

The Victorian Problem with Joy

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CONTRIBUTOR NOTE

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Whatever happened to joy, once the Romantic poets had bequeathed it to the Victorians as a cultural resource, and before it reappeared on the edge of Modernism, inverted but proud, as the exotic angst of the avant-garde isolato? In answer to this question it won't quite do, *pace* Frank Kermode, to gesture towards the pale cast of thought adorning Victorian poetry within that dictionary of received ideas which Modernism compiled for our benefit, and then to leave it commiseratingly at that.¹ There's just too respectable a body of counter-evidence. "What is all this juice and all this joy" that exhilarates Hopkins, in "Spring" (1877) and a dozen other major sonnets too, what but a riposte to the torpor of the saturnine?² Christina Rossetti doesn't name as *joy* the extravagance of welcome that bedecks "A Birthday," but she doesn't have to: that poem's lavishness of simile and delicacy of appointment conspire in sheer rejoicing "Because the birthday of my life / Is come, my love is come to me."³ Swinburne in naked subaqueous exuberance, Browning tossing his old yellow book for glee in the Tuscan air, likewise attest joy's persistence within major poetry of the later nineteenth century. "O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay! / He chortled in his joy": how effortlessly the celebrant glossolalia from Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" cuts through thick layers of lexical impasse to express the one thing finally needful with the one noun finally intelligible, the militant clarity of "joy."⁴

Acknowledging the ecstatic strains in Victorian poetry can induce us to think again about the generic period melancholia that we know so much better. One thought I shall advance here is that imaginative sorrow had a vital role to play in the Victorian poets' most compelling articulations of its opposite emotion: it formed part of the solution to what this paper frames as the problem with Victorian joy. But before we can see it that way, we need a firm grasp of the problem itself. The problem is historical, and in tracing its two chief phases I rejoice to concur

with Adam Potkay in his recent book *The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism*. Potkay's story there is a lot longer than mine can be here, so let me pluck from his Reformation and Romanticism chapters two episodes especially consequent for the Victorian chapter he didn't write. When Luther and Co. replaced eucharistic mysticism with "a mysticism of the Holy Spirit," whose gracious visitation was experienced by the sanctified believer as joy, this new Protestant dispensation from sacerdotal hierarchy entailed hidden costs. For "even as joy rose to prominence as a free gift that assured God's presence, it was also addressed, somewhat paradoxically, as an obligation or duty."⁵ Rejoice! – or else. Joylessness exposed you, to the world's vigilance and your own, as a goat-in-waiting, one of the non-elect.

Nourished in Britain across the sectarian seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and adapted within a body of functionally secular ethics that Potkay traces in its descent through Shaftesbury to Bentham, this mandatory Protestant joy came to the Romantic poets as a burden. Like traditional burdens of other sorts, they were eager to cast this one off. The riddling lapse of so oddly phrased a blessing as Blake's "Sweet joy befall thee!" ("Infant Joy," 1789) epitomizes the cloven restiveness with which at greater length Coleridge in "Dejection" (1802) hunkers down in the shadow cast by the radiant joy he wishes on his Sara: a darkened spirit, he emerges by that same token an un beholden one.⁶ Wordsworth, bolder as usual than Coleridge in such matters, set about reclaiming joy from the instrumentality that held it hostage to either theology or secular ethics, and redistributing it as, no longer the mystified badge of an elite, but instead "joy in widest commonalty spread": a maneuver that Potkay hails as "ecological, egalitarian, and ultimately utopian."⁷ When Wordsworth declared in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) his "faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes," he was shifting joy from the register of soteriology or salvation into that of ontology or mere being, in witness to a larger view of "the world as pure

value, free of the burden of act and obligation.”⁸ On this view humankind’s advantage over the joyous flower inhered in an epistemological bonus, ontology-with-attitude: “Our rational nature is crowned by the joy that comes with knowing its own immanence.”⁹

This liberalized, self-justifying joy of Wordsworth’s (and Schiller’s, and Beethoven’s. . .) – standing free on one hand from Christian doctrinal entailments and on the other from the mindless animal procreativity decried by Malthus and the hedonistic calculus advanced by Bentham – was a signal achievement, and one that proved culturally memorable.¹⁰ Its abiding appeal, attested in the gaudy cento of quotations flourished by our opening paragraph, may be traced across Victorian celebrations of youth like “the breeze of a joyful dawn” in Tennyson’s “Recollections of the Arabian Nights” (1830) and “the wild joys of living” in Browning’s “Saul” (1845).¹¹ The “joyous land” envisioned by the Pied Piper’s auditors (Browning, 1842) and “the joy that mixes man with Heaven” in “The Two Voices” (Tennyson, 1842) attest in different dimensions the pride of place that joy enjoyed, so to speak, within the early-Victorian utopian imaginary.¹² If it sent you out of this world, it was still joy’s privilege, unlike its more abandoned not-quite-synonyms *rapture* or *ecstasy*, to bring you back into a world restored to suit, for the nonce at least, the Edenic lineaments of gratified desire. When towards the fin de siècle Walter Pater conscripted joy into the genealogy of aesthetic impressionism, advocating a stance of “beholding for the mere joy of beholding,” he did so, with a scholar’s rightness of attribution, in an essay entitled “Wordsworth” (1889).¹³ And at mid-century John Stuart Mill recorded how it had been through Wordsworth’s poems that he, seeking therapy at twenty-something for a nervous breakdown, “seemed to draw from a source of inward joy. . . which could be shared in by all human beings.”¹⁴

The Romantic answer to the problem of joy thus quickly and steadily attracted Victorian converts. The acutest among them, however, quickly suspected that its resolution and independence were, if not too good to be true, then too profoundly true to be good unalloyed. Excluded elements of the Wordsworthian ontological truce with obligation had a way of seeping back in. From Matthew Arnold, for example, the old duties of Protestant grace returned to levy a new (and ultimately bankrupting) tax on poetic enterprise. “It is demanded” of poetry – and how harshly that impersonal verb bears down on Arnold’s self-anatomy in the Preface to *Poems* (1853) – “not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspirit and rejoice the reader; that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight.”¹⁵ Joy on demand? Delight by prescription? Some such idea still haunts the last major lyric Arnold wrote, the relentlessly valedictory “Obermann Once More” (1867):

“ ‘And yet men have such need of joy!
 But joy whose grounds are true;
 And joy that should all hearts employ
 As when the past was new.’ ”¹⁶

The ungainly doubled quotation marks – during an Alpine stroll Arnold has run into the conspicuously Wordsworthian figure of Senancour’s Obermann (“A mountain-flower was in his hand, / A book was in his breast,” ll. 65-6), whose monologue then proceeds to incorporate, at many stanzas’ length, remarks that Obermann repeats from a former occasion – betoken Arnold’s uneasy relation to the history of a joy he can only covet, and can scarcely claim to remember at first hand, though apparently that at least was possible once upon a time “when the

past was new.” Not the Christian’s or the Romantic’s *new life*, but a *new past* is now all that may be yearned after: a nostalgia that, while still alienated from primary experience, shall at least feel like the first time memory imparted its true, if derivative, shock of recognition.

The prospect of such renovation is not much brightened by the internal rhyme, telling yet lame, of “joy” with “employ” in line three. To conceive of joy, even on these scrupulously mediated terms, as a *need*, and of the poet as joy’s hard-working supplier in an epoch of scanty yields, was to reinstate with a vengeance the old Reformation mandate of obligatory rejoicing, and to forestall the gospel’s good news with the missionary’s to-do list. It was to disqualify from office the poet who could not in conscience rise to the stated demand; and, in Arnold’s case, it was to turn him from a poet into a critic.¹⁷ When in his chosen capacity as critic Arnold went back to Wordsworth in 1879, he found there, with Mill and in just Mill’s metaphor too, a sharable “source of joy” that met the standard of Senancour’s Obermann, being joy of “the truest and most accessible” kind and – the famous line is singled out for quotation – “joy in widest commonalty spread.” Yet even then Arnold read back into the great Romantic the terms of his own Victorian poetic disenfranchisement; for what Wordsworth turned out to impart, to Arnold the critic, was “the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections *and duties*.”¹⁸

It’s not that the Victorians, having traced Romantic joy to its lucid “source,” proceeded to erect a bottling plant on the site. Still, something about the lip-smacking way Mill describes Wordsworth’s poetry as “the precise thing for my mental wants” suggests that he would have endorsed the therapeutic utility of an industry along those lines, much as he had advocated, in “What Is Poetry?” (1833), the public issue of poems whose paradoxical quintessence it was to evince “utter unconsciousness of a listener.”¹⁹ We verge here on utilitarian problems of adequation and measurement – the instrumental *quantification* of joy – that stubbornly adhered

to the doctrine whereby the Romantics had sought to slough it off: the doctrine, namely, that joy was to be experienced as pure, disinterested *quality*. It remained for their Victorian descendants the Brownings to surmise that this doctrine and its defining opposite the felicific calculus of Bentham, being contraries in a Blakean sense, could not be effectually parted for long. Strange nonce tropes like “weights of joy” in *Aurora Leigh* and “spendthrift joy” in *The Ring and the Book* have bills of lading and cost overruns on the brain. Aurora the poet of overflow not once but twice refers to a “capacity for joy”: seemingly an engineer’s phrase that, whether or not the capacity is satisfied, bespeaks anxieties of dearth, or of glut, and to that extent solicits some kind of econometric adjustment.²⁰

That no such adjustment was forthcoming constituted the implacable verdict of Cleon, Robert Browning’s eponymous poet of antiquity from *Men and Women* (1855), caught in a zero-sum game that Cleon’s first-century Hellenic mind confidently, and in equal measure despairingly, regards as the only one in town. Self-awareness, what Cleon calls “the sense of sense” whereby “Man’s spirit might grow conscious of man’s life,” at once distinguishes humanity in the scale of animal life and fastens it there beyond escape.

For thence we have discovered (’tis no dream –
We know this, which we had not else perceived)
That there’s a world of capability
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
And still the flesh replies, “Take no jot more
Than ere thou clombst the tower to look abroad!
Nay, so much less as that fatigue has brought

Deduction to it.” We struggle, fain to enlarge
Our bounded physical recipiency,
Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,
Repair the waste of age and sickness: no,
It skills not! life’s inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take. ²¹

The soul sees things this way, in terms of frustrated adequation, because it can’t help imagining – again twice over as in Barrett Browning’s very similar “capacity for joy,” and what’s more enjambed here each time for good measure – a “capability / For joy” (ll. 239-40, 326-7). A balked technocrat of affect, Cleon frankly approaches joy as an untapped resource, limitless in theory yet of strictly bounded practical utility: “a man can use but a man’s joy / While he sees God’s.” This calibrated incommensurability, which condemns humankind to a transcendently tantalizing “joy-hunger,” overturns Romantic joy’s immanent equilibrium, leaving a Malthusian balance-due that no power in heaven or earth can clear.²² All told, both Brownings suggest, “capacity” and “capability” are killjoys; where joy is at issue it is probably better not to count your blessings.

And yet count them, in practice, a poet must. That is what Victorian poets did, given their vocational investment (increasingly conspicuous during a century increasingly dominated by prose modes) in metrics, quantities, the exigencies and chances of fixed literary form as techniques for, as Browning told Ruskin, “putting the infinite within the finite.”²³ The problem of joy forms an illustrative special case of the general challenge that drew poets to sublime or unutterable or excessive themes, in order that they might break ineffability to measure – or at least wrestle it to a draw. Cleon and Aurora Leigh are both of them poets, and by the vicarious

trade they drive with “capacity” and “capability” their shortfall in joy is the Brownings’ gain. In this sense quantification served as one Victorian solution to the problem of joy’s representation. The dutifulness we remarked in Arnold served as another solution – or so it might have done, had Arnold been less staunchly loyal to the ideal he had adopted from Wordsworth but couldn’t live up to. Both solutions set a limit to joy, which is what Victorians needed if they were to work with it as artists: a limit that left what Potkay calls joy’s “ecological, egalitarian, and ultimately utopian” sublimity intact but defined it differentially, afforded a human edge.

3

A more successful and widely adopted differential solution is the one I mentioned at starting, the dialectical correlation of joy with its affective opposites sorrow, pain, and grief. The path to this Victorian solution was blazed early by Romantic poets of the second generation, especially Keats. Flush with the new Wordsworthian gospel of joy’s mere being, Keats exulted to affirm in the opening line of his journeyman opus *Endymion* (1818) that “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.” Before long, though, this most brilliant of disciples was playing valedictorian, as heroic immersion in a de-transcendentalized world of immanence broke the Romantic bank, “burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine,” and brought forth instead the vision of “Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips / Bidding adieu.”²⁴ These lines from 1819 culminate an ode to, of all beautiful things, Melancholy, a poem that influenced Victorian literature more pervasively than any other Keatsian treatment of this essential theme.

That goes even for what falls first on the ear as Tennyson’s response not to the “Melancholy” but to the “Nightingale” ode, the “Wild bird” lyric from *In Memoriam* (1850; section 88). The conjugation of joy with its opposites had interested this poet at least since, in

his first solo collection, the trumpet-call of “The Dying Swan” (1830) rang out across the waste “with joy / Hidden in sorrow.” When Ulysses (1842) says, “all times I have enjoyed / Greatly, have suffered greatly,” the tandem contrast of joy with suffering is superintended in advance by an enjambed intimation that, at the end of the day as of the line, Tennyson’s hero has greatly enjoyed it all. Why that might be the case – why sorrow might not only hide joy but in poetic practice actually secure it– emerges during *In Memoriam* 88:

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I – my harp would prelude woe –
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.²⁵

The first two stanzas drill down like miners into a joy that dwells under dense cover, and that remains radically enigmatic even once it is unwrapped. From the blind synaesthesia where hearing, touch, and taste “mix” in line 3, line 4 breaks through feeling-as-sensation to feeling-as-

emotion. Then line 5 digs further and follows the “passions” back from their point of contingent intersection towards their common source. And there, in that “midmost heart” or Keatsian sovereign shrine, deep below the windy turbulence of passion’s instrumental extremity in the world’s “employ,” abides in calm a nuclear joy that is not grief’s contradiction but its complement; its secret sharer and, perhaps, its enabler.

It is toward questions of enablement, and agency, that the final stanza pivots, on the strength of an implied analogy between the affective reciprocation of grief with joy and the aesthetic reciprocation of poet with medium, and of intentional craft with serendipitous execution. Tennyson’s account of creativity here, like so much else that *In Memoriam* accounts for, is suffused with a transitional ambivalence about which the poet manages in passing to be surprisingly precise. His precision tool is ambiguity, sustained across stanza three and signaled right away by the dash breaks in its first line. Are the poetic “I” and his metonymic “harp” in concert with each other or at odds? In either case, is an intention to play the blues (to “prelude woe”) blind-sided by a burst of flashing “glory”? Or is it the other way round, and is the will to publish that “secret joy” from line 8 frustrated by melancholic inertia, no sooner flashed along the chords than gone, in such a way that the real “sum of things,” at the poetic bottom line, abides in grief’s keeping rather than joy’s? At all events, grief and woe impose by complementarity a limit on joy, such that it remains a poetically workable entity, even as joy remains in essence uncontrolled, beyond contingency, “command” or even prediction. In this ambivalence the poet’s song resembles that of the nightingale, awakening in retrospect a syntactic ambiguity within lines 5-6. For it’s not clear whether the “fierce extremes” employ the “spirits” of the “wild bird” or vice versa, and indeed the question is one that by nature forbids a decisive answer. That’s the problem with joy and, properly understood, its solution too. The

creative process – for that matter the healing process of *In Memoriam*, as it guides melancholia through mourning into balance – requires openness to inspiration, and also requires the focussing discipline of articulation: the two keep each other honest.

Notwithstanding the confession in line 10, no Victorian had better command of “the strings” of poetic art than Tennyson. He knew the ropes so well, in fact, that he shows us here the tactical wisdom of relinquishing command at times and, to gloss a Keatsian ambivalence with a Blakean epigram, of “kissing the joy as it flies.”²⁶ That was how to promote joy from the mere subject of a poem into its very substance and, by clasping the secret of joy’s transiency within the passage of the verse, to make good at last on the elusive Romantic fiction of ontological joy: to perform it in the text. Thus line 1 of *In Memoriam* 88 not only hears the nightingale but voices it, in a run of warbling w’s and narrowing vowels that mount to the bird-call onomatopoeia of “sweet.”

Sweet joy befall thee: this happiest of epithets comes up again and again in the airborne rejoicings of Victorian poetry, where it renders at once joy’s bliss in being and a recursive delight in its own lucky rendition, in the timbre of a language that rings true. Hopkins’s incomplete manuscript “The Woodlark” (1876) provides a most elaborate instance, as the impersonated bird concludes in a *Sprechstimme* that so speaks, or sings, for itself as to make further versifying beside the point:

To the nest’s nook I balance and buoy
With a sweet joy of a sweet joy,
Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy
Of a sweet – a sweet – sweet – joy.²⁷

Joy's sweet treble likewise inhabits the hymeneal chant of Jean Ingelow's "Like a Laverock in the Lift" (from *Mopsa the Fairy*, 1869): manifestly in the line "I am thine, and thou art mine; life is sweet and new," and also by manic honeymoon homonymy in the repeated "It's we two, it's we two, it's we two."²⁸ For a richer cocktail mingling performative joy with mimetic melancholy, recall the embouchure that is exacted of the reader once Pan puts pipe to lip in Barrett Browning's "A Musical Instrument" (1862): "Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan! / Piercing sweet by the river! / Blinding sweet!" Slain nature comes back to second life at music's enchanting summons, yet the poem is stricken to acknowledge the "piercing," "blinding" sacrifice of primary imagination that grounds art's very existence. In our immediately previous instances the distance between avian and human lets poetry wield an emotion that both species are supposed to share; this distance mutates with Barrett Browning into an estrangement of the human from itself, the beastly violence of a god's "Making a poet out of a man."²⁹ The immense bitterness here does not unsweeten tragic joy; quite the contrary.

4

If poetic joy was in shorter supply as the nineteenth century grew old, that is partly because poets of the fin de siècle had learned from their High Victorian precursors to stickle for the genuine article, whose touchstone was not mere Romantic being but the authenticating definition joy took from such contrastive states as we have been considering: moral obligation, the economics of affective scarcity, the contagious propinquity of what an earlier lyric of *In Memoriam* called "sorrow touched with joy."³⁰ So, according to the indissolubly cloven Hellenism of Michael Field in 1893, when the god Eros gets out on the wrong side of bed looking like hell, he doesn't suffer his spitefulness but takes the spice of it like snuff: "He joys to

toss and spread / Sparkles of pitchy, rankling flame, / He joys to play with death.”³¹ Like the great god Pan sweetening the life he ruins, this divine toy-boy relishes the perversion of categorical human norms, playing control against violence in a pattern-making game whose quotient of pleasure and risk is one that poetry lovers will hail and embrace as their own.

Hardy in “The Darkling Thrush,” at the end of the end of the century (dateline: “31 December 1900”), recaps a Victorian tradition of Romantic reception by allotting joy two carefully measured cheers:

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-throated evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small. . . .

Joy without limit must, in order for Hardy to find it poetically viable, be disowned as somebody else’s – and must thereby be limited.³² Here joy is vouchsafed to an aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small enough to know better than to indulge in such new-year’s-eve carousing – a knowledge encoded in the unenjambéd sweep of four lines curbed only at “illimited,” a paradoxical line-breaker that wings the line to come with commas like birdshot. Before the poem is over Hardy will guardedly concede that the thrush may know a thing or two after all, that its holiday-making may be rooted, like that of Tennyson’s nightingale, in a sweet perennial knowledge, and that its joy may thus be the Arnoldian kind whose grounds are true. But this is only on condition of Hardy’s excluding any such knowledge from his own ken, right to the bitter end: “whereof he knew / And I was unaware.”³³ Also, I think, on condition of his having

justified this disclaimer in advance by performing prosodically the distaste that attaches to being “illimited,” or as we still and oddly say *overjoyed*: “At once a voice arose among. . .” *Callooh callay*, anybody? In the galumphing anaphora of these four iambs what else is afoot? I think it is Hardy’s ironic vigilance lest joy cloy, lest sweetness sour, and lest too spendthrift a rejoicing, too rote a spree, unspell something more precious: the blessed, halting promise of hope.

¹ Kermode’s 1957 *Romantic Image* (rpt. London: Routledge, 2002), while essential background reading on our topic, leaves the topic itself unaddressed. Kermode discusses a “joy (which acquires an almost technical sense as a necessary concomitant of the full exercise of the mind in the act of imagination)” (p. 9), which through the Romantic redefinition of “the relationship of *utile* to *dulce*. . . conduces to morality” (p. 15), and which in its Yeatsian vindication of “the free, self-delighting intellect which knows that pain is the cost of its joy. . . represents the victory of Coleridge, of Blake and the French” (p. 33) – but not, apparently, a victory owing so much as an assist to a single Victorian anglophone. Even the discerning analysis of Arnold’s 1852 *Empedocles on Etna* surveys a broken road to nowhere that Victorian poets could not take, on Kermode’s showing, because they remained committed only to “apparent joy, not to the truth of disaster” (p. 23). My essay paves no highway through the alleged Victorian wasteland, but the stepping-stones it arranges may facilitate a still much needed literary-historical correction.

² “Spring” l. 9, in *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 67.

³ “A Birthday” ll. 15-6, in *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, ed. R. W. Crump, vol. 1 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), p. 37.

⁴ Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), ch. 6, in *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. Donald J. Gray (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 164.

⁵ Adam Potkay, *The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 73.

⁶ Blake, “Infant Joy” ll. 6 and 12, in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul* (1794), ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967), plate 25; Coleridge, “Dejection: An Ode,” in *Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), pp. 362-8. On Coleridge’s ambivalence about his own vivid but intermittent “Bacchic sense of participation in the creative energies of the cosmos” (p. 38), see George H. Gilpin, Jr, *The Strategy of Joy: An Essay on the Poetry of S. T. Coleridge* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1972).

⁷ Potkay, p. 122. The quoted line from Wordsworth’s “Home at Grasmere” (part of the unfinished *Recluse* manuscript) was published in his 1814 preface to *The Excursion* as line 18 of “a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem” – and, by extrapolation, of Wordsworth’s entire poetic career. *Poetical Works*, rev. ed. Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 589-90. On the complexity with which “Home at Grasmere” not only articulates but also queries the poet’s philosophy of joy, see Stephen C. Gill, “Wordsworth’s ‘Never Failing Principle of Joy,’” *ELH* 34 (1967) 208-24.

⁸ Laurence S. Lockridge, *The Ethics of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 231 (from a chapter entitled, notably, “The Tragic Wordsworth”); “Lines Written in Early Spring” ll. 11-12, in Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, p. 377.

⁹ Potkay, p. 122.

¹⁰ What preoccupied a disapproving Malthus in his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population* abides as a chiefly beneficial principle in Kay Redfield Jamison's upbeat *Exuberance: The Passion for Life* (New York: Knopf, 2004), where research into "dopamine and opioid systems" (160) and the neuroscientific association of play with the "brain source of joy" (58) support the titular term's etymology (*uberare*, to be fruitful) as "a primitive life force vital to survival": "In the exuberance of nature begins our own" (22-5). Not only is joy good; it's good for you.

¹¹ "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" l. 1, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Longman, 1969), p. 206; "Saul" l. 70, in Robert Browning, *The Poems*, ed. John Pettigrew and Thomas J. Collins, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 691; in Browning's first, shorter (-lined) version of 1845 the phrase occurs at l. 137.

¹² "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" l. 240, in Browning, *Poems*, vol. 1, p. 389; "The Two Voices" l. 210, in Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 531.

¹³ Pater, *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan, 1889), p. 62.

¹⁴ Mill, *Autobiography*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 89 (ch. 5). Mill first drafted the autobiography in 1853.

¹⁵ *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, 2nd ed. Kenneth and Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 1979), p. 655.

¹⁶ "Obermann Once More" ll. 237-40, in *Poems*, p. 572. A note to these lines in the Allott edition quotes Senancour's doctrine that "le destination de l'homme est d'accroître le sentiment de la joie": a culturally and historically specific "sentiment" that, this poem strongly

suggests, has been destined by the very success of its increase and dissemination to grow thin and old.

¹⁷ I pursue this argument at greater length in "Arnold and the Authorization of Criticism," in *Knowing the Past: Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. Suzy Anger (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 100-20.

¹⁸ *Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold*, ed. A. Dwight Culler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 343 (italics added). More subtly: as Gill (note 7 supra) reads Wordsworth's uneasy poetic relation to the philosophic *ideal* of joy, "Duty is now seen as the price one must pay for delight. . . . a limiting attitude" (p. 224). So Arnold the critic may have it right about Wordsworth's duteous rejoicing after all.

¹⁹ Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 88; "What Is Poetry?" in *Literary Essays*, ed. Edward Alexander (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 56

²⁰ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, ed. Kerry McSweeney (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9.843 (p. 321), 1.689 and 6.921 (pp. 24 and 212); Robert Browning, *The Ring and the Book*, ed. Richard D. Altick and Thomas J. Collins (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 7.1520 (p. 433). Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* (1863, book 2) participated in this same weights-and-measures program of emotional rationing, engineered by the Creator with utilitarian thrift – "But He who made the heart / To use proportions joy" ("Joy and Use": canto 7, Prelude 1) – and with an incentive bonus system to boot: "Live greatly; so shalt thou acquire / Unknown capacities of joy" ("Platonic Love": canto 11, Prelude 1).

²¹ "Cleon" ll. 224-8 and 238-50, in Browning, *Poems*, vol. 1, p. 717.

²² “Cleon” ll. 261-2 and 328 (pp. 718 and 720). Compare the ecstatic aria at the climax of Browning’s 1835 lyrical drama *Paracelsus*, where the dying mage postulates for the soul “fit delights to stay its longings vast” and, “grappling Nature,” aspires to “prevail on her / To fill the creature full she dared thus frame / Hungry for joy” (5.606-9, in *Poems*, vol. 1, p. 134).

²³ *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 36 (London: Allen, 1909), p. xxxiv.

²⁴ *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* 1.1, and “Ode on Melancholy” ll. 22 and 28, in Keats, *Complete Poems*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge MA and London: Belknap Press, 1978), pp. 65 and 284.

²⁵ “The Dying Swan” ll. 22-3, “Ulysses” ll. 7-8, and *In Memoriam* section 88, in Tennyson, *Poems*, pp. 231, 562, and 939.

²⁶ “Eternity” l. 4, in *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, 4th ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), p. 461.

²⁷ “The Woodlark” ll. 43-6, in Hopkins, *Poems*, p. 178.

²⁸ “Like a Laverock in the Lift” ll. 1, 6, 10, 15, in *The Poetical Works of Jean Ingelow* (New York and Boston: Crowell, 1894), p. 515.

²⁹ “A Musical Instrument” ll. 31-3 and 39, in *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, rev. ed. Ruth M. Adams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 438.

³⁰ *In Memoriam* section 28, l.19, in Tennyson, *Poems*, p. 888.

³¹ Michael Field, “Love rises up some days” ll. 15-17, in *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology*, ed. Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 494.

³² Hardy’s is a special case of a distinct Shelleyan problematic (see “To a Sky-Lark,” 1820), but the condition he treats is more general. Thus Gilpin, p. 182, finds a fascinating

revision (or lapse) in Coleridge's 1819 lecture notes on music's power to produce "infinite Joy" in one version, "infantine Joy" in another. As the boundless morphs into the speechless (*in-fans*), the anagrammatic swap tells a tale, not only about Coleridge's ideal of "freedom from the cares of adult life," but about why it must remain only an ideal, at most vicariously enjoyed, if the poet is to write.

³³ "The Darkling Thrush" ll. 17-21 and 31-2, in *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. James Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1976), p. 150.

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