

# Cognitive Architectures: Structures of Passion in Joanna Baillie's Dramas

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COGNITIVE ARCHITECTURES:  
STRUCTURES OF PASSION IN JOANNA BAILLIE'S DRAMAS

by

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ABSTRACT  
COGNITIVE ARCHITECTURES: STRUCTURES OF PASSION IN JOANNA BAILLIE'S  
DRAMAS

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The burgeoning Industrial Revolution, coupled with the scent of a far different revolution briskly blowing across the English Channel, nourished a significant amount of aristocratic anxiety throughout late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain. The stratifying effects of inherited wealth were dissolving and an ascending middle class was making its way into traditionally upper class social circles, political discussions, and capitalistic ventures. In a letter, written to Sir Walter Scott in the late spring of 1812, Joanna Baillie, the Scottish playwright best known for her *Plays on the Passions, 1798* and her theoretical notion of sympathetic curiosity, references the Luddite riots, citing the continued tensions between the bourgeoisie and the upper class, before offering a simple, mediating, request: "I hope people will associate and strengthen themselves against this disorder every where, and let the good sense and courage of, I trust, a very large majority of the people support and make amends for a feeble government, without giving up any of their views of moderate, wholesome reform."<sup>1</sup> While critics have understood Baillie's dramas as challenging traditional gender constructs or demonstrating rising class conflicts, few have recognized her "Introductory Discourse" and her method of sympathetic curiosity as a form of literary mediation. Her materialist demonstrations of the passions are derived out of a sincere attempt at mediating late eighteenth and early nineteenth century relations between the middle and upper classes.

Using a combination of various tools within cognitive theory, including Scarry's image construction, Zunshine's essentialist representations, and Turner's concept of metaphor, I trace Baillie's method of sympathetic curiosity through a variety of her dramas including *Orra, De Monfort, The Election, The Dream, and Count Basil*. Similar to her comments to Scott regarding the contemporary state of affairs within Britain, I contend that through her dramas Joanna Baillie requests "amends" for a feeble aristocracy from the middle class, while simultaneously challenging the excessive aristocracy to show more sympathy in its casting of judgment upon others, including the lower classes. For Baillie, it is literary mediation, a means to "wholesome reform," that will dispel the disorder and provide for more stable human relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Baillie. "To Walter Scott." 27 May 1812. Letter 3882 of *The Collected Letters of Joanna Baillie*. Ed. Judith Bailey Slagle. Vol. 1. Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated U P, 1999. 303-305.

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Chapter 1 The Invisible Made Visible: The Meeting of the Mind and the Text in Joanna Baillie's Dramas

In the Spring of 1813, Joanna Baillie penned a letter to Sir Walter Scott describing two separate occasions in which she had heard the well-known and highly acclaimed actress Sarah Siddons offer readings of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* respectively. In her critique of Siddons's performance of *Hamlet*, Baillie makes a subtle commentary upon the degree to which a reader physically engages a text:

the closet scene I did not like so well, and there were frequent bursts of voice beyond what natural passion warranted and in no good keeping (to use a painter's term) with the general tone of the whole which annoyed me a good deal. However, take it all in all it was fine & powerful acting; [...] I have called it Acting for so it is rather than reading. It seems to me that no more expression of countenance & gesture belongs to fair reading than one would give from sympathy, as one in telling or *reading* a story naturally assumes in a degree the *change of expression* belonging to the persons of the story.

(*Further Letters* 54; emphasis my own)

Baillie's acknowledgement of the reader's shifting or changing facial expressions in response to a story reflects a Romantic trend towards the exploration of physiognomy. While it is unclear as to whether or not she was familiar with the work of Johann Kaspar Lavater, a leading physiognomist of the time, she would have had intimate knowledge of the subject of physiognomy based upon the research of her brother, Matthew Baillie, a leading surgeon and attending physician to King George III. According to Richardson, "Matthew Baillie outlines the links among mind, brain, nerves, body, and 'emotions,' arguing for a 'natural language' ('universally understood' and 'not connected with any arbitrary customs of society') arising from

them, in his 1794 lectures to the Royal College of Physicians” (*Science of the Mind* 77). The notion of a “natural language” clearly informs Joanna Baillie’s *Plays on the Passions* (1798). The “Introductory Discourse” to her aforementioned plays “tacitly relies on the new neurophysiology summarized four years earlier by her brother in the Gulstonian lectures” (77). Joanna Baillie’s interest in proto-neurophysiology and her intentional incorporation of its initial ideas into her dramas provides a unique opportunity for the consideration of contemporary cognitive theory in relation to her work. Her keen awareness, as portrayed through her dramas, not only of the nuances of the individual emotions and their outward manifestations within the human physiognomy, but also, as considered in her letters and “Introductory Discourse,” of the distinct relationship between both the viewing and reading audiences and their engendered physiological responses to her texts, makes her a particularly useful author for the purposes of exploring and applying cognitive theory. Through the usage of contemporary cognitive literary theory, neurological science, and psychology, this dissertation will “trace [the passions] in their rise and progress in the heart” throughout four of Baillie’s plays on the passions (*Orra, The Election, De Monfort, and Count Basil*). It will develop a series of replicable models for cognitive literary analysis, as well as show the unique mediating position she adopts between the rising bourgeoisie and the anxiety-ridden aristocracy.

Historically, Baillie published her first *Series of Plays on the Passions* in 1798 towards the end of the French Revolution. Simultaneously, the Industrial Revolution was burgeoning, steam engines were becoming common, populations were shifting towards cities, and the middle class was growing in number and political influence. The relationship between the rising bourgeoisie and the aristocracy was strained. Just thirty years earlier, “eighteenth-century European culture was an aristocratic culture, the product of aristocratic leadership and

domination, and it was among the courts and wealthy nobilities that the instinctive moral and social internationalism [...] was most pronounced” (Newman 12). The French Revolution, coupled with the Industrial Revolution, created an atmosphere in which the middle and upper class of England struggled to locate their identities in relation to one another. Newman uses the following commentary to summarize Thomas Day’s *Sandford and Merton* (1783), but I believe it serves to illustrate the contemporary state of relations between the upper and middle classes: “two co-existing worlds of values, two entire systems not only of morality but of manners, tastes, pastimes, impulses and ambitions[;...] two sociomoral worlds, different as castles from cottages yet occupying the same landscape” (101). In the meantime, intellectuals such as Baillie, were left “alienated and frustrated [...] ‘casting around for a cultural identity’” (120). Day among them, many writers entrenched themselves in an anti-aristocratic stance, attempting to promote the progressive values of the middle class. Published in 1788, Wollstonecraft’s *Mary*, the story of a young woman who is forced into marriage due to economic pressures, scathingly critiques the isolation and oppression to which the female was subject in the “polite circle,” in accordance with the “fashionable style” (Wollstonecraft 1). In her subsequent *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798), Wollstonecraft more overtly criticizes the upper class and their obsession with manners, claiming “in writing this novel, I have rather endeavored to pourtray [sic] passions than manners” (73). Again, many of the writers of the time period were attempting to delineate between that which was false, or imitative, and that which was human, or universal. For many, including Day and Wollstonecraft, these distinctions aligned themselves with the upper and middle classes respectively. These two authors were overtly anti-aristocratic; other authors of the time attempted to align themselves with the rising middle class, but arguably struggled to overcome their upper class sentiments.



Wordsworth published the *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) with his enticing “Preface” just four years following the publication of Baillie’s “Introductory Discourse” (1798). In his “Preface,” Wordsworth claims that the passions are recognized in their purest form within the lower and middle classes, arguing, “the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated” (Wordsworth 7). He continues, “from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, *being less under the influence of social vanity* [the peasants] convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions” (7; emphasis my own).

Wordsworth’s intentions are seemingly good, but feel anthropological in their “us/them” mentality. He studies the peasants from a privileged position, the son of a lawyer and political magnate. While his “Preface” attempts to reclaim a literary form from the grasps of an upper class plagued by logorrhea and airy diction, offering it to the ill-spoken tongues of the plebian population, he only further divides the two populations in his efforts. It is exactly the complex and elaborate expressions of the “invaluable work of our elder writers” from which Wordsworth would like to distance himself in the cultivation and presentation of his *Lyrical Ballads*, but in so doing, he amplifies the differences between the two classes (7). Wordsworth’s close friend, Coleridge, similarly situated himself within the conversation regarding the upper and middle class, but sheds some interesting light upon the discussion in the twenty-sixth chapter of his *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

The *Biographia Literaria* is an autobiography detailing Coleridge’s philosophy of literature and poetry. Within it he attempts to account for many of the literary decisions he made

and the philosophical underpinnings of his approach to poetry. His relationship with Wordsworth leads him to a discussion of the poet's decision to write the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and then republish them with the "Preface" in 1802. This chapter provides an interesting perspective of the class discussion. In explaining that Wordsworth added a preface to the second edition of the poems, Coleridge details that

he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of speech that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface, prefixed to poems [...] arose the whole long-continued controversy. (Coleridge 192)

This controversy, waged by the elite, criticized Wordsworth's poetry as "silly[,] childish[, and] inan[e] of thought" (192). Poetry had been traditionally aligned with the high-minded and the cultured aristocracy; though I respect his work profoundly, through his attempted explanations, I believe Wordsworth only further detracted from his purpose of humanizing the lower classes. As Coleridge articulates, Wordsworth's expression becomes "equivocal" and thus, his larger project loses its potentially universalizing capabilities insofar as it establishes an upper/lower class binary.

Shifting away from Wordsworth to Coleridge demonstrates a more significant alignment with the aristocracy. In continuing his aforementioned discussion, Coleridge submits to a historical, cultural and aristocratic tradition of poetry. He defines "*legitimate* poetry" as poetry wherein "the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement" (196; Coleridge's emphasis). Such a definitive emphasis upon legitimacy in relation to poetry

aligns itself with aristocratic constructs of historical traditions. Coleridge was not the only writer to align himself with such tradition; Byron became a landed baron at the young age of 10 through the death of an uncle. Though his famed mismanagement of money and his subsequent financial ruin cast a shadow over his landed title, Byron's literary endeavors align themselves with a strong tradition that embraces the significance of the aristocracy and its power.

Byron's *Manfred* (1817), considered a closet drama by contemporary critics, traces the noble titular character through his attempts to forget his beloved Astarte. Dealing in the otherworldly, Manfred calls forth seven spirits who, each in their turn, fail to help him. Manfred cannot find worldly respite and, following an attempted suicide, rejects religious persuasions to redemption of sin, ultimately, choosing death. Manfred authoritatively rejects all higher powers within the text, claiming, "thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel; / Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know" (Byron 449). The nobleman confronting worldly and otherworldly powers with such demonstrative authority is not an uncommon trope within the British literary tradition;<sup>1</sup> further, Byron's use of verse situates it within what Coleridge might consider more "legitimate" drama. Aside from his sexual exploits, Byron had little to do with the lower and middle classes, situating himself within an upper class cultural, literary and historical tradition.

Clearly, a growing distinction between the classes is reflected in Romantic poetic and narrative considerations. The upper class was feeling assaulted by middle class values; simultaneously, the middle class was increasingly interested in the dissolution of the aristocratic pretenses to fashion and power. The tension between the two created an environment striving for a sense of stability. Newman states, "in the evolving elite and in the snobbery that persistently clung to it there were always fresh targets of concern" (Newman 156). Baillie, along with her contemporaries, was attempting to carve out a space within this tendentious environment. As is

demonstrated above, many writers chose one side or the other in the promotion of a particular class; Baillie is disinclined to do so. Instead, she places herself in a mediating role, setting up a series of dramas that asks not what makes us different, but instead, what makes us similar. It will be this assumed similarity that underlies her approach to the individual passions and ultimately, to humanity.

\* \* \*

Critics have not overlooked the deft attention Baillie has given to the human and relational elements in her dramas, letters, and theoretical considerations. Significant critical conversation has been devoted to Baillie's interest in educating her audiences; however, from a critical perspective the purpose of her education has varied considerably. Focusing on public executions or more general notions of authority, on Christian values or the moral implications of passion, critics are widely concerned with how and what Baillie is truly teaching her audiences. In *Symbolic Interactions*, Hewitt offers a socio-philological examination of Baillie's dramas in an attempt "to educe the constructive social agenda [...] by reading them through the lenses of social work and interactionist sociology" (Hewitt 22). Focusing primarily on public executions and their relation to the "Bloody Code" of British law, Hewitt considers Baillie's dramas, *Rayner*, *The Dream*, and *Henriquez*. Wherein each "represent[s] or allud[es] to executions[; she argues that] Baillie habitually directs attention to the humanity of the prisoner and the inhumanity of punitive justice, creating opportunities for spectators to critique the interactions that define criminality" (77). Through the implementation of a post-disciplinary perspective, Hewitt provides a sociological premise for Baillie's concept of "sympathetic curiosity" in relation to these prisoners, demonstrating the notion of symbolic interaction as "an interpretive encounter between readers and writers or readers and texts" (24). Sociologically, symbolic

interaction is a counter-deterministic philosophy that empowers the individual's ability to construct personal and collective action through an interpretation of the situations confronting him/her (Blumer qtd. Hewitt 25). It sees all human interaction as performative. Thus, as an audience views a prisoner suffering, they internalize and experience that suffering, feeling empowered to make a change.

While the idea of the self's ability to define its situation and circumstances constantly through interpretation often feels naively idealistic and comes vaguely close to the "pull up your bootstraps" mentality of contemporary conservative ideology, Hewitt's consideration of such a mentality certainly feels useful given the early nineteenth-century culture in which class boundaries were dissolving. She makes a strong case that such empowerment may have been helpful in motivating those in the underprivileged lower classes to take control of their own situations. For Hewitt, Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" provides a clearly articulated structure through which symbolic interaction can occur within the public realm, challenging contemporary social issues, specifically, public execution, before seeking to educate the audience through resolution on the stage. Hewitt is not the only critic who sees the demonstration of public executions on stage as a significant point of entry into Baillie's dramatic purpose.

Myers concerns herself with public executions and Baillie's dramatic and educational approach to human sympathy in the socio-cultural realm; however, unlike Hewitt, she is not so quick to praise the Romantic playwright's humane position, but rather focuses on the disturbingly ambiguous position in which she places the spectator in relation to the sufferer. In her article "Joanna Baillie's Theater of Cruelty," Myers examines Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" arguing, her "language shows an affinity with that of eighteenth-century theorists of sympathy, yet [she] elicits from their studies not so much potential lessons in morality – or even

means of conveying moral knowledge from the private to the public sphere – as disturbing ambiguities in the moral role of the spectator/judge” (Myers 88). Distancing herself from “closet/stage” discussions, she argues that rather than fighting the public/private spheres, Baillie “describes the dark side of the [spectator/judge] role through her predilection for a language of voyeurism, invasion, and inquisition and through her examples of primitive torture and contemporary hangings” (88). She continues, claiming that by “entering into the view of the cruel spectator[, Baillie] hints that [her] cultural agenda is quite different from Smith’s, namely to uncover the dimension of cruelty in governmental power and the collusion of the public in that cruelty, rather than to obscure it in a picture of achieved civilization” (100). Myers agrees that Baillie may be attempting to provide a morally progressive message through her “Discourse;” however, unlike Hewitt, she contends that, “if Baillie sees [the dramatic process of education] as contributing to self-control and moral progress, it is by a movement of identification with cruelty which entails recognition of the role of savagery in civilized society and in the maintenance of authority” (106). In other words, while Hewitt considers Baillie’s dramas as useful in the promotion of the individual and his/her own inherent ability to challenge the social system through symbolic interaction, Myers believes that Baillie educates her audience and promotes change through a demonstration of the horrors of civilized society’s methods of authoritarian rule.

Taking a stronger moral angle and shifting away from authority, public execution and the larger social implications to a more personal level of responsibility and accountability within Baillie’s dramas, Colón argues in her recent book *Joanna Baillie and the Art of Moral Influence* (2009), that beyond her influence as a Romantic dramatist and theorist, Joanna Baillie must be remembered and appreciated for her Christian values and perspective. By exploring this aspect of

her writing, Colón believes, “we will see how Baillie negotiates God’s truth, individual freedom of interpretation, and moral reform as she provides a radical critique of orthodox Christianity” (Colón 177). She contends that, “for Baillie, controlling the passions is an intensely personal process rather than a social one” (28). While I agree that the controlling of the passions is personal, I do not believe that it is as bifurcated with regard to the social aspect as Colón portrays; in fact, as I will contend in Chapter 3, “Categorical Essentialism and Social Emotion in *The Election* and *De Monfort*: Sympathizing with a Conniving Politician and a Murderous Aristocrat,” Baillie sees the process of controlling passions as occurring somewhere in between the personal and the social. Though her characters may struggle to maintain their passions as individuals, society must work together to control passion, or it too will suffer. Therefore, a sense of shared responsibility pervades her dramas—perhaps more than Colón wants to admit.

My consideration of a central space between the middle and upper classes is further supported by a reference Colón makes to a particular funeral sermon offered for Baillie. Sadler, the sermonizing pastor, refers to Baillie as “‘one who had many points of sympathy with us, and who occasionally worshipped in this place’ (18); but, ultimately, she was one who ‘tracked out for herself a *middle path* of belief, amidst all the conflicting arguments and influences, which agitate and... unnecessarily divide the Christian world’ (19)” (41 emphasis my own). The middle space is a significant place for Baillie in its refutation of the contentious extremes; I will be arguing throughout this dissertation that Baillie seeks this space through her dramas, letters, and theoretical arguments. Though Colón targets the more personal aspects of Baillie’s agenda, promoting her use of Christian values and focusing primarily on notions of the individual’s relationship with God, nevertheless, similarly to Hewitt and Myers, she demonstrates Baillie’s clear educational motivations.

The final critical consideration of education that I will highlight belongs to Tucker. Tucker examines the “manifestation of the moral reform of the stage primarily through Elizabeth Inchbald’s and Joanna Baillie’s writings on drama” (Tucker 335). She cites the prominent rise of evangelicalism and the British Society’s increasingly universal understanding of themselves in relation to one another, “sharing a bond with all society’s members, whether those members reason from sound or flawed premises” (335). Madness begins to be perceived as uncontrolled passion and the “development of a more psychological, sympathetic, cultural understanding of madness appears [...] in the form of Joanna Baillie’s work on the passions” (336). Specifically, Tucker argues that through displaying the destruction of the passions within individuals who cannot be relegated to something inhuman, Baillie allows her audiences to witness the moral consequence of their actions. Tucker claims, and I would agree, that intimacy and proximity are two crucial aspects to the development of an educational experience for Baillie’s audiences: “Baillie’s theatrical aesthetics assume the role of the stage to be both mimetic – actors should do their best to imitate the real behaviors displayed by real people in the grip of passions – and reformatory – audiences should see themselves in the characters portrayed and learn from the characters’ moral failings” (337). Similar to Hewitt’s notion of symbolic interaction, Tucker is primarily concerned with the notion that audience members will experience the emotions through a mimetic experience, learning from the actors how better to cope with their own passions; however, Tucker takes a more studied psychological approach, as opposed to a sociological one. Her interest in madness, and a focus on Baillie’s intentional development of sympathy for the previously “inhuman,” aligns itself well with contemporary studies on madness and specifically, obsession. I will consider notions of obsession more in detail in Chapter 4. While education in relation to a moral aesthetic remains the primary concern of Tucker’s argument, her critical



inquiry into madness provides a strong segue into another aspect of Baillie criticism, the neurological or science of the mind.

The neurological and physiological aspects of the Romantic era have not escaped critical attention. As Kenneth Burke so eloquently articulates it, “materialistic science that was a dialectical counterpart of romantic idealism, preferred conversely to translate agent into terms of scene, or, in other words, to treat ‘consciousness’ in terms of ‘matter,’ the ‘mental’ in terms of the ‘physical,’ ‘people’ in terms of ‘environment’ (Burke 644). Such was the shifting and dynamic period in which Joanna Baillie composed her “Introductory Discourse” and the various *Plays on the Passions*. For Baillie, this dialectic informed her approach to developing passion within her characters. As the younger sister of a widely recognized and acclaimed doctor and physiognomic, Joanna Baillie had access to the intricate theory of physiological emotion and clearly attempts to weave it through the protagonists of her dramas. Stage directions and carefully situated responses suggest knowledge of contemporary science, as well as a concerted effort to craft artistically, the materialist human. Burwick demonstrates this well in his exploration of Baillie and the pathology of the passions, but first, it is helpful to consider Richardson’s comprehensive overview of Romanticism and the mind.

Of all Romantic critics, Richardson has most carefully documented the history of materialism in the Romantic era. In his book, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001), Richardson addresses the contemporarily “misconstrued” historical perspective of the Romantic period as primarily dualistic in its approach to and understanding of the mind/body question. Through close textual analysis of not only works by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Austen, and Keats, but also of many scientific articles and arguments published by proto-psychologists and neuroscientists, including Erasmus Darwin, Charles Bell, and Francois Gall during the same

period, Richardson complicates quotidian notions of the Romantics as merely “plac[ing] emotion in the body and reason in the brain” (Damasio qtd. Richardson 183). In doing so, he challenges conventional ideas of Romanticism within the humanities, but more importantly, he moves across disciplines into the fields of neurobiology, neuropsychology, and neuroscience, requesting a closer study of the “prehistory” of cognitive theory—the history preceding Charles Darwin—within their respective fields: “lessons could be gained from reexamining the connections posed with the embodied psychologies of the Romantic era” (Richardson 184). Richardson identifies materialist, or anti-dualist, notions of brain science as both radical and unorthodox. In the Romantic period, should one choose to identify him/herself as a materialist it was not only representative of a certain scientific or philosophical approach, but more importantly, it demonstrated clear political and religious biases as well, serving to tarnish an individual’s scientific or literary reputation. This notion remains a consistent theme throughout the text.

Of particular interest to previous considerations of Coleridge’s upper class sympathies, is Richardson’s reading of Coleridge’s *Kubla Kahn*, in which he focuses on the dreaming state and what he terms the “new unconscious.” Richardson cites Cabanis, a sensualist philosopher of the medical revolution, in his definition of this term:

in contrast to the notion held by most ‘metaphysicians’ that dreams are provoked only by external causes (like street noise) or simple bodily discomfort (a cricked neck or dyspeptic stomach), the revisionist theory advanced by Cabanis holds that ‘the mind never sleeps,’ that cognition can proceed without conscious awareness, that the ‘operations carried on by the mind during the sleep of the body’ can produce coherent and even novel ideas despite the suspension of the will and the temporary dissolution of the conscious subject. (40)

In the “Preface” to *Kubla Kahn*, Coleridge identifies the poem as composed in a “profound sleep, at least of the external senses” (48). As a self-professed dualist, such statements complicate Coleridge’s belief system and further shed light on the various nuances within the mind/body conversation. Further, Richardson shows that in his struggles with an opium addiction, Coleridge was unable to align the dualist notion of a mind that transcended the body with the idea that the physical ingestion of opium could impact his mental state: “Not only does opium, a material substance, act on the will; but by acting on the will, it suggests that mental faculties are affected by material changes in the body” (51). Coleridge’s stated dualist beliefs further align him with the upper class, aristocratic tradition within which he was earlier identified; however, it is clear that his concept of dualism is complicated by contemporary science.

In his final chapter, Richardson reconsiders the idea that Romantic conversations surrounding dualism served in the establishment of scientific racism and cultural divisions: “instead, at least some Romantic-era writers fundamentally revised [the Enlightenment era’s postulate of a universal human nature], looking to the body with its nervous system, brain, and ‘organic’ mind rather than to a disembodied Reason as the ground for human uniformity and equality” (177). Specifically, “a conception of human nature that refuses to transcend or deny the body – that *begins* from the body and its brain – can help to affirm a common humanity or to engineer a systematic hierarchy of human differences” (179). I will argue that it is this “common humanity” that Baillie strives to identify and support through her careful articulation of the passions within her protagonists—emotions are a common, social experience and must be understood in terms of relationship.

Burwick, another critic who considers the pathology of passion within Baillie, believes that her dramas promote an understanding of emotion, not through internal exploration, but

through the social experience of viewing them in others' facial expressions, body language, and various physical manifestations, such as blushing or growing warm. In "Joanna Baillie, Matthew Baillie, and the Pathology of the Passions," Burwick recounts Joanna Baillie's observation of emotion, not in the so-called "traditional literary model, but rather in relation to the accounts of mental pathology in contemporary medical science" (Burwick 48). Providing a brief biographical background, Burwick situates Baillie in and amongst familial and societal concerns with the anatomical and physiological manifestations of the passions. Citing her "Introductory Discourse," as well as the prefaces to each of her subsequent volumes of the *Plays on the Passions*, he highlights how "social intercourse requires every individual to be alert to the nuances of disturbance and deviation in others" (51). Burwick notes Baillie's interest in the primary passions: "the wild tossings of despair; the gnashings of hatred and revenge; the yearnings of affection, and the softened mien of love; all the language of the agitated soul, which *every age and nation understand*, is never addressed to the dull or inattentive (3b)" (emphasis my own 51). Again, I emphasize this particular quote because Baillie addresses a transcendent, universal human experience of emotion. It reaches across class boundaries and unifies us in its common physiological expression. Burwick continues, contrary to Colón, claiming that neither Joanna, nor Matthew Baillie, had confidence in introspection as a means to the discovery of emotion. From their perspective, "actions in a state of excitement may override volition and even conscious awareness, [and thus,] they can be studied only in the observation of others" (51). Burwick argues, Matthew Baillie believes that emotion

becomes a natural language, and is perfectly understood in all countries; for it depends upon a universal principle in human nature, and is not connected with any arbitrary customs of society. The expressions of the countenance and attitude in anger, revenge,

fear, etc., when strongly excited, are the same in every country, and are universally understood. (52)

For the Baillie's, extreme emotion is non-volitional or, as Joanna Baillie identifies it in the "Introductory Discourse," a "natural language" (53). It is this language that will be more deeply considered in the cognitive explorations of Baillie's dramas within this dissertation; however, before delving into a cultural cognitive exploration of her dramas, I will shift to the third and final primary area in which Baillie criticism has situated itself – gender.

Burroughs is the most prominent critic on Baillie and gender. In her book *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers* (1997), she demonstrates how Joanna Baillie proposes and implements a theory of theatricality, intentionally clearing a cultural space in which the feminized domestic, "closet stage" co-mingles with the perceived masculine space of the public stage. By carefully reconstructing the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romantic private/public binary and its respective associations of female/male, chastity/looseness, moral/amoral, and mind/body, Burroughs builds the foundation, and the need, for the Bailliean mediating theory, which she contends "advocated looking for theater in the closeted, or private, spaces of domestic life while consistently urging that her dramas of the closet be performed on formal stages" (21). Issues of gender construction and "performativity" are of paramount importance in the overall project of revealing Baillie's dramaturgical intentions:

through [an] attentiveness to feelings that have been repressed, closeted and hidden away in the private chambers, Baillie's dramaturgy helps us regard Romantic closet drama anew, as resembling late-twentieth-century play scripts that focus on the problem of how

to deal with crushing social imperatives to enact one's gender and sexual identity in extremely narrow ways. (87)

Burroughs uses this theoretical angle as a means to demonstrating Baillie's heightened sensitivity to and critique of traditional masculine gender roles within *DeMonfort*, *Count Basil*, and *The Tryal*. Readings of both *De Monfort* and *Basil* reveal strong homosocial tendencies and repressed homoerotic desires within the title characters. Closer study of *The Tryal* portrays the patriarch wavering in his masculine ability to manage his household/domestic space under his niece's persistent pursuit of the development of private theater, before he reestablishes control at the play's close. Burroughs depends upon a unique blend of cultural studies, historical and theatrical theories in her approach to the study of Baillie, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary exploration in the field of Romanticism. By drawing on contemporary gender and queer theory, she effectively engages Baillie's focus on "performativity" and the "closet."

Similar to Burroughs, Bennett deals with the notion of the "closet" and gender as well; however, Bennett is not concerned with considerations of homosociality and homoeroticism, but rather focuses more clearly upon the genre of "closet drama" as it relates to Baillie, as well as the gendered domestic, or private, and public spaces in which she situates her characters. Bennett examines "the implications and effects of the genre category 'closet drama' on the critical reception of Baillie's plays," disentangling her from a category that relegated dramatists to the quiet recesses of a place reserved for privacy (161). Bennett argues that contemporary critics have tried to associate Baillie with closet drama because "recent scholarship on women writers of the early modern period has led, if not to a complete reconceptualization of the category 'closet drama,' then to a fuller sense of the material operations of that genre as well as its cultural impacts" (162-3). She disagrees with this reconceptualization, closely reading the text of

Baillie's *Constantine*, considering it "a foundational text for rethinking the terms and (repressive) conditions of 'closet drama'" (168).

Bennett chooses *Constantine*, a lesser-known Bailliean drama, "both for the pragmatism of Baillie's theatrical script and for its enactment of the conditions of the closet by way of its women characters" (168). In her analysis of the theatrical script and Baillie's preface, Bennett illustrates Baillie's intentionality in creating a play to be publicly performed, specifically noting its suitability for "Kemble and Siddons" (169). The play itself involves complex negotiations of public and private space, delineating respectively between men and women:

men of the play confidently populate exterior landscapes and are the obvious agents of action and decision-making. [...] Women, by contrast, are almost always in interior settings – even watching the action from the tower is a liminal experience that ensures they stay at a removed distance from the men's public lives. (169)

Bennett follows close textual analysis with the summation that "*Constantine* repeatedly enacts the literal and metaphoric closets of women's lives. [...] Both [female roles] try to find avenues for social agency, but their public performances are inevitably turned to scenes of punishment" (171-2). She concludes by reaffirming her stance that "Baillie never concerns herself with the reader, except to lecture on the necessity to *see* the drama" (173). While I do not disagree with the fact that Baillie is negotiating a liminal space between public and private, wherein women attempt to gain social agency, I think that Bennett's definitive claim that Baillie *never* concerns herself with the reader is incorrect. Within her letters to Walter Scott, Baillie considers the reader on numerous occasions, citing how the reader's imagination is intrigued by certain passages, or how he/she physically responds to a text.<sup>2</sup>

Though Baillie strives to see her plays performed throughout her career, unwittingly dismissing her attention to the reading mind may be harmful to her continued integration into the Romantic canon. The Romantic male canon, particularly Shelley, Keats, Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Byron, are fascinated by the inner workings of the imagination in relation to text. Coleridge's writings on the imagination in his *Biographia Literaria* demonstrate a clear interest in identifying text in its complex relationship with the imagining mind. Focusing too much on Baillie's drive to have her dramas performed publicly may result in the oversight of her intuitive and even deliberate approach to affecting the reading mind. To conclude, while considerations of her dramas in terms of education and gender are crucial to demonstrating how engaged she was with her contemporary culture, if she is to find a critical place among her Romantic counterparts, it is important to understand her within a cognitive framework. Having summarized the primary considerations of contemporary Bailliean scholarship, I will now shift to a brief overview of the critical field of literary cognitive studies.

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Suggesting that "the meaning of an artifact is a pattern in the human brain" in his 1991 publication, *Reading Minds*, Turner paved the way for critical inquiry into the relationship, not solely between a text and a reader, but between the text as artifact and the reader as brain. Suddenly, literary critics had a seat at a formerly closed scientific table; brains were no longer purely materialist objects meant for physical probes and scientific investigation, but rather, literature provided us with a unique insight into how we think and potentially, how our brains function. As Spolsky demonstrates in her book *Gaps in Nature*, "the gaps in human cognitive structures—the vacancies between fragments of understanding—not only permit but actually encourage transformation and innovation and, furthermore, this state of affairs is the logical



outcome of evolutionary development” (Spolsky 2). So, cognitive theory claims that as literary critics, we have a unique insight into how our brains work in relation to the world through literature: “the humanities will not disappear in the age of cognitive science, they will not be unrecognizable, they will not lose their identity, but they will add to themselves an unmistakable new dimension precisely because they are vital and must inevitably participate in the great new venture of the present and immediate future: the deep mapping of the mind” (Turner 29). It is precisely this mapping of the mind that cognitive theory attempts to detail in its theoretical analysis. It is not so concerned with the science of how things occur (though that is certainly not out of the realm of consideration when looking at text), but more so, what literature tells us about our human selves. What sorts of patterns can we identify in literature in terms of its ability to cast mental images and inform our imaginations? Are there universal tendencies in our art that might give us deeper insights into how we work as human beings, and more importantly, as human minds? If so, how can we use this knowledge to better understand ourselves in relation to one another and our world? As literary critics, we have been asking these questions for centuries; cognitive theory gives us a new way to address these questions and more importantly, provides us with the opportunity to share in the theoretical exploration of the most complex system known—the human brain.

The field of literary cognitive studies has concerned itself with three primary areas: categorical structures/essentialism, image creation, and universals. In the following overview, I will focus on the primary theorists within each of these specific areas. To begin, Turner is considered the inaugural theorist within the field of cultural cognitive studies. His book, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science*, posits a cognitive understanding of metaphor that exists universally. A self-proclaimed ambitious reclamation of the humanities and,

in particular, literary study, from the droning, monotony of rote memorization and “trivial pursuit,” *Reading Minds* seeks to reposition the field within the context of the cognitive sciences. Choosing metaphor as his *topos*, Turner primarily interrogates the “unoriginal” or the “default concepts” underlying everything processed through our minds: “everything depends upon them—our understanding, belief, persuasion, opinion, judgment, ethics, policy, language, literature, and social and political action. [...] These basic concepts are entrenched and powerful” (26). In establishing his argument, he must first wrestle the preconceived notions of the human person as a body away from the reader’s mind, and supplant such notions with a new image: that of the mind. For Turner, “the human person is patterns of activity in the brain” (30). These patterns serve as the foundation for the construction of the world in which we live and quickly become unoriginal and simple, however, “this apparent simplicity is false” (50). The original can only be imagined within the unoriginal structures of invention. It is these unoriginal structures of invention that Turner will expose through the use of metaphor, defined as, “a mapping of a source conceptual schema (such as our conceptual schema for journey) onto a target conceptual schema (such as our conceptual schema for life)” (52).

Similar to Frye’s notion of the archetype, Turner argues that metaphors are based on a limited amount of source conceptual schemas, including “life as a journey” and “life as a drama.” Through an unconscious recognition of these source conceptual schemas we are readily able to map the schematic onto its target source. Following his discussion on the source/target concept of metaphor, Turner moves into the mind as a reconstitution of the body. This reconstitution permits him to demonstrate how the body serves as an exemplary model for the construction of our “generic concept of symmetry” (71). Alternately stated, the body serves as a powerful example of why we are able to map the generic source onto the specific target. Turner

states: “each point of the body is mapped onto its mirror-image point on the other side of the plane, and the result is that we get the same body back” (72). He follows by listing a series of attributes constituting generic-level information before offering a summation:

It is a metaphoric projection by means of the generic is specific metaphor, which selects from our schema of bilateral symmetry in our body and the environment just the generic-level information. We can apply this generic-level schema to many specific-level schemas to understand them metaphorically in terms of our embodied symmetry. (72-73)

Analogous to Foucault’s understanding of the mirror image set deep within Valasquez’s *Las Meninas*, asymmetry within poetry or art becomes a means by which poets or artists call attention to “certain aspects of their work, and to lead us to think about those aspects” (92). I will consider Foucault’s theoretical exploration of *Las Meninas* more in depth later within this introduction as a means to demonstrating how cognitive theory can serve in the exploration of literature.

Turner follows his close analysis of symmetry with an exploration of rhetoric and, specifically, the metaphor of argumentation as set along a path, on which the two parties move, taking a position and making motions. His sixth chapter, titled “Conceptual Connections,” certainly precedes Zunshine’s work in categorization (which I will consider momentarily): “the act of recognizing analogy depends upon the details of our category structures” (122). Our category structures are deeply entrenched within our minds, and “analogies can inventively induce us to construct new connections, and recast or tune others” (125). Turner analyzes the relationship between categorization and analogy by creating a hierarchy of basic to specific attributes within the categorical structure. For example, we view trees as the sort of peak, or basic level of the hierarchy, before breaking that down into subcategories, or more specific

levels. Through the establishment of the hierarchy, he demonstrates that analogies work more effectively when the source domain is more basic in the mapping onto the specific target domain. In other words, if the source domain is too specific, the process of mapping the image-schematic onto the target becomes far more complicated and often fails. Regardless, of whether or not an analog fails, Turner considers these categorical structures to be the foundational premise of our cognitive processes.

Esrock's book on the visual image and the reading mind is arguably one of the key texts in the foundational *corpus* of cognitive literature. On the heels of Turner's *Reading Minds*, Esrock challenges literary critics and readers alike to reconsider the long tradition favoring the rejection of the image in deference to the text. Falling victim to science and logic, Esrock shows how

visual imagery, a form of mental experience, could not be proved or disproved because the issue could not be treated scientifically: reports about visual imagery are reports about private experiences. What is meaningful, [psychologists and philosophers] argued, is what is publicly observable and thus capable of being intersubjectively verified, and this is linguistic behavior – speech and writing. (3)

She traces the historical perspective of the image as “vital to the literary experience, [but] problematic to the knowledge of the text itself” (24). In other words, visual imagery has been understood to disrupt the reader's ability to actually interrogate the text; it is an unnecessary distraction. She does meticulous work in threading the history of literary thought regarding the image, focusing primarily on Iser. For Esrock, Iser marginalizes the image:

Images serve only to draw attention to imageless semiotic constructions. Called ‘theme and significance,’ these constructions convey the ‘meaningful’ aspects of the literary

text. A reader might visualize a rose, but the importance of this image lies in the theme and significance it suggests – linguistic connotations like sensuality and romance. What is thus important to the ideational process has nothing to do with the optical quality of the image but with its semiotic capability – what the image signifies and how this signification functions. (30)

Esrock's main point in exploring this topic is to demonstrate how the image is consistently diminished in relation to the text. In her second chapter, she provides a precise and clear overview of the nuances and complexities of the formation of the structuralist and deconstructionist perspectives with regard to language before shifting into more psychoanalytic considerations.

In her fourth chapter, "Words and Phrases," Esrock turns her focus to the psychological testing occurring within the area of visual image creation. To summarize, she finds that expectations guide the creation of visual imagery. In other words, if a participant is asked to focus on the visual aspects of a text, the individual's reading time will increase. Esrock's findings give further credence to Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" and her request that her audience might look into the closet of the suffering individual and see how the emotion is created. She continues in her usage of psychological studies, revealing, "other experiments on narratives have shown greater recollection of concrete adjectives than of abstract adjectives" (103). With regard to the specific creation of image, Esrock lays a foundation for Elaine Scarry through her discussion of image schemas. Notably, is her idea that "researchers generally contrast [image schemas] with so-called rich mental images, which are conscious and produced by an act of will and which generally have specific, concrete details that change depending on

the context in which one images” (112). This distinguishing factor is at the core of Elaine Scarry’s notion of “dreaming-by-the-book” versus daydreaming.

Scarry focuses primarily on the works of four authors, Homer, Flaubert, Wordsworth, and Emily Bronte, within her book *Dreaming by the Book*. She theorizes the relationship between the “verbal arts” and the creation of images within the imagination, or brain. Scarry begins in the realm of solidity or concrete images, before shifting into the more elusive space of moving images. She asserts that the establishment of concrete images within the brain is particularly challenging; instead when imagining we deal in “*mimetic content*, the figural rooms and faces and weather that we mimetically see, touch, and hear, though in no case do we actually do so” (6). Great sensory writers will provide readers with instructions or what Scarry terms “material antecedents”: “it is as though perceptual mimesis requires a running start, or as though we must directly participate in mimesis of material production in order to elicit a mimesis of perceptual outcome” (20). An example of a material antecedent would be humidity in the understanding of lightening: we better understand and “see” lightening within our minds if it is anteceded by the presence of humidity. Scarry follows by distinguishing between daydreaming, a volitional act, and “dreaming-by-the-book,” which is often more non-volitional. In daydreaming, we struggle to move or shift an image; it remains rather static, but volitional. Conversely, “reading entails an immense labor of imaginative construction,” in which we give our minds over to the directing and instructing hand of the author, whereby the act becomes non-volitional (37). Finally, she convincingly argues that the imagination has a limited “boundary” within which it can recompose images and that flowers seem to be the perfect size for the “small bowl of space in front of one’s eyes.” (46). Their shape, color, compositional structure and thinness all promote a general ease of recreation within the mind; or, perhaps the category of flower is more readily

accessible within our cognitive structures. Scarry's concept of image-creation serves as a useful entry point into Baillie's *Orra*, as demonstrated in chapter two, "Imagination, Feeling, and Remembrance: A Neurological Triad Foundational to the Establishment of a Mental Mediating Space in Joanna Baillie's *Orra*." The reader's ability to engage in image-creation is a powerful authorial tool in the construction and reconstruction of our cognitive categories.

In her book, *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible: Cognition, Culture, and Narrative*, Zunshine, similar to Turner, addresses the categorical structures that inform our cognitive make-up. She focuses primarily on our cognitive method of essentialist categorization and its potential to limit us in its oversimplification of an otherwise complex social world. According to cognitive psychology, essentialism allows us to demarcate between two categorical domains: artifacts and living kinds. Artifacts are typically assigned functional terms (e.g., a chair is made for sitting), whereas living kinds are assigned essences (e.g., tigers can be aggressive or passive). Zunshine explores these domains, as well as conceptual hybrids, including cyborgs and cartoon animals.

For Zunshine, it is necessary to interrogate essentialism, as "it seems by understanding how susceptible we are to essentialist reasoning we can successfully 'deconstruct' and demystify each instance of such reasoning and see it for what it is—a specific cultural construction parasitizing on a more general cognitive predisposition" (21). She theoretically contends that art is one way in which our essentialist notions can be understood and, though sometimes frustrating, it is a means by which those tendencies can be challenged. An 18<sup>th</sup> C. Restorationist, Zunshine opens with close literary analysis of Dryden's *Amphitryon*, before casting her study's net over a wider, cross-genre, range of science fiction novels, Shakespeare, German nonsense poetry, films, and surrealist paintings.

Zunshine's exploration of essentialism and our ability to interpret people's behavior aligns itself well with Burwick's aforementioned considerations of Joanna Baillie and physiognomy. Zunshine calls this process "mind reading" and, based on cognitive research, articulates,

we engage in mind reading when we ascribe to a person a certain mental state on the basis of her observable action [...]; when we interpret our own feelings based on our proprioceptive awareness (e.g., our heart skips a beat when a certain person enters the room, and we realize that we might have been attracted to him or her all along); when we intuit a complex state of mind based on a limited verbal description [...]; when we compose an essay, a lecture, a movie, a song, a novel, or an instruction for an electrical appliance and try to imagine how this or that segment of our target audience will respond to it; when we negotiate a multilayered social situation. (59)

She consistently reminds her readers throughout her project that highly successful authors and poets intuit audience responses, managing and disrupting their essentialist expectations throughout a text. Notably, the disruption of essentialist expectations will play a significant role in the analysis of one of Baillie's shorter dramas, *The Dream* (1812), considered in the final portion of this introduction. Zunshine concludes that we have a cognitive limit to what we will accept and much of it depends upon the contextualization of the purposed living kind/artifact and the "adventuresomeness" of our cognitive architecture: "the 'adventuresomeness' of our cognitive architecture is not just a crucial feature of our brain-mind as some isolated entity but a crucial feature of our brain-mind *in the world*, that is, in an environment where it is incessantly acted on by different cultural discourses" (170). Through the training of our brain-mind to recognize its essentialist tendencies, we can begin to better understand our own language and its



perpetuation of gender, class, and racial stereotypes and, more importantly, the consequences of failing to perceive these tendencies.

As Turner considers the notion of the “unoriginal” in its overall informing of our metaphorical constructs and Zunshine focuses on the essentializing categories that underlie our basic assumptions and general interactions, Hogan, the final critic in this overview and one who will be particularly important to the fourth chapter, addresses another cognitive structure: universals. Hogan recognizes there is “little enthusiasm among humanists for the study of universals;” however, he believes antiuniversalism is actually more destructive: “indeed, ‘liberal’ racism and Colonialism—with their paternalistic emphasis on leading the native out of primitive ways and into civilization—were always based on specifically culturalist differentialism” (*Literary* 37; 38). Shifting into the realm of cognitive theory and his exploration of universals, Hogan claims that “a theory of literary universals would describe a *repertoire of techniques* available to authors and a range of *nontechnical correlations* derived from broad statistical patterns” (43). For example, Hogan states that cross-culturally, “standard [poetry] line lengths appear to fall regularly between five and nine words” (48). He sees this as a broad correlation across literatures. Hogan continues exploring not just “form,” but “content” as well. From alliteration to “tales of conflict in two areas, love and political power,” cross-cultural universals clearly exist within literature (45). Literary cognitive theorists attempt to locate the underlying reasons why this has occurred. Shifting from theories of “linguistic sounds and poetic sounds” to “speech patterns,” Hogan systematically acknowledges these as possibilities before concluding that it may actually be based on structures of human cognition (52). For example, he cites rehearsal memory as the basis for the five to nine word line: “given the structure of human cognition, one would expect that any such unit would almost necessarily be structure in

accordance with rehearsal memory. This is even more obvious when one takes into account the oral, bardic composition that is at the origin of poetry” (58). Just as the shedding of dualism in favor of materialism within eighteenth-century medicine paved the way for the potential to affirm a more common humanity, so too does the notion of universals: “a universalist program that succeeds in uncovering genuinely universal principles of human thought and human society, principles that are not relative to race or culture, necessarily runs contrary to racism and ethnocentrism” (60). It is these broader notions of humanity that cognitive theorists seek within literature; similarly Joanna Baillie sought such notions in her theory, letters, and dramas. By combining the two, I am working to respond to Esrock’s call for “a broadening of scope [which] entail[s] the usage of more diverse theories of human psychology [...] than are currently recognized by mainstream literary scholars” (Esrock 204). The last portion of this introduction will consider how we might envision this broadening of scope in relation to Joanna Baillie’s *The Dream* (1812).

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As previously stated, the final portion of this introduction will consider Baillie’s drama, *The Dream* (1812) in relation to Foucault’s “Las Meninas,” as a brief demonstration of how cognitive theory reveals and changes our previously held categorical structures through literature. Prior to drawing the connection, it is helpful to offer a brief summary of the drama. Osterloo, a general of high standing and the protagonist of *The Dream*, is placed under lock and key by a group of revenge thirsty monks, due to a series of uncanny and unfortunate circumstances, including prophetic visions, a casting of lots and a confession to murder. He is committed to public execution, but such a conclusion does not suit the Scottish playwright. Rather, she poses Osterloo offering his final breath under the weight of his own imagined and

internalized fear of the afterlife. The overpowering nature of the passion of fear, as constructed in the mind, arrests the body, stripping it of life, prior to the dropping of the blade on the guillotine. Baillie considered her drama brief and pointed, as it is “written in prose and consists only of 3 acts, and has no poetical ornaments given to it but sticks closely to the delineation of the passion & the interest of the story” (*Letters* 277). Though this assessment is true, the brevity does not diminish the impact of the play and its overt warning against the indulgence of the passion of fear. Using Foucault’s, “Las Meninas,” as well as three of the aforementioned cognitive theorists (Scarry, Turner, Zunshine), I will offer a highly simplistic model of how writing shifts cognitively from the page to a position within our mind, disrupting our previously understood essentialist categories. This model provides the basic framework for how cognitive theory considers literature in its relation to the mind.

Foucault’s introductory essay to *The Order of Things*, “Las Meninas,” navigates the complex terrain of the Spanish painter Velazquez’s 1656 masterpiece of the same title. The reader’s gaze is directed by a series of trajectories, carefully mapped onto the 450-year-old painting by the French theorist. Foucault begins with the painter, who stares at that which is doubly invisible: “first, because it [the model] is not represented within the space of the painting and second, because it is situated precisely in that blind point, in that essential hiding-place into which our gaze disappears from ourselves at the moment of our actual looking” (Foucault 1357). From the painter’s penetrating glare, we are asked to shift our attention to the mirror, set in the depths of the painting: the mirror represents that which exists beyond the frame of the masterpiece; it is not visible as it has no gaze within the painting to “render it actual, and to enjoy the suddenly ripe fruit of the spectacle it offers” (1360). Foucault concludes with the grafting of an “x” upon the canvas, citing the dominant central point of the painting within the gaze of the

princess's eyes. The mirror provides a secondary focal point, causing a dynamic "fluttering" back and forth between the two central points of the painting. For Foucault, the mirror's reflected images represent the artificial representation of power and authority beyond the princess that we do not typically question. They serve as a representation of a visual synchronic moment in which we arbitrarily attach meaning to the signified without considering the artificiality of the process; in Foucault's terms, we assign a "proper name," without considering the syntax in which we do so.

Arguably, the utility of Foucault's essay lies within the beauty and complexity of its analogy. The seamless fashion in which it aligns the painting with the revelation of a historical tradition of linguistic oppression is both brilliant and elegant, but I would argue that the essay's utility extends beyond its aesthetically appealing analog and presents a theoretical framework for textual inquiry. The traced trajectories within Foucault's essay organize themselves into three unique categories: the visible, the invisible, and the invisible-made-visible. The consideration of each of these categories in the analysis of a literary text not only promotes a progressively deeper understanding of the complexities of the text itself, but also, it aids in revealing the unquestioned representations brought to the text by the reader. Considering Scarry's concept of the "verbal arts" and mental image creation outlined in her book *Dreaming by the Book*, in relation to Turner's theory of metaphor articulated within *Reading Minds* and Zunshine's concept of essentialism within *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible*, provides the cognitive groundwork for lifting Foucault's categories of trajectory off of "Las Meninas," impressing them upon the text, and subsequently, inserting them into the mind of the reader.

As aforementioned, Scarry views reading as engaging "*mimetic content*, the figural rooms and faces and weather that we mimetically see, touch, and hear, though in no case do we

actually do so” (6). She argues that “reading entails an immense labor of imaginative construction,” in which we give our minds over to the directing and instructing hand of the author, whereby the act becomes non-volitional (37). It is precisely the “giving over of our minds” which allows the text to reveal the arbitrarily assigned nature of the “proper name,” or the moment at which the invisible is made visible. Prior to exploring the third trajectory more closely within the context of Turner’s “metaphor,” I want to read the initial two trajectories of the visible and the invisible within Foucault’s “Las Meninas” and begin to articulate them in textual terms.

Within “Las Meninas,” the visible trajectory is the sightline occurring between the characters within the painting. It includes all of the objects and individuals that the characters within the context of the painting could theoretically “view” (e.g. the gaze of the woman kneeling at the princess’s feet). The visible sightline cannot break the plane of the masterpiece, but rather, it remains purely within the confines of the medium. Textually, the visible trajectory will represent all objects and individuals capable of mimetically interacting within our imaginative constructions. Specifically, this categorical trajectory represents character interactions with other characters or objects. In *The Dream*, characters witness Osterloo’s mounting fear and comment upon it. Jerome, one of the monks, articulates, “his countenance has changed, and his whole frame seems moved by some sudden convulsion” (Baillie 266). We view Osterloo’s rising fear within our imagining minds simultaneously with Jerome. Both the character and the reading mind can comprehend Osterloo’s progressing passion. In terms of the sightline, it is visible, because the characters’ sight does not break the plain of the page. They are looking at one another, as we envision this.

The second category of trajectory is the invisible. Foucault's invisible trajectory would be all the sightlines that break the plane of the painting between the spectator and those individuals represented within the painting (e.g. the gaze of the artist which meets the eye of the spectator). These sightlines are most easily recognized in the literary technique of dramatic monologue. Specifically, they are the trajectories that occur between the reader and a singular character within a text. They break the plane of the text and invite the reader into a participatory role within the story, as opposed to a purely voyeuristic role. Baillie is highly dependent upon this trajectory, as she states, "soliloquy, or those overflowings of the perturbed soul, in which it unburthens [sic] itself of those thoughts which it cannot communicate to others, and which, in certain situations, is the only mode that dramatist can employ to open to us the mind he would display, must necessarily be often, and to considerable length, introduced" (15). For Baillie, this is one of the only means by which she can convey the felt emotional experience of her character. Thus, Osterloo breaks the plain of the page, reaching out to the audience in a moment when other characters are unaware. He expresses his utter horror at the prospect of death:

That this smothered horror should burst upon me at last! And there be really such things as the darkened fancy imageth to itself, when the busy day is stilled.—An unseen world surrounds us: spirits and powers, and the invisible dead hover near us; while we in unconscious security—oh! I have slept upon a fearful brink! Every sword that threatened my head in battle, had power in its edge to send me to a terrible account.—I have slept upon a fearful brink.—Am I truly awake? (*Rubbing his eyes, then grasping several parts of his body, first with one hand and then with the other.*) Yes, yes! It is so!—I am keenly and terribly awake. (268)

The trajectory draws the audience closer to the character. The “unseen world surrounds [not only Osterloo, but] *us*.” We gain more access to the protagonist in our imagining minds and are drawn more experientially into a state of sympathy. So, shifting from the visible trajectory, where we imagine the two characters engaging one another, we are now brought into the drama, as a character engages us—the cognitive relationship strengthens itself.

The “invisible-made-visible,” or the final trajectory within Foucault’s “Las Meninas,” is the image within the mirror, beyond the characters view, which can only be identified by the viewing audience. Foucault’s argument is that the mirror makes us aware of the artificiality of the representation occurring within the painted frame, and more generally the arbitrary assignment of power to representations. So, the question is, where is the mirror in the text? Initially, I felt it did not exist. Paintings, as visual art, can provide their viewing audience with sensory experiences unavailable within literary texts. We can see paintings up close, or from afar, question the placement of objects and scratch our heads at reflections that are not truly there, but literary texts do not permit this luxury... or do they? Turner’s choice of metaphor, and his decision to interrogate the “unoriginal” or the “default concepts” underlying everything processed through our minds, provides a potential answer. Coming out of a similar tradition, Zunshine claims that, “by understanding how susceptible we are to essentialist reasoning we can successfully ‘deconstruct’ and demystify each instance of such reasoning and see it for what it is—a specific cultural construction parasitizing on a more general cognitive predisposition” (Zunshine 21). For both Turner and Zunshine, art is one way in which our essentialist notions can be understood and, though sometimes frustrating, it is a means by which those tendencies can be challenged. Literature reveals the “unoriginal [...] default concepts,” and “essentialist tendencies;” it makes the invisible, visible.

To demonstrate this within a text, it is important to recognize that the process is progressive. Foucault's trajectories are systematically built upon one another within his study of "Las Meninas." The visible is our initial engagement with the painting. We then continue to explore and find the invisible erupting into view. Finally, upon further exploration, the invisible-made-visible comes to cognitive light. It is an engaged and active process that cannot be constructed through a surface viewing. The same can be said for the reading of a text. Cognitively, we first seek out the visible: how are these characters interacting with one another? What are they doing within our mimetic constructions? The invisible erupts when a character engages us, further drawing us into his/her struggles and breaking the fictional plane of the text. The invisible-made-visible occurs when textually we are jarred out of Scarry's non-volitional state and made aware of the artificiality of mimetic constructions or representations. We are reminded of the fictional process of creation and, if effective, forced to question our cognitive predispositions.

The means by which Osterloo dies at the conclusion of *The Dream* is a strange and unusual move on the part of the playwright. Dramatically, it is a compelling scene; cognitively, it is jarring. Osterloo is being steadily led to the executioner's scaffold. Jerome comments, "we are now at the foot of the scaffold, and there are two steps to mount: lean upon us more firmly" (275). Osterloo stumbles, claiming, "it is dark; I cannot see" (275). Jerome offers him premonitions of a heaven that forgives and peace in his death. The executioners prepare him, forcing him into a kneeling position. He lays his head down on the chopping block. The executioner asks that he "press my hand when you are ready for the stroke" (275). He does not move. The prior orders the execution anyway. As the blade is about to drop, an Ambassador bursts into the room shouting for the execution to stop. Under his imperial power, he claims that



the life of the poor general should not be taken. Unfortunately, Osterloo is already dead: “his own mind has dealt with him alone, and produced the effects you behold” (276). The effect of the event is mentally disruptive. Immediately, the mind wrestles with the question: can you die of fear? In asking the question, the invisible becomes visible. In other words, we are jolted out of our non-volitional state and engage the text. Through this engagement, Baillie forces us to wrestle with our previously understood cognitive category of fear. Specifically, fear is an uncomfortable passion that typically moves us to change our behavior, but can it kill us? Literature forces us into a place where we at least ponder such an outcome momentarily and in so doing, we can potentially rewrite our cognitive category, if only for an instant. As will be shown in the following chapters, such rewrites are not without consequence for us as human minds. They inform our everyday lives and interactions.

\* \* \*

Baillie anticipates her audiences response to the conclusion of *The Dream* in the introductory notes to the third *Series of Plays on the Passions*, stating, “it will probably be supposed that I have carried the consequences of his [Osterloo’s] passion too far in the catastrophe to be considered as natural; but the only circumstance in the piece that is not entirely invention, is the catastrophe” (230). She recapitulates a story conveyed to her as a child by her mother in which a similar experience occurred. Supposedly, a man died in a similar fashion, under the felt pressures of his own internalized fear. Such a keen attention to the experience of the body in relation to the rising passions defines Baillie’s dramatic interests and approach to her writing. While critics have rightfully focused upon the educational aspects of her dramas, I believe it is necessary to shift more attention to the experience of her dramas and their relevance to class relations. Baillie’s careful physiological, materialist demonstrations of the singular

passions are derived out of a sincere attempt at mediating late eighteenth and early nineteenth century human relations. For this reason, the following chapters will center on the ways in which Baillie engages the mind of a reading audience, while simultaneously considering how through a jarring or disruption of category, expectations of the middle class and upper class were challenged or questioned. Chapter two, “Imagination, Feeling, and Remembrance: A Neurological Triad Foundational to the Establishment of a Mental Mediating Space in Joanna Baillie’s *Orra*,” will consider Baillie’s ability to intricately engage the reading mind, weaving her images into the material substance of the brain, before concluding with a closer analysis of her integration of the various classes within the drama. Chapter three, “Categorical Essentialism and Social Emotion in *The Election* and *De Monfort*: Sympathizing with a Conniving Politician and a Murderous Aristocrat,” places two of Baillie’s dramas into direct conversation with one another, delving into the more nurtured cognitive cultivations of emotion (as opposed to natural) within the contemporary period, before shifting to emotion as a socially constructed experience. Lastly, chapter four, “He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me Not... He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me Not: Reading Love as Obsession in Joanna Baillie’s *Count Basil*,” considers Baillie’s writing of love not in terms of “love,” but more as a reflection of contemporary concerns with the idea of obsession.

Each chapter identifies one or more cognitive theoretical angle in its exploration of each of the named passions, before concluding with how the dramas disrupted categorical understandings of class. Baillie believed that through writing, she could raise to a level of consciousness our common humanity; that through a careful crafting of the emotional experience, she could demonstrate the universal aspects of who we are as humans; that through focusing on the physiological elements of our experience of passion, rather than the manners or

fashions, she might transcend notions of class in the exploration of a shared humanity, existent within us all. In so doing, she gives voice to a rising middle class, allowing them to speak in a far more public way—she makes the invisible, visible.

Chapter Two Imagination, Feeling, and Remembrance: A Neurological Triad Foundational to the Establishment of a Mental Mediating Space in Joanna Baillie's *Orra*

“Where forms within the memory’s ken are seen,  
Forms faint or vivid, varying oft, that seem  
Like moving objects in a seried dream...”

Joanna Baillie, “Recollections of a Dear and Steady  
Friend”

In her 1798 “Introductory Discourse,” a theoretical treatise on the development of passion and the cultivation of sympathetic curiosity within drama, Joanna Baillie situates the reading, or perceiving, brain of her audience within the context of a subtle neurological triad – imagination, feeling, and remembrance:

the highest pleasures we receive from poetry, as well as from the real objects which surround us in the world, are derived from the sympathetick [sic] interest we all take in beings like ourselves; and I will even venture to say, that were the grandest scenes which can enter into the imagination of man, presented to our view, and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, colour, and form. (Baillie 6)

It is her contention that little of such imaginative forms is remembered without the “faithfully delineated nature” of man, or the demonstration of the passions (6). Each of these aspects as it stands alone, is not an unusual topic during the period during which Baillie was writing. The implication of imagination in the Romantic reading relationship was, in fact, a typical source of literary discussion and theory. Frederick Burwick argues, “there is nothing new in a definition of Romanticism that gives primacy to the imagination and emphasizes the subjective and introspective attributes of the literature of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (*Romanticism* 11). Feeling as manifested through language, the second aspect of the triad, is also not an atypical Romantic concept. The period has been traditionally referred to in critical circles

as the “Age of Feeling.” In his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth concludes that it is the reflection upon the onset of feelings and their direct relation to thoughts that allows the author to convey the connections of objects and sentiments to his/her audience, enlightening them and ameliorating their affections (Wordsworth 8). Wordsworth, like Baillie, believes that feeling and language are intricately connected in the human brain; however, unlike Wordsworth, Baillie necessitates the demonstration of feeling alongside the cultivation of imagination for the purposes of providing an educational experience for and creating remembrance within her audience.

Remembrance, the third aspect of her neurological triad, is foundational to her concept of sympathetic curiosity. It is the memory of the drama, or the poem, infused into the brain, that will serve the reading audience in their future interactions with others. Among the individuals who will benefit most from the study and remembrance of such literature, are those in positions of judgment: “above all, to be well exercised in this study will fit a man more particularly for the most important situations of life. He will prove for it the better Judge, the better Magistrate, the better Advocate; and as a ruler or conductor of other men, under every occurring circumstance” (Baillie 9). Knowledge gained from such a close and deliberate study of the passions informs the brain and its decision-making processes. While critics have not overlooked Baillie’s systematic understanding of passion and its manifestation within the brain, few, if any, have understood her technique as one of mediation through imagination, feeling, and remembrance.

Baillie is so deliberate in her approach to the establishment of imagination and feeling, that she serves as a useful author in exploring the process of how images are formed in the reading brain and how they inform our emotional states. In a letter written to Sir Walter Scott in the winter of 1814, she praises his imagery in *The Lord of the Isles*: “I must give you my best

thanks for furnishing my imagination with a new idea which it had often endeavored to call up to itself but without success, viz a great army drawn up & covering a great extent of country. This you have affected by your skillful succession of armed distances if I may use such an expression” (*Letters* 334). It is apparent that Baillie was aware of the imaginative process and her suggestion of an expression to define the cultivation of the image of an army spreading over a great distance, demonstrates her interest in this cultivating aspect of the writing/reading process. Within this chapter, I will carefully analyze Baillie’s *Orra*, a play on the singular passion of fear, through the lens of Elaine Scarry’s *Dreaming by the Book*, as a means to reveal Baillie’s powerful use of imagery, or the imagination; this exploration will show how Baillie’s practice of dramatic writing bears out her theory. Then, shifting to cognitive studies of the literary image and its role in the cultivation of emotion within an audience, I will demonstrate how the two combined (imagination and feeling) create remembrance, and lead to a mentally mediating space in which Baillie dissolves class boundaries, promoting humanity over petty class distinctions.

*Orra*, a gothic drama published in 1812, is set in Switzerland near the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The drama opens with Glottenbal, the son of the Count of Aldenberg and one of three suitors who desire the titular character, appearing dust-covered and disordered due to a recent loss in a duel with Theobald, a nobleman of reduced fortune and the second suitor of Orra. For his efforts in the duel, Orra presents Theobald with a green sprig, leaving the loser’s pride deeply wounded and planting the seeds of a contentious relationship that will intertwine itself throughout the drama. The initial scene ends with a brief confrontation between Theobald and Glottenbal, followed by the revelation that Orra, as the Count of Aldenberg’s ward, will be forced to marry Glottenbal. Following the conclusion of scene one, we are introduced to Rudigere, a bastard of one of the branches of the Aldenberg family and the third suitor of Orra.

Each of the suitor's has a different intention: Glottenbal seeks Orra for her physical beauty and under his presumed right to marry her; Rudigere seeks her for her attachment to wealth and status; finally, Theobald, who represents the most noble and generous of the three, seeks her out of genuine love. The second scene opens with Rudigere, arguably the most malicious of the three suitors, introducing his plan to inspire fear in Orra as a means to forcing her to seek protection in him. Cathrina, an attendant to Orra, is in love with Rudigere and willingly participates in his plan to terrify the unsuspecting ward. We are introduced to Orra in the third scene of act one; she enters the room "tripping gaily and playing with the folds of her scarf" (Baillie 239). Hughobert, the Count of Aldenberg, demands that she marry his son; however, as the scene unfolds it becomes clear that she is wholly uninterested in marrying the arrogant aristocrat and completely defiant in her refusal—in fact, she even mocks Glottenbal before being silenced by Hughobert. Following this exchange, Orra leaves the room, providing Rudigere with the opportunity to suggest that the Count imprison her in his castle until she submits to his demand that she marry Glottenbal. The first act concludes with Hughobert considering Rudigere's suggestion.

The second act presents Orra's vivid imagination. She is walking through a garden with Theobald and proceeds to describe poetically her imagined future dwelling. Swelling cottages set in a green valley, populated with hard-working peasants, fragrant flowers, and the whispers of fairies; in this moment, Baillie makes it difficult not to fall in love with her humble ward. Theobald, entranced by her imagination, curses the individual who might ever cast a shadow on this romantic vale. They part, but not before Theobald kisses her hand. At this point, Orra's attendants enter the scene and the three of them begin to discuss the tale of a murder that occurred at the Aldenberg castle a few generations prior to the current Count. Cathrina seizes upon Orra's susceptibility to tales of terror and as the story unfolds, she begins to exhibit

physical responses, including faintness. The scene concludes with Urston, Orra's confessor, indicating that she may be forced into banishment if she refuses to marry Glottenbal. Having demonstrated the power of Orra's imagination, Baillie shifts to the final scene of the act. Act two ends with Hughobert confronting his ward and demanding that she submit to his request to marry Glottenbal or be banished to the Aldenberg castle; in an intense dramatic event, Orra sees her deceased father, forgiving and relieving him of any responsibility for her present condition, before ultimately refusing to submit to the Count. Ultimately, she is forced to take residence in the castle, escorted by Rudigere.

In acts three and four Rudigere takes Orra, along with her attendant Catherina, to the castle. It is in the second scene of act three that Rudigere fails in his attempts to seduce Orra, before removing himself the room at her request. While alone, Orra begins to hear voices and decides to leave the space in search of her chamber. Upon finding her chamber, she attempts to sleep; however, she hears howling hounds outside and is terrified. In her horror, she breaks into the adjoining room, believing Cathrina to be sleeping on the couch—she is remiss to find it is Rudigere. In the meantime, Theobald has organized a group of outlaws in an attempt to save his beloved from the maleficent Rudigere. He sends word to Orra that he will pass through the castle dressed as a ghost with the intention of meeting her in her chamber and removing her from the castle. Unfortunately, his correspondence is intercepted by Rudigere and subsequently, Orra is unaware of his plan. As the hour strikes midnight, Theobald bursts upon Orra's chamber dressed as a ghost in an effort to save her; sadly, in her lack of knowledge regarding the plan, she believes him to be a real specter and falls into a state of permanent madness. Theobald removes her from the gothic space, taking her to a cave used by the outlaws. The drama concludes tragically. In losing Orra, Rudigere chooses to commit suicide, but before he takes his last



breath, he slashes Glottenbal across the neck with a poisoned dagger. Before the curtain drops, two of Orra's three suitors are deceased. Theobald, the final suitor, introduces to the remaining characters and to the audience a crazed and unruly Orra, the product of an overactive imagination and a series of complicated events.

Overall, the drama was well received by reading audiences throughout both England and Scotland. Baillie writes to Sir Walter Scott in the early part of the year, claiming her third series of plays on the passions, "sells better than any of those that preceded it; so that having made my curtesies [sic] to the Public with as good a grace as I could, they do not let me retire unhonoured" (*Letters* 297). Scott believed that the play was "likely to have good effect on the stage" (297); unfortunately, it seems as though it was never publicly performed. It is necessary to state that, in considering the drama, I will be treating it as a literary text, not as a performance piece. In doing so, it is my intention to understand better Baillie's systematic approach to the creation of sympathetic curiosity through her use of imagination and feeling. It is especially relevant to analyze the concept of imagination and feeling in *Orra* as Baillie indicates in her prefix to the third volume of the *Plays on the Passions*, that Orra is subject to "superstitious fear" and, "those [...] who possess strong *imagination*, quick fancy, and keen *feeling*, are most easily affected by this species of Fear" (Baillie 229; emphasis my own). Before moving into the realm of image and feeling, I will begin with Elaine Scarry's *Dreaming by the Book*, and her specific theoretical tools for analyzing text and their relation to the imagining brain.

### **Imagination in *Orra***

In *Dreaming by the Book*, Elaine Scarry asserts that the establishment of concrete images within the brain is particularly challenging for the reader; when imagining we deal in "*mimetic content*, the figural rooms and faces and weather that we mimetically see, touch, and hear,

though in no case do we actually do so” (Scarry 6). She continues, distinguishing between daydreaming, a volitional act, and “dreaming-by-the-book,” which is often more non-volitional. In daydreaming, we struggle to move or shift an image; the act of imagining remains rather static insofar as we are unable to move the imagined objects, but it still remains volitional. Conversely, “reading entails an immense labor of imaginative construction,” in which we give our minds over to the directing and instructing hand of the author, whereby the act becomes non-volitional (37). I will revisit the concept of the “non-volitional act” later within this chapter, but for now, I want to continue exploring Scarry’s theoretical tools for the creation of imagery within the brain.

Scarry notes five formal practices authors use to create imagery: radiant ignition, rarity, dyadic addition or subtraction, “hands-on” stretching, folding, and tilting, and finally, floral supposition. Radiant ignition is the process by which the mind establishes discrete motions for images due to the flashing of light. Examples include vertical, horizontal, or concentric resonances. Vertically, light may travel down upon a character/background; horizontally, it may sweep across a character/background; concentrically, it may radiate from within or around a character/object. All three of these uses of light within the verbal text establish a sense of image movement within our brains. Rarity suggests that objects are easier to move within our brains if they are light or airy. Examples include gently blowing lace, butterflies, candle flames, or even ghosts. Great sensory authors, or those authors who call forth powerful images within our minds, will create movement within a scene by drawing attention to those objects demonstrating more rarity. Dyadic addition or subtraction occurs when an author establishes one image and then abruptly creates another image. An example occurs when waves are described as crashing within the *Iliad*: “as the armies pour from the ships in book 2 to assemble on the meeting grounds, they surge like ‘wave on shrieking wave’ at sea, ‘like waves / crashing against a cliff’” (102). The

description of “wave on shrieking wave” requires that we visualize an image, let it disappear and then recompose it: “in effect we make the wave image pulse” (102). Stretching, folding, and tilting occur in two ways: focusing on the material attributes of the image [clothing, hair, etc.] and focusing on the operations of the hands. Scarry convincingly argues that objects are easier to move within our brains if we are able to focus on cloth or use mental images of hands. For example, a person heavily breathing is far more easily pictured in terms of his/her clothing expanding (or stretching) around the chest. With regard to the use of hands, “Brönte acquaints us with our own ability to make images move by having us picture a hand that acts on them, rather than derealizing the image or reminding us that it is as flimsy as paper or cloth” (141). Finally, floral supposition occurs when an image of moving flowers is invoked as a means to moving an image within the brain. Scarry bases this upon her earlier idea that flowers are more easily imagined and more quickly drawn within the brain when contemplating a moving object. An example occurs when characters are set in a field of flowers, as the armies within the *Iliad* march across the Scamander plain “breaking into flower” (167). In this instance, flowers act similarly to a “touchable” presence of radiant ignition. Generally, Scarry’s five formal practices provide an enlightening and useful approach to Romantic texts. An obsession with the imagination was prominent theoretical fodder during the period and gave way to a considerable amount of discussion and critical thought.<sup>1</sup> Scarry’s practices serve to organize the various intuitive approaches Romantic writers were taking. The author’s themselves were not deliberate their use of these various notions within their writing; however, Scarry shows that there was certainly themes in their approaches to the creation of images within the reading mind. These themes are beneficial in the exploration of drama, because they provide a starting point from which to enter into the concept of imagination, the first part of the neurological triad. Specifically, they provide

a theoretical framework for how the reading imagination interacts with a text or, for the purposes of this chapter, with Joanna Baillie's *Orra*.

It is clear from the commencement of *Orra* that fear will be the primarily imagined passion. Though it has real physiological consequences, it is most often provoked from within the imagining brain. In the second scene of the first act, Rudigere, the bastard knight intent upon marrying Orra as a means to power and wealth, establishes Orra's primary weakness – fear of ghosts. Rudigere claims, “this is the effective weakness of her mind / on which I'll clutch my hold” (Baillie 237). He follows by asking Catherina, one of Orra's attendants, as to whether or not she is still requesting to be told stories about ghosts. In a short, poetic question, following a dramatic, stage-directed pause, Rudigere originates the connection between Orra and the imagining brain:

Has Orra oft of late requested thee  
 To tell her stories of the restless dead;  
 Of spectres rising at the midnight watch  
 By the lone trav'ler's bed? (237)

Contextually, the audience understands Rudigere's comments as an inquiry into whether or not he can still manipulate Orra through her fear of ghosts; simultaneously, however, through the use of Scarry's concept of rarity, Baillie has commenced the process of directing her reader's brain, drafting a momentary visual image of the ghostly, or the spectral, in direct relation to Orra.

According to Scarry, image-driven authors will draw attention to those objects that demonstrate rarity, as our imagining brains more easily grasp them. The ghosts are not static, but dynamic in their ascendance and the images drift through our brains, associating themselves with the female protagonist. The effect on us as reader's is similar to how the ghosts work on Orra; that is to say,

they actively engage our minds just as they engage Orra's mind. Baillie's decision to write Rudigere's question in a lyrically poetic format, with a rhythmic a-b-c-b structure, further ties the lines into an imagining audiences mind (and memory). Structurally, "Orra" is the second word of the first line, while "specters" is the second word of the third line—a subtle, but useful technique in further associating the titular character with that which is rare, or more specifically, ghostly.

Following the establishment of Orra in direct relation to that which is "rare," we are first introduced to her in the third scene. She enters the room in direct contrast to her previous spectral associations, "tripping gaily, and playing with the folds of her scarf" (239). Baillie provides her reading audience with a second Scarrian practice of image creation: folding, tilting, and stretching. This time rather than being confronted with that which is "rare," Baillie offers our reading brains a more concrete image in relation to Orra and, subsequently, sets up two parallel binaries: rarity is associated with fear / the practice of "hands-on" stretching, tilting, folding is associated with happiness. The binary is further reinforced by Orra's response to Eleonora regarding her current mood, as well as the introduction of a third Scarrian formal practice:

Eleonora:     Nay, Orra; these wild fits of uncurb'd laughter,  
                   Athwart the gloomy tenor of your mind,  
                   As it has low'r'd of late, so keenly cast,  
                   Unsuited seem and strange.

Orra:           O nothing strange, my gentle Eleanora!  
                   Didst thou ne'er see the swallow's veering breast,  
                   Winging the air beneath some murky cloud  
                   In the sunn'd glimpses of a stormy day,  
                   Shiver in silv'ry brightness:

Or boatman's oar, as vivid lightning flash

In the faint gleam, that like a spirit's path

Tracks the still waters of some sullen lake. (239)

Not only does she play with the folds of her scarf, but Orra also associates herself with a series of radiant ignitions to demonstrate her current state of happiness in the midst of what Eleonora defines as a “gloomy tenor”: the breast of the swallow “shiver[s] in silv'ry brightness;” and, the boatman's oar, “as vivid lightning flash in the faint gleam.” Again, Baillie uses a form of image creation to impress further Orra upon our reading brains. Radiant imagery aligns itself with the latter half of the aforementioned binaries – happiness. Thus, as we continue forward in our reading, we have been conditioned to understand Orra's fear in terms of those images that are “rare” and her happiness in terms of those images which are either “hands-on” stretched, folded, and/or tilted, or radiantly ignited.

Orra continues to represent the imagining state in the first scene of the second act. This time, however, in her conversation with Theobald, the coburgher and her true love, she draws distinct attention to the imagined

E'en now, methinks,

Each little cottage of my native vale

Swells out its earthen sides, up-heaves its roof,

Like to a hillock mov'd by lab'ring mole,

And with green trail-weeds clamb'ring up its walls,

Roses and ev'ry gay and fragrant plant,

Before my fancy stands, a fairy bower:

Ay, and within it too do fairies dwell.

*[Looking playfully through her fingers like a show-glass.*

Peep through its wreathed window, if indeed  
 The flowers grow not too close, and there within  
 Thou'lt see some half a dozen rosy brats  
 Eating from wooden bowls their dainty milk;--  
 Those are my mountain elves. Seest thou not  
 Their very forms distinctly? (240-1)

Orra navigates the imaginative realm using a Scarrian formal practice: “hands-on” stretching, tilting, and/or folding. Orra’s little cottage “swells out its earthen sides” and “up-heaves its roof.” Her little cottage is mildly personified in its swelling and “up-heaving,” stretching itself in our reading brains. As we are taken further into Orra’s imagined space, Baillie’s stage direction provides us with the “hands-on” aspects of the formal practice. We are asked to look “playfully through her fingers like a show-glass” and, in so doing, are permitted the opportunity to look through the little cottage’s wreathed window. We are further brought into the imaginative space and, subsequently, we are more effectively invited into the realm of Orra’s cognitively constructed world.

Finally, in constructing this space, Orra introduces another Scarrian formal practice: floral supposition. Orra describes, “green trail-weeds clamb’ring up [the cottage] walls.” After blending these two Scarrian formal practices in the development of a peaceful and pastoral place, Orra asks whether or not Theobald can see the forms “distinctly.” Theobald responds in the affirmative, addressing the scene as a “sight which sweetly stirreth in the heart / Feelings that gladden and ennoble it, / Dancing like sun-beams on the rippled sea; / A blessed picture! Foul befall the man / Whose narrow, selfish soul would shade or mar it!” (241) He uses radiant

ignition in his response to her imaginings, further aligning the formal practice with that which is happy.

To this point, Orra has represented or been associated with four of the Scarrian formal practices of image construction within the reading brain. The previously referenced parallel binaries have been further supported through the additional readings and, in fact, floral supposition can be added to the latter part of the two binaries (happiness). Even though other characters tell stories, and offer comments regarding scenery or other visually-stimulating spaces, Baillie reserves the majority of the Scarrian formal practices for Orra. In doing so, Baillie maintains the first rule in her outlined systematic construction of sympathetic curiosity: the characters over whom the passions are “made to usurp in dominion, must be powerful and interesting, exercising them with their full measure of opposition and struggle; the chief antagonists they contend with must be the other passions and propensities of the heart, not outward circumstances and events” (15). Orra’s power and interest exist in her ability to create images both within herself and within the reading brain of her audience. In Orra, Baillie has established a powerful brain, capable of extreme imagination and overwhelming passion.

It is the establishment of the overwhelming singular passion that serves as Baillie’s underlying purpose for her *Plays on the Passions*: “to trace [the passions] in their rise and progress in the heart, seems but rarely to have been the object of any dramatist” (10). In her tracing of the singular passion, Baillie is particularly focused on the subtle nuances of its physiological manifestation. As can be seen through the application of the Scarrian formal practices of image creation, Baillie establishes Orra as a highly imaginative character, while simultaneously crafting powerful images within the brains of her reading audience members. This serves two purposes: the first is to demonstrate Orra’s primary antagonist—her own brain;



the second is to entangle the primary character more effectively within the brain of the reader. While the former purpose aligns itself with Baillie's dramatic method, the latter purpose bends the reading brain to a more engaged place. As a reading audience, our minds wrap themselves in the same material with which *Orra* is contending. We are confronted with similar experiences of ghosts, cottages, little fairies and flashes of light, causing fear and discomfort and thus, permitted into a more sympathetic space with the titular character. This space will be the focus of the next portion of this chapter. Having established the foundation of imagery through the use of Scarry's formal practices, it is now my intention to draw upon emotion/feeling theory and its application to literature as a means of connecting the image to the feeling or emotional brain.

### **Feeling in *Orra***

Not only is affect a critical part of Baillie's writing process as demonstrated in her "Introductory Discourse," but it is also elemental to her reading experience as witnessed in her comments to Scott regarding *Rokeby*: "[Wilfred] is as wicked as any man ought to be made for either moral or poetical effect, and we fear & hate yet are interested in him too. Wilfred's character is beautiful" (*Letters* 315). It is clear that she appreciates those characters that inspire affect in the reading audience. As I shift back into my analysis of *Orra*, it is helpful to reiterate that Baillie seeks to infuse her characters with powerful emotions as a means to educating her audience. Baillie's stated value of the drama is that "it improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behavior of others" (9). I will now address feeling, the second aspect of the neurological triad, within *Orra*, both as it relates to her protagonist and as it begins to find its way into the reading brain. It will be necessary to situate Baillie's theoretical approach to feeling within contemporary emotional theory. Jesse Prinz's *Gut Reactions* is a useful place to commence as it provides an

excellent overview of the philosophical, physiological, and psychological principles of contemporary emotional theory.

*Gut Reactions* draws upon the fields of anthropology, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy, in the development an “embodied appraisal” theory of emotion. The text opens with a careful consideration of the various historical and contemporary theoretical perspectives of emotion, ranging from James and Lange’s somatic theory of emotion, in which physiological changes precede an emotional experience, to B.F. Skinner’s behavioral theory of emotion, in which the names of particular emotions are merely used to classify certain behaviors. Other theorists suggest that emotions are “pure cognitive thoughts”; or, “emotions are identical to thoughts” (Prinz 8). Prinz arranges the various emotional theorists into five specific categories: feeling, somatic, behavior, processing mode, and pure cognitive. He follows by considering a range of hybrid theories that will combine anywhere from two to five of these singular theories in their conceptualization. Prinz establishes his own theory of emotion, called the “embodied appraisal” theory. His theory is primarily somatic, as “emotions are not merely perceptions of the body but also perceptions of our relations to the world” (20). An epistemologist and empiricist, Prinz proceeds to build and defend his theory, engaging contemporary and historical philosophers, neuroscientists, anthropologists, and psychologists in “constructive, not critical” dialogue (20). The “embodied appraisal” theory is Prinz’s conceptualization of emotion as made up of two parts: embodied appraisals and valence markers. Embodied appraisals are “thoughts and feelings [that] register the body’s preparation for action and prime congruent memories” (244). Valence markers are defined in their relationship to appraisals: “appraisals represent things that matter to us, but they do not represent the fact that they matter. That’s where valence markers come in. When one couples an embodied fear appraisal with a state that serves as a

negative reinforcer, one represents the fact that the situation inducing the fear matters” (178). The positive and negative inner reinforcers establish the situation as representative of a certain response. Prinz describes inner reinforcers as “behaviorist constructs reinvented for an age of cognitive science. [...] Inner reinforcers can be characterized by their impact on future behavior, but that impact can now be explained in mentalist terms” (173-74). He argues that “inner reinforcers have an impact on future behavior when they, and their attendant embodied appraisals, get stored in memory” (174). Prinz’s theory of “embodied appraisals” and emotion will be useful in the third portion of this chapter as we consider the impact of inner reinforcers and their relationship to memory. For now, it is helpful to focus primarily on Prinz’s five specific theoretical categories as a means to better understanding Baillie’s theory of emotion within *Orra*.

Within the five categories generated by Prinz, Baillie’s emotional theory within *Orra* aligns itself with a somatic feeling. According to Prinz, somatic feeling occurs in the following fashion: the subject views an emotionally significant object; the subject then perceives the object; a change occurs in the subject’s bodily state; finally, the emotion is the consciously named and identified feeling of that bodily change. Somatic feeling theory understands emotion as primarily physiological, while simultaneously permitting reason and conscious control over its manifestation as feeling. For the purposes of ease in understanding and definition, it is helpful to split the concept into its two pure categories: somatic theory and feeling theory. Somatic theory argues that emotion is purely a physiological change. It represents emotion as wholly unconscious and bodily: “somatic states include states of the respiratory system, circulatory system, digestive system, musculoskeletal system and endocrine system” (5). Theorists in the late nineteenth century, such as James and Lange, argued that, “bodily changes precede our emotional experiences. Our hearts race, and we feel elated” (4). Feeling theory situates itself

within folk psychology wherein, “our commonsense conception of the mind tends to privilege conscious feelings” (4). As Prinz puts it, “being elated is feeling a certain way” (4). The two were combined through the further research of William James and his conclusion that “our feeling of the [bodily] changes as they occur *is* the emotion” (qtd. Prinz 5). Prinz defines this combination of somatic and feeling theory, the somatic feeling theory of emotion. Antonio Damasio’s somatic-marker hypothesis shifts James’s research into a more contemporary space, providing a more recent definition of somatic feeling theory. Situating Baillie’s *Orra* within the research of both James and Damasio offers a useful place for us to begin in our analysis of her particular use of somatic feeling theory.

James states in the opening of his fourteenth chapter in *Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892), “an emotion is a tendency to feel” (350). He contends that our bodies physically respond, causing emotion, which we then consciously identify as feeling. Over a century later, in his book *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (1999), Antonio Damasio, one of the world’s leading neurologists, argues for a somatic feeling model of emotion. Damasio establishes “three stages of processing along a continuum: *a state of emotion*, which can be triggered and executed nonconsciously; *a state of feeling*, which can be represented nonconsciously; and *a state of feeling made conscious*, i.e. known to the organism having both emotion and feeling” (Damasio 37). For both James and Damasio, emotion is a non-conscious occurrence that when acknowledged becomes feeling. Damasio articulates two causes of emotion: certain objects or situations trigger sensory devices; or, the organism conjures a memory and represents it as a series of images in the thought process (56). Damasio argues that, physiologically, “the neural patterns which constitute the substrate of a feeling arise in two classes of biological changes: changes related to body state and changes related to cognitive

state” (79). He contends that changes in either the body or the mind cause emotion within the individual, and ultimately, that the only means by which emotion becomes conscious feeling is through identification by the organism. In my close reading of the following text, I argue that Baillie’s articulation of “superstitious fear” in *Orra* rests upon a similar model of emotion, identified and embraced as feeling.

We left Orra in conversation with Theobald. She was demonstrating the power of her imagination through a description of the “swelling” little cottage that housed her mountain elves. This description will be of significant interest in the closing discussion regarding remembrance and class, but for now it serves as Orra’s last happy imagining. From here, conversations with Catherina and other characters turn her brain, along with the reading brain, toward darker images, commencing the rise of the primary antagonist – fear. The Scarrian formal practices no longer separate themselves into a fear/happiness binary, but shift fully into the realm of fear within the brain of Orra. I would argue that Baillie is making a conscious decision to shift the imagining brain into a darker place and thus, simultaneously shift the emotional states of both her protagonist and her reading audience. As the somatic feeling theory suggests that emotion occurs and then feeling (or the conscious identification and subsequent enacting of emotion), it is necessary to show the physiological occurrence of fear and then Orra’s conscious acknowledgment of the emotion as a feeling. In act two, Catherina tells Orra a story about a noble knight murdered in the Black Forest, stirring up horrible visions for Orra and initiating her steady decline into madness. Alice, another attendant to Orra, is present and following the story, their discussion turns to a reflection on the dreaming versus waking state and its implications for the cultivation of fear:

*Orra* It is not dreams I fear; for still with me

There is an indistinctness o'er them cast,  
 Like the dull gloom of misty twilight, where  
 Before mine eyes pass all incongruous things,  
 Huge, horrible, and strange, on which I stare  
 As idiots upon this changeful world,  
 With nor surprise nor speculation. No;  
 Dreams I fear not: it is the dreadful waking,  
 When, in deep midnight stillness, the roused fancy  
 Takes up the' imperfect shadows of its sleep,  
 Like marr'd speech snatch'd from a bungler's mouth,  
 Shaping their forms distinctively and vivid  
 To visions horrible:--this is my bane;--  
 It is the dreadful waking that I fear. (242-3)

Orra's discussion of the dreaming versus waking states establishes the foundation for consciousness as a key factor in her understanding of fear. The dreaming state offers an indistinctness and incongruousness that provides a certain amount of inability to understand. It is the "unconscious" or purely somatic state. Without the acknowledgement of the conscious mind, the body may respond, but it is pure emotion, not feeling. Instead, Orra fears the waking state because of the clarity, or distinctness, with which she can behold the vivid forms of her imaginings. As Baillie has intended, it is Orra's conscious, superstitious promotion of her own imagined fears that serve as her greatest antagonist. It is not simply the bodily arousal of fear that provokes Orra's spells, but the bodily arousal followed by the neuroacknowledgement. In crafting Orra's character, Baillie understands the emotion of fear within the terms of a specific

theoretical framework. She demonstrates it as an emotion-turned-feeling, consciously chosen and encouraged by the individual.

Another supporting example of this framework occurs as Orra soliloquizes. It is apparent through the stage direction that Orra is experiencing one physiological aspect of fear – heightened adrenaline: “pacing to and fro for a little while” (252).<sup>2</sup> This is a purely somatic response. Following, in her soliloquy, Orra acknowledges the conscious aspect of her fear, wishing that her mind might focus on God instead of the demonic; she closes her monologue with a powerful request: “O open and receive me, / Ye happy things of still and lifeless being, / that to the awful steps which tread upon ye / *unconscious* are” (252 emphasis my own)! Baillie’s decision to use the term “unconscious” is particularly interesting within the context of this sentence and serves to support the framework of a somatic feeling theory. In essence, Orra is requesting that God open his arms and receive her in death; however, she does not request “death,” but rather unconsciousness. Baillie’s choice of words in this instance signifies a strong and deliberate understanding of feeling as a conscious acknowledgement of a bodily state. It is consciousness and the brain that promote the destructive fears Orra experiences and it is her prayer that she might lose consciousness. Similar to her delineation between the dreaming and the waking state, Orra identifies unconsciousness as a far happier and peaceful state. As previously stated, Baillie views emotion as only a tendency to feel; it is the conscious decision that nourishes the emotion into its more active feeling state. Within this context, “unconsciousness” is understood as a purely physiological state, insofar as the body responds without the mind’s active involvement.

As the play closes, Baillie writes Orra’s madness as a permanent state of “unconsciousness.” Throughout the final scene Orra rejects the light of day as heartily as she

previously despised the “deep midnight stillness:” “No, no! athwart the wav’ring garish light, / Things move and seem to be, and yet are nothing” (258). Contrary to the previous description of the midnight hour shaping forms and horrible visions, it is now the light that causes movement and the creation of being. Later when Orra is questioned as to whether or not she knows the other characters, she states, “away! Your faces waver to and fro; / I’ll know you better in your winding-sheets, / when the moon shines upon you” (259). It is in the darkness that Orra will recognize those whom she once knew. Theobald summarizes her state as he requests his friends to leave, “her mind within itself holds a dark world / Of dismal phantasies and horrid forms! / Contend with her no more” (259). Orra has found her state of “unconsciousness” through her consistent and deliberate focus on turning an emotion into a feeling. Baillie successfully demonstrates a somatic feeling theory of emotion, as Orra’s development of superstitious fear is no more than a slow and careful process of conscious, decision-making to nurture her nature.

As has been shown, it is clear throughout *Orra* that Baillie believes her protagonist can choose to feel fear. Orra may be pathologically predisposed toward the emotion, but the decision to encourage its cultivation is a conscious and deliberate one. In fact, at one point, Orra even acknowledges, “there is a joy in fear” (242). On the surface, it seems as though Baillie is a pure rationalist and that she is primarily interested in the governance of calculated reason; however, I would argue that her project is far more complex. I would contend that she recognizes the inherent power of emotion and the complicated relationship between the body and the brain within its cultivation. Further, I believe that she recognizes the power of emotion within literature to inform the minds of her audiences; for Baillie, the human element of emotion is essential to the impact on an audience and their memory of a work of art. Baillie claims within her “Introductory Discourse,” that “were the grandest scenes which can enter into the



imagination of man, presented to our view, *and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts*, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, colour, and form; and the remembrance of them would rest upon our minds like the measurement and distances of the planets” (6; emphasis my own). As I have demonstrated the considerable amount of imagery within *Orra*, as well as the implementation of a somatic feeling framework, I now want to shift towards cognitive theory as a means to identifying how the reading brain engages image and emotion, before concluding with a discussion on the usefulness of the neurological triad in the education of an audience.

### **Cognitive Theory and Remembrance in *Orra***

Baillie wrote her plays for the purpose of informing the brain of her viewing audience. Within her *Discourse*, she acknowledges that

to change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing those visitations of the soul, whose causes and effects we are aware of, every one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful.” (Baillie 11)

As I have previously argued, I do not want to consider *Orra* within the context of performed drama, but rather in direct relation to the reading brain. It is the constructed image within the brain, its subsequent emotional impact, and its ultimate rewriting of a “certain disposition of mind,” that is of interest to this chapter. I am aware that by shifting the attention away from the theatrical performance onto a reading audience within the Romantic context, I am inviting a conversation surrounding the notion of the “closet drama.” Romantic critics have tended to situate the private reading of drama within the space of the closet. In her book *Closet Stages*,

Catherine Burroughs opposes the traditional Romantic notion of “closet drama,” arguing that such a concept denied Romantic women writers from gaining success, due to its “tendency to associate the closet with reading only, to oppose it to theatricality, and to forget that, during the early nineteenth century, not only did the phrase serve as a metaphor for privacy and intense intellectual engagement, but it also identified a literal space in which a variety of theatrical activities—many particular to women—took place” (Burroughs 8). I wholly agree with Burroughs’s assertion in her redefining of the “closet drama;” however, for the purposes of this final section of the chapter, I want to remove the theatrical and focus solely on the mind of the reader. According to Alan Richardson, Romantic drama (and specifically, Romantic lyrical drama) was “not a retreat into the closet but [...] a foray into the minds of both dramatic character and reader” (*Mental* 3). He defines this space using the term “mental theatre,” based upon Byron’s idea that dramatic poetry should constitute a “mental theatre.” For the remainder of this chapter, I want to shift my focus onto the latter portion of Richardson’s definition of the “closet drama” as “mental theatre”—specifically, I want to read Baillie’s *Orra* as a foray into the mind of the reader.

In understanding the mind of the reader, it is helpful to return briefly to Damasio’s understanding of somatic-feeling theory. As previously stated, Damasio indicates an organism can conjure something through memory and represent it as image in the thought process causing emotion to occur within the body (Damasio 56). The process of image construction has fascinated both psychologists and cognitive theorists as it relates to reading.<sup>3</sup> One psychologist in particular, János László, has spent a considerable amount of time studying the relationship between imagination, emotion and literature. In her book, *Cognition and Representation in Literature*, László approaches her psychological study of literature from a social-cognitive

perspective. It is an empirical approach that “trusts [sic] of categories which have been worked out in the cognitive psychology for studying human mental activity embracing world knowledge and the stock of personal experiences, and eschews digressions into subjectivism” (153). Her approach is particularly useful in its empirical analysis of the ways in which reading brains relate to texts in terms of imagery, affect, genre, and socio-cultural modality. For the purposes of an audience that may be more familiar with psychoanalysis than other brain theories, László distinguishes between psychoanalytics and cognitive theory in several useful ways: in psychoanalytics “the analysis of the literary text [...] inevitably becomes an analysis of the writer’s repressed emotional and unconscious desires” (16); psychoanalysis resists empirical testing of statements derived from theoretical constructs because of its subjective tradition (17). Conversely, according to László cognitive theory asserts that “interpretations or meaning, when they are stripped of the ballast of the idiographic reactions, can be related to the structure and the content of the text as well as to the psychological characterizations of the readers” (18); cognitive theory depends upon

literary socialization[, or] the skill of applying the two major conventions: the aesthetic convention which suspends the validity of the norms of the factual world replacing them with aesthetic norms, and the polyvalence convention which, by allowing the multiple meaning for the same text, replaces the monovalence convention of ordinary communication (Schmidt 1982; 1992). (21)

More so than any other theory, cognitive theory emphasizes the “interactive character of the literary process” (22). Of particular importance to this chapter are László’s studies of point of view (68), imagery and prose (69, 75, and 79), and the ability to learn and articulate emotions through literature (104). Finally, László considers an aspect of psychology called allusion:

“allusion is a detail of the original experience which re-emerges in the consciousness while representing the entire emotional tension of the original experience. When communication triggers such details, an empathic resonance occurs” (112). Allusions within literature are useful in activating these empathic responses and can have a considerable effect/affect on a reading audience’s literary understanding. Allusion will be a useful concept in the final section of this chapter.

Having shown how Baillie constructs images within the reading mind through the use of Scarry’s formal practices, as well as having demonstrated Baillie’s somatic feeling theory of emotion in her development of the character of Orra, I will now shift fully to the reading brain of the audience and the impact of image and emotion on Baillie’s purported end goal, or the third part of the neurological triad, remembrance. It is this part of the triad that plays a significant role in Joanna Baillie’s goal as a dramatist, as it is the space within the brain that promotes the “checking and subduing” of the passions. Baillie’s overarching purpose is to provide new material for the brain, helping people navigate their social environments more effectively and, I would argue, calling attention to the arbitrary nature of class distinction, providing a mediating space within the reading brain, in which humanity trumps all other institutional and cultural structures.

To understand how Baillie creates this mediating space, it will be helpful to situate her writing within the context of three of László’s studies: point of view, imagery and prose, and the ability to learn and articulate emotions through literature. Narrative point of view, the first concept, is based on Upensky’s research of literary narratives. According to László, Upensky considers point of view as a basic principle of composition. László summarizes Upensky, claiming, “in relation to the person who organizes the perspective, [Upensky] distinguishes [the

following] aspect of perspective: *internal* and *external*” (49). External perspective favors the author and/or narrator’s perspective, whereas internal perspective primarily promotes a singular character’s perspective. László and her team developed a test whereby they studied the effects of the internal and external perspectives on memory recognition and visual imagery within mental models. Prior to revealing the results of the study and applying them to Baillie, it is helpful to define some terms. First, mental model theory, a term proposed by Johnson-Laird, is the “‘representation of things’ described by the text, [rather] than ‘the representation of the text’ itself. [...] In this theory images are ‘full-blown’ mental models which are constructed optionally whenever they help to fulfill the reading task” (46). Of particular importance to this chapter is the notion that mental model theory “is applicable to any kind of narratives describing ‘perceptible’ (‘imaginable’) even ‘nonvisible’ worlds” (46). Second, memory recognition questions “whether alternating the point of view (which involves inside point of view sequences characteristic to literary prose) promotes the recognition of both ‘same’ (previously read) and ‘different’ (changed) point of view sequences as compared to the ‘flat’ outside point of view of narration” (53). In other words, does alternating point of view, parallelism, or literary prose promote the construction of mental models (or images) or does it diminish the construction. Finally, visual imagery simply looks at whether or not “alternating point of view leads to better imagery production after reading” (55). László’s study demonstrates that alternating, internal point of view promotes the construction of mental models, increases memory recognition, and evokes imagery performance and subsequently, increases emotional response from the audience. With regard to imagery, László states, “when the author applies inside point of view, she expresses a more definite invitation to the reader to see the events through the eyes of the

characters and to feel what they feel. [...] Images became more accessible” (57). Through the accessibility of images, readers are better able to empathize with the represented characters.

The use of László’s study on narrative point of view has fascinating implications for Joanna Baillie’s professed commitment to drama as a literary form. As a drama, *Orra*’s point of view shifts constantly from character-to-character, and further, every point of view is internal. Baillie does not provide a chorus or a narrating character; therefore, the opportunities abound for mental models to be created, imagery to be evoked, and, most importantly, empathy to be encouraged. She believes that “the poet and novelist may represent to you their great characters from the cradle to the tomb. [...] They tell us what kind of people they intend their men and women to be, and as such we receive them. [...] But the characters of the drama must speak directly for themselves” (Baillie 6-7). In other words, for Baillie the strength of drama is the lack of an external perspective, or the lack of a narrator/poet/novelist. Instead, it is the internal perspectives of the characters, alternating, bouncing the reading mind from perspective-to-perspective that inspires natural empathy within an audience. László’s study on narrative point of view establishes alternating point of view as a significant tool in creating memory recognition; her study serves as a solid foundation for considerations of a mediating mental space within *Orra*.

László’s second aspect is imagery as it relates to prose. The impact of imagery on memory or remembrance has been well documented in the field of cognitive research. László shows that “because words with high imagery value are prone to such transformation they are more likely to be encoded in an imaginal [sic] way and thereby to endow readers with an extra opportunity to retrieve the corresponding information during recall” (László 69). She continues, arguing that

to simplify the complex flood of information from the world, people sort things and other entities according to similarities in their essential features, forming natural categories and communicating about the similarities and differences between these ‘kinds’ or ‘types’ through shared category labels. Categorization schemes allow us to structure our general knowledge about people and the social world, thereby providing coherence to unfolding social behavior. (70)

She claims that people cannot help but use these categories even in the process of reading literary narratives. Following another study, László determines that “perception of characters and situations in reading literature has phenomenally some commonality with direct experiences by mobilizing perceptual and motor components of semantic categories” (79). Recall increases for texts that have a higher level of imagery usage. This supports another study done by Giesen and Peeck (1984) in which participants demonstrated higher recall when asked to focus on imagery: “concrete-explicit information was better recalled, more contradictions were noticed and spatial information was better retained” (86). Thus, it is clear that the use of imagery in prose increases remembrance and subsequently, provides additional categorical schemes to the brain.

Locating this perspective within Baillie’s “Introductory Discourse” serves to show the intentionality with which Baillie created not only *Orra*, but also all of her other *Plays on the Passions*. She felt as though, “without people being conscious of it, [they] have stored up in idea the greater part of those strongly marked varieties of human character, which may be said to divide it into classes; and in one of those classes they involuntarily place every new person they become acquainted with [sic]” (2). The powerful parallel between Baillie’s language in the “Introductory Discourse” and László’s description of category cannot be overlooked. Baillie possesses a profound understanding of the human mind in her writing, anticipating modern

theories and, in her reflection on consciousness, demonstrates a proto-psychological savvy that must be considered when reading her dramas. For Baillie, drama is a means by which she can add new varieties of human character to our mentally constructed categorical schemes, and thus, inform more educated interactions between people. It is clear that she infuses a significant amount of imagery into *Orra* and thus, based upon the aforementioned research, it is arguable that the drama has an impact on the memory of the reading audience. Further, Baillie's use of emotion serves to drive her text deeper into the recesses of the imagining mind and, therefore, the recollecting memory.

Fittingly, memory is the most significant point of tension in the closing lines of *Orra*. Baillie demonstrates Orra's madness as primarily an inability to recall, or to use her brain. Eleonora and Theobald ask Orra directly three different times if she remembers or "knows" them. In each response, Orra's memory is called into question, before Eleonora concludes that if she does in fact recognize them, "it is a terrible smile of recognition" (Baillie 258-9). Orra's madness, or state of "unconscious," does not allow for memory or remembrance. This aspect of her madness is the most disturbing to those gathered around her at the close of the drama, her eyes unable to fix upon them with any sense of clarity or recognition. It is as though, without an ability to recall or remember, Baillie suggests there is nothing but pure madness. Backing this argument out from the text, and focusing more generally on Baillie's overarching goal of sympathetic curiosity, serves to support the final point that literature serves little purpose beyond aesthetic pleasure if it does not find a foothold in the memory of its audience. Using László's concept of emotion and memory in literature, I will argue that through imagination and feeling, Baillie establishes a memory that serves her reading audience, before moving to my final discussion of the impact of this neurological triad on the brain.



László cites Vygotsky's *The Psychology of Art*, claiming, "it is not very likely that people learn geography from Shakespeare's plays, but they may 'learn' human relations, historical atmosphere, world view, or to articulate emotions" (104). Arguably, through reading literature, people create images and feelings within their minds. These images and feelings become memories insofar as they lodge themselves within our brains as allusions. As referenced earlier, according to László, "allusion is a detail of the original experience which re-emerges in the consciousness while representing the entire emotional tension of the original experience. When communication triggers such details, an empathic resonance occurs" (112). László is using this in relation to our understanding of literature and how we read. More specifically, allusion in literature calls to our minds personal experiences that invoke empathy. Based upon Damasio's argument that we can conjure up images through memory and experience a feeling with those memories, as well as László's research on recall through imagery and feeling and the subsequent development of empathy, I would argue that Baillie's suggestion of mental classes is well-founded, and that her larger project is to create literary memories as a means to serving us in our interactions with others. Thereby, she intuits that our daily interactions with others may serve as "allusions" to the texts we have read and, through the processing of the lived experience with the read experience we might more effectively navigate our relationships.

The notion of the Lazlo's lived experience as "allusion" can be further supported by the earlier discussion of Prinz's theory of "embodied appraisals." The theory of "embodied appraisals" depends upon a somatic response that is then fed by positive or negative inner reinforcers. These inner reinforcers perpetuate a conscious feeling. I would argue that just as lived experiences, or "real" memories can serve as reinforcers, the literary experience, or imagined memory, can serve as a positive or negative inner reinforcer. In other words, as we

attempt to navigate the interpersonal aspects of our lived experience, our literary experience can either positively or negatively reinforce our feeling responses to those with whom we interact. Baillie's *Orra* serves as a literary experience, or a series of mental classes, upon which we might reflect when considering indulging our own superstitious fears. The final section of this chapter will focus on how the concept of the neurological triad creates a mentally-mediating space in which Baillie could challenge her audiences notions of class distinction, particularly the distinction between upper and middle class, opening up a conversation not between two distinct groups of people, but rather, more generally, between equal human beings.

### **Mentally Mediating Space in *Orra***

A forerunner in the resurgence of Baillie scholarship in the early 1990s, Watkins places Baillie in a socio-historical context of gender and class anxiety related to the displacement of one structure of authority by another, "tracking the complex intersections of psychological, social and imaginative motion" (Watkins 109). Though Watkins focuses wholly on *DeMonfort* and its theme of the simultaneous pressures of anxiety brought about by a society that is too vast to escape, and the enclosed feeling of claustrophobia imposed upon him by the "literally shrinking world of the aristocracy," I would argue that issues of class anxiety are applicable to many of Baillie's plays and especially *Orra* (111). As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, the "shrinking aristocracy" was extremely anxiety-ridden, but so too was the growing bourgeoisie. As Gerald Newman demonstrates in *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830*, the rising middle class was fraught with frustration at an upper class obsessed with fashion and excess. Citing Thomas Day's struggles to distinguish between what he terms seductive appearances and real virtue, Newman quotes: "to be armed against the prejudices of the world, and to distinguish real merit from splendid vices which pass current in what is called society, is

one of the most difficult of human sciences” (Day qt. Newman 104). Newman summarizes, “to be impressed was to be oppressed” (105). On the opposite end of the spectrum, the burgeoning Industrial Revolution, coupled with the scent of the French Revolution briskly blowing across the English Channel, nourished a significant amount of aristocratic anxiety throughout late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. Though referencing the upper class in the later nineteenth-century, Robert Lacey’s remarks about the upper class seem especially relevant to the prior century: “Aristocracy, does not stand up well to misfortune. It is a fair-weather way of life” (Cannadine 86). It is clear that there was an “emerging dualism [...and that] the domestic social cleavage of the later eighteenth century was translating itself into a general and intensifying clash between two patters of believe and culture, cosmopolitanism on the one side, aggressively local on the other” (Newman 47). The upper class is increasingly associated with a fashionable French cosmopolitanism, and the middle class, rejecting this cosmopolitanism, is associated with an aggressively anti-French localism. It is this dualistic, contentious cultural space, into which Baillie presents *Orra* and, through her drama, seeks to mediate the dispute and level the playing field.

I have chosen to contextualize the concept of mediation for this chapter within the space of the brain, as we are not “viewing” Baillie’s drama in the traditional, performance aspect that she would have preferred. Instead as readers, we manifest images of Orra’s folds within her scarf, her fingers crossed before her eyes as though peering through a window, and her crazed and wandering gaze in her mad state, within our reading minds. These images provide Baillie with the material through which she can direct the construction of a mental space in which mediation can occur. In the second section of this chapter, I referenced Scarry’s concept of volitional versus non-volitional image creation. Scarry distinguishes between daydreaming, a

volitional act, and “dreaming-by-the-book,” which is often more non-volitional. In daydreaming, we struggle to move or shift an image; it remains rather static, but volitional. Conversely, “reading entails an immense labor of imaginative construction,” in which we give our minds over to the directing and instructing hand of the author, whereby the act becomes non-volitional (Scarry 37). In a sense, we let go, let our thinking guard down, and are at the mercy of the author. Theoretically, it is this moment at which we “get lost” in a book, film, poem, or in this case, drama.

The non-volitional aspect of image construction is paramount to the construction of a mediating space within the mind. In its directing of the mind, the text forces the reader to accommodate certain situations that might be offensive or disturbing within a lived experience. This literary experience can promulgate a more empathetic understanding for future lived experiences. As Martha Nussbaum argues,

narrative imagination is an essential preparation for moral interaction. Habits of empathy and conjecture conduce to a certain type of citizenship and a certain form of community: one that cultivates a sympathetic responsiveness to another’s needs and understands the way circumstances shape those needs, while respecting separateness and privacy.

(Nussbaum 90)

Baillie requests that we enter the mind of Orra as she suffers the consequences of a dominant passion, but more importantly, in the midst of the suffering she reveals the humanity not only within her protagonist, but also within the secondary characters through their respective responses to her as she falls victim to madness. To demonstrate the disintegration of class boundaries and the favoring of humanity within *Orra*, I will focus on two scenes. To close this chapter, I will shift back into the reading brain as a mediating space.

In the imagination section, I referenced Orra's imagining of a quaint cottage in which elves dwell. Prior to her drafting of this image, Orra enters the room discussing marriage with Hartman, a friend of Theobald. Supposedly, she has misunderstood him and his views regarding marriage: "And so, since fate has made me woe the day / [...] Woman yeleft, I must consign myself / With all the lands and rights into the hands / Of some proud man, and say, 'take all, I pray, / And do me in return the grace and favour / to be my master'" (Baillie 240). Hartman disagrees, claiming: "a master! No; / [...] instead,] a noble, equal partner" (240). Orra shakes her head, cleverly suggesting that she knows what "equal" really means. Following this discussion, Theobald indicates that he wishes he could be more liberal in his approach to marriage, but must confess that he is not. Orra responds by indicating that were she to be married, she would "improve the low condition of [her] peasants" (240). Beyond drawing attention to gender issues within marriage, an issue which has not eluded scholarly attention, Baillie presents the topic of class.<sup>4</sup> Orra's interest in improving the condition of the lower classes reflects Baillie's personal interest in mediating between the classes and creating more accommodating living environments for everyone. In fact, just a few months following the publication of *Orra*, Baillie informs Scott, referencing the Luddite riots, that she "hope[s] people will associate and strengthen themselves against this disorder every where, and let the good sense & courage of [...] a very large majority of the people support & make amends for a feeble government, without giving up any of their views of moderate, wholesome reform" (*Letters* 305). For those within her reading audience of a middle class background, Orra, an aristocrat herself, presents a mediating view on the service and support of the lower classes, a view in direct contrast to contemporary understandings of the upper class as wholly focused on themselves, without a care or concern for the lower classes. Orra would use her ability to marry an aristocrat as a means to more effectively serve the lower

classes. It might be considered a subtle manipulation of the patriarchy. However, Orra, as a member of the upper class, is not void of excess. In fact, it is arguable that her excessive dwelling upon the singular passion reflects traditional views of the aristocracy. Ultimately, it will be her excess that drives her mad, and thus, there is an inherent critique of such aristocratic indulgences. The critique is not without its complexities. In fact, through uncovering the emotional dynamics of the suffering mind, Baillie inherently critiques the upper classes excess, while simultaneously elevating the lower classes. It is to say that emotion is human and so too are all who feel; however, its indulgence within the upper classes is excessive.

The second scene to which I want to refer is the final one. To understand it as a disruption of traditional class structures, it is important to situate the characters within their respective classes. In the final scene there are eight characters, not including the attendant. They are listed here in order of dialogue: Franko, Hughobert, Eleonora, Alice, Hartman, Theobald, Orra, and Urston. Franko, the chief of a band of outlaws, and Alice, attendant to Orra, are both assignable to a lower class. Theobald, the co-burgher, and his friend, Hartman, the Banneret of Basle, are both middle class individuals. Hughobert, Eleonora, and Orra are all upper class aristocrats. Finally, Urston, the confessor, is situated in the clergy. Logistically speaking, Baillie has set a scene with a considerable class spectrum. Theoretically, she has created a space in which humanity trumps class. In her article, “Passion and Fashion in Joanna Baillie’s ‘Introductory Discourse,’” Andrea Henderson contends that the traditional forms of established hierarchy—specifically clothing/fashion—were no longer “fully operative” and that “Baillie’s interest in the external expression of passion and character represents part of a broader social quest for ever more intimate and inalienable signs of hierarchy” (Henderson 203). Respectfully, I disagree; instead, I see Baillie’s interest in the external expression of passion as representing her

quest for signs of humanity, not hierarchy. Orra's diminishment into madness becomes an equalizing experience. Every character witnesses in awe and sadness her mental disintegration. Throughout the scene, the devastating passion becomes a source of equalization and mediation. Hughobert, the ranking member of the group, identifies Franko, the lowest member and leader of a band of outlaws, as "valiant" and expresses his indebtedness to the outlaw for his service (257). Eleonora groups everyone as "the voices of [Orra's] lovely friends" (258). Finally, it is Theobald, the middle class co-burgher, who articulates in response to Hartman's question about how to control her ravings, "O none! None, none! but gentle sympathy / and watchfulness of love" (259). Each class acknowledges the humanity of the "other" as the characters respond to the mad Orra, calling one another "friends" and "valiant." Fear serves as the perfect emotion under which to dismiss these socially constructed boundaries, as it has been the primary emotion in establishing and promoting them. In her darkness, Orra sheds light upon a universal humanity that transcends class boundaries.

Baillie creates a sense of equality within the final scene of *Orra*. Each character responds not from within the confines of his/her personal class boundaries, but from a deeper sense of human sympathy. Nussbaum argues, "literary imagining both inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life, not all of which is open to view; in the process the reader learns to have respect for the hidden contents of that inner world, seeing its importance in defining a creature as fully human" (Nussbaum 89). As readers, then, we are invited into the rich inner lives of Baillie's characters through the imagining brain. The application of Scarry's formal practices for "dreaming-by-the-book," along with László's literary cognitive studies, suggests that Baillie effectively engages a reading brain, planting unique literary memories. It is within the brains of her early nineteenth-century audience

members that Baillie would have directed the images of Orra and the other characters. Within the middle-class reading brain, the upper class was no longer a purely excessive, lazy, uncaring group, but rather individuals, suffering and struggling with human passions. After all, “those strong passions that, with small assistance from outward circumstances, work their way in the heart, till they become the tyrannical masters of it, carry on a similar operation in the breast of the Monarch, and the man of low degree” (Baillie 11). Conversely, within the aristocratic reading brain, the middle-class was no longer the sentimental, spectacle-seeking conglomerate, but rather reasonable individuals possessing sound moral judgment. For Baillie, passions, and the ability to control them, do not distinguish between classes. Just as there is a “universal propensity” to witness someone suffering a passion, there is a universal propensity to experience passion.

*Orra* is a drama about fear, but more importantly, it is about imagination and its unique power over the human brain. The protagonist wrestles with her own imagining brain, before being oppressed by it. Baillie writes her *Plays on the Passions* as a means to providing her audience with an imagined space, a literary experience, upon which they can draw when engaging their own lived experiences. In *Orra*, she acknowledges the power of imagination and, in so doing, acknowledges her power as an author to invoke a space within the reading brain wherein she can begin to assuage class anxieties and peacefully mediate relationships. Literary mediation uses the image/emotion, as a means to cultivating memory, or “another mark of human variety,” from which to consciously engage feeling in our interpersonal decision-making process. Baillie’s awareness of this concept is clearly demonstrated in *Orra*. The neurological triad engages the imagining mind, invokes the emotional body, and demands that we remember. After all, to forget is madness.



Chapter 3 Categorical Essentialism and Social Emotion in *The Election* and *De Monfort*:

Sympathizing with a Conniving Politician and a Murderous Aristocrat

“Thou doest exalt the sluggish souls of men,  
Be thee conjoin’d, to great and glorious deeds;  
As two dark clouds, when mix’d in middle air,  
With vivid lightnings flash, and roar sublime.  
Talk not of what is past, but future love.  
~Freberg, *De Monfort*

In her “Introductory Discourse” to the initial *Series of Plays on the Passions*, Joanna Baillie makes a significant assumption about her audience: that we might be sympathetic to individuals who attempt conniving political maneuvers to gain office or who commit heinous crimes. She exclaims,

How sensible are we of this strong propensity within us, when we behold any person under the pressure of great and uncommon calamity! Delicacy and respect for the afflicted will, indeed, make us turn ourselves aside from observing him, and cast down our eyes in his presence; but the first glance we direct to him will involuntarily be one of the keenest observations, how hastily soever it may be checked; and often will a returning look of inquiry mix itself by stealth with our sympathy and reserve. (Baillie 3)

Seemingly, her reasoning is simple—we have an inborn propensity for sympathy once we have gained knowledge of an individual’s inner cultivation of, subsequent battle with, and ultimate succumbing to an unwieldy emotional state. I agree with her assumption; however, I do not want to take it for granted. Rather, instead, I would like to trace the cognitive and emotional reasoning behind why we are able to invoke this sympathy for her characters, and more importantly, for those individuals who are responsible for even the most destructive crimes. In this chapter, I will contend that Baillie demonstrates the fostering of hatred in two ways: individually (or egocentrically) and socially. The hatred cultivated within the character of Baltimore, Baillie’s

protagonist in *The Election*, is dependent upon the more generalized concepts of Lisa Zunshine's twin theme and the category of the "individual." Within this play, hatred arises out of a disruption of the traditional essentialist categories defining the middle and the upper class, and it is the perception of "twinning," or the attempt to manifest the traits of the other so as to be indistinguishable, that serves as the core of Baillie's passion of hatred within this drama.

Conversely, the hatred cultivated within the character of De Monfort, Baillie's protagonist in her tragedy of the same name, is socially informed or nurtured; my purpose is not to rehabilitate the image of the murderer or defend De Monfort's actions, but rather to trace the complexities of categorical essentialism and class within the establishment of the emotion of hatred because hereby we can develop a clearer understanding of how Baillie integrates emotion and how she negotiates issues of class.

In her book *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible*, Lisa Zunshine theorizes about our cognitive method of "essentialist categorization" and its potential to limit us in its oversimplification of an otherwise complex social world. According to cognitive psychology, essentialism allows us to demarcate between two categorical domains: artifacts and living kinds. Artifacts are typically assigned functional terms (e.g., a chair is made for sitting), whereas living kinds are assigned essences (e.g., tigers can be aggressive or passive).<sup>1</sup> For Zunshine, it is necessary to interrogate essentialism as "it seems by understanding how susceptible we are to essentialist reasoning we can successfully 'deconstruct' and demystify each instance of such reasoning and see it for what it is—a specific cultural construction parasitizing on a more general cognitive predisposition" (Zunshine 21). Theoretically, she posits that art is one way in which our essentialist notions can be understood and, though sometimes frustrating, it is a means by which those tendencies can be challenged. Specifically, in the realm of

essentializing tendencies and art, our historical fascination with stories about twins is one aspect of literature with which she contends: “[perhaps] the twin theme engages in a particularly focused way a cluster of cognitive adaptations associated with our essentializing tendencies” (30). She believes twin themes, or works of art that focus on twins, provide human beings with a pleasurable cognitive “workout,” in so far as they focus on “the absence of difference.” Zunshine references Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors* as an example that teases its audiences essentializing tendencies, engaging their propensity towards seeking innate differences and forcing them to contend with visual and auditory similarities. The pleasure in viewing these plays derives itself from the awareness of the presence of twins; the viewing/reading audience is aware of the differences, while the characters within the play are unable to make the distinctions. In comedies, we often laugh at the notion that a character actually believes that one individual is indistinguishable from another individual. Zunshine continues, quoting Rene Girard’s essay on Plautus’s *Amphitryon*, Moliere’s *Amphitryon*, and Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*

In... all comedies of twins, the characters deal with each other on the assumption that all of them are unique and immediately identifiable as such. If they did not cling to this assumption in the face of contrary evidence they would not become so confused. It takes more than the presence of undistinguishable [sic] twins, I repeat, to generate the comic effects; it takes this persistent refusal to acknowledge the possibility of beings, human or divine, less different from each other than we would like them to be. (Girard, qtd.

Zunshine 31)

She interrogates our fascination with the twin theme by studying performance reviews, revealing that audiences’ disliked performances in which the twins looked too similar, or more specifically, performances in which they, as audience members, were unable to tell the twins

apart. Zunshine believes “these plays speak to our very real need to keep close tabs on *who is who* and *who is where* in our multilevel social hierarchies. But in addition to that, the plays use this social aspect as a ‘flag of convenience’ in their endeavor to tease and exploit our essentialist proclivities” (35). It is our cognitive dependency upon the notions of category and essentialism that is poked and prodded; we laugh when twin themes occurs in fiction or drama, but what happens when they seem to be cropping up within our everyday existence?

I would argue that “twinning” and the emotion of anger have a powerful relationship within cognition. In her exploration of the concept of “twinning” within our cognitive processes, Zunshine addresses our concept of individualism and the more disconcerting notion of the “absence of difference”; I would contend that there is a strong correlation between her theory of “twinning” and the perpetuation of anger. Alternately stated, the emotion of anger rises as the “absence of difference” increases. To support this argument, I will turn to contemporary psychological thought regarding the emotion of anger.

In his book, *Prisoners of Hate*, Aaron Beck discusses the psychological roots of anger and hatred within the individual and the group. He argues that the process for the development of both the individual’s emotion of anger and the group’s adoption of prejudice is the same:

“absolute categorical cognition, on the one hand, and obliviousness to the human identity of the victims, on the other” (Beck 15). Beck continues, claiming that

when a person perceives that either he himself or a sacred value is threatened or abused, he reverts to categorical, dualistic thinking. When this primal mode of thinking is triggered, he automatically prepares to attack—to defend his highly invested value. This hostile mode takes over the thinking apparatus and crowds out other human qualities such as empathy and morality. (22)

As a psychoanalyst with over thirty years of research and treatment of abusive and hostile individuals, Beck has identified a sequence by which anger traditionally takes hold of an individual. The sequence occurs as follows:

Event → Distressed → “Wronged” → Anger → Mobilized to attack

Beck concludes, “close examination revealed the common theme leading to the distress that preceded the experience of anger: the perception of being diminished in some way” (31). Based upon Beck’s conclusions regarding the manifestation of anger and Zunshine’s notion of “twinning,” I would argue that through the emphasizing of an “absence of difference, “twinning” diminishes our category of individuality, and can be interpreted as a direct challenge to our egocentric concept of the unique “I.” In turn, this sequence of emotional affects causes anger. Evelin Lindner comments on egocentrism and anger in her book *Emotion and Conflict*: “violence has its roots in overstretched and unyielding egocentrism, which gives rise to hardened and fixed enemy images” (Lindner 30). “Twinning” infringes on the fragile ego’s domain, causing distress, or the feeling of being “wronged,” and inherently threatens us as human beings. Applying this concept to Baillie’s cultivation of hatred within *The Election* provides the foundation of a theoretical structure for the invocation of sympathy for Baltimore within the reading audience. In other words, as Zunshine has suggested, audience members disliked those representations of *Comedy of Errors* in which they were unable to distinguish between the twins; I would contend that we develop sympathy for Baltimore for similar reasons – we are keenly aware of the frustration we might experience should someone attempt to infringe upon our unique identity through “twinning.”

Baillie recognized the rising class tensions throughout England and Scotland, sensed the cultural anxiety and worked to disrupt the sequence of hatred by dramatizing it and bringing it to

a level of cognition for her audiences. Effectively, she is consciously re-framing the conflict and the sequence of hatred within a human context that was previously unconsciously framed within an artificial and material one, based primarily on cultural constructs of class. It is clear that she felt drama provided onlookers with a view beyond the artificial, performative aspects of culture and society, into the more universal traits of humanity: “as the distinctions which it is [drama]’s highest aim to discriminate are those of nature and not situation, they are judged of by all ranks of men; for a peasant will very clearly perceive in the character of a peer those native peculiarities which belong to him *as a man*, though he is entirely at a loss in all that regards his manners and address as a nobleman” (Baillie 12-13; emphasis my own). Thus, for Baillie, drama challenges our innate tendency toward uniqueness in its request of us to see traits as broadly human, and universal, regardless of class. By illustrating that we are not as unique as we would like to believe and revealing that hatred is by no means the emotion through which we should channel our awareness of this fact, Baillie enters into a mentally mediating cognitive space. Hatred becomes the perfect emotional battleground upon which to stage class tensions, before demonstrating more peaceable means through which individuals might manage their inherent similarities. I will now shift the focus to elements of “twinning” as a means to locating textual support for my argument about *The Election*.

### **“Twinning” in *The Election***

*The Election*, Baillie’s comedy on the passion of hatred, was published in 1802 in the second volume of her *Plays on the Passions*. It was never publicly performed as a drama, but was presented as a musical drama in 1817. In a letter to Mary Berry in August of 1817, Baillie states, “[Mr. Arnold] altered it, I think, with considerable skill, and it was admirably acted and very well received, yet it did not bring good houses” (*Letters* 168). *The Election: A Comedy in*

*Five Acts* situates Freeman, a member of the bourgeoisie and “a great clothier, who has acquired by his own industry a very large fortune,” in a parliamentary race against Baltimore, “a country gentleman, and the head of an old family, fallen into decay” (Baillie 106). Throughout the play Mr. Baltimore nurtures a deep-seeded hatred for his opponent. Baltimore is bitter and distrusting, even as Freeman buys up the old aristocrat’s debt and relieves him of his monetary obligations, freeing him from debtor’s prison. Slagle believes that as, “a declared Whig herself and always interested in politics, Baillie gives form to a Tory candidate in Baltimore, an aristocrat whose fortune has fallen into decay and who hates the ostentatious Freeman, a Whiggish candidate and wealthy middle-class merchant” (Slagle 97). The play concludes with a discovery that the two are half brothers, fathered by the same man.

Throughout this section, I will explore the “twinning” theme as it relates to Freeman (a representative of the middle class *nouveau riche*) and Baltimore (a representative of the upper class). I will focus on several scenes that reveal counter repudiation, or a deliberate attempt to bring to a level of consciousness the similarities of the “other” within the reading brain. It is my contention that, unlike a doppelgänger, one character is not better than the other, but rather, they both demonstrate positive and negative characteristics; admittedly, Baltimore is less appealing than Freeman, but neither is pure good nor evil. Rather, it is through their complexity as characters that they develop similarities that lend themselves nicely to the notion of twinning. Following the close readings of the various twinning scenes and their implications for hate in the text, I will shift the focus of this chapter to Baillie’s indictment of excess within *The Election* and its direct relation to the natural and the material.

Zunshine’s larger purpose in defining the “twin theme” is to exemplify the teasing of our essentializing categories. It is the exploitation of these categories that brings before our thinking

brains the otherwise unconscious processes through which we filter the world in our social interactions. Based upon Girard's essay and Zunshine's theory, I believe "twinning" reveals two primary essentialist interpersonal assumptions that we make as human beings: the first, what I will term *repudiation*, is our persistent refusal to acknowledge the possibility that the "other" is less different from us than we would like him/her to be; the second, what I will term *differentiation*, is our tendency to focus on dissimilarities, or "our [constant] attempts to 'define' what makes us different" (Zunshine 31). As might be presumed, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive; however, they often occur separately. In applying these two ideas through close reading, we see clearly that repudiation tends to be less conscious and clearest to our processing brains when it is being countered. In other words, it is an essentialist category to which we give little thought until someone calls it to our attention. Conversely, differentiation is a far more conscious act of identifying the other as dissimilar. Both, whether consciously or unconsciously, lead to discrimination, and serve to promote the emotion of anger and, subsequently, hatred within *The Election*. Twinning raises to a level of consciousness our similarities as humans and, if it impedes too clearly on our own sense of uniqueness, our defense is differentiation and in turn, hatred can arise.

*The Election* opens with a crowd of men, women, and children arguing for their respective parliamentary candidates. Immediately, Baillie sets up a binary of old/new, entitled/earned, and aristocratic/middle-class. The old is represented by a former servant of Baltimore named Margery. She is countered by the more generally named and universally appealing Countryman. Their argument revolves around each candidate's ability to provide food and clothing for the people. Baltimore, as the head of an old family, fallen into disrepute, no longer has the means necessary to feed the people, whereas Freeman "fill[s] a body's stomach"



(Baillie 106). Baillie places her two “party” leaders against a backdrop of tension between the natural, or physiological needs of the populous, and the artificial, or materialistic fashions of the aristocracy. I will address this issue later in this section as I focus on the mediating aspects, but for now, I want to consider the instances of counter repudiation within the play.

Peter, a servant of the Baltimore’s, follows Mrs. Baltimore into their home, acknowledging that Mr. Freeman will be running against Mr. Baltimore. He quickly offers an apology, stating “but I beg pardon for naming such a man as Freeman on the same day with a gentleman like my master” (107). Mrs. Baltimore’s response is terse and telling, “Mr. Freeman, if you please, Peter; and never let me hear you name him with disrespect in my presence” (107). At this point, we know little of Mr. Freeman, but when the servant attempts to repudiate him by dropping the formal title of “Mr.,” Mrs. Baltimore is quick to reattach the prefix and chastise the servant for his disrespect. Following this brief exchange, Mr. Baltimore enters the room and he and his wife begin discussing the upcoming election. Mr. Baltimore proceeds to defame Mr. Freeman, noting his considerable distaste for Mr. Freeman’s “full satisfied face; [...] the tones of his voice; [...] the very gait and shape of his legs” – all of which are “insufferable” to him (108). Mrs. Baltimore laughs, moving one step further in her counter repudiation of Mr. Freeman by identifying the similarities between the two men, responding to Mr. Baltimore: “people, you must know, have taken it into their heads that there is a resemblance between you and him! I have myself, in twilight sometimes mistaken the one for the other” (108). Of course, this further infuriates Mr. Baltimore and the discussion moves toward his growing hatred for Mr. Freeman. It becomes clear that Baillie is deliberately attaching the two men together through the general processes of “twinning.” The two are not described as identical; however, they possess similar natural traits. This is of significance, as Baillie states in her “Introductory Discourse,” we are

predisposed to discriminate between “those [traits] of nature and not situation [...] (Baillie 12). Baillie is beginning the process of disrupting our categorical assumption of “natural difference.” Mrs. Baltimore becomes a consistent reminder of the “absence of difference” between Mr. Freeman and her husband, by drawing attention to their physical characteristics.

Another character that reminds the audience of the two individuals’ similarities is Charlotte, Mr. Freeman’s daughter. She admits to Mrs. Baltimore that she is not fond of Mr. Baltimore, though “there is a certain look about him now and then, that puts me in mind of my father” (109). We have yet to meet Mr. Freeman, but he is naturally categorized in a similar fashion to Mr. Baltimore. It is clear that Mr. Baltimore dislikes this categorization. The first act closes with a discussion between Mr. Baltimore and his wife. She requests that he quit tormenting himself with suspicion and anxiety, to which he responds: “No, madam; it is upon you this disposition has been growing. Whenever I am in the company of that—I will not name him—I have of late observed that your eyes are bent upon me perpetually. I hate to be looked at when I am in that man’s company” (110). Mr. Baltimore detests the natural similarity – more so, he detests the growing “absence of difference” articulated by Mrs. Baltimore and Charlotte; he is slowly losing his ability to deny the natural difference between Mr. Freeman and himself; as we shift into the latter half of the play, Baillie diminishes the material differences between the middle and the upper class as well.

As I identified in chapter two, Baillie acknowledges in her “Introductory Discourse” that we “have stored up in idea the greater part of those strongly marked varieties of human character, which may be said to divide into classes; and in one of those classes [we] involuntarily place very new person [we] become acquainted with” (Baillie 2). She follows this comment with a consideration of the more performance related aspects of individuals: “I will readily allow that

the dress and the manners of men, rather than their characters and dispositions, are the subjects of our common conversation, and seem chiefly to occupy the multitude” (2). These two statements clearly distinguish between the aforementioned “natural” and that which is aesthetic, or material. Within *The Election*, I would argue that Baillie is concerned with the material differences traditionally represented as distinguishing factors between the upper and middle classes, striving to diminish the gap between the two social constructs, through a focus on the natural, or human similarities. Through Mrs. Baltimore’s continual reminder of the natural similarities between Mr. Freeman and her husband, Baillie diminishes the natural distance between the two as human beings. For Mr. Baltimore, the “absence of difference” encroaches upon his unique categorical domain of an egocentric “I” and thus serves to invoke his anger and hatred. In the second act, as we are introduced to Mr. Freeman, “absence of difference” is *seemingly* celebrated. However, as will be demonstrated, Baillie does not advocate an *absolute* diminishment of the individual, but rather, she seeks a moderate space wherein humans assert their own uniqueness while maintaining respect for the individuality of the other. She senses the presence of differentiation as a defense mechanism in protecting our fragile egos; however, she does not want its occurrence to spark hatred.

On the surface, the “absence of difference” is a cause for celebration. In what appears to be a Bakhtinian carnival, ripe with heteroglossia, characters of nondescript classes banter back and forth. Mr. Freeman has opened his home to all of his voters, offering them food and drink. What quickly feels peculiar about the scene is that all of the guests are named after foods: Mr. Bescatti, Mr. Ginger, Mr. Fudge, Mr. Hassock, Mr. Grub, and Mr. Huskins. I have not seen any critical analysis of this oddity, but it is my contention that Baillie’s alignment of Mr. Freeman with the natural, or bodily, is purposely excessive. Naming all of the characters after food further

promotes a sense of gluttony; the product of this excess is absolute chaos and a breakdown in communication. It begins with a discussion between Mr. Bescatti, a French instructor, the Governess, and Mrs. Freeman about Charlotte's artwork:

*Bes.* It be very agreeable.

*Gov.* O beautiful, charming! De most pretty of de world!

*Mrs. F.* There is such a fine glow in the colouring! So much spirit in the whole.

*Bes.* Yes.

*Mrs. F.* And the cattle in that landscape are so spirited and so correct.

*Bes.* O dey be de very pretty sheep, indeed.

*Mrs. F.* why, those are cows, Mr. Bescatti—those are cows.

*Bes.* O, madam, I make no doubt dat in reality dey are the cows, alto in appearance dey are de sheep. (Baillie 110)

The three of them pull out another drawing and have a similar discussion, only this time the confusion occurs over a little boy eating an apple. From here, the guests begin arriving and Mr. Freeman consistently fails to identify the female companions of his male guests. For example, in meeting Mr. Fudge, Mr. Freeman exclaims, "but where is your wife, Mr. Fudge? We are near neighbors, you know, and I see no reason why your good woman and mine should not be better acquainted." Mr. Fudge responds, "she is standing close by you, sir" (111). Following this episode the same thing occurs with Mr. Hassock and his daughter: "my good Mr. Hassock, why have not you brought your pretty daughter with you?" Mr. Hassock responds, "so I have, your honour; this be she" (111). Though this scene provides a considerable amount of comedy, with a complete "absence of difference" in the house, it is clear that communication is disrupted. Cows cannot be distinguished from sheep, wives and daughters are unrecognized in relation to their

husbands/fathers, and people are no more than the food they eat. Baillie championed the cause of the underprivileged, but she was leery of power and excess in all of its forms. Her comedic scene with Freeman and the voters reflects a deeper concern with a *nouveau riche* that will quickly adopt the French fashions and the chaotic excesses historically tied to the aristocracy. Though hatred is burning within Mr. Baltimore, Baillie is slow to relieve Mr. Freeman of his responsibility. In fact, both share a propensity for excess – Mr. Baltimore nurtures his hatred, while Mr. Freeman nurtures his appetite.

To this point in the drama, Baillie has provided us with a consistent, but complicated dichotomy of extremes. Basically, Mr. Baltimore represents the upholding of an excess of natural individual difference based upon material wealth. Conversely, Mr. Freeman represents the rejection of natural individual difference based upon material wealth. Applying Beck's sequencing, I would argue that Mr. Baltimore's hatred is perpetuated by his personal feelings of diminishment due to Mr. Freeman's accumulation of material wealth and increasing natural similarity; Mrs. Baltimore's reminder of the natural similarities between the two registers a series of counter repudiating moments both for Mr. Baltimore, and for the reading audience. It is as though Baillie wants her audience to acknowledge that, though he may be a rich, old aristocrat, with a long and storied tradition of wealth and status, in terms of his physical person, Mr. Baltimore is not that much different from Mr. Freeman. On the contrary, Mr. Freeman serves as a representation of the chaos that can occur with the complete loss of individual difference in the midst of material excess. It would be easy to argue that the indictment is wholly of the concept of materialism, but Baillie is not inclined towards this position. Rather, it is excess in any fashion, natural (passion of hatred) or material (wealth), towards which she turns a critical pen. Economy, both in distinction and similarity, is her *modus operandi*. In a letter written to Walter Scott

regarding his proposal to build a large theater, Baillie responds: “I am very prudent & economical myself, and I am always ready to recommend the same virtues to every body in whom I am at all interested. You will not suppose after this that I have any praise to bestow on your magnificent proposal of building a theatre that will cost £20,000” (*Letters* 247). Analyzing the second portion of the drama will reveal how Baillie demonstrates both natural differentiation and materialism in excess as destructive; it is moderation in both aspects that will provide for simpler, more meaningful interpersonal relations.

### **Economy of Similarity in *The Election***

In the third scene of act two, the Freemans enter their library, which Baillie illustrates as “fitted up expensively with fine showy books and book cases, etc., etc.” (Baillie 113). Material excess serves as the background for a discussion in which Mrs. Freeman acknowledges her growing exhaustion regarding Mr. Freeman’s socializing. Mr. Freeman apologizes for the pressure under which his campaign is placing his wife before questioning whether or not he should have ever run against Mr. Baltimore in the first place. His questioning causes him further reflection upon the nature of his relationship with Mr. Baltimore:

Though his fortune was reduced, and I in possession of almost all the estates of the Baltimores, of more land, indeed, than they ever possessed, I was always at pains to assure him that I respected him as much as the richest man in the county; and yet, I cannot understand it, the more friendly and familiar I was with him, the more visibly his aversion to me increased. It is past all comprehension! (113)

This paragraph is particularly revealing of the potential motivations behind Mr. Baltimore’s hatred for Mr. Freeman. As I previously observed, Mr. Baltimore hates to be looked at in the company of Mr. Freeman; perhaps one reason is because he represents a projected embodiment

of the upper-class loss of wealth and power. Mr. Freeman, as a bourgeoisie character, struggles to understand how his friendliness and familiarity could breed such contempt. What he cannot see is that Mr. Baltimore wants to be respected *as* the richest man in the country, not *as much as* the richest man in the country. To this point, the two men have had limited interaction in the drama. In fact, the notion of “twinning” has only occurred in conversations between Mrs. Baltimore and her husband, Mrs. Baltimore and Charlotte, and Mr. Freeman and Mrs. Freeman. As the drama continues, Mr. Freeman adopts Mr. Baltimore’s individual rights, diminishing the differences between the two of them and usurping privileges reserved for the upper class. He does so by “twinning” the two major aspects of traditional aristocratic power: family and wealth.

Beyond his sheer presence in the borough, the first aspect in which Mr. Freeman actually twins and diminishes the individuality of Mr. Baltimore is family. Mr. Freeman procures “a creditable and advantageous appointment in the East Indies” for the aristocrat’s son, Mr. Charles Baltimore. In essence, Mr. Freeman adopts a paternal role, usurping the right traditionally assigned to the father within the aristocratic culture –he is using his power and wealth to acquire a position for Mr. Baltimore’s son. Mr. Baltimore responds angrily, rejecting the proposition on the terms of his role as the head of the family: “Sir, I am at a loss to conceive how you should take it into your head to concern yourself in the affairs of my family. If Mr. Charles Baltimore chooses to consider himself as no longer belonging to it, he may be glad of your protection” (116). Mr. Baltimore makes it clear that the only way Charles can receive the position is through a direct dismissal of his biological family. In his book, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, David Cannadine articulates it well, “for the grandees and the gentry, primogeniture ruled: and entail and strict settlement were the means of giving effect to it” (Cannadine 12). Primogeniture was a significant mark of the upper class and Mr. Freeman’s presumption of

providing for the direct heir of Mr. Baltimore further demonstrates the degree of decay into which the aristocrat has fallen. Simultaneously, it provides a significant motivation for Mr. Baltimore's growing hatred and serves as an invitation to the audience into a potentially more sympathetic space.

The theme of Mr. Freeman usurping Mr. Baltimore's familial authority continues as the drama progresses. Mrs. Baltimore develops a maternal and somewhat intimate relationship with Charlotte Freeman. Mr. Baltimore despises the thought of such a relationship between Charlotte and his wife, questioning her at one point: "are you attached to that girl?" (120) Mrs. Baltimore responds frankly, "indeed I am" (120). This moves Mr. Baltimore to a considerable amount of anger and he states,

well, madam; I see plainly enough the extent of your attachment to me. (*Walking up and down vehemently*). Methinks it should have been offensive to you even to have stroked the very ears of his dog. And that excrescence, that wart, that tadpole, that worm from the adder's nest, which I abhor—. (120)

In the continued cultivation of his hatred, Mr. Baltimore is shifting through a three-step process: homogenization, dehumanization, and demonization (Beck 17). In homogenizing, Mr. Baltimore identifies all of the Freemans as interchangeable and disposable (17). Charlotte is just as repulsive to him as Mr. Freeman. They are no longer individuals, but a group of people whom he despises. He follows by dehumanizing Mr. Freeman, identifying him as "excrescence, [a] wart, [a] tadpole, [and a] worm from the adder's nest." Interestingly, Mr. Baltimore never shifts into the demonizing stage. In this stage, the victim becomes "the embodiment of Evil. [...] The abstract notions of Evil and the Enemy are transformed into a concrete image of an entity or force that appears to threaten the existence or vital interests of the aggressor" (Beck 17). As we



will see, Baillie will flirt with this final stage of hatred in *The Election*, before deterring her protagonist from this mentality.

Earlier in the play, the reading audience is informed that Mr. Freeman is offered the opportunity to purchase all of Mr. Baltimore's debts and send him to prison. Mr. Freeman is repulsed by the amoral notion of doing such a thing to Mr. Baltimore. At the end of act three, in a fit of rage directed towards Mr. Baltimore for his mistreatment of Charlotte, Mrs. Freeman chooses to enact the plan and buys up the debt unbeknownst to Mr. Freeman. Act four opens with Mr. Baltimore being misinformed by a Servant that Mr. Freeman has chosen to purchase Baltimore's debt as a means to gaining his estate and sending him to prison. From Mr. Baltimore's perspective, this is the second aspect in which Mr. Freeman twins him, diminishing him through the amassing of his debt. Though he originally downplays the situation in front of his wife, attempting to remain calm, he reveals his frustration while walking with her in the garden: "my native trees and my native lawns are to me more cheerless than the dreary desert. I can enjoy nothing. The cursed neighbourhood of one obnoxious being has changed everything for me. Would he were—(*clenching his hands and muttering*)" (123). Mrs. Baltimore's interruption suggests her fear that Mr. Baltimore wants Mr. Freeman dead, "O! what are you saying?" (123). Through this carefully placed interruption, Baillie alludes to the final stage in the psychological process of hate—demonization and extermination.

At the same moment in the drama, a small boy approaches the couple in the garden informing them that Mr. Freeman is drowning; Mr. Baltimore rushes out to save him. When Mrs. Baltimore hears that her husband has actually saved Mr. Freeman, she proclaims, "O yes! [God] has made every being with good in it, and will at last make it perfectly so, in some way or other, known only to His wisdom" (124) – a powerful statement that reflects Baillie's underlying

humanist motives and her overarching belief in the ability of all human beings to enact positive change. In further support of this conclusion, Christine Colón suggests that “in the midst of all of the complexities that Baillie explores in her plays, she clings to her belief that individuals can learn to control their own passions *in order to become better people*, and she hopes that by controlling these passions men and women may [...] improve society together (Colón 169; emphasis my own). In Baillie’s attempt to create a sympathetic character, Mr. Baltimore’s action serves in the cultivation of sympathy within the reading audience.

As Mr. Freeman is brought back to the home and conversation ensues, it is apparent that Mr. Baltimore’s attitude towards him is little changed. The scene portrays Mr. Freeman’s unwelcome and useless attempts to befriend Mr. Baltimore. The angry aristocrat storms out of the room and we are left with a telling conversation between Mrs. Baltimore and Truebridge, a friend of Mr. Baltimore’s:

*Mrs. B. (shaking her head)* I had great hopes from this accident; but his unhappy aversion is, I fear, incurable.

*True.* Don’t despair yet: I prophesy better things. But do not, my dear madam, before Baltimore at least, appear so anxious about it. It serves only to irritate him.

*Mrs. B.* Is it possible to be otherwise than anxious? This unlucky prejudice, gradually gaining strength from every little trivial circumstance, embitters all the comfort of our lives. [...]

*True.* The way to reclaim him, however, is not to run directly counter to it. I have never found him so ready to acknowledge Freeman’s good qualities as when I have appeared, and have really been half provoked myself with his vanity and magnificence. When we would help a friend out of the mire, we must often go a little way into it ourselves. (126)

Mrs. Baltimore expresses a complete lack of hope and inability to understand how and why this “prejudice” continues to grow. Truebridge argues that countering Mr. Baltimore’s anger only further irritates him. The psychology of this is incredibly complex, but Truebridge is right. As discussed previously, “twinning” challenges us to think in terms of similarities between others and ourselves. As human beings we are apt to categorize ourselves as individuals, different from one another and uniquely “I.” This egocentric notion is evolutionarily valuable to us as a species, but can also be destructive. In fact,

since each person is the vehicle for transferring his or her genes to the next generation, evolution has placed a priority on self-serving bias, acquisitiveness, and self-defense. This centrality and definition of the self is reinforced not only by physical pleasures and pains but by psychological ones as well. [...] As other people mark *their* boundaries, they also serve to define *our* sense of being separate individuals. The anger that we evoke when we encroach on the domain of another establishes the perimeter of our personal domain. (Beck 30)

According to Beck, it could be argued that our notion of “I” as a categorical domain is socially defined. As we see in *The Election*, Mr. Freeman’s twinning of Mr. Baltimore is more or less a redefining of boundaries, or domains. Mr. Baltimore experiences anger and ultimately, hatred because he has lost the ability to define his boundaries and, thus, lost his sense of individuality. Mrs. Baltimore’s counter repudiation serves to further anger Mr. Baltimore because it is a consistent reminder of his loss of individuality. Truebridge’s point is that the only way to disrupt the downward spiraling gyre of anger is to acknowledge Mr. Freeman’s unique traits—vanity and magnificence. In doing so, Mrs. Baltimore will acknowledge the natural differences between Mr. Baltimore and Mr. Freeman, returning to her husband his sense of “I.”

Not only will Mrs. Baltimore return her husband's categorical "I" to him; as he is sitting in debtor's prison, so too will the crowd return his individuality. Baltimore stands up excitedly in his cell responding to Mrs. Baltimore: "and they are calling out, as they go through the streets, that I am a *true Baltimore*, and the son of their old benefactor?" (Baillie 127, emphasis my own). From the viewpoint of Mr. Baltimore's supporters, Mr. Freeman has gone too far in his "twinning" of the old aristocrat. The community reasserts his unique role as the "true Baltimore," and realign him with his lineage. Understandably, this restores Mr. Baltimore's happiness. He has regained his categorical "I," claiming, "this viper gnawed at my heart, and I could be gentle to nothing; [...] But my heart feels lighter now" (128). Not too soon after this declamation, Mr. Freeman enters the prison cell to dismiss all of Mr. Baltimore's debts and free him from prison. Once again, Mr. Baltimore returns to a space of anger and refuses this kindness. A pistol duel ensues between the two. Prior to the discharging of their pistols, Truebridge returns to inform them that they are biological brothers.

This moment presents a complexity that seems to undermine Baillie's entire drama. Slagle claims that due to this conclusion, "Baltimore does not overcome his disdain for the middle class; he just welcomes Freeman into his home because he is now, through consanguinity, worthy of Baltimore's own class" (Slagle 97). Though I can respect this reading, I believe that the outcome is far more complicated. Cannadine argues that

for generations, and in some cases for centuries, the same gentry and noble families had sent representatives into Parliament. [...] To most people, this was the natural order of things: it had been ever thus. As such, these gentry and grandees possess that most indispensable of all characteristics in dominant groups – the sense shared, not

only by themselves but by the populace, that their claim to govern was legitimate.

(Cannadine 15)

I believe *The Election* is about class, but more importantly, it demonstrates Baillie's attempt to question a history of excess within the aristocracy and primogeniture as a route to unchallenged political power. Simultaneously, she uses drama to illustrate moderation as a form of mediation between the middle and the upper class. Further, Baillie uses their brotherhood as an overt appeal to our shared humanity, as opposed to the basic affirmation of Mr. Baltimore's views towards the middle class. Immediately following the revelation that the two are brothers, Mr. Baltimore and Mr. Freeman are left on stage alone, "looking at one another for some time without speaking" (Baillie 132). For me, this is a powerful moment, as they are forced to acknowledge a shared biological humanity. Were the drama to close in the moments directly following this scene, I would be inclined to agree with Slagle's assessment; however, Truebridge closes the play with a more general application of the relationship between the two characters:

Now let us leave this happy nook. But I am resolved to have a little bower erected in this very spot, where we will all sometimes retire whenever we find any bad disposition stirring within us, with that book in our hands which says, 'If they brother offend thee seven times in a day'—No, no, no! I must not repeat sacred words with an unlicensed tongue: but I will bless God in silence for restoring a rational creature to the kindly feelings of humanity. (133)

The biblical reference he makes is to Matthew 18:21 in which Peter asks Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus responds, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (*The New International Version Study Bible*, 18:21-22). Fittingly, Jesus proceeds to tell a story about a debtor and forgiveness, but the larger

message is one of universal forgiveness. At the conclusion of *The Election*, biological brotherhood serves as a foundation for the similarities between the two men; however, metaphorically, like Jesus, Truebridge draws a more universal conclusion: the restoration of kindly feelings of humanity through forgiveness and the rejection of the passion of hatred. Lastly, the need for differentiation is exposed. Freeman is safe now for, like Baltimore, he is special: he won't threaten Baltimore's individuality anymore.

As has been demonstrated, the emotion of anger can arise out of a threat to the domain of the unique categorical "I." "Twinning" brings to a level of cognition our innate similarities, but also shows us how those similarities can impose upon our egocentric understandings of who we are as individuals. By revealing this for a reading audience in *The Election*, Baillie is able to demonstrate the importance of acknowledging our similarities as part of a universal brother and sisterhood, but also warns us against the need to respect one another's individuality and the dangers of encroaching upon another's domain. According to Christine Colón, this aligns itself well with Baillie's overall worldview: "her project [...] is so committed to the importance of personal freedom that she refuses to dictate specific beliefs. Instead, she presents the evidence to her readers and asks them to decide the truth" (Colón 48). Sympathy within a reading audience occurs for Mr. Baltimore because at an unconscious level, twinning is a disturbing prospect. Of course, this does not excuse his intense cultivation of hatred, but it makes it somewhat understandable. Baillie asks that we all stand and look at one another, seeing the human similarities, while acknowledging our unique individuality. As she demonstrates in *De Monfort*, if we are unable to do so, the outcome is the dismissal of humanity through the demonization and destruction of the other.

### **Hatred as Social Emotion in *De Monfort***

*De Monfort* has been Baillie's dramatic *foci* of both praise and critical inquiry since it was first published in 1798. Francis Jeffrey considered the overall project "extremely injudicious," commenting specifically on *De Monfort* in his 1803 review

De Montfort presents himself, in the very first scene, the victim of a confirmed and inveterate hatred. If Miss B. really believed that her readers would be better able to resist the influence of bad passions, by studying their natural history and early symptoms, in her plays, she ought certainly to have traced this of hatred to its origin, more carefully than any other, since there is none of which it would be so desirable to cut off the shoots, or extirpate the seeds, at the beginning... (*Plays* 438)

Though defensible, Jeffrey's review is overly harsh. Throughout her career, Baillie was consistently challenged by Jeffrey's reviews of her work.<sup>2</sup> As a side note, it is helpful to recognize that within the context of eighteenth-century Scottish theories on the moral sentiments, Jeffrey "believed that men are motivated entirely by the desire to enjoy pleasure or avoid pain: 'There must be a *motive* to excite volition, as certainly as an impulse to begin motion; and a motive neither does nor can mean any thing but an apprehension of good to be attained, or evil or uneasiness to be avoided'" (Flynn 74). Out of this core belief, Jeffrey demonstrated a disapproval of any suggested universal account of human emotion. He contended that pleasure and pain were so varied based upon the individual that any attempt to formulate a universal understanding of human emotional response was not only philosophically irresponsible, but scientifically impossible. Unfortunately, given his personal biases and philosophical understanding, Baillie could never convince the Edinburgh reviewer of the validity of her project. Thankfully, other critics were not so harsh. The *Eclectic Review* stated: De Monfort is "brave and generous and

manly, struggling with an infernal passion, bearing up and making head against it, and at length finally borne down by it, and brought to the perpetration of a deed cowardly, ungenerous, and unmanly” (*Plays* 53). In 1804, the *Imperial Review* claimed *De Monfort* demonstrates a “powerful conception of character, and masterly expression of passion [; it possesses a] simple sublimity of language, [a] towering generosity of sentiment, and all the pathos of keen and clinging attachment” (*Plays* 444). Finally, Elizabeth Inchbald felt that *De Monfort*, “while a fine play[,] is both dull and highly improbable in the representation; and sure it is, though pity that it is so, its very charm in the reading militates against its power in the acting” (qtd. in Burroughs 103, *Memoirs* 2:34). It is clear that *De Monfort* was widely respected and appreciated, though it had its harsh critics. Contemporary criticism has been far less dichotomous in its view of Baillie’s tragedy on the passion of hatred.

In his article “Class, Gender, and Social Motion in Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort*,” Daniel Watkins claims *De Monfort* “provides an excellent introduction to the social and historical richness of Baillie’s work, [...depicting] in detail many of the social problems [...] caught in the crossfire of this certain and radical transformation of society” (Watkins 109). Shifting the focus from the transformation within society to the more local level of the individual, Christine Colón argues that *De Monfort* “illustrates just how prevalent [our curiosity about other people] is, arguing for the truth of this foundational premise and paving the way for the rest of her moral project” (Colón 54). For Colón, “much of the ‘action’ in *De Monfort* revolves around the process of interpreting character, for the focus of the play is not necessarily on the events that are taking place but rather on the interpretations of these events” (55). Catherine Burroughs believes that “De Monfort’s [...] repressed desire for [another] male character suggests that one of the reasons Baillie was interested in domestic spaces and closet drama stemmed from her curiosity about



‘closet issues’” (Burroughs 142). More generally, but definitely applicable to *De Monfort*, Victoria Myers contends that “Baillie describes the dark side of [the role of spectator/judge] through her predilection for a language of voyeurism, invasion, and inquisition and through her examples of primitive torture and contemporary hangings” (Myers 88).

In their readings of *De Monfort*, critics have typically taken for granted Baillie’s consideration of class. Since Watkins, few critics have dealt with the implications for literary mediation that are prevalent within her play on the passion of hatred. Issues of gender have been significant fodder for critical analysis and have revealed a considerable amount of interesting readings. Further, while the passions of fear and love have presented themselves as excellent sources for critical inquiry, few have sought to understand the depth of hatred which De Monfort experiences. In this section, I will argue that Baillie represents De Monfort’s hatred as socially constructed. Though Baillie believes the individual is culpable for his/her actions, she presents a social climate ripe for the cultivation of the passion of hatred. I will use contemporary emotion theory, as well as Zunshine’s cognitive theory of mind reading, as the foundation for my close reading of this drama.

Prior to the analysis of *De Monfort*, it is helpful to provide the particulars and a working definition of social emotion. In his article, “Emotions are Social,” published in 1996, Brian Parkinson, argues that

the interpersonal, institutional and cultural factors surrounding emotion clarifies its causes, consequences and functions in everyday life. [...] Second, [Parkinson] puts social considerations at centre stage by arguing that emotions may be profitably viewed as forms of communication in which evaluative representations are made to other people. (Parkinson 663)

Parkinson is not original in this thought; Adela Pinch, a literary critic, argues that during the Romantic period, affective life had a tendency “to get located among rather than within people, or in the interstices between different explanations and stories of their origins, arising as much from rhetorical or fictional situations as from the mind’s own motions” (Pinch 166). However, in opposition to a physiological or cognitive understanding of affect, Parkinson seems to be a strong voice for a socially defined psychological approach to emotion. He contends that, “although emotional functioning always involves cognitive processing and physiological experience, the organizing principles of the syndrome depend ultimately on social considerations” (Parkinson 664). Building upon Parkinson’s argument in her article, “Positioning Hate,” Kathleen Blee suggests that hatred is not a universal motivation for individual racists, but instead, merely serves in the creation of “social boundaries that mold or intensify a sense of commonality with the self-group (the ‘us’)” (99). Alternately stated, hate is socially cultivated as a means to further delineating between “us” and “them,” though it is not always the foundation for the distinction between the two. If we blend Parkinson’s, Pinch’s, and Blee’s notions, we see that social emotion serves as a useful starting place from which to draw a working definition of the concept in relation to *De Monfort*. I will be using the following definition: social emotion is the idea that affect is primarily caused by interpersonal factors, designated for the purposes of social encounters or withdrawals, designed as a means to increasing or diminishing commonality, and existent in the space between, rather than within human beings.

In addressing social emotion within *De Monfort*, I will use the cognitive theoretical notion of “Theory of Mind” or ToM, and more specifically, Lisa Zunshine’s usage of it as “mind-reading” in her literary analysis. The main purpose of Zunshine’s article, “Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness,” is to promote “a broader

case for introducing the recent findings of cognitive scientists into literary studies by showing how their research into our ability to explain behavior in terms of the underlying states of mind—or our *mind-reading* ability—can furnish us with a series of surprising insights into our interaction with literary texts” (“Theory of Mind” 271). She introduces her article by considering how contemporary research and understanding of autism enables us to understand our interpretations of people’s behavior as merely categorizations of their mental states. Zunshine explores the concept of categorization based upon a cognitive psychological concept called ToM, or Theory of Mind. ToM is “our ability to interpret the behavior of real-life people—and, by *extension*, of literary characters—in terms of their underlying states of mind” (272). This idea serves as the foundation for Zunshine’s argument that “we do not just ‘learn’ how to communicate with people and read their emotions (or how to read the minds of fictional characters based on their behavior) [...] but that we also have evolved cognitive architecture that makes this particular kind of learning possible” (273). Autistic individuals lack the equivalent “library” to understand other people in social settings. Zunshine shifts from an understanding of the psychological implications to some excellent clarifications regarding literary criticism and cognitive criticism:

for the lay reader, the example of a glaring failure in mind-reading and communication might be a person’s interpreting her friend’s tears of grief and reacting accordingly. For a cognitive psychologist, a glaring failure in mind-reading would be a person’s not even knowing that the water coursing down her friend’s face is supposed to be somehow indicative of his feelings at that moment. (274)

While Zunshine’s critical apparatus regarding the mind-reading of characters is especially interesting and useful in the continued exploration of cognition and reading, it is not the singular

focus of this section. Instead, her suggestion that we have a series of categories that align themselves with others' particular emotional states of minds and that, in turn, we respond based upon these categorical understandings, serves as another theoretical foundation for social emotion. Moreover, we are consistently, unconsciously assessing the emotional mind of others and emotionally responding based upon that assessment.

In her analysis of *De Monfort*, Christine Colón suggests that the entire drama is about our freedom to assess others: "as we observe the characters in this play, we soon realize that even though individuals are all curious about one another, they are very rarely able to understand each other fully" (Colón 57). Colón concludes that Baillie provides her reading audience with a demonstration of the inability to understand one another, as a means to revealing the individual freedom to assess and draw our own conclusions of others, rather than moralizing or forcing an opinion. Though I agree that Baillie upholds individual choice, I disagree with Colón's conclusion that Baillie is promoting assessment as an individual choice. Rather, within *De Monfort*, a drama on the passion of hatred, Baillie demonstrates our inability to understand each other fully, bringing fully to the level of consciousness the root of the emotion of hatred and its socially, unconsciously refined, construction. The following analysis of *De Monfort* demonstrates how the category of class informs the cultivation of hatred within the protagonist; my purpose is not to rehabilitate the image of the murderer or defend De Monfort's actions, but rather I am interested in tracing the complexities of categorical essentialism within the cultivation of the emotion of hatred. Although cognitive theory presupposes that emotion is a thought process, I will be basing my approach in the aforementioned theories of social emotion. For the purposes of this analysis, I am combining cognitive theory and social emotion theory as a

means to interrogate the unconscious categorical constructs that serve as a foundation for De Monfort's descent into hatred.

*De Monfort* was first published anonymously in 1798 as one of three plays in Baillie's initial *Series of Plays on the Passions*. The play is set in a generic German town. De Monfort is an aristocrat who returns to his childhood home after taking an extended leave. In his absence, he has reportedly grown discontent and moody. Some of the characters believe it is scorned love that has inspired his change of person, while others simply consider it a lack of social contact. Regardless, Baillie's protagonist has obviously been affected. The first act provides the audience with a dramatic soliloquy revealing the mind of De Monfort; through the monologue we are informed that he is nursing the passion of hatred for Rezenvelt, a childhood friend and competitor, who has recently gained significant status as a member of the *nouveau riche*. In the second act, a ball is held as a means of providing De Monfort with what many consider some much needed social interaction. The highly lauded and beautiful sister of De Monfort, Jane De Monfort, returns but is concerned her presence may further disturb his state of mind. However, she wants to see him. So, she attends the ball, wearing a double-veil. The veil presents an interesting space for literary inquiry as both Rezenvelt and De Monfort are drawn to Jane in her veiled condition. De Monfort wants to tear the veil off and reveal the woman behind, while Rezenvelt is adamant that it must remain. De Monfort prevails and is shocked and overwhelmed by the presence of his sister. Under great pressure from Jane, the second act concludes with De Monfort revealing to her his deep seeded hatred for Rezenvelt.

Act three opens with a conversation between Lady Freberg and her attendant, Therese. Lady Freberg is expressing her distress at Count Freberg's apparent infatuation with Jane De Monfort. Though Therese expresses her concerns regarding her superior's disposition, Lady

Freberg believes it is necessary to lie to her husband, informing him that Rezenvelt is actually attempting to court Jane. Her hope is that this will extinguish any flame of interest Count Freberg might be harboring for Jane De Monfort. Following the opening scene of act three, Jane and De Monfort are presented speaking with one another. De Monfort is reading a book; Jane begins begging him to forgive Rezenvelt and shed his hatred. De Monfort accepts her request and decides that he will offer Rezenvelt his hand in forgiveness. Unfortunately, the meeting between the two men does not go well – first, the presence of the Frebergs and Jane unsettles and humiliates De Monfort; second, Rezenvelt’s reaction to De Monfort’s offer of peace is excessive and serves only to deepen De Monfort’s hatred for him; third, Rezenvelt leaves the meeting distraught. Act four shifts the drama into a far darker place. It commences with Rezenvelt expressing his frustration and intentions to further instigate hatred within De Monfort. Freberg attempts to dissuade the hot headed bourgeoisie male, but it is to little avail. In the meantime, Conrad, described by Baillie as “an artful knave,” similar in character to Iago, enters the room and converses with Freberg. Though the knave is never fully fleshed out, upon hearing from Freberg that De Monfort hates Rezenvelt, his intentions are quickly made clear – Conrad is in some form or fashion, an enemy of Rezenvelt and thus, will provoke De Monfort’s anger/hatred of him. Immediately, Conrad goes to De Monfort and suggests that Rezenvelt will marry Jane. The loss of Jane is too much for De Monfort and becomes the motivating factor behind De Monfort’s murder of Rezenvelt. The drama closes with the death of De Monfort under the extreme pressure of his hatred, guilt, and general passion. Having provided a brief summary of the drama, I will now turn to my analysis, in which I will argue that Baillie is critiquing the categorical structures regarding emotion established within the upper class, while demonstrating that hatred is a social emotion. I will begin with an overview of Parkinson’s critical assumptions

of social emotion as a structural framework for my inquiry, before I shift into my direct analysis of the drama.

In his defense of emotion as social, Parkinson depends upon three critical assumptions: 1) “the ways in which organizations[, institutions, cultures, etc.] define emotional reality may directly shape emotional responses to it;” 2) “Institutional and cultural rules about appropriate conduct guide the behaviour of the people around us and directly constrain or facilitate certain forms of emotion;” 3) “Emotion can only be communicated directly to someone who is present, so the physical position of functionaries controls their affective exchanges in quite tangible ways” (Parkinson 667). The three critical assumptions upon which he bases his argument for social emotion could also be called essentialist categories; in other words, we have cognitive categories regarding emotion, informed by institutions that underlie our affective responses and exchanges.

To understand the first critical assumption within *De Monfort*, it is helpful to understand the culture of the upper class in the 1790s: “the whole education of the fashionable, not merely the overtly ‘foreign’ [or French] part of it, was a systematic training in ‘artificial graces,’ the acquisition of a perfected taste for ‘fraud and insincerity’” (Newman 104). Newman suggests that at the time Baillie was writing, “people were simultaneously torn by two contradictory patterns of value, one old and the other new, one oriented [...] towards traditional social valuations [Fashion], and the other towards new and more functional standards of worth [Merit], which history was forcing upon their attention” (97). Thus, the upper-class culture defines its emotional reality as one that is counter-emotional, or artificial. In other words, it despises the display of excessive emotion and promotes the oppression of passion, with a pretense of grace and composure. De Monfort draws attention to this conflict within the first pages of the play,

stating, “Freberg, thou knowst not man; not nature’s man, but only him who, in smooth studied works of polish’d sages, shines deceitfully in all the splendid foppery of virtue” (Baillie 80). It is clear that Baillie was aware of the contemporary contradictions arising within English society. De Monfort is a product of the “in-between”: he recognizes his culture’s expectation of him (primarily, to control his excessive passions), but also, calls attention to the deceit of its artificiality. It is the socially defined expectation for emotional response, specifically manifested by Rezenvelt, which serves as a contributing irritant in his growing hatred.

Nowhere is the upper class’ dependency upon social emotion clearer than in Freberg’s consistent requests to have De Monfort attend a party. Parties within the upper class are the socially acceptable means by which to restore happiness: “we’ll re-establish thee: we’ll banish pain. I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends and we shall spend together glorious hours” (Baillie 78). Baillie’s use of the verb “re-establish” is telling of the upper-class response to emotion. De Monfort’s emotional state has uprooted him; he is floating, disconnected and thus, no longer upper class. Just as the “true Baltimore” needs to be reemphasized by Baltimore’s supporters, so too does De Monfort need to be “re-established” by Freberg. Categorically, within *De Monfort* emotion is a communal construct over which the individual has little to no control. De Monfort agrees to attend, but closes the scene with a soliloquy reflective of his mounting irritation regarding the acceptable social categories: “rather than share [Freberg’s] undiscerning praise with every table-wit, and book-form’d sage, and paltry poet puling to the moon, I’d court from him proscription, yea abuse, and think it proud distinction” (10). Again, similar to Baltimore, De Monfort’s hatred arises out of his own feelings of diminishment. However, the difference between the two characters is that De Monfort refuses to acknowledge his emotional state in keeping with the upper-class expectations of emotional reticence, whereas



Baltimore cannot stop acknowledging his frustration. Of course, Baillie redeems Baltimore; De Monfort is not so lucky.

The second critical assumption reflects how our emotions are informed by our interactions and interpersonal expectations of one another. This assumption is dependent upon Zunshine's categorical understanding of ToM, or Theory of Mind. As a reminder, ToM is "our ability to interpret the behavior of real-life people—and, *by extension*, of literary characters—in terms of their underlying states of mind" (Zunshine 272). This concept serves as the foundation for Zunshine's argument that "we do not just 'learn' how to communicate with people and read their emotions (or how to read the minds of fictional characters based on their behavior) [...] but that we also have evolved cognitive architecture that makes this particular kind of learning possible" (273). As an upper-class member, De Monfort has been "trained" in a certain ToM, and as previously shown he recognizes how to enact his cultural category of emotion. Baillie sets the scene of the Freberg party in pure artificiality, affirming De Monfort's former statement regarding the foppery of virtue. Appropriately, Rezenvelt is the mouthpiece for this scene. Following a description of all of the beautiful women, he reflects upon the artificiality of it all:

*Rez.* [...] The native prude,  
 With forced laugh, and merriment uncouth,  
 Plays off the wild coquette's successful charms  
 With most unskillful pains; and the coquette,  
 In temporary crust of cold reserve,  
 Fixes her studied looks upon the ground,  
 Forbiddingly demure.

*Freb.* Fy! Thou art severe.

*Rez.* Say, rather, gentle.

I 'faith! The very dwarfs attempt to charm

With lofty airs of puny majesty;

While potent damsels, of a portly make,

Totter like nurslings, and demand the aid

Of gentle sympathy.

From all those diverse modes of dire assault,

How ones a heart of hardest adamant,

Who shall escape to-night. (83)

At this moment, we are informed by stage directions that De Monfort has entered during the speech and has heard the greater part of it. He stands by silently before Rezenvelt verbally assaults him:

*Rez. (smiling archly).* What, think you Freberg, the same powerful spell

Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?

Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd—

So widely from his native self to swerve,

As grace my folly with a smile of his?

*De Mon.* Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no smile

I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,

A smile of nature too, which I can spare,

And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it.

*[Smiles contemptuously]* (83)

What is particularly enjoyable in this scene is Baillie's overt critique of social expectations of artificiality. The interchange is preceded by a "severe" commentary on the "studied" and "forced" aspects of the party. When they first speak with one another, both men smile, physiognomically representing the emotion of happiness; however, their tones, unstudied and unforced, reveal contempt. Again, the cultural expectations of how these men should interact within the setting of a party serve to constrain the emotion of hatred. Rezenvelt even calls attention to this expectation when he states that De Monfort might turn from his "native self" to "grace" them with a smile. This challenging of his upper-class persona only further fuels De Monfort's anger, and he reverts to the natural category in his response to Rezenvelt. Baillie's revealing of these socialized expressions of emotion demonstrates the larger cultural tensions described by Newman. Though this scene serves as an indictment of the upper class, I would argue that this is not her sole intention. Rather, Baillie is intent upon our close analysis of her dramas and in particular, her characters. She claims we are all curious about other individuals:

every person who is not deficient in intellect, is more or less occupied in tracing among the individuals he converses with, the varieties of understanding and temper which constituted the characters of men. [...] We are all conscious of this within ourselves, and so constantly do we meet with it in others, that, like every circumstance of continually repeated occurrence, it thereby escapes observation. (Baillie 1)

Thus, I believe, Baillie's primary intent is the raising to a level of consciousness, or presenting for observation, the socially constructed essentialist categories in which we are all participating. De Monfort's response to Rezenvelt reflects his ability to enact a Theory of Mind – in other words, he wholly understands the emotional state of Rezenvelt and the meaning underlying the message he is sending. As an audience, we too read the sarcasm within the text. Baillie provides

adverbs to describe the smiles each offers to the other, but we are in little need of these adverbs – our Theory of Mind provides us with all we need to understand the undercurrent of hatred between these two.

The final critical assumption made in the defining of emotion as social relates to the purely functional nature of emotion as expressed to another individual. Within the context of *De Monfort*, the emotion of hatred maintains two states: a verbal manifestation and a physical manifestation. The verbal manifestations are instances within the play when De Monfort names his hatred for Rezenvelt; the physical manifestations are moments within the play when De Monfort enacts the passion. The verbal manifestations occur in two situations: with Jane De Monfort and through soliloquies, or statements intended solely to engage the audience. Physical manifestations always occur in relation to Rezenvelt. What is interesting about this dichotomy is that it allows Baillie to set up a cognitive structure wherein the verbal manifestations invoke sympathy for De Monfort. Jane is highly celebrated throughout the play by many of the characters. She is the essence of refinement and culture; her responses to De Monfort register an essentialist category of tender, loving sympathy. The soliloquies permit the audience their own personal view of De Monfort's suffering and thus, engage us in a more personal relationship with the protagonist. Further, the verbal manifestations of De Monfort's hatred always occur in a private setting (a closet or a bedroom). Conversely, the physical manifestations of his hatred typically erupt publicly – at the ball in front of the attendees, during his apology in front of the Freberg's and Jane, and in the forest. The private/public dichotomy is of significant interest to many critics, but is not the main point of this analysis.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I believe Baillie's careful distinction between the two demonstrates her belief in the power of language as a healing or mediating tool. We experience sympathy for De Monfort when he speaks his suffering.

As an audience member, we are permitted the opportunity to witness the inner workings of De Monfort's mind as he cultivates his hatred. We generate sympathy for and empathy with him because we are given a privileged space within the context of the play. We have the opportunity to discover the motivations behind his feelings and we are able to recognize them as the insecurities and fears that they represent. For Baillie, and more generally, for social emotion theorists, this is the primary value of emotion. It allows us the opportunity to identify our shared humanity. Though the cognitive categories that underlie our interpersonal interactions are well defined by our cultures, our brains are not beyond rewriting these categories. I will close this chapter with a discussion regarding the final scene of *De Monfort* and the stark warning with which Baillie leaves the reading mind of her audience.

**Re-essentialize or “low are ye laid”**

Within *De Monfort*, Baillie makes it clear that Rezenvelt and the protagonist were childhood friends, given to competition and discord. Their personal relationship was nurtured prior to the deepening resentment within De Monfort and his subsequent hatred. Though critics have argued that class resentment is at the core of his hatred, I believe that class informs his response to Rezenvelt as demonstrated above, but also that, unlike the case of Baltimore, it is not the motivating reason for his hatred. De Monfort never despises Rezenvelt for his upward mobility, nor does he disrespect his aristocratic status. Rather, it is the associated pride that Rezenvelt adopts in the gaining of his status that infuriates the sensitive aristocrat:

*De Mon:* When, low in fortune,  
 He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,  
 As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,  
 Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,

I could endure it; even as we bear  
 Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,  
 I could endure it. But when honours cam,  
 And wealth and new-got titles fed his *pride*;  
 Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,  
 And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses for him;  
 Oh! Then I could no longer suffer it! (30; emphasis my own)

Though class plays a role in De Monfort's emotional response to Rezenvelt, it is not the reason for his hatred. Baillie is careful to identify the individual as the target of hatred, not the class or group: in a letter to Walter Scott, she determines that "it is hating individuals, not whole bodies of men that spoils the heart" (*Letters* 269). Baillie could not appropriately represent the depth of hatred that De Monfort feels if it was solely directed at a class. De Monfort wants Rezenvelt to suffer for his pride, not because he is an aristocrat.

Baillie closes her tragedy on the passion of hatred with a disturbingly memorable survey of the physiognomy of De Monfort in his deceased state. Bernard, a monk responsible for the capturing of De Monfort following the murder, peels back the cloth covering the aristocrat's body. He then proceeds to narrate a detailed gaze from the top of his head to his chin:

Look on those features, thou has seen them oft,  
 With the last dreadful conflict of despair,  
 So fix'd in horrid strength.  
 See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;  
 The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;  
 That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,

In agony, to gnash the nether lip.

Thinkst thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife

Was such a death as this? (102)

By invoking such a detailed image of the physiognomy of the deceased De Monfort, Baillie impresses upon the reading mind a memorable image of hatred. She then asks the audience the question: is suffering hatred worse than being murdered? Of course, the inferred response is “yes.” While De Monfort was responsible for the murder, Rezenvelt shared responsibility for the socially motivated hatred. Freberg asserts Rezenvelt’s responsibility

And who shall call him blameless, who excites,

Ungen'rously excites, with careless scorn,

Such baleful passion in a brother's breast,

Whom heavn't commands to love? Low are ye laid:

Still all contention now.—Low are ye laid:

I lov'd you both, and mourn your hapless fall. (102)

The curtain is drawn with all of the living characters surrounding the bodies of De Monfort and Rezenvelt. Both have suffered dire consequences due to the passion of hatred; neither will have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, but the audience will.

\* \* \*

Baillie understood that the human mind failed to recognize things due to consistent or repeated observation. Both *The Election* and *De Monfort* challenge the mind's interaction with the emotion of hate, but in different ways. *The Election* disrupts our innate belief that we are all unique in some way, positing that this belief, or essentialist category, can serve as the foundation for our emotion of hate. It warns us against the extremes of total individuality and complete

similarity, providing a mediating space in which we might respect one another's differences while still acknowledging our shared humanity. *De Monfort* demonstrates how our essentialist categories, informed by the cultures in which we live, generate belief systems at an unconscious level that propagate our emotional responses (both negative and positive). So, whether egocentric motivations, social pressures, or some combination of the two inspires our hatred, Baillie challenges us to observe the essentialized categories formed by our individual and shared pasts and rewrite them. For Baillie, hatred is founded on our misinformed pasts, our failure to interrogate our everyday observations, and our artificial pretenses. We need to shift our focus to re-establish ourselves in a less reticent space—Freberg captures it best when he claims, “talk not of what is past, but future love” (90).



Chapter 4 He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me Not... He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me  
 Not: Reading Love as Obsession in Joanna Baillie's *Count Basil*

“And yet within the compass of these walls  
 Somewhere she is, altho' to me she is not.  
 Some other eye doth gaze upon her form,  
 Some other ear doth listen to her voice;  
 Some happy fav'rite doth enjoy the bliss  
 My spiteful stars deny”

Count Basil, *Count Basil*

To this point, Baillie has provided us with a series of texts wherein emotion is cultivated in a variety of ways before it serves as a mediating entity. Within *Orra*, the emotion of fear is imaginatively constructed. The audience enters into an empathic relationship with the protagonist due to a neurological triad of imagination, feeling, and remembrance prior to witnessing the shedding of class boundaries in a more universal commitment to the suffering human being. *The Election* casts hatred as a product of the diminished ego, using that emotion as a tool for instructing the reading audience to seek our common humanity; conversely, *De Monfort* posits emotion as culturally inspired, cautioning against the oversight of the unique individual within socially constructed classes. *Count Basil*, the fourth text that I will be examining, addresses the passion of love. Having imaginatively and culturally situated the previous emotions of fear and hatred respectively, I will briefly contextualize Baillie's portrait of the passion of love historically within the framework of Lennard J. Davis's book *Obsession*. Davis documents the history of the categorically constructed, socially defined concept of obsession, locating its scientific development within the Romantic era.<sup>1</sup> I believe that the novelty in Baillie's approach to the passion of love lay within an analysis of its destructive capabilities as an obsessive monomania. Basil exemplifies a “single-minded devotion to a love object to an excessive degree” (Davis 150). Contrary to those who precede her, such as MacKenzie or Goethe, and even her contemporaries, such as Byron, for Baillie a commitment to the passion of love does not plot

itself upon a noble trajectory; unlike Werther, Harley, and Manfred, Basil's monomaniacal nurturing of his love for Victoria is neither sentimental nor noble. Instead, it is solely obsessive. Following the establishment of a framework for her approach to love as an obsession, I will focus specifically upon the structure of her text. Baillie's textual construction of emotion within *Count Basil* provides unique and fascinating insights into the basic cognitive premises of obsession. Cognitively, *Count Basil* brings to a level of consciousness what amounts to one potential theoretical foundation for the notion of obsession – specifically, memory and future-oriented thinking. Using the theoretical construct of Patrick Colm Hogan, a contemporary cognitive theorist working in the subject of literature, I will argue that Baillie's text provides an example of proto-cognitive theoretical thought. Finally, I will discuss obsession and its relationship to class, before concluding the chapter with an exploration of the usefulness of obsession in the promotion of love as a mediating emotion.

*Count Basil* is set in Mantua during the sixteenth century, immediately preceding the Battle of Pavia.<sup>2</sup> The play commences with the grand procession of Victoria, the Duke of Mantua's daughter. At the same moment, Count Basil and his troops enter in military procession. Basil halts his troops and ceases the military music in deference to Victoria and her procession. A discussion follows between Rosinberg, a close friend, military mentor, and confidant to Basil, and Frederick and Valtomer, two soldiers in Basil's army. The discussion reveals Frederick's envy of Basil's high praise and military glory, foreshadowing a future unrest within the army. Basil enters the scene, silent and stoic, while the two soldiers exit. In a conversation between Basil and Rosinberg, much to Rosinberg's concern, Basil articulates his deep love for Victoria and this concludes the opening act. Act two commences in the Duke's "room of the state" wherein Basil and he are discussing the Battle of Pavia. Basil believes they must leave to join

forces with Charles V's army and fight the French immediately; the Duke believes it is necessary for the troops to stay and rest for a few days. Victoria enters during the discussion and Count Basil becomes disoriented, "a dizzy mist [...] swims before [his] sight" (Baillie 23). Throughout further conversations with Victoria, Basil chooses to remain in the city. The second act continues revealing that the Duke has ulterior motives in his encouragement of Basil's stay in the city. He has developed a relationship with Pescaro, another general, and wants him, not Basil, to gain the glory of triumph in the battle. Meanwhile, at the conclusion of act two, Victoria is portrayed as a vain woman seeking the praise and attention of men; Governess Albini, a voice of reason, warns her against such conceited pursuits.

Act three opens with a subplot in which an honorable old soldier named Geoffrey is offered accolades for his demonstrated success in battle by Basil's army. Geoffrey is a one-armed veteran who was never offered any military promotions for his service. While other soldiers express a certain amount of disgust at this lack of recognition, Geoffrey portrays humility in his demeanor and response: "I have enough to live as poor men do. When I'm in want I'll thankfully receive because I'm poor, but not because I'm brave" (29). Basil parades Geoffrey before his army as an example of the strength and loyalty of a good soldier, increasing morale throughout his troops. In the next scene, the Duke disperses his minister, a Machiavellian, Iago-type character, named Gaurecio, to spread rumors amongst Basil's army. Gaurecio suggests that Basil wants to lead the troops into a slaughter so that he will gain more fame, at the cost of the soldiers' lives. While Gaurecio is out spreading discontent, Basil and Rosinberg attend a masque presented by the Duke. Basil attends as a wounded soldier and Rosinberg attends as an ironic, satire of the lovesick poet. In a comedic scene that predates Byron's *Manfred*, but feels unusually similar to the tragic aristocrat's encounter with the Seven Spirits in the opening act,

five masked women surround Rosinberg, playfully challenging his poetic intentions as “saucy,” calling him a “knave” and a “swain.” The difference is that the masked women mock his intentions, whereas the Seven Spirits are called forth by Manfred and remain at his beck and call. The masquerade concludes with Basil’s profession of love to Victoria, a profession that offends her. The fourth act presents the army, discontented and braced for mutiny against their general and formerly respected leader, Count Basil. Basil responds in what I would consider the most powerful scene of the drama. He stands up against his army, making no apologies for his behavior, and accusing them of weakness in their willingness to so quickly turn on him: “how can I be your gen’ral? Ye obey as caprice moves you” (37). He regains his soldiers’ confidence and follows by confronting Frederick, the leader of the rebellion. Basil chastises him prior to extending his forgiveness. Overwhelmed by the gesture, Frederick bows before Basil. The scene culminates in a conversation in which Rosinberg begs Basil to move the troops on to the Battle at Pavia. Rosinberg’s main concern is that there is evil in the court in Mantua and that this could have fatal consequences for Basil’s reputation. Basil chooses to remain and spend time hunting with Victoria. The play concludes with a messenger of Pescara’s army returning from the battlefield to inform Basil that the battle has been won by the King’s army and that he no longer needs to attend. This moment awakens Basil to his dishonorable decision to remain in Mantua and leads to a deep sense of shame. Basil finds a cave and the drama concludes with his suicide and Victoria’s repentance and her decision to enter a nunnery out of love for his “departed spirit” (48).

Interestingly, Slagle points out that, aside from a note in the third edition of the play which addresses her composition and editing, “Baillie has little to say about *Basil* in her letters, writing only to Margaret Holford in 1826 that she is flattered by Arch Deacon [sic] Wrangham’s

reading *Basil* so often and wanting to meet her” (Slagle 85); in contrast to Baillie’s sparse commentary, critics have not overlooked the drama. Similar to the work being done on *De Monfort*, they have been particularly interested in the sexual and gender dynamics of *Basil*. Burroughs considers issues of gender construction and “performativity” of paramount importance in the overall project of revealing Baillie’s dramaturgical intentions: “through [an] attentiveness to feelings that have been repressed, closeted and hidden away in the private chambers, Baillie’s dramaturgy helps us regard Romantic closet drama anew, as resembling late-twentieth-century play scripts that focus on the problem of how to deal with crushing social imperatives to enact one’s gender and sexual identity in extremely narrow ways” (Burroughs 87). For her, a reading of *Basil* reveals strong homosocial tendencies and repressed homoerotic desires within the title character: “Rosinberg’s obsession with Basil is similar to De Monfort’s with Rezenvelt, suggesting that both of Baillie’s early tragedies are fascinated by what happens to men for whom there is no socially sanctioned mode of expressing desire” (133). Shifting away from the underlying sexual tensions, Colón focuses more on gender constraints, demonstrating that “in *Basil* the characters fail to break free from the conceptions of masculinity and femininity that confine them, and tragedy ensues” (Colón 150). Anne K. Mellor claims that in this play “Baillie suggests that it is men who destroy themselves through an excess of emotion and women who have the ability to free themselves from the follies and prejudices of their youth, to take up all standpoints, and to see a larger truth” (Mellor qtd. Colón 155). Moving away from gender altogether and towards the mind, Alan Richardson claims that

like the typical protagonist of Romantic mental theatre, Basil boasts a ‘fixed mind’ (J. Baillie 1853: 22), a phrase that evokes Satan’s wishful autonomy (‘that fixt mind’) in *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 97). Basil’s illusory mental transcendence, however, is

undone [...] by the suddenly insistent claims of the body that cannot be disentangled from his mind. (“Neural” 138)

Finally, Thomas Crochunis sees the drama as a demonstration of “her skilled use of both reference to theatrical practices and dramatic enactment of a protagonist’s passion” (176). For Crochunis, the play is not so much about gender or the mind, but rather, more about Baillie’s skill in meeting the needs of both a reading and a viewing audience in her dual roles of author and dramatist.

While they have interrogated the expression of love, as Basil “demonstrates” it for Victoria, or as it underlies the relationship between Rosinberg and Basil, in terms of the contemporary socially constructed imperatives defining the expression of desire and its relation to gender, critics have not considered the idea of obsession. Baillie’s tracing of the passion of love within *Count Basil* must culminate in obsession, or it would not be destructive. For this reason, I want to consider Baillie’s portrayal of love, not in terms of the philosophical and psychological notions of love, but rather within the context of the history of obsession. Having summarized the drama and established the critical field into which I am entering, I will now shift to the concept of obsession, reading Baillie’s portrayal of it through a cognitive lens, before concluding with a discussion of the class implications within the text and their relation to obsession as monomania.

### **Obsession as the Present *in Abstentia***

In his book *Obsession*, Lennard J. Davis moves seamlessly between the fields of psychology, medicine, and literature, describing how the notion of obsession came to be categorized within culture, as well as the human mind, and how taxonomies were invented within the various disciplines to attempt a “scientific” model for diagnosing the phenomenon.

Davis defines the hallmarks of obsessive behavior as “fixation on one thing, repetitive interest in that thing, fixed attention to the details, copious notes, observations, repetitive and focused habits of study, and a strong compulsion to do all this” (Davis 24). Historically, the diagnosis of obsession was limited to the rare mad individual who was confined to an institution; slowly, modern society has coupled intellect with obsession and more importantly, tends to promote obsession as a primary trait of genius.<sup>3</sup> He believes that obsession is a uniquely modern creation in so far as “diseases, particularly ones as complexly envisioned as those we call mental illnesses, are distinctly tied to the historical moment, the set of expected behaviors and norms in society, and the paradigms of the observers and the observed” (23). Davis situates the rise of interest in obsession within the Romantic era, touching upon various eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novels, including *The Man of Feeling* (1771), *Maria* (1794), and *Frankenstein* (1818), as a means to support his claim that obsession captivated the cultural mind during this time period.

Davis uses three different terms within his historical approach to the concept of obsession: monomania, *idée fixe*, and obsession. Each term denotes a slightly different meaning in relation to its cultural usage and context. The term “monomania” was introduced by Jean-Étienne Esquirol around 1810 and referred to “the notion that the mind could be imbalanced or made unsound by a single idea or train of thought” (67). As the cultural perspective shifted towards the notion of obsession, aligning monomania with genius, the term “*idée fixe*” arose. Davis cites an article written by an anonymous American author in 1856, in which the author argues that an *idée fixe* is “a disease of people with ‘large, active brains,’ and he notes sensibly that ‘a man should never become so scientific, so sentimental, or so religious, as to forget his dinner’” (72). The distinction between the two terms lies in their respective associations—a

monomania tends to be related to madness, whereas an *idée fixe* aligns itself with genius.

“Obsession,” the final term, situates itself within our more contemporary understanding of the notion. Davis cites the *DSM-IV* in his usage of the term:

OCD [or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder] is characterized by uncontrollable intrusive thoughts and action that can only be alleviated by patterns of rigid and ceremonial behavior. Symptoms frequently cause considerable distress and interference with daily social or work activities. There may be a major preoccupation with the smallest of details in daily life. Obsessive ideas frequently involve contamination, dirt, diseases, germs, real/imagined trauma, or some type of frightening/unpleasant theme. People recognized their obsessive ideas do not make sense but are unable to stop them. These obsessive thoughts frequently lead to compulsive behaviors as the person tries to prevent or change some dreaded event. They frequently repeat activities over and over again (e.g., washing hands, cleaning things up, checking locks). (*DSM-IV* qtd. Davis 8)

Though subtle, the differences between these three terms are important in the understanding of obsession and its history. Both monomania and obsession carry negative connotations, whereas the *idée fixe* connotes upper class affluence and genius. For this reason, in the following analysis, I will only be using the terms “monomania” and “obsession.” To apply the term “*idée fixe*” to Basil’s condition might elevate it to something of genius and would misrepresent Baillie’s consideration of the singular passion within *Count Basil*.

Baillie’s keen attention to the individual passion and its subsequent manifestation within *Count Basil*, serves as another supporting example of Davis’s suggestion that writers were intensely focused upon the tracing and diagramming of the processes through which the human became obsessed; further, she demonstrates the potentially destructive fallout of such a fixation



on a singular passion. *Count Basil* demonstrates, better than any other of her dramas, the clash of the historical moment, or “the set of expected behaviors and norms in society” at this specific time, with human obsession. Specifically, the cultural expectation is that as a soldier and a general, Basil will lead his troops to war; this directly contradicts his desire to be with Victoria. He cannot have both and in choosing Victoria, he chooses his own cultural shaming and subsequent demise. Basil’s excessive obsession serves as yet another example Baillie’s critique of aristocratic indulgence of passion.

The tension between the set of expected behaviors and norms in Basil’s society and his obsession with Victoria creates a sense of urgency throughout the play that feels paralyzing. The reason I use the term “paralyzing” is because very little within Basil’s mind happens in the present moment; instead, Basil’s obsession is developed through his consistent reflection upon the past, or his memory, and what I will term, his “future-oriented thinking.” Baillie’s singular comment regarding her decision to include a former meeting between Victoria and Basil is representative of the importance of memory in the cultivation of obsession within her play:

My first idea when I wrote this play was to represent Basil as having seen Victoria for the first time in the procession, that I might show more perfectly the passion from its first beginnings, and also its sudden power over the mind; but I was induced, from the criticism of one whose judgment I very much respect, to alter it, and represent him as having formerly seen and loved her.<sup>4</sup> (Baillie 22)

In other words, rather than seeing the passion grow from its infant state into its more oppressive form, we are introduced to it as an obsession. The notion of paralysis becomes apt in so far as it not only describes Basil’s state of mind, but it also parallels the plot, in which Basil does not move his troops.

Though it may seem self evident that obsession can be a paralyzing state, I do not want to take it for granted. Rather, in my continued exploration of cognitive theory and its relationship to Joanna Baillie, I want to apply another methodological structure of cognitive thought as outlined by Patrick Colm Hogan in his book *Cognitive Science, Literature, and The Arts: A Guide for Humanists*. I agree with critics that through the collision of cognitive science with literature further clarity is brought forth in regards to both the text and the human mind.<sup>5</sup> Hogan states, “cognitive science is an interdisciplinary form of study aimed at understanding human cognition” (Hogan 29). For example, a problem might be the one that Mark Turner raises: how do we understand a metaphor? Hogan summarizes the methodological response to the concern in the following cognitive fashion: information processing, cognitive architecture, and algorithmic sequences. Considering the first portion, information processing, Hogan argues, that we might address such issues as “selection, segmentation, and structuration of perceptual inputs” (30). In responding to the concept of metaphor, we must consider that we do not receive “pure” environmental information in our minds – this would overwhelm us. Instead, our minds select, segment and structure our environments into understandable and perceivable thoughts. Thus, in understanding metaphor, our minds select the two portions of a sentence (the vehicle and the tenor), segment the two, one from the other, and structure them in relation to one another. This happens so quickly that we are often unaware of the process. For example, in understanding the clichéd metaphor, “life is a journey,” our minds select the notions of “life” and “journey,” segment them from the sentence as a whole, and then structure them and their associated elements in relation to one another. The second aspect of the methodology considers cognitive architecture. Hogan states

cognitive architecture is just the way cognitive scientists refer to what makes up the human mind. [...] There are three broad components to any cognitive architecture: structures, processes, and contents. *Structures* are the general organizational principles of the mind. For example, the distinction between working memory and long-term memory is a structural distinction. Structures define the relations into which processes and contents can enter. [...] *Contents* are most often understood as representations or symbols. (30)

Similar to the idea of the signifier and the signified, when I state “dog,” the term has no relation to the actual animal beyond the fact that it provides an image of a “dog.” Within cognitive science, this assigned image is considered “content,” as it calls to mind the “internal lexical entry” for “dog” (30). According to Hogan, “internal lexicon” resides in the long-term memory system. The last concept in the notion of cognitive architecture is *process*: “processes are operations that run on content” (30). Hogan describes the “mapping of an incoming sequence of notes onto a thematic (musical) phrase [as] a process” (30). The content to be mapped would be the musical notes, and the structure within which the process would be occurring is working-memory.

The final aspect of cognitive methodology is the development of algorithmic sequences. Hogan claims, “the basic idea here is that any cognitive scientific analysis should consist in a set of steps that is fully explicit in moving from inputs of the (information processing) problem to outputs” (30). Thus, the algorithmic sequence for the metaphor “life is a journey” might be: mind selects “life” and “journey,” segmenting them from the sentence; mind pulls representative symbols from long-term memory; mind distinguishes “is a” as a trigger for comparing and noting similarities between the two lexical entries; mind produces the idea of “life has a beginning and

end; so too, does a journey.” The algorithmic sequence would apply a set of letters to each of these steps (comparable to an algebraic equation), placing them into a formula that is repeatable in subsequent similar situations.<sup>6</sup> This is an incredibly simplified notion of cognitive science, but it provides a basic framework for my following analysis of obsession within *Count Basil*. The question with which I would like to begin is: how does obsession become a form of paralysis from a cognitive perspective? I believe that Baillie’s *Count Basil* coupled with Hogan’s cognitive methodology and Davis’s history of obsession can provide some fascinating answers.

In understanding Baillie’s portrayal of Basil’s obsession, I will be focusing primarily on his thoughts as portrayed through his conversations with others and his soliloquies; however, first I want to develop what I perceive to be the cognitive architecture of obsession, beginning with the notion of structure. Based upon the definition above, I will situate obsession within the structures of working- and long-term memory. Joseph LeDoux describes working memory as “a temporary storage mechanism that allows several pieces of information to be held in mind at the same time and compared, contrasted, and otherwise interrelated” (270). The central executive is then responsible for “orienting the various operations of working memory to larger systemic goals and integrating information in ways that bear on those goals” (Hogan 37). Selection feeds information into the working memory where it is segmented and structured. I would argue that in the case of obsession, the central executive has defined a selection principle as being anything relevant to the object of obsession. For example, if I have a fear of germs, anytime I perceive dust, my selection process will segment that perception within the working-memory, and structure it within the context of my long-term memory related to a fear of germs, before the central executive will orient my response to the dust (thought or action). As this process of structuring recurs, the brain creates a model: “whenever we try to deal with any aspect of the

world in any way, we necessarily form a model of that aspect of the world. Indeed, ‘model’ is not so much a theoretical concept as a practical one” (40). Hogan continues, pointing out that, “though the model is open to alternation, it also focuses our attention and gives structure to ambiguous information” (40). It can accommodate itself to experience, but it also assimilates experience to itself. What I would argue is that when an obsessive model is implemented within cognitive architecture, it rarely accommodates experience, but rather effectively assimilates all that it selects to itself. In other words, in the instance regarding germs, it fails to account for or simply dismisses any number of environmental accommodations (e.g. the body’s natural immunities, the importance of building up antibodies, etc.).

Having reviewed a working- /long-term memory structure within a cognitive architectural framework, I now want to shift back into the definition of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Of particular relevance to cognitive science is the notion that “obsessive ideas frequently involve [...] imagined trauma; [further], obsessive thoughts frequently lead to compulsive behaviors as the person tries to prevent or change some dreaded event.” Cognitively, individuals who develop obsessions frequently respond based upon an imagined trauma or in an attempt to prevent a future dreaded event. The obsessed individual is often aware of his or her thought, but unable to resist it. Davis states, “Monomania was defined as a preoccupation with a single idea, passion, or train of thought that was on the one hand obvious and knowable rationally to the subject while at the same time, despite the cognitive acknowledgement of the monomaniac, irresistible” (Davis 69). Therefore, as it is clear that obsession is constructed through thought (both memory and imagination) my hope is that by tracing the “train of thought” within Basil through the use of cognitive science, Baillie’s *Count Basil* will provide the reader with a clearer understanding of

obsession. I will now turn to a close analysis of *Count Basil*, implementing the aforementioned cognitive architecture of obsession.

Basil's inaugural line occurs in response to Rosinberg's reference to Victoria's hand as she had passed in the procession: "(*in a quick voice.*) Mark'd you her hand? I did not see her hand, / And yet she wav'd it twice" (Baillie 21). The urgency, as marked by the stage direction "in a quick voice," establishes a sense of tension regarding Basil's "love" for Victoria. To this point, the conversation between Valtomer and Rosinberg has focused on the aesthetic garnishments of the "goddess" including her yellow scarf, precious gems that she offered to St. Francis in worship, and a "fretted gold" olive branch (21). It is not until Rosinberg refers to her "white [...] hand" that Basil responds (21). Basil's obsession with Victoria is immediately marked by what he has failed to see. From an information processing perspective, what is selected from the environment is what he did not see; the hand is segmented from the larger conversation and structured within the context of the fact that he failed to discover it ("I did not see her hand"). Interestingly, this moment becomes the lens through which all of Basil's future considerations of Victoria will be perceived. Specifically, "failure to discover/recall" becomes the structuring process through which Basil will filter all subsequent conversational and physical encounters with her. This is affirmed in his next conversation with Rosinberg regarding Victoria. Rosinberg is worried, believing Basil to be overly concerned with Victoria, and suggests leaving the town immediately to go to war (22). Basil responds that he will, but in so doing, he asserts that "what we have seen to-day I *must* remember-- / I should be brutish if I could forget it. / [...] My fixed mind shall gaze upon it still" (22 emphasis my own). Basil's commitment to remembering not only highlights his fear of a failure to recall (he "must remember"), it also

serves as an example of a foundational concept in the cognitive architecture of obsession, the future possibility of a dreaded event (forgetting Victoria).

As the first act closes, Rosinberg recollects an instance in which Basil told him to avoid getting involved with a woman lest he should forget his duty:

Thy mighty bosom swell'd with mighty thoughts;  
 Thou'rt for the court, dear Rosinberg, quoth thou;  
 Now pray thee be not caught with some gay dame,  
 To laugh and ogle, and befool thyself;  
 It is offensive in the publick eye,  
 And suits not with a man of thy endowments. (22)

Basil responds that he is no longer interested in discussing the situation with Rosinberg and that he will dwell upon Victoria no more. Rosinberg's response is "well, my good friend, God grant we keep our word!" (22). Rosinberg's intent in recalling the former story is to prime a memory for Basil that will counter his mind's fixated gaze. Basil's central executive is unwilling to engage this primed memory, dismissing it quickly. Rosinberg responds with a hope that "we keep our word." This is not a wholly unusual way to phrase the sentence, but it is also not a typical way either. Where Baillie might have written "God grant you keep your word," Rosinberg responds using the first person plural. From a cognitive perspective, it is as though he is requesting that Basil remember the words of caution that he has offered. Rosinberg is hopeful that Basil will recall *this* conversation. The first act demonstrates Basil's commitment to his memory of his meeting with Victoria through his fixated gaze; cognitively, Rosinberg ends the act with an attempt at countering that memory as a means to disrupt the obsessive cognitive loop and encourage Basil to commit himself to battle.

During the second act, Basil and Victoria meet again; however, for the first time they are left alone. As they are standing in an art gallery, Victoria turns to Basil and asks,

*Vict.* Loves not Count Basil too this charming art?

It is an ancient painting much admir'd.

*Bas.* Ah! Do not banish me these few short moments;

Too soon they will be gone! For ever gone! (24)

Victoria opens their interaction with a simple question regarding the painting in the gallery. Rather than responding to her question, Basil immediately mourns the loss of the present moment. Similar to his need to fixate his mind on the memory of Victoria in act one, Basil is already fixated on the memory of the present moment; he imagines it to be “gone! For ever gone.” His central executive selects the present moment with Victoria, immediately segmenting it within the working-memory and structuring it with a long-term memory of failure to recall. The output, or his response to Victoria, becomes a hyper-awareness of the present as nothing more than a future collection of memories. The conversation switches immediately to the future. Victoria responds, asking him to delay his march to war for another day so that they might spend more time together. Ultimately, Basil relinquishes and offers to stay. Victoria responds, “you will perform your word!” Basil counters, “I will perform it” (25). This time, Basil affirms that he will perform his word. The choice of verbs in this second exchange regarding his “word” is particularly telling. “Keeping” is a far more passive verb, whereas “performing” is far more active. Immediately following his affirmation, Victoria bids him farewell. Thus, in their meeting, he began by lamenting the passing moments and ended by establishing a future moment with her; all told, he failed to exist mentally in the present with her – simply, to discuss the art.



This encounter is followed by a soliloquy in which Basil reflects upon the previous moment with Victoria and then imagines a future in which he will recall the memory:

- 1       “Farewell, my lord!”—O! what delightful  
Sweetness
- 2       The musick of that voice dwells on the ear!
- 3       “Farewell, my lord!”—Ay, and then look’d she so—
- 4       The slightest glance of her bewitching eye,
- 5       Those dark blue eyes, command the inmost soul.
- 6       Well, there is yet one day of life before me,
- 7       And whatsoe’er betides I will enjoy it.
- 8       Tho’ but a partial sunshine in my lot
- 9       I will converse with her, gaze on her still,
- 10      If all behind were pain and misery.
- 11      Pain! Were it not the easing of all pain,
- 12      E’en in the dismal gloom of after years,
- 13      Such dear rememb’rance on the mind to wear? (25)

I have numbered the lines of the soliloquy as a means to demonstrating the shift from recall, to future-oriented thinking, to future-oriented thinking involving recall. Lines 1-5 serve as a recalling of the memory of being with Victoria just moments before – the recall involves auditory and visual cues. Hogan states that “in addition to the central executive, the work space has two well-established, specialized components[...]. These appear to be specialized for two senses, hearing and sight. The *auditory rehearsal loop* allows us to keep about two seconds of auditory material cycling through memory. [...] Parallel to this, we have a *visuo-spatial*

*sketchpad*. This allows us to organize different spatial perceptions into unified items and complexes of related items” (Hogan 37). First, Basil focuses on the “musick of that voice,” before recollecting the “slightest glance” and “those dark blue eyes.” The cognitive aspects of his immediate recall serves as one more example of Baillie’s sharp intuition regarding the human mind. Lines 6-9 demonstrate Basil’s imagined future moments with Victoria: “there is yet one day of life before [him]” in which he will “converse with” and “gaze on her.” Finally, lines 10-13 show his movement into an imagined future state in which he is reflecting on his memories with her—Basil’s future-oriented recollection of the past serves to complete an interesting thought pattern for obsession. Basil asks the rhetorical question: “e’en in the dismal gloom of after years, / such dear rememb’rance on the mind to wear?” In so doing, he is embracing a memory of the present moment over the current moment. It is not the present moment with Victoria for which he longs, but rather, the memory of the present moment with her. Close attention to the details of Basil’s thought process is useful in demonstrating Baillie’s skill in capturing the obsessed mind from a cognitive perspective.

Once again, consider the obsessed individual as defined by the *DSM-IV*. The sufferer of the disorder must “try to prevent or change some dreaded event.” The notion of “prevention” involves future-oriented thinking. After all, to prevent something we need to consider its future possibility of occurrence. In that consideration, the non-obsessed individual takes steps in the present moment to avoid the potential occurrence, trusting that his/her precautionary actions will alleviate a “dreaded event.” For the obsessed individual, repetition becomes the only means through which he/she can assuage concerns regarding the future. I will take up the concept of repetition in relation to Basil momentarily, but first I want to shift to the second portion of the aforementioned definition of the obsessed individual. Regarding the “dreaded event,” the only

means through which an individual might consider an event to be “dreaded” is through the application of previous experience, or a memory. To assign the adjectival category of “dreaded” to the concept of an “event,” indicates a long-term memory of associated content with that particular “event.” In summation, the obsessed individual operates from a model in which every moment presents a potential opportunity for the future occurrence of a “dreaded” event. The present is consumed with memories of past sufferings and considerations of future traumas.

In the third act, Basil continues his future-oriented thinking in which he recalls the past as he enters the mask, anticipating his meeting with Victoria:

This once, O! serve me well, and ever after  
 Ye shall be treasur'd like a monarch's robes;  
 Lodg'd in my chamber, near my pillow kept;  
 And oft with midnight lamp I'll visit ye,  
 And gazing wistfully, this night recall,  
 With all its past delights. (Baillie 32)

Again, it is not the present moment with her that he will treasure, but rather his ability to revisit her by “the midnight lamp,” recalling their meeting as a “past delight.” Following a considerable amount of searching for her with no luck, Basil makes a definitive statement: “somewhere she is, altho' to me she is not” (33). This comment is particularly revealing; it is a moment in which Basil acknowledges her existing somewhere in the present. Somewhere within the confines of the space, she exists in that moment – conversing, gazing upon and generally interacting with others; however, she does not exist in the present for Basil—“to me she is not.” Instead, she is either a memory or a future event, the idea of an ideal woman, but never a present moment. At this point, Basil meets her, but fails to recognize her. Through his lack of recognition of her, he is

able to converse and respond to her appropriately, however as soon as she reveals herself as Victoria. Once again, the scene serves to prove that Basil is unable to confront Victoria in the present moment, but rather his obsession is driven by his memories of or his potential for future interactions with her.

As the obsession continues to grow, Baillie writes a momentary consideration of a shift towards future action into the play. Basil has just quelled a mutiny amongst his men and Rosinberg believes “the time is critical” for a movement into battle (39). After a considerable amount of convincing, Basil tells Rosinberg that he will forego his relationship with Victoria to move forward to confront the enemy. Basil concedes, reflecting on Victoria’s memory

I’ve seen the last look of her heav’nly eyes,  
 I’ve heard the last sounds of her blessed voice,  
 I’ve seen her fair form from my sight depart;  
 My doom is clos’d.<sup>7</sup> (41)

Basil has no more potential future meetings with Victoria; thus, no more potential opportunities for memory creation. He has stored his last visions and sounds of her. That is until Isabella, Victoria’s attendant, requests that Basil accompany them on a hunting expedition the next day on her attendee’s behalf. Once again, the movement towards battle is halted in deference to the deeply rooted obsession within Basil. Needless to say, Rosinberg is devastated. The subsequent meeting between Victoria and Basil demonstrates the depths of his disordered thought.

The two meet in a grove, described as “very beautiful” and a place where “fairies sport beneath the summer’s moon” (42). This picturesque scene recalls the place in which Oberon and Titania basked under the moon in a *Midsummer Night’s Dream*; however, there exists no Puck in

Baillie's tale, but rather only the tormenting, obsessed mind of her protagonist. Seemingly entranced, Basil begins to repeat everything Victoria states regarding their surroundings

*Vict.* See, thro' the twisted boughs of those high elms,  
The sun-beams on the bright'ning foliage play,  
And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.  
Is it not beautiful?

*Bas.* 'Tis passing beautiful  
To see the sun-beams on the foliage play,  
(*In a soft voice.*) And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy  
brown.

*Vict.* And here I've stood full often, and admir'd  
The graceful bending, o'er that shady pool,  
Of yon green willow, whose fair sweepy boughs  
So kiss their image on the glassy plain,  
And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream.

*Bas.* And I too love to see its drooping boughs  
So kiss their image on the glassy plain,  
And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream. (42)

Victoria questions Basil's repetition, considering it a "mock'ry to repeat." To which he responds, "Nay, pardon me, did I indeed repeat? / I meant it not; but when I hear thee speak, / So sweetly dwells thy voice upon mine ear, / My tongue e'en unawares assumes the tone; / As mothers on their lispng infants gaze, / And catch their broken words. I pri'thee pardon!" (42). In his request for pardon, Basil pleads unconsciousness, or the inability to process and respond appropriately.

His body is responding to Victoria separately from his mind. Alan Richardson identifies Basil as a “lovesick automaton [...] barely register[ing] his own words and actions, governed more by his body, emotions, and involuntary reactions than by anything like conscious volition” (“Neural” 139). What Richardson identifies as an “automaton” state might be better understood as an individual in the throes of obsession. Returning to the definition of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, we find that, as a means to alleviating fears of a traumatic event, sufferers of the disorder, “frequently repeat activities over and over again.” Basil’s repetition of Victoria’s language becomes a form of obsessive behavior in so far as he acknowledges little to no control over it. Further, I would argue that by attempting to assume her tone of voice, catching her “broken words,” he is, in a sense, committing her physically to his memory through repetition. His former recollections of her always involved the sweet “musick” of her voice. By repeating what she says in the same tone, he can forge a memory of that tone, potentially accessible for future use should he momentarily forget. Again, this act aligns itself with Hogan’s concept of the auditory rehearsal loop.

Continuing in a similar vein, Basil questions Victoria’s willingness to remember him at a future time: “Perhaps, when rumour from the distant war, / Uncertain tales of dreadful slaughter bore, / Thou’dst see the tear hang on her pale wan cheek. / And kindly say, how does it fare with Basil?” (Baillie 43). Victoria’s response is of the utmost importance: “A friend’s remembrance I will ever bear thee” (43). As would be suspected, Basil sets himself upon this statement, “and yet she said she would remember me. / I will believe it; Ah! I must believe it, / Or be the saddest soldier that sees the light!” (43). It is Victoria’s commitment of him to memory that is most meaningful. It is not her proffered love. From Basil’s perspective, it is the thought that at some moment in the future (a future-oriented thought of recollection), they might share a memory of

one another. In those future dark hours of the midnight lamp, he can now believe that she is recalling him as well. At this moment, a messenger of the King's army approaches Basil to inform him that the battle has ended. Recognizing his loss of honor, Basil retreats to a cave and commits suicide. In his deceased state, Victoria commits herself to his memory, stating that she will enter the convent forever praying for his "departed spirit"; Rosinberg requests that "they who but admir'd him in his height, / his alter'd state lament, and love him fall'n" (48). Baillie demonstrates that obsession leads to the destruction of her protagonist, wiping away the present and leaving nothing but a future full of memories.

\*   \*   \*

Before I conclude this section, I want to return briefly to the cognitive science of obsession. I set out to understand why obsession can become a form of paralysis from a cognitive perspective. I have accounted for the selection, segmentation, and structuration of the process (Basil selects all that is relevant to Victoria, segments it from every other environmental input, and structures it within a fear of a failure to recall her). The cognitive architecture includes the content (any moment relevant to Victoria), the structures (his long-term and working-memory, as well as the substructures of auditory rehearsal loop and visuo-spatial sketchpad), and finally, the processes (the means through which he integrates the inputs of Victoria's voice and image). The final portion of Hogan's cognitive science approach to literature is the development of an algorithmic sequence. Hogan claims, "the basic idea here is that any cognitive scientific analysis should consist in a set of steps that is fully explicit in moving from inputs of the (information processing) problem to outputs" (Hogan 30). Though Hogan applies an algorithmic sequence to singular sentences within his study, it is helpful to consider a sequence that can be mapped onto Basil's larger thought patterns throughout the text. Specifically, in understanding

Basil from a cognitive perspective, it is necessary to identify the algorithmic sequence for his obsession. Using a basic formula, I want to set up the cognitive process for obsession portrayed by Baillie through Count Basil. The letters below will represent their respective concepts within the following algorithmic sequence:

<b>V</b> = all moments containing Victoria	<b>CE</b> = the central executive
<b>Vm</b> = memories pertaining to Victoria	<b>I</b> = Input
<b>Vml</b> = memories pertaining to the loss of Victoria	<b>O</b> = Output
<b>Vf</b> = all future-oriented considerations of Victoria	<b>WM</b> = Working Memory
<b>Vfm</b> = all future-oriented considerations of memories of Victoria	<b>LM</b> = Long-term Memory of loss
	<b>ARL</b> = Auditory Rehearsal Loop
	<b>VS</b> = Visuo-spatial Sketchpad

My algorithmic sequence is as follows:

$$\mathbf{I(V) \rightarrow CE (WM(Vm(ARL + VS)) + (LM(Vml))) \rightarrow O(Vf + Vfm)}$$

This sequence is used consistently throughout the drama to demonstrate Basil's obsession with Victoria. At any moment when Basil is presented with a "Victoria" input, his central executive immediately cues the auditory and visual memories of Victoria situating them within the working memory. It then cues the long-term memory of loss related to her (note: the initial scene in which we meet Basil, he is highly distressed at the thought of having failed to see her; he then recommits to forever remembering her). These are processed immediately into outputs or future oriented considerations of being with her and the subsequent memories of those moments. Take for example the previously analyzed soliloquy:

- 1 "Farewell, my lord!"—O! what delightful Sweetness
- 2 The musick of that voice dwells on the ear!
- 3 "Farewell, my lord!"—Ay, and then look'd she so—
- 4 The slightest glance of her bewitching eye,



5     Those dark blue eyes, command the inmost soul.  
 6     Well, there is yet one day of life before me,  
 7     And whatsoe'er betides I will enjoy it.  
 8     Tho' but a partial sunshine in my lot  
 9     I will converse with her, gaze on her still,  
 10    If all behind were pain and misery.  
 11    Pain! Were it not the easing of all pain,  
 12    E'en in the dismal gloom of after years,  
 13    Such dear rememb'rance on the mind to wear? (Baillie 25)

This reflection follows Basil's initial meeting with Victoria alone. Immediately upon her departure, the central executive processes Victoria within the staging area of the working memory, combining both the auditory and visual concepts of her (1-5), before drawing upon the long-term memory of potentially losing her (lines 6-10). The combination of the two creates an output in which Basil considers both the future moment and the memory of the future moment with Victoria (11-13). This sequence serves as the underlying construction of his obsession. Each input of Victoria, whether imagined or real, somehow plots itself upon this schema.

As a means to providing further credence to this argument, it is necessary to show how the sequence establishes itself in Basil's anticipation of meeting Victoria:

This once, O! serve me well, and ever after

Ye shall be treasur'd like a monarch's robes;  
 Lodg'd in my chamber, near my pillow kept;  
 And oft with midnight lamp I'll visit ye,  
 And gazing wistfully, this night recall,

With all its past delights. (32)

Again, the imagined input of Victoria triggers a reflection not upon a physical meeting with her, but instead upon the visuo-spatial sketchpad (“gazing wistfully”); the reflection, coupled with the memory of her loss (Basil lodges her in his mind/“chamber” because he will not be with her) leads to an output of future oriented considerations of memories of being with Victoria. This sequence is the model under which Basil’s brain is operating and presents a useful model by which we might consider the notion of obsession. Simply stated, the input (I) will always trigger some sensory experience within the working memory (WM); that sensory experience is tied to a long-term memory of dread (LM). The output is an action intended to deter the potential for the dreaded event occurring again, so that in the future, the individual can reflect back on the moment with some peace, recalling his/her repetitive action. Sadly, for the obsessed individual, the present becomes a series of actions committed with the intent of being able to recall the present moment in the future. Though Basil does not always foresee the future as harmful, his present actions are constantly directed towards the alleviation of any loss relevant to Victoria—be it through the loss of memory episodes, imagined recollections, or real interactions. The algorithmic sequence for Basil’s thought process is a fascinating example of how cognitive science, coupled with literature, can provide us with useful insights into the human mind. In conclusion, Basil’s paralysis occurs because his central executive has adopted a model that refuses to adapt itself to his surroundings, stubbornly assimilating all inputs into a schema that will solely output future-oriented thoughts relevant to the loss of Victoria. This model serves as a means to destroying the protagonist. Baillie’s demonstration of obsession as negative within *Count Basil* reveals a timely critique of the upper class and contemporary concerns with British structures of power.

### **Love in Praesentia**

During the dance of masks in the second scene of act three, Victoria expresses her frustration at hearing Basil discuss his love for her: “If I indeed should listen to thy words, / they must not talk of love” (34). Once again, Basil’s response reflects an absolute inability to honor her request when in her presence: “To be with thee, to speak, to hear thee speak, / To claim the soft attention of thine eye, / I’d be content to talk of any thing, / If it were possible to be with thee, / And think of ought but love” (34). As I have previously shown, Basil suffers from obsession. His response to Victoria in this instance affirms his selfish, unwavering conviction to his own monomania. Basil’s professed “love” for Victoria denies her request and demonstrates his inability to empathize with her concern for his unguarded advances. Peter Hadraes describes love as “founded upon an empathizing with the beloved’s strivings,” but due to his obsession, Basil is unable to acknowledge Victoria’s “state of being” in the current moment (2). The aforementioned algorithmic sequence denies him the ability of mentally existing with her *in praesentia*. For Baillie, obsession is a refusal of the present moment, where conversely love exists within the present. The distinction between the two has significant ramifications for Baillie’s treatment of class relations within the drama. When we meet Basil, his obsession has fully seized him, but he has not always been so monomaniacal. In fact, Baillie’s final tribute to the deceased General acknowledges moments in which he demonstrated love as an equalizing and empathizing emotion. The final section of this chapter will explore the cultural and class implications of obsession in contrast to love as presented within *Count Basil*. Davis constructs a Williamsian “Structure of Feeling” in his documenting of the “presence” of obsession throughout the Romantic period. In his development of this structure, Davis creates a formal, theoretical framework within which Baillie’s *Count Basil* can be situated and against which it can be

critiqued. Finally, Baillie counters aristocratic trends favoring obsession, revealing the negative consequences of choosing to indulge one's *idée fixe*, before concluding her drama with a subtle, but poignant commentary on the true meaning of love and its mediating capabilities.

Prior to considering Davis's history of obsession in relation to Baillie's class critique, I want to sketch one potential theoretical perspective for his book—Raymond Williams's "Structure of Feeling." I am inclined towards this particular theory as it permits an understanding of literature as a documentation of a culture's contemporary "feeling" towards certain social and political issues. In my continued exploration of the relationship between Joanna Baillie's dramas, the singular passions, the brain, and Romantic class affairs, it serves as a useful theoretical angle. Raymond Williams defines "structure of feeling" as follows: "we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences" (1288). For Williams, "we are then defining these elements as a 'structure': as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension. Yet we are also defining a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies" (1289). What is of the utmost importance to Williams is "the hypothesis of a mode of social formation, explicit and recognizable in specific kinds of art, which is distinguishable from other social and semantic formations by its articulation of *presence*" (1290; his emphasis).

Shifting Williams into the realm of cognitive theory and promoting emotion in literature based upon the “Structure of Feeling,” Donald Wesling makes a compelling argument regarding the relationship between Williams’s theory and emotion within literature. Wesling contends that it is possible to understand the historical structures of and cultural implications for human emotion through the careful analysis of text. Referencing Williams, Wesling argues, “structure of feeling is as firm and definite as ‘structure’ suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this... is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization. And it is in this respect that the arts of a period, taking these to include characteristic approaches and tones in argument are of major importance” (Wesling147). To demonstrate this, he chooses the 2500-year-old story of *Phaedra* and its various manifestations throughout the centuries. Wesling’s treatment of the story of *Phaedra* becomes a model for literary theorists and would be useful in the exploration of historically retold narratives; however, it is not the intent of this study to trace the historical portrayal of obsession within literary texts. Instead, I want to use Baillie’s *Basil* as an example of a counter-cultural portrayal of obsession within the Romantic period in which she is writing, setting it against the backdrop of Davis’s history. This exploration will enact Wesling’s notion that “emotion’s role in the economy of the person is relational and regulative. We get help in defining emotion, when we try to understand how changes occur, in direction and intensity and from state to state, in a person’s life. Literature’s role in the economy of emotion-studies is to give examples of how these states get put into writing, read back from written stories of lives” (193). Baillie’s construction of obsession provides readers with a useful educational opportunity regarding obsession and class, but only insofar as we are willing to explore it within the context of the time period in which she was writing. Davis provides us with this context.

For Davis, “meanings and values as they [were and] are actively lived and felt,” exist in relation to the more formal and systematic cultural experiences (or cultural norms) as they relate to obsession. Drawing upon literature, diaries, and contemporary accounts, he captures the cultivation and implementation of the notion of obsession throughout the past 300 years. In essence, he documents the “presence” of obsession. Similar to Williams considerations of social experience as “still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized,” Davis claims, “the distinction between disease and cultural activity is one that is hard to make, and that the making of that distinction is itself an act that is part of the process, not outside or tangential to that process” (Davis 65). As one illustration of a text that demonstrates how obsession was being treated during the Romantic period, he chooses *Frankenstein*: “what Shelley is presenting in the form of Frankenstein’s obsession, is the nerve-induced monomania that we have seen in writings of mad doctors. [...] That madness has a name, and it is ‘science’” (75). Victor’s singular pursuit represents the product of genius and his death at the conclusion represents a powerful adherence to his sole purpose, assigned to him by “Heaven” (Shelley 216). Davis considers this treatment of obsession as typical of the Romantic “cultural mind’s” relationship with the monomaniacal. He states:

the notion that obsession led to madness, that thinking on a single thing could produce monomania, that the human mind was made up of faculties that could and probably would be out of kilter, led to a humanizing of the insane and insanizing of the human. The first step of this process was the establishment of fashionable madness, noting that partial madness was the consumer privilege of the elite of society. The French Revolution led directly to the redistributing of this franchise on elite madness to the lower classes. (Davis 100)

Baillie's portrayal of Basil's obsession complicates its status as fashionable and even questions its alignment with genius. In fact, in a period when obsession was positioning itself among more attractive qualities, Baillie realigns the disorder with its less appealing and particularly destructive traits. Whereas *Frankenstein* (1818) tells the story of the tortured genius, destroyed in the process of an honorable pursuit (science), *Count Basil* (1798) represents the tortured mind, destroyed in the process of a dishonorable pursuit (obsession). The distinction is important as it demonstrates Davis's argument for a shifting cultural attitude and feeling towards obsession. I would argue that this literary shift in perception of obsession from Baillie to Shelley marks a shift in the Williamsian concept of "presence," or in this case "public opinion" related to the disorder. Baillie combats the treatment of a singular, obsessive passion as positive and the product of the powerful upper class individual, contemplating monomania as a disordered state, both dishonorable and pitiable. Twenty years later, Shelley considers it a natural product of genius, destructive, but simultaneously, alluring. Davis continues, "monomania caught on and became so integrated into the culture that it was a desirable thing, a state almost devoutly to be wished" (71). Baillie was writing within the midst of this cultural and mental shift towards the humanizing of the insane; though madness is still reserved for the upper class within her dramatic exploration of love, it is not a fashionable portrayal, but rather a self-indulgent weakness. Having overviewed Williams's concept of "structure of feeling" in relation to Wesling's understanding of literature, and provided an example of how Davis maps the structure of obsession within the Romantic period, I will now turn to *Count Basil* for a close analysis of the obsession-related, class-oriented concerns within the text.

Baillie represents class conflicts most clearly in *Basil* through the nefarious Duke of Mantua. The Duke and his henchman, Gaurecio, plot the downfall of Basil throughout the course

of the drama, planting seeds of distrust among his men, loosely maintaining Victoria as his puppet in the plot to defer Basil's leaving the city, and ultimately, championing the King's army in their victory at Pavia (the victory that leads to the shaming and subsequent suicide of Basil). As a reprehensible character, the Duke considers the lower classes to be "miscreants," "the base," "the fulsome marsh," "ungrateful varlets," "mud," and "sediment," while considering himself a "sacred person" offering "parental care" (Baillie 26). Baillie's stereotypical portrayal of the aristocracy in the drama serves as a typical critique of the arrogance and paternal entitlement the gentry expressed. The Duke acknowledges an upper class concern with disrupting their peace, but only insofar as he believes "calm, steady labour is their bliss, / To aim at higher things beseems them not. / To let them work in peace my care shall be, / To slacken labor is to nourish pride" (26). More kindly, but to a similar point, Basil himself chastises one of his officers for participating in the kindling of a revolt among the "simple untaught soldiers": "With secret art, and false insinuation / the simple untaught soldiers to seduce / From their sworn duty, might become the base, / Become the coward well; but oh! What villain / Had the curs'd pow'r t' engage thy valiant worth / In such a work as this?" (38). On the surface, it seems as though the Duke and Basil articulate a similar perspective regarding the lower classes; the difference between their respective treatments of the plebian population manifests itself in their underlying intentions. Both view the lower classes as simple; however, the Duke identifies this as a useful tool in his manipulation of them towards his own ends, whereas Basil perceives the seduction of the lower classes as villainous and deceptive.

The perception of the lower classes as simple-minded was not uncommon for the time period. Jeffrey Cox argues



while [Baillie] repeatedly asks that tragedy stop dealing only with aristocrats and with ‘heroic heroes,’ while she wants the drama to appeal to the ‘middling’ ranks, she does not extend the appeal of her plays to those below that middle: the drama’s ‘lessons reach not, indeed, to the lowest classes of the labouring people, who are the broad foundations of society, which can never be generally moved without endangering every thing that is constructed upon it’ (*Discourse* 57-8). Baillie shares with many of her contemporaries a fear that the power of the drama will move the people not only to emotional response but also to political action. (161)

While I agree with Cox’s suggestion that Baillie feared the power of the drama and its ability to move people, he errs in his assumption that Baillie did not “extend her appeal” to those below the middle class. Baillie clearly articulates pleasure at the thought of the lower classes viewing *De Monfort* in a letter to Walter Scott written in 1810: “I never was better pleased than upon hearing that *De Monfort* was acted at a county fair, in a great wagon along side the wild beasts” (*Letters* 275). Baillie appreciates the appeal her play has to the lower classes; what concerns her is that the more complex lessons portrayed within the dramas do not incite political rebellion. Considering class relations, Norbert Elias makes an interesting argument regarding the German versus the French middle-classes in his book *The Civilizing Process*:

While members of the German middle-class intellegentsia, at least in the mind, in the daydreams of their books, forge concepts diverging absolutely from the models of the upper class, and thus fight on politically neutral ground all the battles which they are unable to fight on the political and social plan because the existing institutions deny them instruments and even targets; while they, in their books, oppose to the human characteristics of the upper class their own new ideals and behavioral models; the

courtly-reformist intelligentsia in France remains for a long time within the framework of courtly tradition. (33)

One could argue that Baillie's apprehensions derive out of a similar elite English courtly tradition. While she is able to make considerable headway into the upholding of middle-class values and an overall concern for the dissolution of class boundaries in favor of a common humanity through her dramas, the courtly tradition within which she is writing potentially denies her a more comprehensive conscious awareness of the lower classes as anything more than a mass of "labouring people." She has moments in which she humanizes the lower classes, individualizing them, as was demonstrated in Chapter Two's exploration of *Orra* and will be shown in *Basil*; however, she simply may be unable to overcome more general contemporary concerns of revolt in light of the recent devastation caused by the French revolution. Further, one might consider that, similar to Basil, she felt the lower classes were simple-minded and that the lessons communicated through her plays were not accessible to them as untaught individuals. Again, this would serve as a function of the courtly tradition within which she was writing. Her sentiments regarding the performance at the carnival indicate elation at the popularity of her writing; they reflect little concern for planting the seeds of uprising. Regardless, I will concede that Baillie feared the potential power of a rebellious lower class (as demonstrated in *Basil*), though it is difficult for me to believe that she was inclined to restrict them access to her dramas.

Baillie cared about the lower classes. In fact, when reconsidering the ending of *De Monfort*, she indicates that she "must give some stronger reason for De Monfort's hatred and I think to please all parts classes of the audience I must alter the ending of the piece" (*Letters* 338). It is clear that she was aware of her audience and their varying class perspectives. Her portrayal of the soldiers in *Basil* reflects her concern for an uprising amongst the lower classes; however, it

is the soldiers who provide the lasting insight into Basil's ability to love. As Basil dies from a self-inflicted pistol wound, his soldiers gather around his body, and Valtomer acknowledges the scene as "too sad" (Baillie 47). Following the recognition of Basil's "noble spirit," the soldiers recollect his accomplishments. Interestingly, they are not related to great battles or transcendent expressions of power and glory. Their tributes to Basil are far simpler:

*3<sup>D</sup> Sol.*        How pleasantly he shar'd our hardest toil;  
                          Our coarsest food the daintiest fare he made.

*4<sup>TH</sup> Sol.*        Ay, many a time i'the cold damp plains has he  
                          With cheerful count'nance cried, good rest my hearts!  
                          Then wrapp'd him in his cloak, and laid him down  
                          E'en like the meanest soldier in the field. (47)

For his soldiers, Basil's greatness exists not in his feats of strength and glorious undertakings, but rather his nobility manifests itself in his ability to strike down inequality, leveling himself with them. The third soldier acknowledges his willingness to share their "hardest toil" and eat the "coarsest food" with a pleasant attitude. The fourth soldier commends him for his "cheerful" disposition as he laid himself down "like the meanest soldier in the field." In his phenomenological understanding of love, Hadraes claims, "it urges on a relation between lover and beloved that resists differences in rank and status. [...] in effect, it wears down inequalities" (2). Basil loved his soldiers not by fighting on their behalf, but by fighting with them. He resisted his rank, striking down the inequalities between his men and him. Prior to his suicide Basil recognizes the great shame he is facing in taking his own life and laments that "I' the fair and honour'd field shouldst thou have died, / Where brave friends, proudly smiling thro' their tears, / Had pointed out the spot where Basil lay!" (Baillie 44) Cleverly, Baillie's tribute by the soldiers

grants this request insofar as they recollect him lying in the field with them. Though it is not his gravesite, it is their memory of him, as they proudly smile through their tears, and as was clearly stated in the initial section, remembrance is of the utmost importance to the titular character.

\* \* \*

The concept that love is a mediating emotion is not groundbreaking. As previously stated, it strives to break down inequalities between individuals and establish connections. What is most fascinating in *Count Basil* is Baillie's representation of obsession in direct contrast to love. Cognitively, her portrayal of obsession is nuanced and complex, yet highly systematic. At a time when obsession was becoming another means through which the upper class was establishing dominance in relation to the lower class, usurping madness as a form of genius, Baillie illustrates its destructive qualities sans its contemporarily constructed positive traits. Again, similar to her other dramas, she does not do so through a complete degradation of the upper class. Her mediation is subtle, but powerful. Ingroup/outgroup theory and the psychology of prejudice are useful tools for the demonstration of this idea. Marilyn Brewer argues that "ingroup favoritism and outgroup prejudice are separable phenomena and that the origin of identification and attachment to ingroups is independent of intergroup conflict" (Brewer 430). Brewer defines ingroups as "bounded communities of mutual trust and obligation that delimit mutual interdependence and cooperation. An important aspect of this mutual trust is that it is depersonalized, extended to any member of the ingroup whether personally related or not" (433). She continues, stating that as the ingroup becomes larger and more depersonalized, "the institutions, rules, and customs that maintain ingroup loyalty and cooperation take on the character of moral authority" (435). I would argue that the upper class maintained its sense of moral authority through an ingroup mentality.

Basil's constant draw to war is a function of an ingroup mentality ingrained in him from his early days of soldiering. As an aristocratic general he is called to lead his men into battle. It is a cultural expectation. His obsession with Victoria counters this ingroup expectation and creates a significant amount of tension within the drama. Colón argues, "Basil is the prototypical, aristocratic male in his society. He is a warrior who falls in love with a beautiful princess, and his masculinity is defined by 'codes of honor derived from military prowess' (Davidoff and Hall 110)" (Colón 153). His obsession becomes destructive to both his ingroup and himself. Davis's history of obsession posits the disorder as alluring in its relationship to genius. I would argue the relationship between the two only functioned positively in the Romantic period when it was beneficial to the ingroup, or more specifically, the upper class. In other words, it was fine to pair the two together, as long as it was solely destructive to the individual and not the upper class as a whole. Baillie's writing of obsession is destructive both to the upper class, or more particularly, Basil's aristocratic expectations, and to Basil as an individual. Baillie questions the monomaniacal within a "structure of feeling," considering obsession as increasingly fashionable. She complicates the closure of the play by introducing less military forms of prowess and honor, and more general, human forms of love.

The soldiers' portrayal of Basil as lying down amongst them in the battlefield suggests a far greater ingroup solidarity with them as individuals, opposing any alignment of him with his aristocratic background. Basil's refusal to go to war as an aristocrat, instead choosing to pursue an obsession, demonstrates an unwillingness to identify with an upper class ingroup. His demonstration of love for his soldiers suggests a depletion of boundaries between classes and an acknowledgement of a shared goal and common value. Brewer claims "that loosely knit ingroups become more cohesive and less subject to internal factioning when they can be rallied to the

demands of achieving a common goal” (Brewer 436). Basil and his soldiers shared a common goal in battle—survival and glory. Baillie wrote Basil’s obsession in direct contrast to his aristocratic ingroup expectations; she wrote his love in alignment with a more human expectation. For me, Baillie’s *Count Basil* demonstrates how obsession is a divisive passion in human relations, not only because it is self-serving, but in-so-being, it refuses to acknowledge the need of the other in the present moment; it refuses to listen; it refuses to recognize our shared human experience. Conversely, she writes love, not as a loud, brash, consuming commitment, but rather as an emotion that softly catches the mind’s eye, like moonlight reflecting off of the brass button of a general’s coat as he chooses to lie down next to his fellow man on the battlefield.

## Conclusion Cognitive Architectures

Critics of literary cognitive theory will most often cite venturing into the scientific realm as presumptuous and generally ill advised on the part of the literary theorist; after all, we are not scientists, nor are we equipped with the necessary tools for such analysis. The exploration of the brain and its various materialistic aspects should be left to neuroscientists and psychologists. Further, critics render our analysis of universals within texts as directly correlated to cognitive structures, as mere overgeneralizations—how can we presume that all readers will internalize a text in the same fashion? Both of these are fair critiques and certainly should not be cast aside in considerations of this fledgling field; however, they should not serve as the catalyst of its dismissal either. True, scientists have been studying the inner workings of the brain for over two hundred years. Richardson notes that, “historians of neuroscience, of biological psychology, and of neurology concur in viewing the later 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” (*Science of the Mind* 1). However, it wasn’t until the late twentieth century when modern technology collided with science to provide George Bush the opportunity to sign *Proclamation 6158* officially designating the 1990s “The Decade of the Brain.” Not only did this mean more financial resources were directed towards the exploration of the three-pound mass between our ears, it also meant more of that mass was being devoted to the intellectual endeavor of researching the human brain. While scientists clearly seized the opportunity, literary critics and theorists began wondering how we too might participate in this academic and humanist endeavor. Just months after George Bush signed the proclamation, Mark Turner would challenge literary critics to add their voices to this conversation, claiming, “literary acts are constituted upon the ground of shared human conceptual patterns of conventional

language. An attempt to reintegrate the study of language and literature as grounded in human cognition is, I suggest, the most likely path to restoring our profession to its natural place as a central cultural and intellectual activity” (Turner 24). In so doing, Turner drew the conversation into the field of the humanities. He was not asking literary critics to shift their attention to the sciences, but rather instead to focus their honed analytical skills and intuitive reading abilities upon the patterns occurring within texts, both culturally and cross-culturally. These patterns serve as reflections of how our brains process images, sounds, emotions, and metaphors, providing insights into not only our unique individual brains, but also more importantly, our shared human components. Literary cognitive theory uses scientific methods in its analysis, systematically parsing out patterns and trends in literature; it then isolates and identifies these patterns to offer theories as to how the human mind functions.

The second critical concern with cognitive theory is its tendency towards overgeneralizations. Literary cognitive theorists will often address this issue through the usage of psychological research and focus groups relevant to texts. While this will often silence some critics, it does not always assuage the more vocal opponents. In considering this response to literary cognitive theory, I am most drawn to Patrick Colm Hogan’s suggestion that perhaps universalism could be beneficial: “no racist ever justified the enslavement of Africans or colonial rule in India on the basis of a claim that whites and nonwhites share universal human properties. Rather they based their justifications on presumed differences among Europeans, Africans, and Indians, usually biological differences, but often cultural differences as well” (Hogan 38). While both Hogan and I are aware that the deeper issues of institutionalized racism are far more complex than this statement might seem to illustrate, the point of the comment is to highlight the historical focus on difference, as opposed to similarity. While socio-political forces and



contemporary cultural conversations consistently ask us to choose between different or competing ideas, cognitive theory strives to consider what it is that makes us similar. Not in a free loving, “pie-in-the-sky,” sort of way, but rather through a more systematic and scientific approach. It theorizes that should we begin to see patterns in our art that reflect the ways in which our brains function, we will better be able to understand ourselves in relation to one another and more importantly, we will truly begin to see what makes us human.

Joanna Baillie had a similar intention in the creation of drama. Tired of the products of human emotion, particularly war and destruction, her plays sought to help her audiences in their human frailty: “above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all of the misery that ensues” (Baillie 11). As is clearly demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Baillie identified passion as a human component that carries on a “similar operation in the breast of the monarch and the man of low degree,” as opposed to something more prominent in a specific class (11). As a proto-cognitive theorist, she saw patterns in human behavior and emotion, detailing them in her dramas as a means to raising to a level of consciousness the felt experiences of her audience members. Each of her dramas on the individual passions carefully plots out the development of emotion within the protagonist, demonstrating its slow and painful overthrow of human reason. For this purpose, she serves as a powerful literary figure and her dramas offer exemplary material for cognitive inquiry.

It is my hope that each of the critical and cognitive inquiries above will serve as models for future literary analysis. Baillie’s dramas are an exceptional place to begin in terms of emotion and cognition; however, it cannot and should not stop here. Literature allows us to invoke

imagined emotions, spaces, interactions, and bodies. Peta Tait, a Chekhov scholar, claims that “the expression of emotions suggests an emotional self that comes into existence as it is making emotional spaces. But the materiality of an emotional body has a lightness of density and weight, which allows it to float across social categories and appear, disappear and reappear” (Tait qtd. Wesling). It is precisely this power of emotion that permits the dissolution of social categories within the reading mind. Through the invocation of emotion, we as a reading audience can engage varied human experiences, participating in the felt struggles, joys, sufferings, and fears of another. This process softens our responses to the human condition and increases our empathy for others. While literary critics and authors alike have been making this claim since the creation of art and writing, cognitive theory is allowing us to start to define the parameters of this phenomenon in terms of human cognition and thought patterns. In other words, through reading we gain insight not necessarily into what makes human beings different, but in effect, what makes us similar.

Whether we are consumed by the passion of fear, hate, or love, there are cognitive architectures, or frameworks, in place that define these felt experiences. How emotions manifest themselves may vary from individual-to-individual, but their presence within every functioning human brain is undeniably universal. Literature attempts to offer architectures for these emotional experiences, helping us to better cope with our own frail emotional states. It provides us with temporary egos, a momentary felt sense of the “other,” moving beyond socially constructed boundaries and inviting us, not into a space of difference, but rather into that which is universal. Baillie saw the text’s powerful relationship with the imagining mind as something that transcended class boundaries; over two hundred years later, literary cognitive theory demonstrates the importance of interrogating that relationship as a means to revealing our shared

humanity. We must continue to address universal patterns within literature as a means to better understanding ourselves as human minds in relation to one another; the study of such patterns will reveal the architectures of passion so clearly sought by a humble, Scottish Romantic dramatist.

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## END NOTES

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**The Invisible Made Visible: The Meeting of the Mind and the Text in Joanna Baillie's Dramas**

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking most specifically about Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* in which the titular character asserts his dominance, conquering all that attempts to stand in his way. Similarly, Manfred refuses to be dominated by anyone or any spirit.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter sent to Sir Walter Scott on December 8, 1812, Baillie comments on Scott's *Rokeby*: "The very striking opening of the poem which we had seen before, did indeed make it difficult for us not to be disappointed, yet the scene between Oswald & Bertram which follows it is so excellent and presents such a strong picture *both to the eye & the mind*" (*Letters* 315). It is clear Baillie was aware of the importance of the reading mind in relation to the text.

**Imagination, Feeling, and Remembrance: A Neurological Triad Foundational to the Establishment of a Mental Mediating Space in Joanna Baillie's *Orra***

<sup>1</sup> In his analysis of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge is particularly struck by his use of imagination: "it was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing with the imaginative faculty in modifying, the objects observed" (Coleridge 53-4).

<sup>2</sup> In *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*, Joseph LeDoux argues that people behave similarly to animals when feeling threatened, responding in one of four ways: withdrawal (avoiding the danger or escape from it), immobility (freezing), defensive aggression (appearing to be dangerous and/or fighting back), or submission (appeasement) (LeDoux 141). *Orra*'s pacing suggests a physiological increase in adrenaline, with an inability for an outlet; thus, she grows restless with the chemical changes in her body due to fear.

<sup>3</sup> Olivia de Costa Fialho, "Foreground and refamiliarization: understanding readers' response to literary texts," *Language and Literature* 16.2 (2007): 105-23; Craig Hamilton and Ralf Schneider, "From Iser to Turner and Beyond: Reception Theory Meets Cognitive Criticism," *Style* 36.4 (2002): 640-56; David Hanauer, "Poetic Text Processing," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26.3 (1997): 157-72; David S. Miall, "The Body in Literature: Mark Johnson, metaphor and feeling," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26.3 (1997): 191-210; David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "Foregrounding, defamiliarization, and affect: Response to literary stories," *Poetics* 22 (1994): 389-407; Stefan Oltean, "Possible Worlds and Truth in Fiction," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26.3 (1997): 173-190; Lisa Zunshine, "Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness," *Narrative* 11.3 (2003): 270-90.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent discussion on the topic of gender and Baillie see Christine Colon's, *Joanna Baillie and the Art of Moral Influence*, 2009; or, Catherine Burroughs's, *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers*, 1997.

**Categorical Essentialism and Social Emotion in *The Election* and *De Monfort*: Sympathizing with a Conniving Politician and a Murderous Aristocrat**

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter, I will be substituting Baillie's terms of "natural" for the "living kind," and "material" for "artifact." Baillie was aware of the distinctions as she states in her

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“*Introductory Discourse*”: “as the distinctions which it is [drama]’s highest aim to discriminate are those of *nature* and not *situation*, they are judged of by all ranks of men; for a peasant will very clearly perceive in the character of a peer those native peculiarities which belong to him as a man, though he is entirely at a loss in all that regards his manners and address as a nobleman” (Baillie 12-13; emphasis my own). The terms are interchangeable, but using Baillie’s terms will serve in the avoidance of confusion.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to William Sotheby, regarding the publication of her third *Series of Plays on the Passions*, Baillie writes, “I had gone on for a long time publishing under the rebuke of [Francis Jeffrey] and when I publish’d last, at the time I announced my intention of publishing no more, I believed that he would for the future (tho’ it did not prove so) be less rather than more severe upon me; fear of him therefore could not and most certainly did not influence me in the slightest degree” (*Letters* 197). Understandably, Baillie was often discouraged by his consistently negative reviews; as is shown in her commentary, she never let it prevent her from continuing her work.

<sup>3</sup> The public/private dynamic has been explored by critics such as Catherine Burroughs, *Closet Stages*; Christine Colon, *Joanna Baillie and the Art of Moral influence*; and Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*.

### **He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me Not... He Obsesses Over Me... He Loves Me Not: Reading Love as Obsession in Joanna Baillie’s *Count Basil***

<sup>1</sup> In an analysis of Godwin’s *Caleb Williams*, Davis notes that “what we see in development here is two-fold: Caleb is, through his obsessive attention to human behavior, a kind of analyst of the psyche. He is also an incipient detective, and indeed, this novel is one of the first forerunners of the genre of detective fiction” (Davis 56). Though I wouldn’t claim that Baillie is creating detective fiction, I would argue that her attention to human behavior within the “*Introductory Discourse*”, as modeled on her brother’s work in physiognomy (see Burwick’s “Joanna Baillie, Matthew Baillie, and the Pathology of the Passions.”), further serves to support Davis’s claim that their was a cultural obsession wherein it became important to “pay careful attention to trivial details and a range of human behavior” (56).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Duthie summarizes the Battle of Pavia as a “decisive military engagement between Charles V and Francis I on February 24, 1525 to liberate the city of Pavia in the region of Abruzzi, Italy. The French infantry of over 28,000 men was virtually annihilated, and Francis I was taken prisoner, actions all leading to the Peace Treaty of Madrid” (Duthie 117).

<sup>3</sup> In support of his claim, Davis cites Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Godwin’s *Caleb Williams*, both novels that present genius protagonists with obsessive pursuits, as well as doctors such as Sir Francis Galton and Samuel Johnson, who reportedly, “lived in dread of losing his reason” (Davis 58).

<sup>4</sup> Baillie never identifies the initial reader who proposed the change; however, Slagle suggests that “since the revision would have taken place before 1798 when she wanted to remain anonymous, it was probably her brother Matthew, her sister-in-law Sophia, or even their aunt Anne Hunter” (Slagle 85)

<sup>5</sup> In *The Reader’s Eye*, Ellen Esrock claims, “my purposes is to show – by reference to empirical research conducted in the science – that imaging has functional consequences that have applications to literature” (Esrock 16); Lisa Zunshine promotes “a broader case for introducing



the recent findings of cognitive scientists into literary studies by showing how their research into our ability to explain behavior in terms of the underlying states of mind—or our *mind-reading* ability—[believing such a perspective] can furnish us with a series of surprising insights into our interaction with literary texts” (Zunshine 271); Ellen Spolsky argues, “a culture’s most powerfully imaginative texts are understandable as the heroic efforts of particularly responsive minds, goaded by the inevitable asymmetry and incompleteness of mental representation to vault the gaps in brain structure thus surpassing the limitations of the biological inheritance” (Spolsky 2). In other words, literature has the ability to shift our minds passed their previously felt and understood boundaries. Mark Turner concludes, “a cognitive approach to linguistic and literary acts could potentially serve as common ground for many different theories of literature, conflicting with none of them, however incompatible they might be with each other” (Turner 22).

<sup>6</sup> An example of the algebraic sequence for metaphor:

**x** = symbol 1

**y** = symbol 2

**I** = input

**O** = output

**xm** = memories of x

**ym** = memories of y

**T** = trigger (or in the case of metaphor “is a”)

**Equation:**  $I(x + T + y) \rightarrow x(xm) + y(ym) \rightarrow O(x=y)^*$

\***(I) (Life + is a + Journey) → Life (Memories of Life) + Journey (Memories of Journey) →**

**(O) Life = Journey**

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, Sir Walter Scott uses this quote as an epigraph to introduce his 35<sup>th</sup> chapter in *Rob Roy*. It is the chapter in which Frank Osbaldistone is delivered the ring of Diana Vernon as a keepsake of their relationship.