who has this influence over society was a common figure in Romantic political writing, as I have discussed in previous chapters. The idea of the state physician as a politician striving, and usually failing, to cure the ills of the body politic lends itself in a specific manner to the discussion of debt and paper money. Almost always described as quacks by radical writers for the periodical press, the state physician poisons, harms, or else uselessly placates the diseased or injured body politic. The state doctor is presented by a contributor to the *Register* in 1804 as having the power to "draw blood from our veins, and the money from our pockets": once again showing the close relation of blood and money in the physiological political metaphor (A.Z. 513). In this article, Sidmouth is once more the state doctor, as seen in chapter two. The use of the possessive plural "our" moves away from the idea of the state doctor abusing a personification of the country, as in Gillray's caricature *Britannia Between Death and the Doctors* — also produced in 1804 and analysed in chapter two — and towards the idea of the body politic actually comprising the people. However, it must be stressed that the bodies and minds of the people were not perceived as weak by Cobbett, even if their ability to grasp complex political economy was limited. He presented the English spirit as "stout both in body and mind": a threat to this must be exposed ("To the Reformers" 542).

Cobbett is adamant in 1827 that "no state doctor. . .proposes to get rid of the paper system" ("Banking Schemes" 487). Immediately, the paper money system is seen as a bodily

system, if a doctor is the one authorised to control it. The mistrust of doctors by the rural poor and Cobbett himself, as previously examined, is easily transferred to the figure of the state doctor. Although bleeding was still frequently used and acceptable for a wide variety of complaints, it was undeniable that the excessive venesection, as had been favoured in the previous century by bombastic physicians such as Benjamin Rush, was detrimental to health. I later analyse the treatment of Rush by Cobbett in detail. The state physician figured as a politician siphoning off excessive quantities of blood — as a stand in for money — from the body politic was a powerful symbol of perverted authority. The medical procedure would also have cost the patient money: it could be seen as a placebo treatment that was at least harmful to the patient's finances if not their body.

Cobbett did offer a solution to the problem of paper money. In 1818, he proposed the "puff-out" of paper money in an open letter to Henry Hunt that was published in the *Register*. This solution, proposed in a satirical manner, involved the mass forgery and distribution of fake bank notes that would expose the worthlessness of paper money and collapse the borough system, where seats were sold and traded dishonestly by "boroughmongers" ("Henry Hunt" 225).[31] However, the physical act of forgery and distribution was not necessary. Simply by imagining the act, Cobbett successfully unveils the system for what it is: fragile and, ultimately, based on false power. Mitchell describes the "horrified" reaction to this apparently idle threat, demonstrating that, while the discourse of paper money has power, so does the mere idea of collapsing the system (2). As Cobbett writes in *Two Penny Trash* — his practical and cheap guide subtitled *Politics for the Poor* —"the government depend upon the imaginary value of little bits of thin paper" (260). Also, by focusing on the intangible worth of paper money and the "puffing out" of this false currency, Cobbett is using a purposefully contradictory vocabulary to the physical and organic money as blood analogy that has been

[31] The boroughmonger has also been discussed — in terms of greed and monstrosity — in chapters one and two.

described above. As John Whale argues (2000), when writing about paper money, "Cobbett is forced to make that which is invisible visible; that which is merely fiction a reality. . .the drive of his work is to expose and demystify" (141). While organic metaphors describe the natural and the physical, and therefore the very real, the phrase he chooses — "puffing out" — suggests intangibility and falsehood. In the nineteenth-century periodical press, "puffing" was also a common term used to describe the practice of endorsing a literary work as a favour to its author. Therefore, the idea of a lack of real worth is invoked by Cobbett's use of the phrase. "Puffing" may also refer to the system of artificially driving up prices of goods: making Cobbett's use of the term knowingly ironic, considering the economic crisis.

Moving from the intangible to the very physical, violence and the threat of violence also provoked the use of physical language in the political writing of the period. Anthony Jarrells (2012) writes that the "bloodless" Revolution of 1688 was, in the Romantic period, a major context for understanding, challenging or supporting the French Revolution in print, and that a second bloodless Revolution happened in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century culminating in the Reform Act of 1832 (1; 2). However, Romantic radical writing did use violent language as a mimetic reaction to the brutality of government. In "Knowledge Against Paper" (2012), Benchimol discusses the money crisis and radical opinion in terms of blood but focuses on the metaphorical blood of the system as the product of state violence. The emotive language of blood and violence was frequently employed by radical writers:

> The print protests of William Cobbett and T. J. Wooler against the paper money system and its brutal political enforcement demonstrate how the depiction of state violence can be used as a vehicle of ideological resistance in the service of radical political and economic reform. As Wooler put it in The Black Dwarf [*sic*] about the judicial crisis sparked by the forgery executions of December 1818, even the "many admirers of '*the system*,' confess they do not like it disfigured with blood". (1; original emphasis)

Benchimol scrutinises the ways in which radical writers used metaphors of blood and state violence to support ideological resistance to the enforcement of paper money. He also asserts

that contemporary writers wrote against the execution of forgers under a “bloody code”; the enforcement of the paper system led to literal bloodshed (24). Descriptions of blood and violence in Romantic political writing have also been examined in depth by Ian Haywood in *Bloody Romanticism* (2006): the use of this language is integral to much Romantic radical political writing. Similarly, in *Refiguring Revolution* (1998), Kevin Sharpe and Steven M. Zwicker investigate the effect of the French Revolution “stain[ing] the romantic landscape and its political vision with the blood of violence and terror,” providing an explanation as to why this might be (Introduction 16). The violent and macabre reaction to the paper money crisis is demonstrated in satirical items, such as the *Bank Restriction Note*, by William Hone and George Cruikshank. This is a grotesque mock-up of a bank note that was produced in January 1819. The features of paper money are substituted for macabre images: skulls, a hangman's noose, ships — representing the punishment of transportation that was often meted out for passing forged money — and the monstrous figure of Britannia eating children. Here paper money becomes monstrous, covered in the iconography of violence and death:

Fig 15. Hone and Cruikshank, *Bank Restriction Note*, British Museum, London.

Signed by "J. Ketch," the infamous hangman, the slip of paper becomes a death warrant, demonstrating the lack of faith in paper currency, and the violence it causes, including the execution of forgers, and the detrimental effect to the labourer whose money is worth little and whose debts and taxes are artificially inflated. The excess and satire employed by radicals has been analysed in detail in chapter two: here, it provides a stark image of the power of paper money to starve the labouring poor.

Also discussing the theme of blood and violence, in *The Romantic Crowd* (2013), Fairclough analyses the threat of the "unsettling physical might" of the people Cobbett addresses in the *Register* (136). His writing style — aside from the use of practical, plain language and metaphors that guide the labouring classes through complicated economic

systems — is also threatening. The freedom of the press and of association came to be connected with public violence in the period (Jarrells 1). In 1822 Castlereagh committed suicide by cutting his own throat, and Cobbett satirically claimed responsibility for this act of violence. Writing in the *Register* in August, Cobbett asserts that:

> Only a *few weeks ago* I addressed a *Register* to this very man [Castlereagh] who has now cut his throat. In that Register, which, by-the-by, was far more likely to be the cause of his throat-cutting, than the causes assigned by his friends; in that Register I reminded him of *what I said to him in the year 1815*...I showed him that I then foresaw and foretold how *low* he and his colleagues would sink England. ("To the Boroughmongers" 463; original emphasis)

The article also asserts that Castlereagh was insane, not because of the act of violence he performed upon himself, which is seen as a reasonable reaction to Cobbett's attacks, but because of his speeches in the House of Commons (467). In chapter two I described Castlereagh's own violent contribution to the law, specifically the punishment of flogging in Ireland. Cobbett was imprisoned for two years in 1810 for criticising this practice (Dyer 72). Here, blood and violence become normalised in an era of cruelty and brutality, for, as Cobbett had previously written in the *Register* in 1820, "accustom a people to behold the shedding of blood; and they will soon be a bloody people" ("Death of Maggenis" 677).

The lexis of blood also has connotations of status, family, and heredity through the idea of bloodlines. These are concepts that become important when considering the intangible and alienating effect of the economy that Benchimol examines: the "abstractions and mystifications" of the paper money system, compared to the idea of a traceable lineage and provenance (*Intellectual Politics* 174). The economic system was concerned with affiliation, particularly bastardy. For example, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 repealed "so much of any Act or Acts of Parliament that enables a single Woman to charge any Person with having gotten her with any Child" and fully absolved putative fathers of legal and financial responsibility (Chitty 2: 825). The poor's reproductive business became the business of the

state: as I have already examined, Malthus condemned the freedom of the poor to reproduce as a leading cause of poverty. The poor were dehumanized by Malthus' account, and here they become husbanded like livestock, as in the work of Adam Smith and David Hume, among others, who, in Cobbett's words, "look upon *the people* as cattle" ("Mr. Cobbett's Speeches" 412; original emphasis).

Smith and Hume's own bloodlines were interrogated by Cobbett. In 1818 Cobbett satirically refers to the "high-blooded" gentlemen who benefit from the paper money system, and here the double meaning of both highly bred and metaphorically covered in the blood of the poor provides a stark image of violence committed by the upper classes ("Ignorance" 154). Once more demonstrating his goal of exposing the ways in which the poor were being exploited by the upper classes, Cobbett writes in 1834, "I shall have enabled the working people themselves to plead their own cause. . .I shall have shown them how the aristocracy have been dealing with them and their fathers for several ages" ("Register After" 576). However, a new aristocracy of bankers and accountants was emerging in the wake of the financial crisis, much to Cobbett's disgust: he called them "money-mongers" ("Aristocracy" 593). They did not have aristocratic blood, but, according to Cobbett, their "Malthusian Scotch feelosofy [*sic*]" — "Scotch" referring once again to Smith and Hume — was the driving force behind the new Poor Laws ("Register After" 576). Cobbett stresses, however, that "NATURE. . .is not always on the side of what is called '*high blood*,'" denying a view of the aristocracy as naturally superior to the lower classes and echoing the values of the revolutionaries in America and France (576; original emphasis). Instead, when advocating rational discussion, Cobbett celebrates a different type of familial bond, described in detail by Fairclough as sympathy: an emotional and physiological force for social change that is evoked by emotive words (Fairclough, *Romantic* 136). As mentioned in chapter one, sympathy could spread political ideas and create a united and powerful conduit for resistance

and this was a theme that was used by both radicals, to describe the ways in which the labouring poor might develop political drive, and also by conservatives to highlight the threat that radicalism posed to the same group of society.This latter idea is discussed in my final chapter.

Moving away from bonds of sympathy and family, I next analyse the threat to these bonds and the role of the blood-drinking monster in political writing in the period. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the British monarchy was seen by reformers as feeding parasitically on the taxes of the Dissenting middling class (Leader and Haywood 67). In 1819, the physician John Polidori wrote "The Vampyre," which was first published — in Byron's name — in the *New Monthly Magazine*. In this novella, the aristocrat Lord Ruthven's need to feed upon the living to sustain his own life suggested a perversion of the natural order of things (Telotte 10). Considered to be one of the first examples of the vampire in English literature, Polidori's story demonstrates Hunter's view of blood being a source of life, albeit for sustaining a monster. "The Vampyre" begins with an explanation of the origins of the vampire myth, stating that vampirism is considered by the Greeks to be a post-mortem punishment for a sinful life, and that the vampire is doomed to visit and feed on "those beings he loved most while on earth — those to whom he was bound by ties of kindred and affection," demonstrating the perversion of blood ties and natural relationships represented by the vampire (196). Monstrous perversions and the grotesque feature in the pages of radical periodicals such as the *Black Dwarf*, as examined in chapter two, but here I examine the blood drinker in depth, and in relation to the monster of Romantic economy: the boroughmonger. When money is represented as the blood of the country, the boroughmonger feeds on it like a vampire. Boroughmongers, who bought and sold parliamentary representation, were a perversion of the democratic system and an attack on the labouring poor, and it is this unnatural element and excess that I focus on in this section.

Cobbett's *Poor Man's Friend*, reprinted in the *Register* in 1833, describes blood-drinking as against human nature, and he likens it to denying basic rights to the people, writing: "that same human nature that tells me I am not to cut my neighbour's throat, and drink his blood, tells me that I am not to make him die at my feet by keeping him from food" (49). Cobbett employs satirical hyperbole here. Of course, a rational humane person would not attack a fellow human in this manner, nor watch him or her starve: this is how terrible and excessive the boroughmongers are, he implies. He calls them "monsters": a term that, in the period, had connotations of nature being perverted as well as of excess (49).[32] Cobbett addresses the boroughmongers directly in multiple open letters in the *Register*. He presents them as monstrous, violent, blood-drinking creatures, and writes that those in their pay — taken from the public's money — "would rather drink the blood of any victim than be *compelled to go to work*" ("Reduce" 594; original emphasis). Cobbett also writes in the *Political Register* in 1831 that the "Whig-faction. . .could drink hot blood rather than be bereft of their prey" ("To the Readers of the Register" 324). Blood-drinking thus becomes a way to live that avoids honest labour. In contrast, the implied reader of the labouring class, is defined by working. Once again the satirical tone takes the unnatural effect of the boroughmonger to a conclusion that can only be seen as ridiculous.

Thomas Wooler, writing in the *Black Dwarf* in 1819, also uses the metaphor of blood-drinking monsters to describe boroughmongers and their associates as part of his carnivalesque, excessive writing style. He writes of the boroughmonger: "it has often drank blood in *secret* and fed upon the *tears* and *sighs* of its victims" ("Letters of the Black Dwarf" 3:34; 551; original emphasis). Here, body emissions are interchangeable: blood, tears, and expulsions of air are all signifiers of pain or frustration, and the boroughmongers benefit from the pain of the labouring classes. This article repeatedly refers to blood: it is "flowing down

[32] I offer detailed analysis of the excessive and monstrous boroughmonger in chapter two.

the streets" and children are "bathed in their mother's blood" (550–1). Both Britain and Ireland, and their people, are often depicted as living bodies under attack from monstrous forces in articles in the *Black Dwarf*. In "Nottingham Meeting" (1819) for example, the "boroughmongers" are "daily fattening upon the vitals of the people" (815). The Black Dwarf, in "Major Cartwright's New Mode of Petitioning," (1817) demands the removal of several hundred figures that have fastened themselves "on the backs, that they may more readily imbibe the vital fluid from the nation" (455). Here it is not blood that is being taken, but the vitals or vital fluid of the country that are being devoured, in a shift from the vampiric to the cannibalistic.[33] The unnaturalness of the blood-drinker strikes a chord in a period that was often concerned with organicism, which is why discussions of boroughmongers frequently inspired the use of bodily metaphors. While organicism is concerned with a holistic view of the world, in which systems function according to organic laws, the boroughmonger is a perversion of the democratic system.

In 1819, Peterloo inspired fresh use of the blood drinker in political writing. In the *Black Dwarf*, Major John Cartwright's respondents employed the language and metaphor of vampiric parasites. The description of the life of the nation being siphoned off is again used in a letter written by James Cooper to Cartwright, published in the *Black Dwarf* in September 1819, a month after the Peterloo massacre. The letter in the *Black Dwarf* considers the progress of reform in light of the event, asserting that:

> [Since Peterloo] All but the wilfully blind, and surely none will remain so but those who are feeding on the vitals of our country, will now see that nothing can save us from a practical military despotism, but a radical change of system. (643)

Once again, the country's "vitals" are being fed on in a more general attack than that of the blood-drinking boroughmonger. Here, the system is vulnerable and must be changed. Percy

[33] The political connotations of cannibalism are further examined in the following, final chapter.

Shelley also used the metaphor of the blood-drinking parasite in his sonnet written on the occasion of Peterloo, "England in 1819," writing that the rulers of the country: "leech-like to their fainting country cling/Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow" (4–5). Here, it is not the boroughmongers who are blood-drinking monsters posing a threat to the health of the body politic, but more generally those in power who are figured as the less impressive, blind leech drawing off resources from the labouring classes. Unlike excessive and fearsome blood-drinking monsters such as the boroughmongers, leeches are more benign and ambivalent creatures. Used for a wide range of complaints, leeches were a less invasive form of blood-letting that was less painful than venesection. Cobbett's *History and Mystery* described those who made money from the work of the labourer as "vermin who suck our blood" (426). Instead of fearsome monsters described earlier, the blood-drinkers are now vermin, pathetic, and weak in their own way, dependent as they are on the labouring classes.

Cobbett also uses the metaphor of the wealthy as parasites in the *Register* in 1804, denouncing those "leeches of the state, who hang on through all the vicissitudes of sickness and of health" ("William Pitt" 527). In a poem published in the *Register* in 1827, "To the Whig Ministry," those addressed are represented as leeches attacking an emaciated bovine body politic: "the Cow is *lean*, and ye ALL must be fed/And then ye're *all* like *leeches* sleek and *thin* (5–6; original emphasis). Here, the poverty of the labouring classes is pointed out as detrimental to those who would parasitically feed on them.

Leeches were both a medical tool and a form of labouring-class economy in the early nineteenth century.The leech gatherer in Wordsworth's poem "Resolution and Independence" (1807) is described as "old and poor," and his work as "hazardous and wearisome" but "honest" (107; 108; 112). The old man and his honest labour are a stoic, organic force, and the leeches are his economy. The leech had been used in medicine since classical times, and the demand outweighed England's supply in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Leeches were imported from France and Germany, and, eventually, from Russia and India instead of being a meagre source of income for the very poor they were an indulgence for the wealthy (Dormandy 125). As the practice of blood-letting was being questioned in the period, perhaps leeches offered a less harmful placebo effect on the patient demanding an impressive-looking medical procedure. Small, sightless, and relinquishing their host when full, the leech is also a less threatening attack on the body politic than a blood-drinking monster. The use of leeches as a metaphor for the aristocracy and those in political power is therefore a way of both rendering these groups grotesque while also symbolically removing their power. As I have discussed in my examination of the *Black Dwarf* in chapter two, this method was used by radicals to galvanise the labouring classes into action by emancipating their imagination when confronted with intimidating authority.

As a final note on the paper money crisis, in 1835 Cobbett turned to America and its banks to blame for the national debt, writing:

> The United States bank is the chief artery through which these foreign leeches drew off our life-blood; and in cutting this artery, Andrew Jackson struck what may happily be a death blow to the moneyed aristocracy of the whole world. The late unexampled importations of specie show that he has bled the bleeders; and their deadly struggle proves that they think their case dangerous. ("American Currency" 746)

Cobbett here uses a combination of metaphors from physiology and pseudo-medical language to discuss money: the phrase "unexampled importations of specie" uses paronomasia to refer synonymously to exotic biological specimens and foreign coin currency. Cobbett had written Jackson's biography in 1834, and was a strong supporter and great admirer of the seventh president. In *The Life of Andrew Jackson* he writes that such a man can defeat the "monster of paper money" in the United States (7).

According to Cobbett, the belief that notes are worth their equivalent in specie or gold must be held firmly by the population in order to maintain a successful economy, and it is this

belief that Cobbett sought to undermine with his writing on the subject in the *Register* and, in a more practical way, his proposed "puff out" of the system. Cobbett saw paper money as a "fiction" (Rowlinson 14). However, as Whale writes, Cobbett's practical, utilitarian style cannot be seen as opposed to the aesthetic (140). His use of blood and circulatory metaphors provided an effective counterpoint to the ephemeral system of paper money. Promoting a change in the dominant belief in paper money, as Hunter did when asserting his new view of blood and its role in the body, Cobbett aimed to expose the system for the false and damaging illusion that he saw it was, and to burst what he called the "paper bubble" ("To the Readers of the Register" 67.19 577). The lexis of blood was employed for this purpose as, due to Hunter's work, blood was now seen as the ultimate indicator of the organic body's health (De Almeida 210). As blood was supposed to have to be of high quality and not necessarily quantity, so coin and gold also had a value and worth above paper money.

Cobbett's authority in medicine stretches beyond his use of medical language to describe the paper money system. In a wider sense, Cobbett was vocal in the scientific arena, and wrote against medical practice and law that was detrimental to the poor, individually, and as a group. For example, he wrote against the practice of phlebotomy, or blood-letting, in the *Medical Reformer*, a New York based journal that was published monthly between January and June 1823, and was edited by an anonymous "physician," although Cobbett put his name to the article he wrote for the publication. This journal savagely attacked the medical profession. Blood-letting was seen as one of two major medical threats to health and it is the labouring class, and slaves, who are represented as at most risk due to their vulnerability and lack of autonomy regarding their medical treatment. Cobbett also subtly attacked Malthusian principles while discussing medicine. In the article written for the *Medical Reformer* about the treatment of yellow fever, Cobbett describes in detail the "depletion" — blood-letting and

extreme purging — of patients, by Rush, the American founding father and physician. However, Cobbett is also satirically referencing Malthusian principles when he writes:

> Of all the great discoveries, especially those which have contributed to the depletion of the population of the earth, we are indebted to what appears to be mere accident; which was also, in some sort, the mother of the system of depletion. ("Pernicious Effects" 97)

Naming the medical practice of depletion a powerful, if accidental, method of controlling the population, Cobbett alludes to the macabre details of Rush's extreme methods, which inevitably kill his patients (97–8). Cobbett takes Malthus' argument to an absurd conclusion: to reduce the population by actually killing patients.

Cobbett was also an influence on medical reformers. Adrian J. Desmond (1992) argues that the savage writing style that Wakley used in *The Lancet* was based on Cobbett's own "bruising" style (15). Wakley formed a National Anti-Quackery Society in the 1830s because, like Cobbett, he became concerned with the damage done to the health and the finances of the poor by writing expensive and harmful prescriptions (Porter, *Health* 225). Editorial meetings of *The Lancet* were attended by Wakley, Cobbett, and the surgeon William Lawrence, whose lectures are discussed in chapter three (Desmond 15). This team ensured that the politics of the *Lancet* were radical, and the publication questioned medical authority as well as dispensing practical advice. Cobbett also wrote against the Anatomy Act of 1832 that Abernethy had been influential in passing through parliament. This Act allowed for the unclaimed bodies of the poor to be used for dissection (Collings 246). In reality, Cobbett argues in "Schools of Anatomy" (1832), published in the *Register*, this led to the selling of bodies by workhouse owners and hospital managers (262). Cobbett's petition is printed in this article, where he also writes: "'Despise not the poor *because he is* poor,' says the Bible. What would this law have said? Why, 'cut him up because he is poor?'" (262; original emphasis). However, Cobbett's main concern for the poor and labouring classes was

financial; he believed that their poverty was compounded by the complicated and fragile paper money system.

4.4 Periodical Circulation

The metaphor of circulation can also be applied to Cobbett's main literary format, and the focus of this thesis, the periodical press. Fairclough also analyses physiological metaphors that were used to describe the dissemination of the press when she writes that, during the early nineteenth century "radicals exploit the varied implications of the metaphor of physiological diffusion when describing their activities" (*Romantic* 151). I argue here that periodicals circulated ideas and, as in an anatomical model, periodicals were usually produced in the heart of the country, London, and were then disseminated to areas further afield. This fostered a network of readers on a national level. As William St Clair argues, the periodical press was especially important to nineteenth-century readers who lived outside London:

> In past centuries, the elites outside London had kept themselves up to date by making occasional visits to the capital, and discussing the latest news on their return. By their reading of. . .the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*, the members of the reading societies could feel themselves part of a national as well of as a local reading community. (254)

Outlining the public sphere model I discuss in chapter one, St Clair is referring to periodicals read by the literary and business intelligentsia, but periodicals aimed at the labouring classes worked in much the same way. As stated in the *Edinburgh Monthly Review* in 1819:

> Nothing more distinguishes the times in which we live than the taste for knowledge which pervades all ranks in society, from the peer to the peasant. While the former prides himself on his extensive and valuable library. . .the latter, after the labour of the day, enjoys his *Cheap Magazine*, *Cheap Repository*, useful Tract or Penny Subscription Newspaper. ("Sketches" 708)

Periodicals not only reached geographically across space but also across class boundaries: there was a paper or magazine aimed at every level of society. Although the large reviews and expensive magazines were aimed at middling sorts, the cheap tracts mentioned in the *Edinburgh Monthly Review* article provided a source of knowledge — usually focused on moral guidance — for the labouring classes. Of course, many radical periodicals aimed at the labouring classes were unstamped and illegal, and ephemeral. They were borrowed, shared, and read aloud to groups rather than purchased and so their circulation is difficult to track. The important role of periodicals in creating and sustaining this "taste for knowledge" can be attributed to their ability to create a nationwide dialogue and a community of readers. Klancher argues that readers are "*made*, created as a public through a network of circulatory channels" (33; original emphasis). Klancher also writes that circulation "had acquired metaphorical resonances as a symptom of national growth": as the healthy circulation of blood strengthens the body, so the healthy circulation of ideas fortifies the nation (32).

However, this circulation, like the circulation of money, was restricted by various laws and acts: the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act of 1820, for example, and threats were made to the licensees of public houses that took Cobbett's *Register* (Royle and Walvin 111). Cobbett's cheap version of the *Register* is described as an "innovation" in wide circulation and reading habits by Fairclough (*Romantic* 136). This contemporary attitude is supported by evidence from Hunt, who writes of Cobbett in 1819:

> The invention of printing itself scarcely did more for the diffusion of knowledge and the enlightening of the mind than has been effected by the Cheap Press of this country. Thanks to Cobbett! The commencement of his twopenny register was an era in the annals of knowledge and politics which deserves eternal commemoration. (qtd. in Gilmartin 26)

Cobbett's practical economic decision to create a cheap version of the *Register* allowed for the wider circulation of the paper. He also used working men as sellers, and they were able to make a living out of it, demonstrating harmony between economy and circulation (Royle and

Walvin 111). Fairclough continues that Cobbett made a point of publishing his circulation figures and celebrated the distribution networks that ensured the physical presence of the *Register* in rural areas (*Romantic* 151). This unfettered circulation of reformist ideas was a cause for concern for the government and this engraving from 1820, drawn by Cruikshank for Hone's *Man in the Moon*, testifies to the anxiety surrounding periodical dissemination:

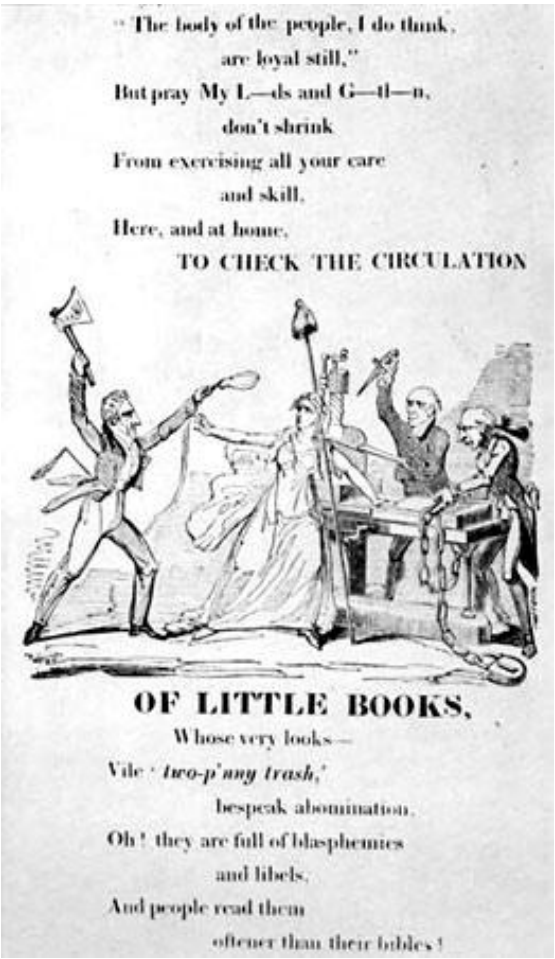

Fig 16. Hone and Cruikshank, *The Man in the Moon*, Victoria and Albert Museum Images, London.

Cobbett's *Register* is invoked by its common nickname, "two penny trash," in the poem that accompanies the image of Liberty, personified, defending a printing press from Castlereagh, Sidmouth, and Canning. The politicians are equipped with chains — a common image in caricatures portraying threats to freedom of speech —, an axe, a noose, and a dagger.

While Fairclough analyses a diffusion model where periodicals are only sent out from the urban centre to the far corners of the country, the inclusion of letters from contributors responding to articles and other letters in the *Register* — and in most other periodicals — adheres to a more circulatory model: ideas returned to, as well as came from, the "heart". In the following and final chapter, I examine the conservative reaction to the circulation of radical ideas, specifically looking at the way that radical politics were seen as a contagion by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

Chapter Five: Radical Contagion in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*

The focus of this thesis so far has been a selection of radical periodicals that opposed the government and called for reform in Britain using language taken from physiology. However, conservative and anti-radical writers also used ideas and tropes taken from medical science to describe and reposition politics in terms that were meaningful to their readerships. In this chapter, I analyse *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*'s application of the vocabulary of disease and contagion to radical politics. The revolution in France served as a catalyst for this use of medical language by many conservative factions in Britain, and the idea that radical politics were contagious became commonplace throughout conservative writing and oration. Although the post-revolutionary radicals of the 1790s were not the radicals of the 1810s, 20s, and 30s, the idea that the contagion was particularly likely to infect the poor was taken up in the early decades of the nineteenth century by *Blackwood's*, a city-based magazine with a middling-class readership, because a new sense of social responsibility was applied to theories about the transmission of diseases. The idea that the labouring classes were diseased because of the environment in which they are forced to live was interrogated, and this raised the question of middle-class accountability. *Blackwood's* transferred this sense of duty to the control of radicalism by using the language of contagion: the way that radicalism was transmitted was revealed to its middle-class readership in familiar terms so that its spread could be prevented.

As I have stated, the beginning of this use of the language of contagion can be found in discussions of events in France. In 1790 Edmund Burke calls revolution a "plague" and advocates "a most severe quarantine" (*Reflections* 132). F.P. Lock (2000) describes Burke's use of revolutionary plague and the "panacea" of conservatism as one of many sets of binary oppositions employed in his political writing (26). The rest of his *Reflections*, however, abandons this metaphor and, as Patrick Brantlinger points out in *The Reading Lesson* (1998), employs primarily the Gothic language of terror and violence in a more evocative reflection

of contemporary fears (50–1). Contemporarily, in a speech given by William Pitt the Younger in 1793, both the revolutionary ideals of France and the Jacobin radicals are described as a "contagion" (*War Speeches* 28; 127). Indeed, as Connell asserts, the notion that radical ideas were infectious became a staple of conservative political rhetoric in the early nineteenth century (249).

The concept of political radicalism as a contagious disease was diffused among conservative writers after the revolution and throughout the Romantic period. This political contagion is described by *Blackwood's* as "rag[ing]" through the ranks of the rural poor as late as 1830, while rural radicals are named as the "*élite*. . .peasantry," bringing to the fore questions of class that I analyse in depth later ("The Late Cabinet" 978). Confronted by this threat, *Blackwood's* promotes itself as the cure for the metaphorical poison or infection that the periodicals that I have discussed in previous chapters were seen to be spreading amongst the poor. The ways in which various physiological diseases could be transmitted were debated by politicians, medical reformers, practitioners, travellers, and merchants in the early nineteenth century. Contagion was seen a social problem with political dimensions due to quarantine laws that restricted the movement of ships carrying goods and it was particularly linked to the poor. Debates focused on whether the poor was prone to disease due to inherent inferiority or environmental surroundings, which would mean that there was a sense of social responsibility on the part of *Blackwood's* middle-class audience.

In this chapter, I apply the work of Foucault on contagion, discipline, and the body to highlight the ways in which disease is a cultural phenomenon with its own discourse. I first examine the founding of *Blackwood's* and its implied readerships, paying particular attention to its coverage of science and medicine. I next analyse debates concerning contagion in the Romantic period and the political dimensions of different positions on infectious diseases. Finally, I classify and evaluate *Blackwood's* use of metaphors of contagion to describe the

ways in which radical ideas spread among what they saw as the vulnerable sections of society in order to catalyse a sense of social responsibility among its middle-class readership.

I also analyse the ways that *Blackwood's* promoted itself as a stimulant cure using the language of Brunonian medical theory. The idea that literature could cause sickness adheres to Brunonian theory, named for eighteenth-century physician John Brown, who published his *Elementa Medicinae* in 1780. This was edited and released as *Elements of Medicine* by Thomas Beddoes in 1795. In Brunonian theory disease is either "asthenic" — caused by an overstimulation of the body's "excitability," which Brown describes as the living power — or "sthenic," an understimulation (Brown 1: xiii; 7). Treatment is either the withdrawal or the application of stimulants and in the category of stimulants are included alcohol, opium, heat, food, drink and even rousing literature and art (Brown 2: 202). In fact, according to De Almeida, all medicines were considered stimulants (153), while cold, abstinence, and bleeding and other purging techniques were sedatives (Brown 1: xxiv). Moderation was seen as the ideal for health (Brown 1: 17). This theory described sensational literature as a stimulant which could be overused, particularly by a female patient, and lead to an asthenic disease. Brown writes:

> The stimuli that produce abundant menstruation, short of morbid state, are unchaste ideas, and a high energy of passion. In this way, the influence of books, conversation, or pictures, calculated to kindle up lustful appetite, and the uncovering of parts that modesty conceals, which all produce a lively imagination of the thing so much desired, can be indistinctly felt by none perhaps but eunuchs. (2: 202)

Here, Brown describes sensational literature, discussion, and art as stimulants which produce in women an asthenic effect leading to excessive menstruation, but it is implied that men may fall prey to these stimulants as well by the invocation of the eunuch. It is important to note that the books, conversation, and pictures themselves are not thought diseased, but their influence stirs the imagination into a diseased state. Brunonian medical theory had important influence in early nineteenth century, attaining "general intellectual currency," according to

Gavin Budge (2007) ("Erasmus" 284). The vocabulary of sthenic and asthenic disease and stimulants came to be used in a wider sense than the strictly medical. Doctors such as James Currie identified radical politics as stimulants (Budge "Erasmus" 286). It is this link between radical politics and medical theory that provides the basis for discussion in this chapter. *Blackwood's* aimed to provide the moderation advocated by Brown by being the correct type of stimulant for their readers and promoting healthy literature and proper taste.

Blackwood's former incarnation, the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, edited by Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn, was founded in early 1817 as a local alternative to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*. The politics of the new miscellany were Tory. After six issues that failed to capture much public attention, it was re-named for its founder and John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart were hired as key new contributors (Flynn 2). Priced at 2*s* 6*d*, its readership was the newly-forming middle-class intelligentsia, who were educated and literary, but politically conservative (Klancher 39). Readership was estimated at nearly four thousand in 1817 (*SciPer*). William Blackwood edited the magazine until his death in September 1834, although the magazine continued to be edited by the Blackwood family until 1905. It is Blackwood's editorship, beginning in the seventh issue, which I focus on in this chapter as it encompasses the beginning of *Blackwood's* in its new format and the end of this run is circa the close of the Romantic period. Key contributors included John Gibson Lockhart, "Doctor" William Maginn, and Thomas De Quincey, all of whom are integral to my discussion of radical contagion.

While conservative in its politics, the magazine's format and style were nonetheless highly innovative after the traditional format of the first issue was changed. As John O. Hayden writes in *The Romantic Reviewers* (1969), "*Blackwood's* brought a change in layout of articles which was to set the pattern for other magazines: the formal departments were dropped and the correspondence and other articles were intermingled" (61). The monthly

format meant that *Blackwood's* was less immediate than the weekly radical papers. Articles were therefore longer and more literary than the bold and audacious style of the radical weekly papers, with many allusions and references to classical and contemporary texts, which worked to confine their readership to the educated, wealthy classes. Much scholarship has been undertaken on the intertextuality of *Blackwood's* and for the purpose of my argument this use of allusion proves that the magazine is aimed at the highly educated and upper middle-class readership: the readership to whom social responsibility for contagion among the lower classes, both of disease and of radical politics, was newly ascribed. As David Higgins writes in *Romantic Genius* (2005), *Blackwood's* "elevates its readers as exceptionally able individuals, who are capable of appreciating and sympathizing with great writers like Wordsworth" (8). Use of literary and cultural allusion also suggests that the professional critic was striving to prove his own authority as widely and well read.

With regard to its content, the magazine was concerned with dictating ideas of proper taste and with stimulating the intellects of its audience in what conservative contributors and professional critics believed was the correct manner. The idea of stimulating the minds of its readers is important when considering radical contagion because *Blackwood's* sells itself as a treatment or remedy: a stimulant for the mind, which conquers the mental disease of holding radical views, as I shall discuss later. The magazine was published in Edinburgh's New Town, a neo-classical area that reflected the more progressive, forward-thinking views it offered. Edinburgh was also an important centre of medical knowledge and education in the period, with its own Royal College of Surgeons at which well-known pioneers of anatomy, such as Robert Knox, demonstrated dissection techniques. Edinburgh was often referred to as "the Athens of the North" by residents due to its intellectual life, and it was a popular choice for medical students from across the country and even from America (Bynum 4). Scotland's "democratic intellect" placed importance on education and literacy (Bynum 4). In keeping

with the city's growing speciality, *Blackwood's* had a strong focus on medicine. The seventh number of the magazine, when Blackwood took over editorship, contains a "Medical Report of Edinburgh" (1817). This article begins by discussing the weather conditions, demonstrating an early alliance to miasmatic theory, which that states that disease is a product of the atmosphere (A.T. 48). Miasmata were thought to be noxious emanations from an unclean environment that caused sickness, as opposed to a contagion, which was the term for a disease that spread from person to person. Describing a recent occurrence of scarlet fever, the writer asserts that "the disease has occasionally passed through different individuals of families, but cannot be said to be epidemic" due to small-scale quarantine measures of isolation (48). Here, *Blackwood's* demonstrates an awareness of the manner in which diseases may be transmitted through physical proximity and thus prevented from spreading. This idea was carried over into discussions of radical politics. However, use of the term "contagious" to mean the same method of transmission as "epidemic" reflects the confusion between similar terms that I later disentangle (48). The writer describes a one-way transmission of disease from the poor to the wealthy, developing questions of class that later become entrenched in discussions of disease, both physical and political (48).

Because of these fears of transmission, *Blackwood's* was concerned with the health of the poor, but it was also interested from an economic point of view. In an article on the Poor Laws written by "A Political Economist" in 1818, which praises the Scottish system for encouraging the labouring classes to work whilst in bodily health, it is stated that "the benefit of this system excites the lower ranks to industry and frugality in the days of health and strength. . .in Scotland, no person in health can, upon any account, receive relief from the poor's funds" (12–13). Thus, the economic system benefits from the health of the poor because healthy people are not given relief. As well as this practical interest in health, when *Blackwood's* began, science reporting was a key element of its format. Philip Flynn (2006)

has identified that, in the first six issues, for every contribution on fiction there are two on science (146). This continued to some extent in the issues edited by Blackwood himself: issue seven (1817), for example, contains an announcement of Davy's improvement of his safety lamp ("Literary and Scientific Intelligence" 97). Medicine in particular was a key component of *Blackwood's* scientific articles, as Heather Worthington reveals in her examination of the magazine's preoccupation with violent crime through a medical history lens, linking Gothic themes in *Blackwood's* "tales of terror" and Edgar Allan Poe's "How to Write a *Blackwood's* Article" with the beginning of forensic science (128–9). *Blackwood's* thus demonstrates the increasing medicalisation of violent criminality than can be seen during the Victorian period.[34]

However, while *Blackwood's* produced fifty-one scientific articles in its first year, including "On the Chemical Process of Combustion," "On the Optical Properties of Mother-of-Pearl" and "On the Fall of Volcanic Dust on the Island of Barbados," this number dropped to just four between 1824 and 1825 (Flynn 146). William Christie (2013) suggests that this is due to the widening gap between the lay person and new scientific knowledge, the expansion of specialist science periodicals and the increasing self-identification of *Blackwood's* as a literary magazine (128). Robert Jameson and David Brewster were responsible for the majority of the articles on science that were published in *Blackwood's*: they were, respectively, a Professor of Natural History and a natural philosopher who dedicated the majority of his career to editing scientific journals (Christie 128–9). They set up a specialist journal shortly after *Blackwood's* began, which is another possible reason that the magazine did not sustain the quantity of scientific articles it produced in its early years (Christie 133). Nonetheless, *Blackwood's* continued to remark on medical debates while employing the language of medical science in its analysis of radical politics. The next section of this chapter

[34] *Blackwood's* use of the metaphors and aesthetics of violence is examined in detail by Mark Schoenfield in "The Taste for Violence in *Blackwood's Magazine*" (2013).

outlines debates focused on the science of contagion in the early nineteenth century, how the debates were commented on in the periodical press, including in *Blackwood's*, and explores the reasons that they took place at the same time as the use of contagion as a metaphor for the ways in which radical politics were transmitted.

5.1 Contagion in the Romantic Period

In the period under review there were fears of a reoccurrence of a devastating plague. This term originally referred to any disease that affected a large portion of the population, such as the Great Plague in Britain in the seventeenth century. The more common threats of yellow fever and cholera were prevalent in colonies of the British Empire. In 1712, a plague epidemic did occur around the Baltic Sea, leading to England passing the Quarantine Act. During the mandatory forty day quarantine for arriving ships, goods could not be removed and serious breaches of the act could result in the death penalty. New Acts in 1805 and 1825 further restricted the movements of ships between countries. These threats were represented in Mary Shelley's novel *The Last Man* (1826), in which a lone survivor of a plague recounts the destruction of the human race by disease and describes how whole populations are reduced to barbarism by this plague.

However, Quarantine Acts were challenged by anti-contagionists such as Charles Maclean and Thomas Southwood Smith, who believed that plague and fevers were "epidemic" and not contagious: which, in this context, meant that they emanated from the atmosphere and were not transmitted from person to person ("Contagionists" 415). The Acts slowed travel and trade and cost the taxpayer money, demonstrating one of the political aspects of this medical debate. Quarantines that segregated the poor and the sick took place in Spain in the early decades of the century and these were feared but not enacted in Britain at the time. These measures threatened human rights and were Gothicised by the physician

Maclean, who, as I reveal later in this chapter, used the language of terror and the Inquisition to represent people oppressed by the Acts in *Evils of Quarantine Laws* (1824).

The dominant model of sickness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a combination of the humoral and the miasmatic. The development of anatomical pathology had led to the understanding that disease could, in fact, be contained within part of the body, thus calling into question the belief in humors. As early as the mid-fifteenth century, the link between organisms too small for the naked eye to see and infectious disease had been made by Girolamo Fracastoro, an Italian physician (Rooney 60). While it was clear that some diseases seemed to spread among people in close quarters — the isolation of lepers in medieval times demonstrates the strong belief in this concept — precisely how they were transmitted remained unproven and so modes of contagion were subject to debate. In *Madness and Civilization* (1964), Foucault locates the leper as the original Other and outsider in medieval communities, a figure that was replaced by the vagabond, criminal, or madman in later societies (5). These figures were all attributed with the same symbolic power: they were fearful and "insistent" (4). Society was conditioned to abandon these figures and this abandonment was seen as the key to salvation in a religious sense: "the sinner who abandons the leper at his door opens his way to heaven" (4–5). This view of empested people continued to some extent in the nineteenth century and ways of dealing with these Others was still the subject of debate. However, in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault writes of seventeenth-century society during an outbreak of plague:

> The magistrates have complete control over medical treatment; they have appointed a physician in charge; no other practitioner may treat, no apothecary prepare medicine, no confessor visit a sick person without having received from him a written note 'to prevent anyone from concealing and dealing with those sick of the contagion, unknown to the magistrates'. The registration of the pathological must be constantly centralized. The relation of each individual to his disease and to his death passes through the representatives of power, the registration they make of it, the decisions they take on it. (195)

Here, disease becomes a public matter, and a matter of legislation. Disease is annotated with processes of restriction and power, and order is applied to chaos. As Foucault continues:

> The plague is met by order; its function is to sort out every possible confusion: that of the disease, which is transmitted when bodies are mixed together; that of the evil, which is increased when fear and death overcome prohibitions. (197)

Plague, in this quotation, is described as affecting a population rather than a single individual. While the leper is Othered, and separated, the plague area is segregated and controlled. Exiling or abandoning the leper keeps society pure, but quarantining a plague area is a disciplinary political act. It is also a method of safe, but intense, surveillance. Similarly, *Blackwood's* provides a distancing frame through which the reader can survey the diseased poor that contagion cannot breach.

Quarantine, as a means of containing disease, had been adopted by most European nations by the fifteenth century (Barrett and Armelagos 51). However, it was widely distrusted in the early and mid-nineteenth century because it was simply not effective. Margaret Pelling states in "The Meaning of Contagion" (2001) that it was during the nineteenth century that theories of contagion first became scientific, or, that medical science strove to understand the ways in which disease was transmitted (15). The nineteenth century witnessed the transition from humoral and miasmatic theories of disease being widely accepted to contagion theory being eventually proven at the end of the century. Physicians and political commentators strove to prove medical theories regarding the transmission of sickness and the political connotations of infectious disease. Pelling also reveals contemporary confusion between terms that seem to be interchangeably employed, even by medical practitioners, such as contagion, infection, and miasmata. For example, the term "epidemic" was taken up by anticontagionists to refer to diseases that were transmitted by miasmata. This suggests a fluidity of meaning and a complicated discourse concentrated on the transmission of disease that was open to misuse or misinterpretation. I have found that

Blackwood's use of contagion as a metaphor for the way that radical politics were transmitted was not always coherent, and was often contradictory. Pelling confirms that contagion theory has never been solely medical, but rather the idea of contagious influence in society, in a general sense, developed alongside scientific theories (15–7). Therefore, it is not surprising to find the language of contagion in political writing since it suggests the symbiotic relationship of medical science and literature as well as the mutually influential aspect of the metaphorical and the literal.

In 1840, the theory that disease was transmitted by microscopic organisms was "at its lowest ebb" and seen as old fashioned (Ackerknecht 175). This theory would not be proven until the end of the nineteenth century, when Louis Pasteur revealed a correlation between microbes and disease (Rooney 61). However, the most prominent medical debate about contagion in the earlier part of the century took place in the mid-1820s, and the alternative views were represented in the *Quarterly* and *Westminster* reviews. In 1822, the *Quarterly* asserted that its aim was to present the arguments of contagionists and anticontagionists in an unbiased manner ("Researches" 525). However, the *Westminster Review* published two articles by the aforementioned physician Smith in 1825 that challenged contagion theory — the idea that illness could be passed from person to person — and the *Quarterly* responded at the close of the same year, shortly after which *Blackwood's* also weighed in on the debate. Smith, whose links to the radical Leigh Hunt are discussed in chapter one, was a Unitarian minister and sanitary reformer as well as a physician. He reviewed the work of Maclean, who had asserted that plague was a consequence of environment rather than a contagious disease. In 1817, 1818, and 1824, Maclean published pamphlets against contagion theory and the Sanitary Code and petitioned government against the new quarantine laws of 1825 that further restricted and slowed the movement of ships between countries (Maclean xxi; "Contagion and Quarantine" 387). In his *Evils of Quarantine Laws*, Maclean analyses the

political and economic dimensions of contagion. He writes that contagious disease is wrongly considered the business of "the statesman, the legislator, the police, [and] even the municipal officer" rather than the physician, "regardless of the consequences to public health" thus taking the power over health legislation away from the physician and placing it into the hands of bureaucrats (xxii).

Despite this, the professional organizations under which medicine was practised, such as the College of Physicians, are described by Maclean as refusing to accept evidence that challenges previous doctrine and are also ignorant of the true situation overseas where contagious disease was rife (21–2). While contagionists argued that the abolition of sanitary laws "has been sought merely to favour the interests of commerce" Maclean, denying this, still argues for a socio-political view of contagion (xxii). The poor who are quarantined in Spain during the yellow fever epidemic, he asserts, are "*shut up in a lazaretto. . .there to die*" (310; original emphasis). He later names the quarantine laws a "*terror*," leaving the poor effectively "*buried alive*" (313; original emphasis). Language such as this emphasises the moral dimensions of the laws rather than only the commercial effects and potentially linking the laws to the Inquisition where, in its representation in Gothic romance novels the victims were abandoned in cells and underground spaces of terror. The fear of contagion, Maclean asserts, is more harmful to the population than a real attack of sickness, invoking a Gothic terror of the unknown and, in fact, causing misery, disease and death when people are abandoned by their families and their government (244–5). Physicians, Maclean continues, refuse to enter empested communities to diagnose illness and instead recklessly diagnose contagious disease from a street away from the quarantined area, but do not provide any treatment (313). Foucault's leper-figures are, once more, abandoned by society.

Smith agreed that certain diseases, such as plague and yellow fever, were not contagious but epidemic. These are not transmitted from person to person, he argued, but

simultaneously caught by people in the same environment. The entire human race would be extinct, he asserts, if epidemic disease was truly contagious (146–7). Pelling's assertion that discussions of contagious diseases became scientific in the early nineteenth century is corroborated by Smith's call for a scientific method to be applied to the analysis of contagion, for, he writes, "it is by no means an exclusively medical question; it is really a question of science, to be decided by facts which everyone can understand, to be determined by evidence that everyone can appreciate" (137). In context, the term "science" still refers to any rigorous system of knowledge. In the mid-nineteenth century, Richard Yeo (2003) writes, logic, theology, and grammar were still considered "science" (33). Here, we see a conceptual distinction between medicine and science: medicine is beginning to be professionalised, while "science" can still be understood by the layperson. Science is utilitarian, medicine elitist. As Smith continues, "there are circumstances which render medical men peculiarly unfit to investigate the subject. Few members of a profession are capable of taking any thing but a professional view of any subject" (137). Smith here suggests that contagion has a political and social element beyond its medical dimension. He blames the didactic method of medical education and the overbearing authority of the elders of the medical profession for the inadequacy of the physician in answering the question of contagion, writing that an inability to question authority impedes progress (137). The medical profession is described as dogmatic and prescriptive and Smith's reformist stance is implicit. In 1842, sanitarian Edwin Chadwick consulted and worked with Smith on the *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Working Poor* (1843), using Smith's miasmatic view of contagion to call for improvements to the sanitary conditions of the poor. The text outsold well-known contemporary novels, demonstrating the wide concern with public health at this time (Hays 144).

Both radical politics and disease were strongly associated with the poor and with crowds. Maclean writes that illness among the poor is due to "want of food, want of

employment and want of hope, together with a slight degree of atmospheric influence" (6). Here, Maclean asserts that the lack of morale ("hope") and the psychological status of poverty causes illness, more than the influence of the atmosphere, calling for a socio-political outlook on disease as well as a medical one. Smith, taking a more scientific approach, writes that "the habitations of the poor are. . .generally crowded and always ill ventilated and dirty. Accordingly, it is in these situations that epidemic diseases most frequently arise, and prove most mortal" (144). Here, he only outlines the physical conditions commonly believed to spread disease in miasmatic theory: crowding, air circulation, and cleanness. He does not echo Maclean's assertion that mental state contributes to sickness, thus denying responsibility for enrichment above the physical needs of the poor.

Either way, physical proximity was understood to encourage the spread of infection and crowds were feared as they spread both illness and radical principles: the Seditious Meetings Act of 1819 banned groups of more than fifty people from gathering together in an attempt to stop radical meetings. Before this Act was introduced, Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate and — at this point — political conservative drew a link between the idea of radicalism and disease infecting the crowd, writing in the *Quarterly Review* in 1812: "Physical diseases are not more surely demonstrated by crowding human beings together in a state of filth and wretchedness, than moral ones by herding them together. . .in a state of ignorance" (338). Gavin Budge also identifies Southey's description of political radicalism as a stimulant in the Brunonian sense ("Erasmus" 286), demonstrating that it was not only *Blackwood's* who represented reformist politics as a disease. Southey supports his assertions with the work of Hunter, who predicted that the crowded workhouse conditions would produce virulent disease, but, Southey writes, the disease is of moral faculties, rather than the physical body (338). According to George F. E. Rudé (1971), Hunter had identified typhus,

for example, as a sickness of poverty, filth, and crowds (233).[35] Fear of crowds was discussed in its political dimensions but also in medical terms: Smith notes that a "distinguished surgeon" in London "mentions, that in a particular ward of his hospital, whenever the number of patients. . .amounted to twenty, typhus-fever was sure to be generated; and whenever that number did not exceed fifteen, the fever never appeared" (150).

The mob was not only potentially violent, as I have discussed in chapter four, but also possibly diseased. For example, in 1834, *Blackwood's* describes the "crowded and corrupted constituencies" faced by those who they name "Conservatives," and the "vices [and] contagion of manufacturing population" (Alison 96). Fairclough identifies the mob as a symbol of dangerous contagious sympathy and "disorder" (*Romantic* 3). As Haywood asserts, the mob was represented as savage, depraved, and unthinking (*Bloody* 181). The Otherness of spectacular violence and riots, was, Haywood argues, for the first time in this period, located on British soil (*Bloody* 182). Foucault's Othered figure of the leper, and later, the madman, on the outskirts of society metamorphoses into a mob of lower-class violence, depravity, and contagion that is located within the boundaries of civilisation, and which may even destroy it. The only mitigating factor of the mob, for bourgeoisie spectators, is its inevitable self-destruction (Haywood, *Bloody* 187). Transferring this concept to contagion theory and returning to Foucault, the middle-class hope in this instance is that by abandoning the mob, or, previously, the leper, it will destroy itself and salvation will be granted by God rather than society. This thinking is a denial of social responsibility, which *Blackwood's* in turn refutes by its use of the language of contagion when discussing radical politics.

To return to Smith's work, the political dimensions of Smith's refusal to believe in aspects of contagion theory similarly demonstrate his reformist position. He does not agree that epidemic diseases are passed from person to person, but instead asserts that they emerge

[35] I have been unable to verify Rudé's assertion by reading Hunter's published works.

from environmental circumstances. This implies that political ideas may work similarly: rather than being transmitted to the poor or impressionable, they are instead generated within groups of people in the same conditions as a natural response to those conditions. The idea that environment causes disease also implies that quarantine laws are not effective if illness is thought of as a product of atmosphere: these laws were expensive to enforce and slowed trade. Disease also had connotations of foreignness because wider travel identified new illnesses. As Alan Bewell writes in *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (1999), it was also political, because the outcome of imperial conflicts became more dependent on disease than on military power. The immunity of the invading people proved an advantage over the conquered inhabitants, or, alternatively, the European susceptibility to foreign disease devastated attempts at colonisation (7). Hence, in terms of Empire, disease travelled both from home to abroad and from abroad back to home: from the Occident to the Orient and vice versa.

The *Quarterly*'s response to Smith denies the idea that some diseases — such as plague and fevers — are epidemic (in the atmosphere) rather than contagious ("Progress" 220). The article instead supports the quarantine laws. In turn, *Blackwood's* reply to the *Quarterly* defends the anti-contagionist stance but puts forward the idea of "contamination" instead: in this context, describing the way that a person who visits the sick may contract illness "not from a specific contagion, generated by the body of the patient, but by the exhalations from his body, rendered poisonous by being concentrated" ("*Quarterly* Review" 131). Here, infection can move from the individual into the immediate environment and onto the next person. Thus, a frightening image of the radical's ability to pollute the atmosphere around him or her can be presented by conservative thinkers. In this way, gaol was another site of concern for both contagious radicalism and disease. Prison was a particularly troublesome atmosphere for contagion due to overcrowding and dirty conditions: as I

examined in chapter one, Davy believed he had contracted “gaol fever” from his visits to Newgate in order to design a better system for ventilating the diseased environment in prisons. Radicals were housed away from the general population while in prison because of the fear of their political influence on other prisoners, who were, of course, often already dangerous criminals (Parolin 39). The following sections analyses contagion as being strongly linked in the public and political imagination to the foreign, poor, or radical Other.

5.2 Colonial, Poor, and Radical Disease

In a time when sicknesses like yellow fever and cholera devastated other countries, highly infectious diseases were conceived of as foreign and even uncivilized (Pelling 25). The outbreak of cholera in the British colonies in India in the early decades of the nineteenth century brought a disease rarely seen before in the Western world to public attention (Arnold 159). It had spread to China, Japan, Arabia, and East Africa, although Britain was spared this outbreak: in the 1830s the disease did reach Europe (Herbst 4). In *Blackwood’s* in 1832, the poet James Montgomery describes cholera as “the blue pest” due to the effect the disease had on the skin, as illustrated in this coloured stipple engraving from 1831:

Fig 17. *A Young Viennese Woman, aged 23, Depicted Before and After Contracting Cholera*. 1831. Wellcome Library, London.

This image demonstrates the wasting effect that cholera has had on an attractive young woman, as well as showing the blue tinge it gave the skin, in an image designed to invoke sympathy and fear. “The Cholera Mount,” Montgomery’s poem about the segregated burial ground of the cholera victims, also aims to stir compassion for the deceased, describing the place:

Wherefore no filial foot this turf may tread
No kneeling mother clasp her baby’s bed
No maiden unespoused with widow’d sighs
Seeks her souls’ treasure where her true love lies (35–8)

Montgomery writes against the abandonment of the empested, at least after death. The graves of those killed by cholera are seen to be highly contagious, so that relations will not visit them. However, he also describes cholera in Orientalist terms and those of a conscious invading killer:

When like a timeless birth, the womb of Fate
Bore a new death, of unrecorded rate,
And doubtful name. Far east its race begun,
Thence round the world pursued the westering Sun;
The ghosts of millions following at its back,
Whose desecrated graves betray’d their track;
On Albion’s shore, unseen, the invader stept,
Secret, and swift, and terrible, it crept;
At noon, at midnight, seized the weak, the strong,
Asleep, awake, alone, amidst the throng,
Kill’d like a murderer; fix’d its icy hold;
And wrung out life with agony of cold (19–30)

In these lines, Montgomery first describes cholera as a monstrous pregnancy of “Fate,” denying scientific analysis of the disease. It is also represented as unknowable, when he writes that it is “of doubtful name,” and describes it as “unseen,” attacking at any time of day, and infecting people in every state. Interestingly, those “both alone, [and] amidst the throng” are affected: the idea of the crowd as conducive to transmission of disease is denied by the indiscriminate way cholera attacks. There are no preventative measures suggested, because

cholera cannot be understood or controlled by medical science: it is seen as a sentient killer. Even the drop in temperature seen in its victims is described as a self-aware "icy hold" that chokes life. The language used is also similar to that which De Quincey uses to describe his feverish dreams in his "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" (1821): of terrible creeping monsters from the "far east" that seem incongruous in civilized, healthy Britain. De Quincey's opium dreams, in his "Confessions," first published in the *London Magazine* in September and October 1821, depicts disease travelling from the Orient in crocodiles' "cancerous kisses" and infecting him (4.22 376).[36]

Similarly, De Quincey's encounter with the "Malay" in the setting of the English countryside suggests a hallucination brought on by opium (4.22 365–7). The Malay, however, represents racial anxiety as well. De Quincey contrasts the "beautiful English face" of his servant with the "sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany" (4.22 366). In his detailed analysis of this passage in terms of race Kitson identifies De Quincey's representation of the Malay as "irremediably Other and hardly human," and even animalistic (*Romantic* 205).[37] This is a representation of De Quincey's fear of racial difference: the Malay is a homogenised symbol for the Orient, which haunts De Quincey's opium dreams. However, not only does the concept of racial difference provoke fear because of its uncanny Otherness, but it also carries connotations of disease. Bewell confirms that, in the nineteenth century, susceptibility to disease was used as a marker of difference between races and responsibility for introducing disease was denied by European imperial discourse: both contracting and spreading sickness were seen as foreign attributes (6).

[36] The sequel to "Confessions," *Susperia de Profundis*, was first published, in its incomplete form, in *Blackwood's* in 1845.
[37] In this discussion of the "Confessions," Kitson also identifies de Quincey's application of the body politic metaphor to China, which is unsurprisingly represented in "physiologically coarser" terms (207).

Contagion was not only strongly associated with foreignness but also with primitivism. In the early nineteenth century, as Pelling continues: "popular belief in contagion was seen as belonging to a primitive state of society and as entailing a breakdown in social responsibility" (25). Smith's *Blackwood's* article and indeed, miasmatic theory in general, supports this assertion. He writes that environmental properties are responsible for disease and that these "prevail most in those countries which are the least cultivated. . .the worst built and least sheltered" (144). He is promoting the idea that circumstance spreads disease, not physical contact with an infected person, and the Victorian idea that the poor are degenerating into an uncivilised, primitive, or savage race finds early expression in these theories. In *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* (1991) John Barrell analyses De Quincey's imperialist notions of the Orient as diseased (17), but also his surveillance of the poor as entirely Other, and a separate race (4). His physical contact with the prostitute Ann, which constitutes an actual kiss rather than the opium-induced dream of crocodile kisses, raises the possibility of tainting his body. Despite De Quincey's insistence that, "at no time in my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape," he immediately produces the adverse effect by dehumanising the poor and introducing the concept of pollution, in this case, a moral contagion (304). He later kisses Ann on the lips, asserting a qualifying statement reading, "lips Ann, that to me were not polluted," once again acknowledging and yet denying the conception of the supposedly immoral poor as contaminants to the middle-class body (377).

Peter Stallybrass and Allan White (1986) identify a nineteenth-century fear of the poor as contaminants, writing of the "separations and interpenetrations of the suburb and the slum, of grand buildings and the sewer, of the respectable classes and the lumpenproletariat": intersections and divisions we find in De Quincey's text (125). However, they continue, "it was in the reforming text as much as in the novel that the nineteenth-century city was

produced as the locus of fear, disgust, and fascination," naming Chadwick's *Report* as such a representation of this terror of contagion (125). Later, the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869 would allow policemen to arrest and detain women, examine them, and incarcerate them if they were found to have sexual diseases (133). Certain forms of contagion were thus seen as shameful, and furthermore, as J. N. Hays explains (1998), when outlining the increasingly fastidious approach to the body during the nineteenth century by the bourgeoisie class, cholera in particular struck suddenly and could lead to a gentleman collapsing in the street in his own excrement (136). Montgomery describes its victims seeming "as though a thunder-bolt struck them dead" (60). In *History of Sexuality* (1976) Foucault analyses the development of a middle-class body in the nineteenth century: a body that must be both constructed and maintained in terms of race, descent, health, and hygiene, and protected from unsavoury external influence (123). Rather than falling under the authority of the medical profession, hygiene was an individual means of controlling the body, and social dominance was seen to be grounded on the healthy and hygienic bourgeoisie body (123). The potential loss of control over the middle-class body therefore lent greater urgency to the sense of social responsibility regarding contagion.

Blackwood's presents the radical body in these terms of loss of control, shame, and physiological excess. Writing in 1835, the "Radical body" is described as having "baser and more shameful parts," and radicals act accordingly:

> They hawk up their foul phlegm, not always unmixed with the baser matter of their crop-sick stomachs, and collecting it in their mouths, till their cheeks are blown like swine bladders, they walk up to gentlemen on nomination or election day — in boroughs no longer rotten — and discharge it with grins and curses in their faces! (C.N. 445)

This visceral description of the radical body politic shows it not as diseased, but as a deliberate and grotesque bodily protest. With the reference to phlegm and the sick stomach, the spewing of bile is invoked, with bile a metaphor for anger that is cited in the *OED* in

earliest use in 1836 but is associated with melancholy and anger in humeral medical theory ("Bile, n. 2"). The radical's cheeks are described as porcine, "swine bladders," in keeping with the common nineteenth-century analogy of the radical poor and the mob as pigs.[38] The radicals are excessive and grotesque, but Whigs also are potentially infectious in this article, by means of their odour. The writer continues that the Whigs:

> leave a name that shall so stink, in the nostrils of unborn generations as they continue successively to be born. . .out of delicacy to the sense of smell, it shall be buried with their bones, and the air remain forever impregnated with Whig odour. (439–40)

Parallels can be found here with the Reform Acts of the 1830s, which conservatives were concerned would burden future generations: *Blackwood's* describes the lingering stink of the Whigs as potentially contagious and the following generations will suffer it. Chadwick believed that odour was an indicator of disease (Stallybrass and White 139). This was an idea that had been circulating since the Great Plague, when plague doctors wore long-nosed masks stuffed with pungent herbs. Odour, then, was a powerful indicator of bodily and political danger.

According to contemporary medical discourse, sickness could also be spread by sympathy — the physiological effect of similarity between individuals — as I have also discussed in chapters one and four. As Elizabeth Dolan states in *Seeing Suffering* (2008), "Romantic-era medical sources argue both that sympathy can spread contagion and also that disease and deformity can destroy individuals' sympathetic responses to one another. . .the medical theory of sympathetic contagion reflects this fear of social contamination" (60). Here, Dolan outlines two strands of contagion theory: that sympathising with a sick individual could, in fact, cause sickness, and that sympathy could be disrupted by illness and, interestingly, deformity. As I have argued in chapter four, deformity was conceived of in the period as the manifestation of the inner self. This suggests that radical contagion could break

[38] For a detailed discussion of the representation of the labouring class as pigs, see Brantlinger 54.

down the fragile bonds of society and humanity. In an even more extreme case that further endorses, for example, the exclusion of radicals from the general prison population, in the early nineteenth century there was a popular assumption that sickness could even be transferred through looking. Dolan cites the example that many people thought that eye disease in particular could be contracted by a sympathetic glance (60). The *Quarterly*'s 1825 condemnation of the anticontagionists supports the view that sympathy could spread contagion. In this discussion of a disease that is firmly believed to be non-contagious transmission can still take place:

> There are English physicians, of the greatest experience, the highest eminence and least fanciful minds, who are convinced that [consumption] is sometimes communicated from a wife to a husband, or from a husband to a wife during the long and close attendance which its lingering nature and strong affection sometimes occasion. ("Progress" 221)[39]

Here, the idea of illness being transmitted not because it is medically contagious but through sympathy is evoked if not entirely endorsed. Close quarters and sympathetic affection are described as enough to transmit a disease that is not scientifically contagious. Fairclough analyses the close relationship between sympathy and contagion, both of which spread "disorder and unrest" (*Romantic* 1). In other words, contagious disease is a possible source of civil unrest; as the poor are unsatisfied with their condition they turn to radical politics to oppose the government they perceive to be keeping them in the circumstances that are making them ill. As Hays writes, the "middle classes feared cholera as a threat to social stability, for it might provoke the anger of the lower orders" (140). Once again, contagion becomes a social problem. *Blackwood's* wrote about the poor and sickness, but also against political contagion in order to promote anxiety among its readers by the use of the language of disease, as I now analyse.

[39] For a detailed analysis of consumption in the Romantic imagination, see Clark Lawlor, *Consumption and Literature* (2006).

5.3 *Blackwood's* against Radical Contagion

Writing in *Blackwood's* in 1821, the Pittite politician Henry Lascelles identifies a "radical epidemic," but points to the bodily weakness of the impoverished radicals as a reason not to be concerned, describing them as "pale, lank and famished. . .feeble and emaciated" (335). Robust healthiness of the body and mind was strongly linked to fitness for purpose, as I have discussed in the opening chapter. *Blackwood's* had already identified this epidemic earlier in that year:

> As the mania of reform is raging far and wide and the people have taken the radical infection in the *natural way*, — the necessary consequence of inhaling the pestiferous miasmata which sprang from the Cobbetts and the Carliles of the day, — might not the physicians of the state, to continue the illustration, abate the virulence of the disease by a species of inoculation? ("Thoughts" 493; original emphasis)

In a self-conscious use of the metaphor of infectious disease, radicals are described as contagious. This disease travels through the air and it is caught by inhalation. Carlile and Cobbett, the focus of chapters three and four of this thesis respectively, are invoked as the source of the sickness. The state physicians are, as in the radical publications discussed in previous chapters, charged with healing the sick body politic and the modern idea of inoculation is offered as a solution. In fact, it is implied here that taking *Blackwood's* magazine may be a preventative step. Inoculation is a process that requires a small amount of the disease to be contracted and this implies that the periodical press is a virus. A small amount of non-corrupting material — namely *Blackwood's* — should be read to guard against the radical contagion. Both radicals, then, and conservatives, writing in the periodical press of the Romantic period employed similar metaphors, demonstrating the efficacy of the use of medical language in political rhetoric.

Blackwood's continued to offer itself as a remedy for radical disease. In the first volume for 1823, *Blackwood's* claims to offer a selection from articles in other periodicals in

which it has been mentioned ("Vox Populi"). However, the article, opening with a bombastic declaration of the popularity of the magazine, is entirely fictional. In an extract purported to be from the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, *Blackwood's* is discussed as a stimulant for treating the mental derangement of radicalism. Diseases such as *Typhus Radicalis* and *Phrenitis Radicalis* are invented. Typhus, a particularly virulent and contagious disease, and phrenology, the study of the bumps on the skull to determine personality, taken together suggest that radicalism is both highly infectious and a part of a person's character. *Blackwood's* supposedly also cures "Orange fever" — a reference to yellow fever and the Orange Order of Irish Protestantism — where medical treatments such as cupping, blistering, and bleeding have failed (128). Political "fever" is a common analogy. While fever suggests a delusional state, fervour, closely etymologically related to fever, describes a state of intense belief. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but in this context, the "fever" suggests an extremism that, although the politics of the Orange Order aligned with *Blackwood's* general beliefs, must be quelled. This successfully occurred, according to the article, with the arrival of "four bales" of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, demonstrating the representation of the magazine as medicine (128). In this article, *Blackwood's* as a remedy for radical contagion is prescribed by these newly professional authorities on medicine:

> There is now no danger of the contagion spreading, provided proper precautions are taken and enforced by the magistrates and others concerned. We conclude, by declaring our belief in the efficacy of Blackwood's Magazine [*sic*], as one of the best stimulants to nervous energy with which we are acquainted; and those to whom public health is of importance would do well to give it a fair trial. (128)

The use of "stimulants" and "nervous energy" adheres to Brunonian medical theory: here, *Blackwood's* posits itself as a stimulant, or a medicine for a sthenic disease. The magazine stimulates the intellect of the reader out of radical thought, which is a baser excitement; previously described in *Blackwood's* as a fever. This demonstrates the heterogeneous use of medical language in *Blackwood's*. Written by a variety of contributors, unlike the largely

editor-written radical publications I have discussed earlier chapters, the "voice" of *Blackwood's* is not always consistent in content, but the transauthorial discourse describes radicalism as a contagious disease.

The writers for *Blackwood's* could agree, however, that British literature was intrinsically healthier than foreign writing. Romantic poets also concurred: Wordsworth writes in his "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* that "the invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse" (294). Here, foreign literature is described as both intellectually lacking and diseased. Wordsworth also claims that bodily illness has an effect on his own writing, asserting that "sometimes from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy subjects'' (309). Britishness and healthiness are requirements for writing healthy literature. Although in *Wordsworth Writing* (2007) Andrew Bennett identifies Wordsworth's association of writing with his ill health, the representation of Wordsworth as being in robust health was seen by contemporaries as a signifier for the healthiness of his work. John Stuart Mill claimed that Wordsworth had a curative effect on his unhappy state of mind, writing that, on reading Wordworth's poetry, "I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it" (25: 98). Wordsworth agreed that his poetry could affect the body and he discussed this in terms of Brunonian theory, writing that his aim was to produce in his readers, "excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants" and stating that the reader who can achieve this is superior, continuing that "one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability" ("Preface" 293–4).[40] Of this, *Blackwood's* said:

[40] See also Ruston *Creating Romanticism* (17).

> The mind that demands the violent excitement of 'frantic novels' or the gross nutriment of 'sickly and stupid German tragedies,' is, I grant, indeed in a diseased state; but that the mind is in a sane state *in proportion* as it recedes from this diseased torpor, I deny. (Townsend 457; original emphasis)

The writer for *Blackwood's*, the poet Chauncey Hare Townsend, asserts that excessive sensitivity to stimulants is equally a disease, and implies that the reader must experience enough stimulants to be not overwhelmed by, for example, "milk and water" or "a sparrow's egg" (457). Townsend continues "a strong medicine alone can master a strong disease" (457), here breaking from Brunonian medical theory, in which stimulants must be gradually and carefully withdrawn in order to prevent the reverse effect (Budge, "Erasmus" 285) *Blackwood's* strove to maintain the mental health of its readership by developing the role of the professional critic in identifying healthy literature for its readers and the lower orders, and so was concerned with the concept of taste. This was what constituted its "strong medicine".

In order to determine healthy literature, taste was a key concern of conservative publications in the period as magazines like *Blackwood's* began to define and shape a new type of literary figure: the professional critic. In *Educating the Proper Woman Reader* (2004), Jennifer Phegley analyses the discourse under which mid-nineteenth-century professional critics regulated women's reading of periodicals in terms of cultural health: magazines such as *Blackwood's* began to outline this discourse for the poor and radicals of the early nineteenth century. As I have discussed, Brunonian medical theory concentrated on the ways in which women might contract an asthenic disease by reading sensational literature. Both women and the poor are similarly Othered in nineteenth-century discussions of their ability to discriminate healthy from contagious or poisonous literature. As literacy grew among the labouring classes, and printing technology improved, the professional critic was seen to create order out of the "unruly mass" of periodical literature (1). Phegley's assertion that "the profession of literary criticism was built upon the notion that the work of critics served national interests by cultivating a healthy cultural atmosphere that would

preserve. . .the nation's strength" is applicable to *Blackwood's* concern with the unhealthy nature of radicalism as a disease spreading among the poor through literature (3). As such, literary reviews moved away from short, descriptive pieces and became discriminating, didactic, and rhetorical. Tension between the form and style of professional criticism and that of poetic expression was reconciled by writers such as De Quincey, who developed in *Blackwood's* a discourse of professional periodical rhetoric and literary style (Camlot 8). De Quincey also drew a distinction between the reviews and magazines, writing that magazines are "considered as themselves part of the literature, whilst Reviews analyse and criticise, but are themselves scarcely part of the literature magazines are thus represented as superior in the hierarchy of reading material" (*Works* 1: 351).

Blackwood was concerned with not only dictating but also with producing proper literature: in the years 1821–1825, his publishing company was responsible for almost half of all the new fiction published in Edinburgh (Garside 35). Literature of all kinds was represented as contagious, transmitting either healthy or unhealthy notions to the reader. As Allan Conrad Christensen writes in *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion* (2005): "with respect to nineteenth-century theories of reading. . .any literary text may be considered positively or negatively contagious" (201). In other words, every text has an altering effect on the reader, and therefore taste — dictating the selection of reading material — was the key to avoiding negative effects. Taste, of course, having a physiological as well as intellectual dimension, lent itself well to use in mock-medical discussion. It was also linked to health. Wordsworth writes in his "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* when describing being asked to give an account of his poetic system, "it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved" (288). Here, Wordsworth describes a national public taste, a homogenous predilection which, he hints, is unhealthy and corrupt. In a letter to Lady Beaumont (1807),

Wordsworth expands on his idea of taste, writing that "every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great and original, must himself *create the taste* by which he is to be relished": his task as an artist is to shape the nation's taste so that it enjoys his work (*Major Works* xvi).[41] In *Taste* (2005), Gigante analyses Wordsworth's identification of depraved taste with the lower orders who, at this time, could purchase a railway ticket to the Lakes and consume the sublime without having the intellectual capacity to appreciate the landscape properly (83). The language Gigante identifies, with which Wordsworth describes this tasteless class, is also that of the diseased mob: of "pestilential masses" (83).

Blackwood's had its own notions of what constituted healthy taste. In 1822, a letter published in *Blackwood's* was addressed to Christopher North and signed "H," "On the Different Stages of Taste." Strongly linking taste to stimulation, the writer asserts that "the person who reads or contemplates [literature and art] is often contented with strong sensations, without discriminating at all as to their quality, or their grade in relation to taste" (585). Here, the indiscriminate reader is seeking sensation from literature without distinguishing its worthiness or attending to notions of proper taste. The tone of the article is scientific, as the writer attempts to classify these sensations of "mental excitement" in terms similar to those used in medical discourse (585). In the letter, the best grade of taste, now described as "feeling," is found in the "fine arts": literature lacks the ability to produce refined feeling (590). Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams* with its radical political leanings is cited as belonging to the lowest class or grade of stimulants to the senses (586). However, in his *Enquiry*, Godwin posited that all disease could be attributed to social factors, and when society is perfected, illness, and even aging, would no longer affect the body (2: 866). As Logan asserts, Godwin posits disease as an external influence on the body (48), denying a theory of contagion in which illness is passed from person to person. In Godwin's novel, both

[41] Wordsworth attributes this idea to Coleridge in the extended letter.

Caleb and his tyrannical master have been "poisoned" by reading romances, demonstrating the same idea that novels transmit a physiological effect that the conservative professional critic built their profession upon (326). This concept, then, was widely used across political boundaries and in fiction as well as explicitly didactic writing.

While Godwin's characters, both elite and labouring class, are poisoned by reading novels, the supposed preference among the poorer classes for merely stimulating reading material continues to be a subject of discussion in *Blackwood's* and can be seen in an article from 1834, which I return to discuss at the end of this chapter:

> The advocates of education. . .uniformly asserted, that to make the human mind virtuous, it was sufficient to render it enlightened; and that if the people were only taught to read, there could be no doubt that they would select only what would improve and elevate their minds. But the inherent depravity of our nature has speedily shewn [*sic*] itself. . .as fast as the people were taught to read, they have, in part at least, fastened on seductive or alluring publications; and while works of sterling utility or virtue, sold by hundreds, those of fascination, imagination, or sensuality, have gone off by tens of thousands. ("The Influence of the Press" 375).

As literacy grew among the poor and labouring factions of the public, reading "proper," useful and moral publications should be encouraged through their promotion in the periodical press by the professional critic, and a taste for vulgar literature must, according to conservative elites, be curbed. As James Secord reveals in *Victorian Sensation* (2000):

> Working-class readers were to be easily affected by sensual imagery, as their brains were assumed to associate words on the page with concrete, external objects. Cheap newspapers were dangerous because they brought the overt excitement of politics, murder, and other current events into ordinary cottages and working-class homes. (13)

Secord's text analyses the reception of a scientific book, demonstrating that it was not just the working-class consumption of sensation fiction that caused concern: science was a part of culture that could be seen as high or low brow like literature. In this quotation, Secord also points to cheap newspapers as an example of reading that caused "excitement," in working-class households, invoking the concept of stimulation in a Brunonian sense once again.

Cheap newspapers, he writes, circulated nationwide, into both the cottages of rural areas and urban homes. *Blackwood's* instead sought to cultivate its own, reflective, readership: it was, as Klancher asserts, "audience-making" (52).

According to the objective of creating an audience, *Blackwood's* became known for a series of attacks on the "Cockney School" of poets, which included Leigh Hunt and John Keats, whom *Blackwood's* considered vulgar and uneducated compared to the Lake poets. The campaign against the Cockneys was spearheaded by Maginn, Lockhart, and John Wilson Croker (Montluzin 87). The seventh issue contains no Preface or opening statement, merely a table of forthcoming contents. Immediately following this is a contemptuous review of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and, in the same issue, the first of these attacks is published. The attacks were at first written by Croker and, from the fourth attack, Lockhart, who would become editor of the conservative *Quarterly Review* in 1825 (Wheatley, "*Blackwood's*" 1). According to Lockhart (1817), the Cockney school demonstrated "bad taste" and "vulgar modes of thinking" and Hunt, in particular, is considered uneducated, of low birth and, interestingly, urban and not widely travelled, and therefore unacquainted with nature and the sublime ("The Cockney School" 2.7 38–9).

While the Lake poets were, by now, politically conservative, Hunt's radicalism in particular and his influence on young poets made *Blackwood's* anxious, and this radicalism was strongly linked to Hunt's creative work by the magazine. One of these young people affected by Hunt's radical contagion is the focus of the fourth attack: Keats. In a further article on "The Cockney School," Lockhart describes a "mania" of the age, named "*Metromanie*": a mental illness characterised by the desire of the lower orders to write bad poetry (3:17, 519; original emphasis). In *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (1997), Roe also identifies metromanie as a disease of "rampant and demented scribbling" which was seen to have accompanied the French revolution, and therefore abound with connotations of

radicalism and class unrest (20).[42] Roe argues that the article created the myth of Keats' poor education and low background (*Dissent* 10). For example, Lockhart paid particular attention to the fact that Keats had only read Homer in translation, while *Blackwood's* prided itself on its classical references ("Cockney School" 3.16 519). Keats' uneducated desire to write poetry is described as a "malady," a "disease," and an "infection" by Lockhart, and his career in medicine is represented as a more "useful" and, indeed, healthy path that was cut short by the disease of writing vulgar poetry ("Cockney School" 3.16 519). As Roe asserts, the potential for Keats to heal has been perverted into a spreading of sickness (*Dissent* 20). In *John Keats: A New Life* (2012) Roe expands on the article, outlining Lockhart's real fear that poets who loosened the formal and inaccessible style of literature would spark a revolution in England, and his belief that by attacking them vehemently in the pages of *Blackwood's* this may be prevented (265). Once more, radical politics are equated with an infectious disease by conservative commentators, demonstrating a preoccupation with the healthiness of thought and action.

To return to the attacks on the "Cockney School of Poetry" (1818) aimed at Leigh Hunt, Lockhart describes Hunt's *Story of Rimini* as diseased literature:

> The pestilential air which Leigh Hunt breathed forth into the world to poison and corrupt has been driven stiflingly back upon himself and he who sought to spread the infection of a loathsome licentiousness among the tender moral constitutions of the young, has been at length rewarded. (3.16 445)

Here, the air is described as the method for spreading infection. Via this means, Hunt, a political radical, is described as purposefully corrupting another vulnerable section of society: the young. He is also poisoning or infecting himself, as he is tarnished by the radical politics he is spreading in the eyes of *Blackwood's* and other critical parties.

[42] For clarity, Roe's *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* shall be referred to as *Dissent* in parenthetical references.

It is Hunt's personal views that *Blackwood's* worries are contagious. This suggests the concept of miasmata that I have already revealed, in which disease passes from the infected individual into the atmosphere. In this case the sickness is carried by the text, and is then contracted by the next individual from this atmosphere, rather than directly from the infected person. Hunt is denounced for a lack of strict patriotic fervour and Britishness: "his patriotism [is] a crude, ineffectual and sour, Jacobinism." Hunt affects a character described as "airy, graceful, easy, courtly and ITALIAN" ("The Cockney School" 2.7 39; original emphasis). Britishness and taste are strongly linked by *Blackwood's* as complementary defences against radical contagion. This "Cockney School" article is preceded by a piece by an author only cited as "G" on "Animal Magnetism," demonstrating *Blackwood's* persisting preoccupation with contemporary sciences, and it is followed by a piece on colonial policy in the West Indies, continuing the theme of British conservative superiority.[43] The article on the West Indies also demonstrates the fear of wide-spread radicalism, asserting that: "interested and fanatical individuals, unprovided [*sic*] with sufficient information, and possibly influenced by more sordid motives, do threaten the security of the British West India Colonies, by preaching *Jacobinism* to the slaves" ("Strictures"42; original emphasis). The transmission of disease, physiological or political, was a two-way movement. Foreign people were seen as both the cause of Western disease, and vulnerable to Western contagion.

British superiority also continued in discussions of literature. In "French Literature of the Day" in *Blackwood's* in 1825, Maginn, who, significantly, was known as "the Doctor" or "Doctor Maginn" in the *Blackwood's* circle of key contributors, describes French literature as not only sickly itself but a transmitter of contagion. The article discusses an event held in France in the Italian improvisation mode of performance literature, where an audience would offer subjects for the poet to speak on: a mode much admired by the Shelleys and Byron

[43] Animal magnetism itself was thought to be contagious: see Ruston, "William Godwin and the Imagination" in *Creating Romanticism* 63–97.

(Esterhammer 5; 8). A French poet is described as passing an attack of itching around his audience: "Not one returned from the improvisations with a whole nail or a sound head, so quickly contagious was the biting and scratching by which the poet sought in vain to facilitate his delivery" (Maginn 719). The article then ends with a postscript on recent medical experiments on rabid and venomous or poisonous animal bites (719). Here, French literature is represented as either a venom or poison, transmitted aurally in this case.

At the same time, the revolution in France as a source of radical contagion was a recurring theme in the period. In 1823, *Blackwood's* advocates a "universal quarantine against this scourge of nations," and the "plague" of the French revolutionaries ("Public Affairs" 60). *Blackwood's* uses fiction to describe French radicalism as a poisonous medicine in 1826 in an essay titled "Streams." The piece is narrated by an anonymous older literary figure and he describes his health improving due to having "no more of that revolutionary, constitution-shaking, radical French eau-medicinal": playing on the double meaning of constitution as government legislation and the human body (388). It "shakes" his constitution, which suggests the over-stimulation of Brunonian medical discourse. In *Powers of the Press* (1996), Aled Jones discusses the way that newspapers in the nineteenth century were seen as poisons or antidotes and these terms were used in contemporary debates focused on the influence of the press (99). In *Blackwood's*, poison and contagion were used as two different metaphors for the same radical influence, as demonstrated in an article from 1824 in which the period shortly after the French revolution is discussed, when, according to the writer, "it was the opinion of many" that in the immediate future there would "not be a king, a peer, or a priest in the world!" ("The Irishman" 9). The article continues: "the mania, however was shortlived. . .dissipated by the spreaders of the contagion, to whom, however little we may thank them for administering the poison, we are under great obligation for supplying the antidote" (9). Smith had outlined the common view that contagion was an "animal poison,"

demonstrating the overlapping nature of the terms (138). In *Blackwood's*, the magazine is offered as an antidote for the poison: rather than a preventative inoculation, the magazine can, in fact, rid the body of the contagion after it has been contracted. Jones identifies this as a common idea, writing that "in some cases, newspapers might. . .inject the only effective antidote to the venom ingested through unwise reading" (99). The articles of *Blackwood's*, as a magazine, were lengthy, literary, and less immediately responsive to current events, but they also posited themselves as an antidote, or cure. As I have revealed, *Blackwood's* posits itself as not only curing improper taste but also revolutionary politics.

The next reference to the French revolution in terms of disease in *Blackwood's* can be found in 1828. Revolutionary politics in Britain had supposedly been cured, and *Blackwood's* asserted that what had conquered French revolutionary infection was English culture, particularly literature. In a patriotic image, *Blackwood's* once more presents foreignness as sickness:

> The British oak spread out its giant arms in health and verdure and with all the flowers that grew beneath its shade, sent forth such streams of life and fragrance, as subdued or neutralised the emasculating malaria that was creeping over the Channel. ("Shakespeare" 580)

This article asserts that Shakespeare was "a Tory and a gentleman," invoking ideas of British literature as healthy, genteel, and politic (570). Malaria, meaning bad air, is seen as a miasmatic disease and, as such, could potentially travel over the Channel. The British oak, in contrast, produces perfume that dissipates the contagion. As I have referred to earlier, there was a common notion that contagion could be smelled, was carried in the air, and could be inhaled. Here, Britishness, symbolised by the oak tree and, indeed, Shakespeare, is the cure for foreign revolutionary ideas. Gendered language is also used: the foreign disease of revolution is described as "emasculating," asserting that Britishness and healthiness are masculine.

The idea of masculinity as health can also be seen in caricature of the revolutionary period. Gillray's *National Conveniences* (1796) contrasts English, Scottish, French, and Dutch toilets:

Fig 18. Gillray, *National Conveniences*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

The French figure is the only woman, and the French water closet is the dirtiest. The female character wears fine clothes in spite of the setting, although is unkempt and missing a slipper. The English figure is overweight, ruddy-cheeked, and one foot is bound in an indication that he is suffering from gout. He is clutching his stomach is if in pain. The connotations are of overindulgence and luxury. Gillray's *French Liberty*, *British Slavery* (1792), also contrasts national types. It shows a robust, healthy, and typically masculine John Bull contrasted with a sickly, emaciated, and feminine Frenchman:

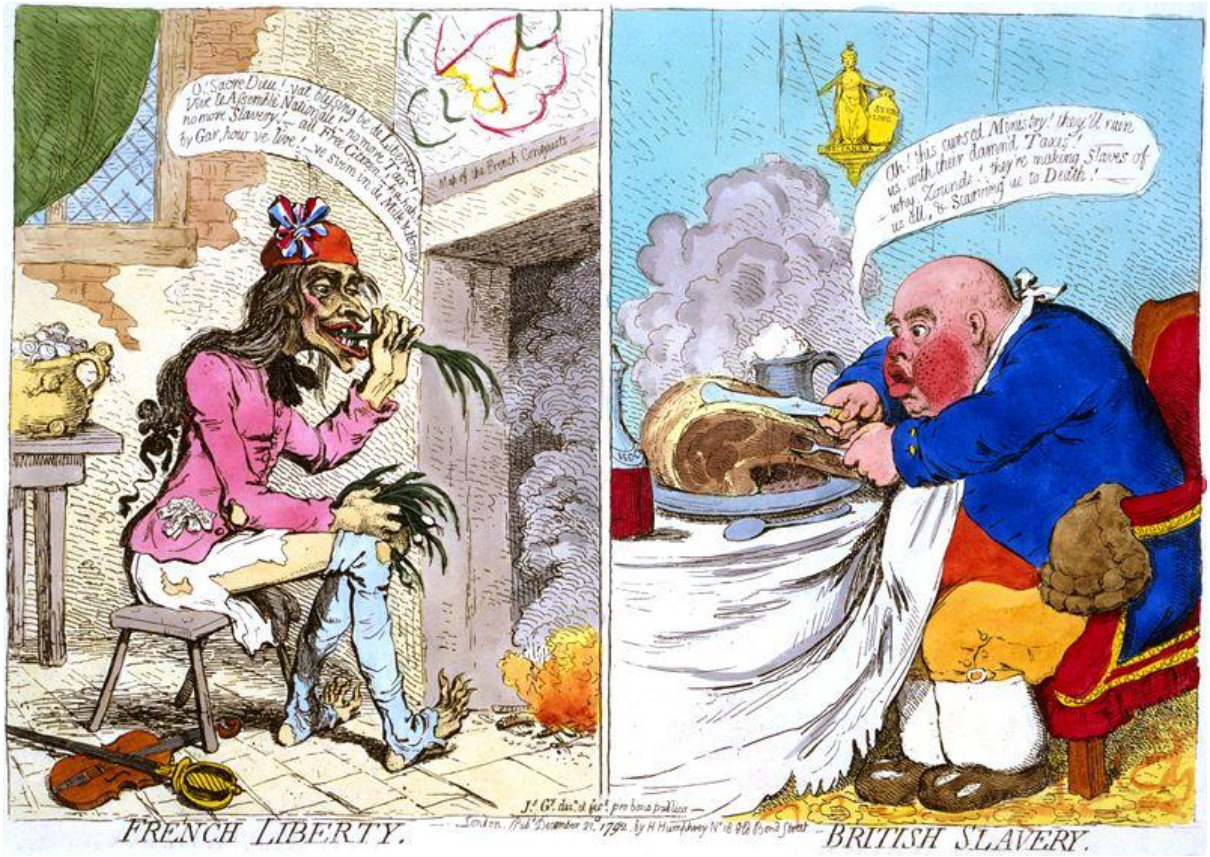

Fig 19. Gillray, *French Liberty*, *English Slavery*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

The French figure's clothes, though tattered, are feminine, while John Bull wears simple, bold garments. His bald head is contrasted with the Frenchman's long, unkempt hair. The British figure is complaining about paying taxes, while sitting down to a hearty meal stereotypical of the English: roast beef. The Frenchman is praising his liberty as a "Free Citizen" while he eats wilted and unappealing vegetables. His poverty and happiness is as amusing as the British figure's gluttony and greed.

I also wish to highlight the depiction of revolutionaries in caricature, who were often represented as monstrous: in a caricature also by Gillray (1792), a family of *sans-coulotte* are drawn as cannibals. This is a depiction of radicals as primitive and barbarous:

Fig 20. Gillray, *Petit-souper, a la Parisienne*. National Portrait Gallery, London.

While the bodies of the *sans-coulotte* are atypically undistorted, apart from their sharpened teeth, the grotesque is still present in their graphic devouring of human bodies. Here, the radicals are not diseased but monstrous. As Kitson writes in "Sustaining the Romantic and Racial Self" (2004), in the Romantic era cannibalism took on new connotations, moving away from a marker of cultural difference between savagery and civilization, and instead representing racial or moral degeneracy (79). A "bestial and lustful. . .desire," cannibalism becomes a manifestation of the revolutionaries' political degradation in this image (79). In "'The Eucharist of Hell'; or, Eating People is Right: Romantic Representations of Cannibalism" (2000), Kitson analyses this cartoon alongside Burke and Paine's own use of cannibal metaphor to describe revolutionaries (8–9). Therefore, in the 1790s, conservative and radical rhetoric employed the same imagery of violence and excess that I have argued Wooler uses in the *Black Dwarf*. However, the monstrous radical is displaced in the first half of the nineteenth century by a more insidious threat: a contagion that cannot be seen, but can

spread in unknown ways. This suggests that radical politics have become less violent but more sophisticated, and greater surveillance is required on the conservative side.

Even so, by 1830, the revolution and its proponents are described as less of a threat in *Blackwood's*. In "France and England" the effect of the revolution on English politics is discussed and the writer for *Blackwood's* asserts:

> Were the first revolutionary taint [in England] propagated from this contagion [in France] and supposing that no previous morbid action of political influences in our own system had prepared the great body of English society to receive the French example with its entire effect, there could be little reason for looking to France with awe. (699)

English radicalism did not spring from the revolution in France, the writer argues, employing a medical term meaning an ill influence — "morbid action," as opposed to the natural action of the healthy body — a term that was considered by some to be technical jargon used by physicians to mask their ignorance, according to the *Monthly Gazette of Health* in 1824 ("Diseases of the Tongue" 879). Physician Matthew Baillie's *Morbid Anatomy* (1793) presented "morbid action" as an altering force, usually undetectable until post-mortem examination, and in this case, this element exists within the body politic of England (5). In *Blackwood's* the negative influence on the health of the nation is once more an internal political contagion and not one from France: the after effects of the revolution were a mere distraction from the real threat of disease from within the country. This suggests that disease is a product of the immediate environment, the repercussions of which are a sense of responsibility on the behalf of the higher classes to exterminate the disease.

5.4 Circulation and Contagion

I concluded the previous chapter with a discussion of the circulation of the radical press and here I analyse the response of *Blackwood's* to this phenomenon. The final note from Blackwood's editorship on radical politics in the press comes from the September 1834 issue

of the magazine. Once more, taste is a key concern, with *Blackwood's* lamenting the taste among the newly literate classes for "seductive" and "alluring" material ("Influence of the Press" 375). If radical politics were a contagious illness, then the wide and tenacious circulation of the radical press was the method by which this disease was disseminated. In response, the writer for *Blackwood's* calls for greater legislation and control over the press, stating that "strong and vivid pictures addressed to the passions and the imagination, incitements to sensual indulgence and that fatal union of genius with voluptuousness. . .have of late become prevalent" (373). Using Brunonian terms, the radical press is presented as a stimulant, a theme continued in the article when it is written that "the immense circulation of the productions which stimulate the political or the private passions, sufficiently prove that it is they [and not *Blackwood's* or the conservative elite press] that fall in with the spirit of the age" and continues by describing the "excitation of the senses" that the radical press produces (374; 376). Here, the circulation of the radical press stimulates the body of the reader beyond health and thus produces a sickness, once again described alternately as a "fever," a "poison," and a "disease" (374; 376; 377). It then produces a sthenic effect: "the immense multitude of the middling and lower classes continue to brood incessantly over the democratic press" (374).

As I have indicated, poison and contagion were both used by *Blackwood's* as political metaphors. Poison has connotations of religious evil, as well as disease, as explicitly acknowledged in this article:

> The suffering produced by democratic fervour has produced such a general reaction as renders all men desirous of seeing it restrained. At this stage of the disease its danger is, comparatively speaking, over. Men have tasted the bitter apples of Sodom and they have found bitter ashes under an inviting and luscious surface. (377)

The use of religious language continues in the article: "The only real antidote to the press is the press itself; the demon of truth, cloaked in the armour of hell, can be combated only by

the spirit of truth arrayed in the silver robes of innocence" (377). Poison leading to moral corruption is a biblical trope and here is used by *Blackwood's* to posit itself as a righteous influence as well as the antidote.

In both the radical and the conservative periodical press of the early nineteenth century, corruption and disease inside political ideologies are exposed, suggestions for purging and curing the illness are posited, and hope is demonstrated that the sickness may be cured by reading the publication under review. Threats come from either an interior disease or an exterior influence: one must be uncovered and eradicated, like an illness, and the other must be defended against. Both, in various ways, posit the reading of their publication as the key to political health. *Blackwood's*, then, engages with contemporary medical debate just as the radical papers discussed in previous chapters do, both taking a stance on the political dimensions of scientific theory, and also appropriating the vocabulary of contemporary debates in order to promote opinions and principles of a strictly political nature. The radical is Othered in the magazine as contagious, spreading the sickness of reformist politics through phlegm, miasmata, and diseased literature. While proximity is strongly believed to be conducive to physiological infection, rather than move away or ignore the radicals, *Blackwood's* readers are encouraged to take the magazine as a form of inoculation against the radicals, presumably so that they may continue to interact and control this dangerous Other.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have uncovered the ways in which human and political bodies were represented, and, in a wider sense, how medicine and literature interacted, in the Romantic periodical press. In the early nineteenth century, the body was conceived of differently than it

had previously been: rather maintaining a holistic view of the body, medical science had greater knowledge of and control over systems such as the nerves and circulation, attempted to define the normal or healthy body against the deviant or sick body, and speculated about the ways in which disease could penetrate and infect the body. Periodical writers responded to these medical advances by appropriating the vocabulary used by practitioners for their own political purposes. In discussions of politics, the body was central as a site where power or resistance could be inscribed, whether the body was healthy or sick, excessive and monstrous, unnaturally restrained by government, or contagious. Greater medical control over the human body and it systems inspired the belief that political bodies and systems could be similarly controlled or changed. In the course of my research, I have identified the main political purpose of each periodical, and found that in writing to this agenda, each editor employed specific medical and bodily metaphor. By undertaking a close and detailed investigation of the key aims of a selection of popular and widely read periodicals, I have discovered that each engaged with medicine as far as they could find appropriate allegory in its discourse.

Such synergies are not surprising. In the period under review, both medicine and political writing attempted to answer the question of what it meant to be human. Medicine was brought into the political and the public sphere in this period in a new way, as it attempted to define the boundaries between life and death, health and sickness, and the normal and the deviant body. The dissemination of these debates was aided in no insignificant part by the periodical press, which brought such discussions to a wide and general audience. Writers for periodicals employed a vocabulary taken from these debates to explore political concepts and medical debate was also directly linked to politics through the body and through the struggle for control, power, and resistance. The political right of free speech, for example, was endorsed by physiology at the moment it was being suppressed by the government. An alliance with French medicine was read as a form of sympathy with

revolutionary politics, while extreme blood-letting was satirically posited as a method of political control over the labouring class. Parallels were often drawn between political authority and medical authority: after Thelwall's self-identification as a political physician in the 1790s, the state doctor became a figure of derision for radical writers in the early decades of the nineteenth century. As Wooler writes in 1821:

> The whole body politic is covered with ulcers. . .our *wise* men are prescribing, or pretending to prescribe, in what manner each sore shall be dressed — what salve will best promote the discharge, and what bandages best bound over the eyes of the patient, lest he should see, and be shocked at his own miserable condition. The mode in which the palliatives are offered, are quite in unison with the quackery that offers them. All classes labour under the effects of *one great evil*, a want of proper representation of the people. ("Mockery" 368; original emphasis)

While medicine had greater control over the human body than ever before, the limitations of and abuses within the profession were transferred to the politicians charged with looking after the body politic: they are described as deceptive quacks in this quotation, bandaging the eyes of the patient so he cannot see and treating sores on the surface of the body rather than curing the underlying disease. The writers I have focused on believed in the power of the press to illuminate and explain the often complex ways in which the people were being oppressed or cheated by their government or the opposing political side, and they used body metaphors as a tool for this purpose, as can be seen above.

Although at first glance the articles I have encountered seem to be merely employing metaphor as a literary device, use of medical language to describe political events encouraged the reader to find Others in the sick or excessive ruling-class or radical body and to imagine themselves as healthy and politically emancipated. Alternatively, as Wooler's quotation illustrates, the reader was asked to believe that they were being attacked or damaged bodily by a political disease: represented in this manner, such an attack was personal and immediately threatening to health and life, ideally galvanising political action.

It is also the case that the line between bodily fitness and fitness for purpose becomes blurred in discussions of politics and reform. Political agency could be denied if bodies were sick, monstrous, excessive, mute, contagious, or otherwise weakened. Political disruptions, such as the Regency, the boroughmongers, suspension of Habeas Corpus, enactment of suppressive laws, economic instability, and the spread of radical ideas were frequently described as disease. Therefore it is clear that during the period under review there was a struggle for control over bodies, human and political, by both reformers and the state. It was not just those calling for reform or resistance who employed medical language to this end: for example, conservative factions presented radicalism as a disease in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. This was a tool for instilling fear and watchfulness in the middle classes. In 1837 *Blackwood's* describes a "Whig-Radical government" in power, the product of a "social revolution" in which "change for its own sake. . .ferments into the fever of revolution" ("Whigs" 561; 553). As I have shown is common, the article represents this anxiety in terms of disease: "politically, as physically, one member of the body cannot long be diseased, without affecting through all its ramifications the whole system" (553). The article charges the radical government with neglecting the bodily health of the poor and providing the middle classes with "ample justification for the exercise of the superintendence, ever watchful, of a wise authority over the health and wellbeing of the labouring classes" (561; 562). The concept of surveillance and authority over the labouring-class body persisted in medical and imaginative literature throughout the nineteenth century. Often compounded with the radical body as the century continues, the poor and labouring-class body became the site of genteel anxiety and methods of control were discussed and debated widely in Victorian era medicine and literature.

The relationship between medicine and literature was mutually influential in the Romantic period. This thesis has explored practical links between periodicals and medical

practitioners, as well as the intrusion into medical debate, publications, and legislation by editors and writers. The health of writers both informed their work and was influenced by the act of writing. It was believed by the writers considered here that reading political writing could stir the reader out of ill health, hypochondria, or Brunonian disease, to make them politically active and, once again, fit for purpose. As I have already discussed, the limitations of the medical profession are ridiculed by the writers for the periodical press, which was another way of subverting authority over the body and therefore the people. Instead, the writers I discuss assumed authority over the body politic themselves and they presented their publications as a cure: as Hunt writes in 1828, the "excision of the Radical Knife" was seen as the remedy for the "gangrenous excrescences on the Body Politic" ("Immaculate" 35). Furthermore, in 1830, Hunt proposed a "National Medical Establishment," funded by a poll tax with the aim of enabling the medical profession to help those too poor to afford healthcare ("Proposal" 21). Hunt's proposal demonstrates his writing from a position of both political and medical authority. While I have made use of Jon Klancher's concept of transauthorial discourse to collate material and identify the voice of each periodical, individuals also became important in my thesis because their personal experience with health and medicine influenced and intruded upon their political rhetoric.

My thesis contributes to scholarly attention paid to the ongoing narrative of the body politic. By approaching political writing through the lens of the discourse from which it borrowed metaphors, I have supplemented and further developed the growing body of criticism that acknowledges a conversation between medicine, or science, and literature, and posits these productions as part of the same cultural landscape, or public sphere, in which many interdisciplinary publications and figures interacted. I have positioned the relationship between medicine and literature as symbiotic and pedagogic: Beer's "two-way" traffic of

literature and science, as outlined in my introduction, can also be found in the periodical literature and medicine of the early nineteenth century.

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