

William Godwin's Enquirer: Between Oratory and Conversation

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1. Hume on Oratory

*A*dam Potkay's account of the decline of oratorical eloquence and the rise of polite conversation in eighteenth-century Britain features David Hume's allusive, nostalgia-filled, and irresolute essay "Of Eloquence." In discussing this landmark essay, Potkay pinpoints an ambivalence that widely "characterizes the political and aesthetic discourses of midcentury Britain,"¹ an ambivalence, I would argue, that is not absent from late-century Britain as well. Potkay traces Hume's "enthusiasm" for the ancient orators' spirited language to Longinus's praise of "sublime" passages in Demosthenes and Cicero: they leave "an impression figured by Hume in terms of light and heat, the 'blaze of eloquence,' [and] the 'inflammation' of the audience...." Irradiated with this illustrious tradition, Hume regrets that "it is precisely this sense of heat that has passed from the modern assembly," yet his essay provides a strangely digressive ending, "call[ing] for expository cohesion" rather than showing how "light and heat" might be incorporated in some degree in modern speaking. Hume completely sidesteps the crucial question – "how is ancient eloquence suited to an age that does not want its passions inflamed?"² In most scholarly accounts, Hume figures largely as the advocate of polite conversation, a representative of the ideology of politeness. Potkay fully credits Hume's central role in the cultural shift to a conversational ethos, but he also remarks that Hume never entirely relinquished his nostalgia for ancient eloquence.³

As the period's rhetoric texts testify, the teaching (and learning) of eloquence continued active throughout the eighteenth century and beyond. Brian Vickers offers his "impression ... that the general attitudes of rhetoric had been absorbed by a literary culture some of whose members rejected its detail, and especially its technicalities," but accepted its views on general principles. Observing the influence of classical rhetoric on Romantic-era writers like Goethe and Wordsworth, Vickers says: "Cicero continued to be a living part of the educated Englishman or American's culture until well into the nineteenth century."⁴ It is mainly the influence of philosophers such as John Locke, according to Vickers, that has obscured "the continuity of the rhetorical tradition"; particularly targeting figurative language, Locke characterized rhetoric as an art of fallacy and deception and helped to spawn a "new rhetoric" valorizing plain language, simplicity, and clarity.⁵ The influence of this new rhetoric proceeded side-by-side with the influence of politeness in discrediting vehement and elaborated discourse.⁶ Yet Hugh Blair, whose *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) historians usually take as epitomizing the shift from the focus on oratory to the focus on (literary) taste, nonetheless exhibits the same ambivalence about eloquence that Potkay attributes to Hume; more importantly for our study of Godwin, Blair remains alert to the civic implications of persuasive speech. About oratory in Athens, for example, Blair says: "public speaking was not a mere competition for empty applause, but a serious contention for the public leading, which was the great object both of men of ambition, and the men of virtue." Though admitting "that ambitious demagogues, and corrupt orators, did sometimes dazzle and mislead the people by a showy but false Eloquence; for the Athenians, with all their acuteness, were factious and giddy," Blair insists that, "when some important interest drew their attention, when any great danger roused them, and put their judgment to a serious trial, they commonly distinguished, very justly between genuine and spurious Eloquence...."⁷

At century's end William Godwin was heir to the eighteenth-century quarrel, and his collection of essays entitled *The Enquirer* (like Hume's essays) was the product of continuing tensions in the prevailing opinions. In his preface, Godwin presents the collection as a departure from his mode of reasoning and communicating in the *Enquiry concerning Political Understanding*: from concentration on rational truth and deductive rigor in a treatise mode he turns to empirical discovery in an essaistic conversational mode. Scholars such as Mark Philp and Julie Carlson have nonetheless remarked on the continuity of Godwin's reform purpose in the essays, even while exploring (in different ways) the change in the scene and manner of accomplishing his purpose. Most recently, Jon Mee has worked out a discriminating account of Godwin's views of conversation that distinguish his from the many other routes conversation took in the late eighteenth century. Mee credits the civic humanist thread in Godwin's theory of conversation, though (following Philp) he emphasizes the decisive influence of Dissenting culture. Clearly, Godwin did not simply reincarnate Hume (nor did the political conditions of Godwin's day simply recapitulate those of Hume's day). Yet Hume was evidently an important reference point for Godwin's thinking about eloquence, among other subjects. Godwin's diary between 1791 and 1796 records many readings of Hume's writings, especially his *Essays, Moral and Political* and his *History of England*. It is very likely that on 27 September 1791 he read Hume's essay "On Eloquence," for besides recording a reading of Hume's *Essays*, he also records "Tea at Nicholson's: talk of rhetoric."⁸ Godwin meets Hume at the juncture of many similar issues that indicate a continuity between mid- and late-century cultural conditions, and Hume's quandary (as a point of comparison) illuminates Godwin's handling of these issues.

The first of these issues has already been indicated in the mention of Blair: namely, the dilemma between representing oratory as an instrument of liberty and patriotism and representing it as a tool of demagoguery and despotism. As Potkay observes, Hume is writing the early version of his essay on eloquence during an era of Country Party

opposition to the ministry of Robert Walpole. To some extent Hume shared the assumption this party adopted from ancient writers, such as Tacitus and Longinus, that eloquence is both characteristic of popular government and the proper expression of civic virtue. As a matter of style and even of policy, the spokesmen for the Opposition frequently invoked what Potkay calls the “Demosthenic Moment,” that moment when an orator (like Demosthenes against the Macedonians) calls upon a somnolent people to awake and unite in facing a common threat. Through the sympathy created by his eloquence, the patriotic orator gains his hearers’ identification with his own projected emotions and consequently their support for his proposed actions.⁹ Potkay shows that in the 1730s and 1740s Hume tended to side with the Opposition, even if he did not espouse republican principles, but from 1753 to 1770, when he several times revised the eloquence essay, he increasingly distrusted eloquence, largely because he “fear[ed] that it was being used by men like Wilkes and Pitt [the elder] to inflame the inferior sort.” Instead of praising a sublime style, Potkay says, Hume “now judges Pitt’s oratory by the standards of a plain or polite style.”¹⁰ It is mainly during this latter period that Hume joins “the governing elite” in articulating politeness as an ideology “intended to consolidate the members of the gentry and professional orders.”¹¹

Godwin invoked the civic eloquence-liberty link in his 1783 biography of William Pitt the elder (later Lord Chatham), particularly in recounting Pitt’s early career as a collaborator with the Opposition to Walpole. As I have shown elsewhere, Godwin analyzes the oratory, in turn, of Walpole’s supporters, the Opposition to Walpole, and William Pitt to measure their possession of civic virtue at this crucial time in Britain’s political history and to distribute audience sympathy accordingly.¹² The “virtue” Godwin has in mind denotes independence from the corrupting influence of the court, which through the minister controlled distribution of lucrative offices.¹³ In the Pitt biography, partly written to serve the interest of the Rockingham Party, but also ultimately to serve the purpose of parliamentary reform, Pitt’s career is marked

alternately by periods of exalted eloquence and desiccated oratory as he fluctuates between selfless statesmanship and self-serving ambition. Godwin garners admiration for Pitt at the point of his greatest political (and possibly moral) achievement, as he embodies a kind of Demosthenic Moment, using his oratorical genius to mobilize and motivate the British people toward victory in the French and Indian War. Godwin himself, while explicitly endorsing impartiality and clarity, indulges in moments of high eloquence to acquire sympathy for Pitt's dilemmas. Yet in observing Pitt's subjection to the vacillations of popular sympathy, Godwin also registers a certain futility in oratory that depends on popular reception for its efficacy and thus undermines individual agency, on which the possibilities for moral and political reform depend.

The Pitt biography of 1783 indicates some continuity between the political changes that occurred during Hume's career and those that occurred during Godwin's, leading both men to amplify their wariness of oratory, though the trajectories of their political hopes and fears did diverge. In the final version of the *Essays*, Hume anticipated the euthanasia of Britain's mixed government as a gradually approaching absolute monarchy. He argued, however, that this fate was preferable to a speedy, violent termination in demagogic despotism, consequent on parliamentary usurpation and the inevitable devolution into factional divisions experienced in the civil wars.¹⁴ But this apprehension does not entail that Hume believed absolute monarchy was essentially better than an established mixed government. As his weighing of possible terminations to England's present constitution culminates, he recommends that parties avoid either choice by maintaining "moderation in all of our political controversies."¹⁵ While Hume at mid-century anticipated the advent of absolute monarchy, by the 1790s Godwin was looking toward the withering away of the state. In the 1783 biography, Godwin's rendering of Pitt's career argued that bringing into parliament men of more consistent and exalted principles would result in a fundamental and lasting reform of government, and in his journalism of

this period he explicitly supported first the Rockingham and then the Foxite Whigs in classical civist terms. During the few heady years after the French Revolution and the renewed Dissenting agitation for the repeal of the Test Acts, Godwin quite openly took a radical turn that carried him well beyond Hume's moderation and well beyond party politics. By 1793, with the *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, he was arguing for the steady enlightenment of the professional and literate classes, eventuating in an "acephalous" community.¹⁶ This was a position clearly at the extreme opposite from Hume's euthanasia of government, and it was taken in a period of even more intense revolutionary activity than the Wilkesite fervors of the 1760s. Yet as the government's rigorous suppression of dissidents geared up, Godwin increasingly held (like Hume) that assembled crowds and Demosthenic speakers presented conditions blocking rather than fostering enlightenment.

As various scholars have pointed out, Hume saw conversation in gendered terms – polite conversation was a feminine "empire," where the combative spirit of ancient oratory and modern dispute was moderated and where the milder passions encouraged a reformation of manners as a desirable alternative to political struggle.¹⁷ Even though Godwin, like Hume, embraced the venue of conversation as the scene of social reform, his version of conversation in 1793 still required complete sincerity and frank confrontation. His reform agenda did not ignore rhetorical means of conciliating one's listeners, yet he avoided the politeness solution of Hume almost entirely. In the *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, Godwin addressed the problem of effecting transition from a society governed by inherited laws and institutions, only "virtually" representative and ordered toward the interests mainly of the landowning classes, to a society governed by private judgment, enlightened by reason and ordered toward the interests of all the individuals in the society.¹⁸ Godwin's conception of these interests was greatly influenced by his affiliation with Dissenting intellectuals and professionals.¹⁹ In his ongoing discussions with these friends during the writing of *Political Justice*, Godwin discovered a way to replace traditional institutions with

conversation as a civic institution, a mode of discussion that would in practical terms connect political acting with rational thinking and speaking. At first his line of thinking tended simply to replace oratory with the discourse of science (broadly speaking, philosophical discourse), but he seemed to sense that his notion of rigorous argument would work to the detriment of the civic function of conversation by limiting participation to a small coterie. He evidently preferred this outcome to the control of government by political associations dominated by demagogues and fueled by uneducated masses, but as he began more carefully to distinguish his views from those of the radical orators, he developed a more inclusive view of the kind of rhetoric appropriate to a reforming society.

As a means toward effecting the transition to an acephalous society, Godwin advocated that individuals improve themselves through “reading and conversation” in small groups, envisioning that “the studious and reflecting” would improve the educated, but less critical, self-serving members of “the higher orders.” In contrast, “the multitude” would, by reason of their inferior education and lack of leisure, be excluded from these two-way discussions, but would gain improvement through the exhibition of examples and “a very short catalogue of reasons.”²⁰ In the process of defining the mode of educated discussion, however, Godwin evolved a concept of what I would call “dialogic rhetoric,” merging philosophical-scientific discourse, that is, close reasoning informed by reading and reflection, with the informality of “candid and unreserved conversation.”²¹ It would be more intensely purposive than informal conversation, but more simple than philosophical interchange. At the same time, it would not eschew the vehement style of oratory or other rhetorical aids, but these would arise naturally from the passion for truth rather than be imposed as artificial elaborations. This plain but ardent style of communication would in turn make science less abstruse and specialized and render it “accessible to all.”²² Ultimately Godwin anticipated that, at the same time that enlightenment would spread through discussion, discussion

would become more capable of replacing traditional governing institutions. In short, Godwin did not abandon the civic function of oratory but, changing its institutional venue, he adapted its character and opened it to further adaptation in a democratic direction.

Aware of the dilemma faced by Hume of whether oratory fosters liberty or despotism, Godwin casts the solution in 1793 in terms of the style and forum of communication. But he leaves a *second* related issue in rather sketchy form. This issue comprises two concerns: how will the poorly educated and unleisured public acquire the capacity for the more active participation that the less abstruse conversation promises, if such improvement depends on reading as well as conversation? And how will the more educated yet unenlightened participants become capable of the philosophy-informed conversation leading to this change? John Thelwall targeted the former difficulty when he commented: "The visionary peculiarities of mind, which in the midst of all its excellencies, mark the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, cannot have escaped the observation of the attentive reader; and in the midst of the singularities with which that remarkable work abounds, nothing is more remarkable than that it should at once recommend the most extensive plan of freedom and innovation ever discussed by any writer in the English language, and reprobate every measure from which even the most moderate reform can be rationally expected."²³ Thelwall expresses his profound disappointment with Godwin's criticism averring that "lectures" to crowds were inappropriate to the investigation of truth and the instruction of the masses. In *Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr Pitt's Bills* (1795), Godwin had written: "Strict disquisition, especially to persons not much in the habits of regular thinking, is difficult to understand: it requires too active and laborious an attention." Not just the audience but the venue itself is prohibitive of "Sober inquiry": "theatres and halls of assembly" call for "oratorical seasoning," but "All oratorical seasoning is an appeal to the passions," and thus must arouse the masses, despite "the saving clauses that are, from time to time, introduced into the discourse."²⁴ Thelwall had anticipated this view when

he wrote (circa 1792): "It is, I acknowledge, in the silence and solitude of the closet, that long rooted prejudices are *finally renounced*, and *erroneous* opinions changed: but the materials of truth are collected in conversation and debate: and the sentiments at which we most revolt, in the warmth of discussion, is [*sic*] frequently the source of meditations, which terminate in settled convictions."²⁵

Godwin would likely have noticed that Thelwall here elides conversation and oratory in order to locate public lectures as the place where the public may obtain "the materials of truth." In his 1796 revision of *Political Justice*, Godwin makes it clear that "the source of meditations," not just their result, is found in "the silence and solitude of the closet," where one may read, reflect, and prepare for discussion with others. Although he admits that "Books have by their very nature but a limited operation," he asserts that "on account of their permanence, their methodical disquisition, and their easiness of access, they are entitled to the foremost place." He goes on of course to remark on the "constitutional coldness" of books and to praise the liveliness of "conversation," which "accustoms us to hear a variety of sentiments, obliges us to exercise patience and attention, and gives freedom and elasticity to our disquisitions." Yet here he is talking primarily about the benefit accruing to the "thinking man," who is also the reading man. It is the small group of studious readers that is the source of reformation because only this condition can produce fruitful debate. "Let us figure to ourselves a number of individuals, who, having first stored their minds with reading and reflection, proceed afterwards in candid and unreserved conversation to compare their ideas, suggest their doubts, examine their mutual difficulties, and cultivate a collected and striking manner of delivering their sentiments."²⁶ When it comes to communicating what has been learned, Godwin is also concerned with rhetorical matters, as this quotation indicates. He envisions "these men, prepared by mutual intercourse, [going] forth into the world, to explain with succinctness and simplicity, and in a manner calculated to arrest attention, the true principles of society" and "their hearers instigated in their turn to repeat

these truths to their companions.” Godwin waxes eloquent as he envisions enlightenment proceeding from group to group: “Does the fewness of their numbers imply the rarity of their existence? Far otherwise: show to mankind by an adequate example the advantages of political discussion undebauched by political enmity and vehemence, and the beauty of the spectacle will soon render it contagious ... Every man will be eager to tell and hear what the interests of all require them to know.”²⁷ Godwin ironically uses language characteristic of communicating with crowds – referring approvingly to the sympathetic contagion of the (conversational) spectacle – to indicate the scope that group-by-group conversation will ultimately attain without risking the passions of the crowd.

These quotations suggest that the problem disabling the educated but insufficiently enlightened from reforming their mode of discussion will prove quite similar to (even continuous with) the problem disabling the insufficiently educated masses from joining in such discussion. In the 1796 *Political Justice*, Godwin finds reading *cum* discussion to be the initial step and targets the insufficiently enlightened. While (as he believed) the working classes lacked the leisure or inclination for reading and hard thinking, and deference colored all their views, by 1797, when he wrote the *Enquirer* essays, it is evident that he believed the educated classes too were blocked – by habits of lax reasoning, undisciplined reading, and an undeveloped conversational manner. The fact that Godwin turns his attention to the education of the child shows that he discerned these shortcomings and, still believing in the centrality of informed conversation to moral and political reform, decided that it would be more successful if the training were begun early rather than later superimposed upon adult habits. As Godwin had already discovered by the conclusion of Book 2 of the 1793 *Political Justice*, it is change in education at least as much as change in government that is required for deep reform.

While the following chapters of *Political Justice* are geared toward effecting that (moral and political) education, they do not reach into the

process of re-forming habits of reasoning, reading, and speaking. But the 1797 *Enquirer* does. *The Enquirer*, of course, is rightly viewed as a contribution to contemporary discussion of children's education, but it is equally a contribution to adult education. Taking up the sticky problem of how the conventionally educated adult can train a child to use his or her private judgment, the pre-requisite for political independence, Godwin (as we shall explore in the last section of this essay) re-enlists the techniques of oratory to transform the adult into a conversational partner with the child. Godwin's essays address the issue of how to induce the intelligent independence of mind that will enable an acephalous, egalitarian society, namely by providing a class of educators and educated that will continue the enlightenment of society. The methods and attitudes he describes as essential to the child's education are relevant to a fundamental revolution in attitudes toward education, for the techniques of pedagogical conversation Godwin recommends concern the handling of power, and the oratory Godwin exercises upon the preceptor constitutes an effort to inspire and raise the holder of power beyond the current conception of power relationships. By transferring attention to the scene of education, then, Godwin's solution to the problem of crowds differs markedly from Hume's salon version of ameliorative conversation.

2. Cicero on Conversation

By situating conversation in relation to reading in *The Enquirer*, Godwin becomes involved in another (related) cultural quarrel, that between *oratory* and philosophy – or, as it takes shape by the end of the eighteenth century, the quarrel between *conversation* and philosophy. In this form it locates another point of meeting between Godwin and Hume.²⁸ My initial excursion placed Godwin with Hume in the ambivalence between oratory and conversation and related it both to a fluctuating political context and to the classical roots of the oratory-liberty link. The tension between oratory and philosophy too has political implications and ancient roots that provide, better than Hume alone, the

grounds for Godwin's concept of conversation in *The Enquirer*. Philosophy was anciently challenged as presenting a subject matter, a method of thinking, and strategies of communicating inappropriate to the popular audience and the usual forums for oratory. During the eighteenth-century rise of politeness, philosophy was again challenged as too esoteric, this time for polite conversation (hence perhaps its eventual specialization in the discourse between philosophers).

Hume himself had traded the philosophical form of the 1738 *Treatise of Human Nature* for the more approachable style of the *Enquiries* and *Essays*. Yet in his "Of Essay Writing," he (perhaps wishfully) discerns an emerging rapprochement between philosophy and conversation: "'Tis with great Pleasure I observe, That Men of Letters, in this Age, have lost, in a great Measure, that Shyness and Bashfulness of Temper, which kept them at a Distance from Mankind; and, at the same Time, That Men of the World are proud of borrowing from Books their most agreeable Topics of Conversation." After positing this cultural change, Hume announces his intention to promote it personally: "I cannot but consider myself as a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation; and shall think it my constant Duty to promote a good Correspondence betwixt these two States, which have so great a Dependence on each other."²⁹ In *Political Justice*, Godwin suggested that reading, by implication reading philosophical treatises like *Political Justice*, would be important preparation for serious (but non-specialist) discussion, where truth would be discovered in a "collision of mind with mind."³⁰ In *The Enquirer*, he attempts the rather Humean task of moderating collision with politeness and thereby revisits the place of philosophy in conversation. The quarrel between conversation and philosophy, as we shall see in part 3 of this essay, is implicit in Godwin's discussion of serious reading to prepare for conversation geared toward self-improvement.

Godwin's relation to this quarrel can best be understood by departing from Hume for a while and going back to an ancient document in the history of oratory, namely Cicero's *De Oratore*. Godwin was very

familiar with Cicero's works, having invoked the ancient concept of the political career in his early works and the civic humanist concept of oratory in *Political Justice*, where he developed Cicero's natural law basis for criticism of corrupt institutions in a radical direction.³¹ In *The Enquirer*, Godwin further develops the Cicero connection, for parts of Cicero's argument that philosophy must train the statesman-orator to responsibly exercise rhetorical power reappear in Godwin's argument that studious reading must train the individual citizen to responsibly exercise private judgment. Interestingly, while *De Oratore* focuses on the nature and practice of *oratory*, it takes the form of a multi-sided *conversation*, which is reported by Cicero to his brother Quintus in a *letter*; the letter in turn is the continuation of earlier conversations with his brother. This embedding of genres, suggesting their mutual permeability and overlapping rhetorical concerns subtly prepares for Cicero's thesis that philosophy, far from being a mode of discourse irrelevant to practical action in law and government, might usefully be absorbed into oratory and into the training of a statesman-orator. The conversational mode in which the dispute proceeds, moreover, invites transfer of concepts from civic oratory to civic-oriented conversation.³²

In his introduction Cicero first concedes that, while philosophy is wedded to abstruse thought and esoteric language, oratory "lies open to the view, and is concerned in some measure with the common practice, custom, and speech of mankind, so that ... in oratory the very cardinal sin is to depart from the language of every day life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community."³³ Soon, however, Cicero departs from this position, telling Quintus that without broad culture, including but going beyond training in the techniques of effective speaking, "oratory is but an empty and ridiculous swirl of verbiage..." for "it is from knowledge that oratory must derive its beauty and fullness, and unless there is such knowledge, well-grasped and comprehended by the speaker, there must be something empty and almost childish in the utterance."³⁴ The language of oratory he favors must therefore be something more than everyday language since it has the "beauty and

fullness” of philosophical thinking even if it does not purvey the recondite terms and reasoning of philosophical style. So far Cicero’s position, while exalting oratory’s dependence upon knowledge, still falls short of a full inter-incorporation between philosophy and oratory, since he focuses mainly on persuasion rather than content: knowledge aids oratory, but knowledge (either discovering it or communicating it) is not the main end of oratory.

In reporting the ensuing conversation among Crassus and the others, however, Cicero brings out the broader civic implications of the issue,³⁵ asking: is oratory simply a set of techniques, usable in certain public functions, or is it a power, based on philosophical knowledge, that operates in constructing and governing the nation? The question is relevant not only to Godwin’s reflections on oratory and statesmanship in the Pitt biography, and to his adaptation of oratorical vehemence to conversation as a civic institution in *Political Justice*, but also (as we shall see in part 3) to his speculations on the power of speech acts in the pedagogical mission of *The Enquirer*. Crassus’ opening panegyric broadly claims that eloquent speech brought human beings together into community and gave “shape to laws, tribunals, and civil ‘rights’” – in short, founded civilization.³⁶ He is countered by Mucius, who denies Crassus’ conflation of oratory with statesmanship: oratory is no necessary component of political wisdom nor is political wisdom a necessary component of oratory. Statesmen of the past benefitted the state without eloquence, while orators often damaged the state through their oratory. There is, moreover, a basic difference between persuasion and truth, according to Mucius, and the best that oratory can do is “guarantee ... that in the courts whatever case you present should appear to be better and more plausible, that in assemblies and in the Senate your oratory should have most weight in carrying the vote, and lastly, that to the intelligent you should seem to speak eloquently and to the ignorant truthfully as well.”³⁷ Thus, Mucius sees oratory as useful in certain venues, but as neither philosophical nor (necessarily) truthful, and often delusory.

However, in Book III, Cicero affords a refutation of Mucius. The relationship between oratory and philosophy comes up again, significantly in the midst of Crassus' disquisition on style, where he describes a more focused operation of philosophy in oratory than was evident in his opening panegyric. Crassus asserts that correct diction and lucidity, though fundamental requisites of effective speaking, can be treated quickly, whereas the important thing is to study eloquence as a "virtue," which therefore entails an ethical understanding.³⁸ At this point Crassus digresses from instruction on style alone to attempt a fusion between style instruction and philosophical learning: "the stronger this faculty [of rhetoric] is, the more necessary it is for it to be combined with integrity and supreme wisdom, and if we bestow fluency of speech on persons devoid of those virtues, we shall not have made orators of them but shall have put weapons into the hands of madmen."³⁹ Consequently, he praises the men of those earlier schools in which "the same system of instruction seems to have imparted education both in right conduct and in good speech...."⁴⁰ It was a great mistake that when they were debarred from politics, or left politics in disgust, they retreated each into a special branch of study (like men at leisure) and divorced wisdom from action. Socrates in particular spread this scorn of oratory, and divided "the science of wise thinking from that of elegant speaking," which naturally belong together.⁴¹ In short, it is political repression of learning that causes division into disciplines and it is the consequent rise of expertise that separates morality from oratory.

In this plea for an ethical understanding of oratory, Crassus segues from discourse about oratory to discourse about conversation, bringing the issues of expertise and pragmatic action to bear on pedagogy. At the beginning of the dialogue, Mucius assumed the segregation between oratory and philosophy when he suggested they imitate Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus*.⁴² Conversation, by which Plato meant dialectic, is the way to truth, and Mucius clearly believes the dialectic method is too strict for decision-making that requires only practical reasoning. He invokes Socrates only to invite a philosophical approach to their

conversation, not to admit it into *oratory*. Crassus, oriented, despite his idealism, toward practice and practical experience, would reject dialectic from oratory too. Yet he believes it is in public service that philosophy acquires significance and that to orators one should “entrust and assign the task of developing with complete charm and cogency the same themes which [esoteric philosophers] discuss in a sort of thin and bloodless style.”⁴³ As to philosophical conversation, no extensive *specialized* training is necessary, though high intelligence is, for “the contents of philosophy are discovered by intellects of the keenest acumen in eliciting the probable answer to every problem, and the results are elaborated with practiced eloquence.”⁴⁴ Crassus’ preference of probable reasoning goes hand in hand with his aversion from the “thin and bloodless style” of esoteric philosophy. In this way, Crassus goes beyond his initial claim that knowledge aids oratory to claim that oratory aids at least the dissemination of knowledge (and perhaps, by a sort of feedback mechanism, determines the nature of knowledge as well). The important point here is that Crassus is laying groundwork for continuity (not identification of course) between oratory and conversation. This point in turn suggests a rationale for adapting philosophical discourse to a style in keeping with the moral essay of Hume and Godwin, that is, not only informed by philosophical study but geared toward making philosophical thinking available to practical action and a non-specialist public.⁴⁵

Subsequent sections in *De Oratore* incidentally reveal much on the nature of different kinds of conversation, as the participants feel their way to the kind most appropriate to their emerging pedagogical purposes. The young men, Sulpicius and Cotta, take the opportunity afforded by their elders’ having “slip[ped] into this particular conversation” to persuade Crassus and Antonius to discourse more connectedly on the subject of oratory. At first their expectations were inchoate: “on our way hither we were thinking that it would be delightful enough if, while you and Antonius were talking about anything else, we might still manage to catch from your discourse something worth remembering....” What they now have in mind is more like

philosophical dissertation than desultory conversation, namely a "recounting with exactness of detail your respective opinions upon every branch of oratory."⁴⁶ Crassus, however, favors an informal, free-flowing conversation, in place of the formal discourse appropriate to "some idle talkative Greekling, who is also perhaps full of learning and erudition."⁴⁷ Crassus reiterates this quality of informality when he agrees to give the discourse but retains a non-specialist stance, insisting that he will "restrain myself, so as not to seem a sort of master and professional, volunteering some observations of my own, but just one of the many Roman citizens, a man modestly qualified through experience of public affairs, and not altogether untrained, who has stumbled by chance upon your discussion."⁴⁸ The desirability of this second, non-specialist, quality becomes explicit when, contrary to these intentions, Crassus finds himself plodding through a lecture on school rhetoric and is induced to come down from this dry exposition by the young men protesting and pleading for concrete experience. Crassus' responsiveness to the young men's desires adds a third important quality, which figures in a final conversational maxim. Feeling himself unable to fully explain the power of oratory "in so short a span," Crassus offers to "indicat[e] the road" for the young men's future studies. Mucius concurs (and incidentally defines the purpose of such adumbration), pointing out that it was Socrates' way to feel satisfied if some one of his listeners "had been so far stimulated by his encouragement as to pursue the knowledge and apprehension of excellence (since further instruction came easily to such as had been persuaded to set the attainment of virtue above all else)...."⁴⁹

In *The Enquirer*, Godwin consciously adopts the qualities of conversation emerging in Crassus' negotiation. Godwin's preference for inductions based on experience over strict deduction from premises renders the essays informal, while his avoiding the voice of the expert and his hospitality to contradictions between his essays suggest he is restraining any appearance of mastery over the subject. In asserting that his essays "are principally the result of conversations," Godwin indicates a methodological link not simply to Hume's ambassadorial intentions to

communicate knowledge to non-experts, but also to the pedagogical intentions of Crassus to involve his young listeners in discovery of knowledge. He deliberately gives this knowledge production an impression of incompleteness, when he announces that the essays “are presented to the contemplative reader, not as *dicta*, but as the materials of thinking.” Carrying Crassus’ desire to stimulate his listeners to continue the inquiry on their own, Godwin intends his essays to be only one step in knowledge-production: “the hints of enquiry rather than actual enquiries,” hints that “may be taken under other men’s protection, and cherished to maturity.”⁵⁰

Possibly what is most interesting in Godwin’s relationship to *De Oratore*, however, is the quality of combativeness, which Mee describes as continuing in the eighteenth century, sometimes in opposition to politeness, sometimes in tension with it.⁵¹ As the paragraph above suggests, Crassus embraces an accommodating pedagogical ethos, but he also carries on a vigorous defense against not only Mucius but also Antonius, who backs Mucius’ argument with jocular cynicism about Crassus’ ideal orator and emphasizes natural talent and experience over schooling in technique or philosophy by making a case for “cheek.”⁵² Cicero brings out Antonius’ charming individuality and his clever *modus vivendi* with the Romans’ conventional hostility to philosophy, while showing Antonius is not devoid of esoteric learning himself. What is most striking about their dispute, however, is the balance of combativeness with deference and good humor. By giving equal time to both sides, and moreover by making the principals equally attractive, even when their principles differ, Cicero produces a potential for independent yet consensual knowledge.⁵³ Similarly, Godwin strikes a balance between combativeness (his essays typically identify an attitude or position he intends to dispute) and politeness (he frequently presents an opposing position sympathetically, by entering it fully into his deliberations). This method, carrying Cicero’s further, invites reader participation in the discovery of knowledge and suggests a civic-oriented solution to Hume’s quandary between combativeness and politeness.

In the final paragraphs of his Preface, Godwin's rationale for politeness in conversation is both political like Hume's, and yet consistently and perhaps more fundamentally revolutionary than Hume's. Here his concern with knowledge-production melds with his concern with knowledge-reception, but in a way that transforms his sense of what that knowledge (still moral and political) must be. Alluding to the political conditions under which he (and others) have previously written, he brings up the subject of "the French Revolution; that inexhaustible source of meditation to the reflecting and inquisitive." He deplores the "somewhat too imperious ... tone" adopted by "the friends of innovation" and the consequent impression of "barbarism" they conveyed. Since he retains "as ardent a passion for innovation as ever," he has not changed his view that reform is his mission. He now believes, however, that it may be found "in his investigations into the humbler walks of private life." This shift is secured not simply by advocates' becoming "amiable in their personal manners."⁵⁴ Rather, the facts of experience that define empirical philosophy must (in part) come from private life, home truths about domestic relations and childhood education, which (for those who have eyes to see) are available to close observation and reflection. Godwin does not reject political knowledge or an agenda of political reform, but these are connected to intellectual and literary refinement and their anticipated effect on respect for persons in one's immediate sphere of influence. The scene of education, as a result of the melding of knowledge-production with knowledge-reception in this new key, must now be what Julie Carlson calls a public-private sphere.⁵⁵

3. Godwin's *Enquirer*: A Reading

In the first philosophical essay in *The Enquirer*, "Of Awakening the Mind," Godwin both commends eloquence, giving it an initiatory role in pedagogy, and remains wary of it. "To the attainment of any accomplishment what is principally necessary, is that the accomplishment should be ardently desired ... The means of exciting

desire are obvious. Has the proposed object desirable qualities? Exhibit them. Delineate them with perspicuity, and delineate them with ardour ... Criticise, commend, exemplify.”⁵⁶ The advice is similar to that of the early books of the 1793 *Political Justice*, but the preceptor here appears almost a monologic creator of desire, even a figure of declamation and display – thus a figure that should be incompatible with the strengthening of private judgment. In the third essay, “Of the Sources of Genius,” Godwin diminishes the role of the declaiming preceptor and diffuses the scene of education: “Genius ... is not born with us, but generated subsequent to birth. It by no means follows ... that it is the produce of education, or ever was the work of the preceptor. Thousands of impressions are made upon us, for one that is produced.”⁵⁷ Yet diffusing the scene of education does not spell Godwin’s final word, but rather preludes an elaborate argument. In *Political Justice* Godwin considered his new civic rhetoric as the cure for monarchical display and factional declamation, placing persuasion in the coterie conversation and making that venue a potential replacement for traditional institutions. In *The Enquirer*, however, he gives rhetoric an even more fundamental role to play by locating it in the scene of early education and ultimately extending it to the entire domestic sphere. As in *Political Justice*, all surroundings become a language which, without art, ultimately wield formative power. While this principle should undermine the preceptor’s control in *The Enquirer*, Godwin there recognizes and even embraces that control. Occupying the center of the child’s life, the preceptor-role (performed by the teaching parent as well as the hired tutor) has the capacity to organize and direct the random impressions of the child’s surroundings and to form him for moral and political life.

In Godwin’s advice to educators, he himself often adopts a managerial language: his book, for example, is meant “to assist the adult in discovering how to *fashion* the youthful mind,” and he speaks of the educator as “a skilful *artificer*.”⁵⁸ In the 1793 *Political Justice* Godwin said, “Whatever each man does for himself is done well; whatever his neighbours or his country undertake to do for him is done ill. It is our

wisdom to incite men to act for themselves, not to retain them in a state of perpetual pupillage."⁵⁹ In maintaining *The Enquirer*'s position, then, he complicates the terms in which he defends the viability of private judgment, for he now concedes that without the guidance of the preceptor the child's capacity for private judgment is vulnerable to disorder and dissolution – a threat every bit as debilitating as the child's exposure to excessive control. By shifting his focus from coterie enlightenment to childhood education, therefore, he directly confronts the problem that individuals do not spontaneously exercise any private judgment worthy of the name, and therefore do not only need to resist encroachments on it, but rather need to *become* capable of private judgment – of making judgments that are their own, of recognizing what is their own, and of being ethically serious. Recasting the participants in enlightenment discussion as preceptor and child, then, Godwin requires himself to work out the implications of inequality in rhetorical (and ethical) situations. Granting the necessity of education, how can an egalitarian society, which requires trust in the operation of private judgment, arise from an experience of inequality? Granting that individuals are formed in a matrix of control, how can they ever become anything but slaves or despots themselves?⁶⁰ The place of this problem in Godwin's configuration of moral and political change reveals the enormous philosophical pressure on the terms in which he attempts to solve it in *The Enquirer* – the terms of pleasure, desire, and sympathy in aesthetic psychology permeate the civic-oriented situation he assigns to pedagogy.

These terms crop up when Godwin weighs private against public education in *The Enquirer*. He offers as chief criterion the condition he considers the *sine qua non* of education: "There is no motive more powerful in its operations upon the human mind, than that which originates in sympathy ... The social affections are the chief awakeners of man."⁶¹ By this criterion, private education would seem to possess an advantage over public education in stimulating industry and understanding because the child has a monopoly on the attention of the

preceptor. His praise, the rhetorical driving force, gives the child a sense of “communicated and reciprocated pleasure” and “produces in [him] the most animated and unequivocal consciousness of existence.”⁶² This effect is akin to the operation of sympathy achieved by ancient orators and admired by Hume. Godwin himself in the Pitt biography consciously distributed sympathy through praise for exhibitions of virtue and blame for defalcations from virtue.⁶³ As preparation for exercising private judgment and directing it toward social good, however, this rhetorical practice appears equivocal. “Those things which are censured in a child, he learns to be ashamed of; those things for which he is commended, he contemplates in himself with pleasure. If therefore you would have him eagerly desirous of any attainment, you must thoroughly convince him that it is regarded by you with delight.”⁶⁴ This advice suggests that in private education the child will attain a capacity for private judgment, but only in the sense in which the preceptor’s praise gives him leave to defend with confidence the judgments he has already absorbed from the preceptor.

Godwin evaluates the advantages of *public* education by reference to the same criteria that he used on *private* education: the opportunity for sympathy and the operation of praise. To be really effective, praise ought to be dispensed (as in oratory) before observers who are also contenders for the prize; otherwise it loses its “pomp and enchantment” and appears “a cold and concerted stratagem” of one individual against another.⁶⁵ Godwin goes on to show that public education, though geared to the world as it is, can nonetheless confer on the individual a measure of independence and virtue. Public education is despotic, but harbors interior contradictions which may prove politically fruitful. All the students “contend ... upon a footing of equality”; the individual possesses greater liberty, when he is not “left alone with [his] tyrant”; his resistance is not solitary and hopeless, but he has a “sphere” separate from his “master.” In this context, he develops eagerness and courage to aid others and to endure what cannot be changed and thus awakens his sense of commonalty. In support of public education, Godwin says that

"morals cannot be effectually taught, but where the topics and occasions of moral conduct offer themselves."⁶⁶ Insofar as it reduces all to an equal condition, provides a mental space apart from the master, and arouses the virtues associated with resistance, the public school provides the means of destroying the despotic relation in the scene of despotism itself. Yet this advantage produces a condition of incipient rebellion, not of achieved democracy, or it produces an illusion of private freedom that saps the inclination to seek change.

In view of these ambiguous judgments on both private and public education, it is not entirely surprising that Godwin would declare, "All education is despotism," a maxim, moreover, consistent with his attitude toward institutions in the latter half of *Political Justice*.⁶⁷ Yet he goes on to assert that "Great power is not necessarily a subject of abuse," and this position is certainly adverse to the argument of *Political Justice*.⁶⁸ Although his criticisms are less explicit than my explication, Godwin, it turns out, supports neither private nor public education, but reserves his hopes for some other alternative compatible with his project of social reform. "We have here considered only the modes of education at this time in practice. Perhaps an adventurous and undaunted philosophy would lead to the rejecting them altogether, and pursuing the investigation of a mode totally dissimilar."⁶⁹ That is what Godwin does when he later offers the vision of the preceptor as friend: "When my friend accompanies me in my task, and our souls mutually catch and emit animation, I can perform labours that are almost more than human with an undoubting spirit."⁷⁰ Sympathy even in a conversational mode, however, is still a mode of power, but this sentence captures the ideal sense in which Godwin sanctions the exercise of this power. Sympathy operates spontaneously only in a condition of confidence, between friends who are "as much as possible ... equals."⁷¹ To promote this equality requires that the preceptor "talk no solemn, prolix and unfeeling jargon" (PPW 5: 134), which would block his own feelings and render communication the instrument of hierarchical imposture and control. The preceptor must exercise rhetorical *self*-control not only over words, but

also over “actions” and “countenance,” all of which must be utterly sincere and yet ordered to the purpose of influence.⁷² Godwin here proposes something like the responsiveness and deference adopted by Crassus in *De Oratore*, but carried much further.

Like Crassus and Mucius in *De Oratore*, moreover, Godwin advocates using conversation to arouse desire for learning and to activate the pupil’s independent efforts. “Study with desire is real activity: without desire it is but the semblance and mockery of activity.”⁷³ Rather than declamation and praise, all originating with the preceptor and aimed at manipulating the child, the preceptor should use conversation to open the way to a shared pursuit of knowledge. As in the coterie dialogue of adults in *Political Justice*, the listener participates in discovery: “That the boy is accustomed almost always to consult the man, and not the man the boy, is to be regarded rather as an accident, than any thing essential. Much even of this would be removed, if we remembered that the most inferior judge may often, by the varieties of his apprehension, give valuable information to the most enlightened.” Moreover, just as the adult listener’s questions and challenges help to determine the direction and outcome of inquiry, so the student listener should originate questions that determine the direction of his learning: “To know when and how to ask a question is no contemptible part of learning ... Activity is a mental quality. If therefore you would generate habits of activity, turn the boy loose in the fields of science ... Without increasing his difficulties ... suffer him to ask himself the question before he asks you....”⁷⁴ In this process, the preceptor must allow a certain degree of combativeness alloyed by the cooperative character of intellectual friendship, as in Cicero’s dialogue. By exercising restraint, the preceptor merges his and his pupil’s interests, namely the production of truth by the intelligent inter-independence of individuals. In this context, the preceptor quells his solemn unfeeling rhetoric, but may indulge in the occasional effusions born of enthusiasm for the subject, may delineate its desirable qualities, commend and exemplify, for under a changed intention,

rhetoric defines a real relation – friendship – rather than a feeble copy of a relation.

To effect this change, Godwin himself applies eloquent rhetoric, raising the imagination and desire of his parental and preceptorial readers for a difficult but exalted mission. Godwin, it is clear, is advocating a paradoxical solution to the operation of rhetorical power. Although the preceptor's purpose is to exercise influence, he must renounce absolute control. It is doomed to failure anyway, Godwin warns, both because the pupil's resistance is infinitely inventive and because in exercising absolute power the preceptor damages his own character: he will inevitably devolve into a tyrant.⁷⁵ He can never achieve perfect confidence, perfect control, but by renouncing these, the preceptor may nonetheless acquire a godlike power: "He may breathe into [his pupil] the philanthropy of a Fenelon and the elevated soul of a Cato ... He will dismiss with generous carelessness the question of an entire confidence and the communication of little cares and little projects. His hold upon the youthful mind will be of a higher and more decisive denomination."⁷⁶ In this way, Godwin perhaps validates, certainly raises the preceptor's conception of his role, to give the "reverence" due to all human beings: "Violate not thy own image in the person of thy offspring. That image is sacred. He that does violence to it, is the genuine blasphemer. The most fundamental of all the principles of morality is the consideration and deference that man owes to man; nor is the helplessness of childhood by any means unentitled to the benefit of this principle."

While bringing children under the rubric of spiritual entitlement, Godwin also analyzes the psycho-social meaning of his key term. "Reverence is a certain collectedness of the mind, a pause during which we involuntarily impress ourselves with the importance of circumstances and the dignity of persons."⁷⁷ This is a temporal gap within which the mind prepares itself to reason persuasively: in the silence of mind, of self, the person about to speak gains access to his moral norms and to consciousness of the autonomy of the listener. In developing this idea, Godwin deliberately departs from his stand in favor of complete sincerity

and frankness in *Political Justice*. There are circumstances, other than the threat to personal security, under which we should not say all that we think. Although he develops this idea in the educational and domestic contexts, it explicitly applies to public justice: “The neglect of [this principle of reverence] among mankind at large, is the principal source of all the injustice, the revenge, the bloodshed and the wars, that have so long stained the face of nature.” What are usually called the “lesser moralities” of the private sphere are “the most obvious test as to the habitual temper of our lives. Those who attend only to the greater moralities are like unrefined savages, inadvertent tyrants. The civilized person attends to the effect of gesture and facial expression, “desirous, out of petty materials, to compose the sum of our happiness.”⁷⁸ The “habitual temper” in private dealings can be stifled in public since interest compels self-control, but only by an elaborate rhetoric of politeness and deference that nonetheless asserts the difference between the speaker’s state of mind and his behavior – and these forms are a code that lets the listener know that the speaker is under the constraint imposed by the listener’s power or the power of the community. The exercise of deference in the domestic sphere, however, would be constrained only by the speaker’s reverence for the listener and would therefore convey recognition of his and the listener’s freedom. Reverence, then, would create the foundation and source of a habit that could extend to public behavior and replace the spirit of deference.

By his own practice, then, Godwin conflates Crassus’ civic conception of the ideal orator and his practice of pedagogical conversation. But unlike Crassus (and Cicero), Godwin demands respect for the private sphere in general as a location where crucial rhetorical choices will determine not only public morality but also the structure of public relations. By transforming the practice of rhetoric in the private sphere, based on transforming private relations, we can do the same with public rhetoric and relations. This view is implicit in Godwin’s revising the argument against cohabitation first made in *Political Justice*: married persons tend to rationalize their “mistake[s],” therefore practice “fraud”

upon themselves. The consequence: "men who carefully mislead their judgment in the daily affairs of their life, must always have a crippled judgment in every other concern."⁷⁹ In *The Enquirer* again cohabitation tends to breed an excessive familiarity that eventuates in our dismissing "the arts of ingenuous persuasion," as "we expect [wife, comrade, child] to bow to the despotism of command or the impatience of anger," and as we rationalize our despotism under the heading of "wisdom, profound judgment and liberal virtue."⁸⁰ Godwin does not wholly dismiss cohabitation in *The Enquirer*, but holds out the threat that, if left unchanged, it will attack the capacity for precisely the rational and rhetorical skills Godwin described in *Political Justice* as necessary for exercising private judgment. He nonetheless implies that it can be changed by the cultivation of reverence.

Godwin's revision and redirection of eloquence, through his revision of education and family life, changes his view of speech acts as well. As Angela Esterhammer has argued, in *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* Godwin distrusts the performative uses of language because they declare states to be permanent that circumstances may change. Promises, oaths, contracts – all encroach on and limit the ability of a private judgment to accord with facts and reason. They therefore not only block necessary change, they also promote epistemological confusion through the increasing discrepancy between language and world. Godwin, Esterhammer argues, notices "the problematic temporality of promising" in that, as Paul de Man judges of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, "all promises and social contracts perform a metalepsis by which they illegitimately found themselves on a future situation that does not yet exist."⁸¹ In consequence, Godwin advocates a rigorously constative use of language, which fits words to world rather than world to words. His goal in *Political Justice* is language use that is "unfailingly" transparent, sincere, and empirical.⁸² Even so, in *Political Justice* he recognizes and in *Caleb Williams* corroborates that performatives (ensconced on their institutional warrants) structure the world as it is and therefore circumscribe individuals' ability to behave

ethically. This comes about because the performative that produces the existing power structures of the world also structures what publicly counts as knowledge and, in the context of intersubjective action, even what counts to ourselves as self-knowledge. In *Caleb Williams*, “The final irony is that Caleb’s decision to testify [against his employer Falkland] affects ... his innermost convictions ... as if the very process of uttering the accusation [in a public venue] alters moral values and private sentiment.”⁸³

If Esterhammer is right, however, this argument raises what I would call the constative paradox: constatives describe the world that performatives largely make. If the constative describes things as they are, not things as they should be, how can we change the world through rigorously holding to constative language? Esterhammer concludes that we cannot, but that Godwin recognizes this fact only indirectly: “The reason that Godwin has to resist so adamantly the idea that language might shape reality is that it patently *does* shape reality....”⁸⁴ Godwin, I would venture however, has another recourse, namely persuasive language, which mediates between the constative and performative functions of language. Words form worlds not simply through performatives (which require institutional sanction or consensual uptake), but also through persuasion (which makes that uptake seem desirable). If constatives fit words to world and performatives fit world to words, persuasives (admitting the dimension of time that performatives conveniently forget) delineate the world “ardently” as it might be.

There is a psychological dimension to these kinds of speech acts, though less an aesthetic than a faculty psychology. In late eighteenth-century terms, the constative can be associated with the exercise of reason in ascertaining truth, the performative with the exercise of will, and the persuasive with the exercise of imagination. Godwin recognizes this last-named function for rhetoric in the 1793 *Political Justice*, Book IV, in the paradigm of conversation. The truth function consists, not simply in the constative copying the thought as a pre-existing original,

but in a process of inquiry that brings truth into *effective* being in the saying, challenging, defending, and modifying of truth-formulations. In these formulations the truth function also becomes performative because inquiry brings into being a new, deliberative state of mind. This performative-constative meld, however, has a different temporal form from either the constative or the performative. The constative is punctually true insofar as it reflects what is; to be felicitous it should change at each point when the facts change. The performative is instantaneously true in that properly declaring a thing to be so makes it so, and the thing remains so until another properly executed performative changes it. But inquiry draws out the temporal dimension, since truth may not be what the speaker says, but what he enables to be said (or done) thereafter, and thus inquiry incorporates the imagination of change. This view of the persuasive would be in keeping with Godwin's hint that there may arise an alternative kind of education, one that rests on arousing desire and fostering it through conversation. In this form Godwin emphasizes the element of time, not as the maker of epistemic discrepancy, but as a component in verbal doing. Furthermore, that verbal doing takes the form of conversation in which the speaker attempts to persuade the listener of the truth or the practical viability of his propositions.

My reading of *The Enquirer* as aiming to transform the preceptor into a persuader captures Godwin's response to the oratory-conversation quarrel, but Godwin also responds to the oratory-philosophy issue, showing how through reading the pupil may be transformed into an independent thinker. In *The Enquirer* the mediation between constative and performative is embodied in the relation between reading and conversation – Godwin's recasting of Cicero's incorporation of philosophy in oratory.⁸⁵ Godwin does not define the truth function of language as constative only, but locates it in the persuasive process. *The Enquirer* posits that the imagination of possibility must also be a component in the truth function. In the process of making knowledge we must be able to go beyond "surrounding objects";⁸⁶ we must imagine a

standpoint outside of them, whether to validate them as what is (and thus imagination enables the constative) or to contrast them with what may be (and thus imagination prepares for the performative). Godwin makes this nature of the persuasive clear in describing how the process of reading generates a habit of mind that freely goes beyond “surrounding objects.” At first Godwin’s description of reading as assimilation appears contrary to his freedom agenda: “When I read Thomson, I become Thomson....” Reading appears as a performance of identity in which the reader becomes the text, “become[s] the creature of his author.”⁸⁷ This identification of course poses the very problem Esterhammer pinpoints in *Caleb Williams* – Caleb is trapped in things as they are because he absorbs himself in Falkland’s story – and recapitulates the vice of private education later described in *The Enquirer*: the pupil is absorbed in the preceptor. Godwin, however, subsequently demonstrates that the escape from total subjection is achieved by deliberate study of the very texts that exercise the strongest pull on the imagination. These he finds in the classical inheritance, where eloquence and ideas are not separated. Godwin advocates studying the grammar of classical languages in a process of knowing and comparing different languages that helps the reader to separate rhetoric and idea in imagination and thus avoid being “the slave of language.” He would have the student observe “all the shades of meaning through the various inflections of words, and all the minuter degradations of sense which the same word suffers, as it shall happen to be connected with different topics.”⁸⁸

This classical discipline seems to return education to preceptorial control (and all the nightmares of eighteenth-century education that Godwin wants to avoid), but the preceptor here involves the pupil in a rational “discipline of mind” that also enlists the imagination in achieving distance: “All talent may perhaps be affirmed to consist in analysis and dissection, *the turning a thing on all sides, and examining it in all its variety of views* ... a man of genius takes [an object] to pieces, enquires into its cause and effects, remarks its internal structure, and considers what would have been the result, if its members had been

combined in a different way, or subjected to different influences.”⁸⁹ The spatial metaphors in this passage recall that the pupil’s acquisition of private judgment depends on the preceptor’s affording him space, an opening as is now evident for the operation of imagination. This imaginative rationality, like the conversational relationship between preceptor and student, transforms the metaphor of absorption into a metaphor of dialogic mixture, or even reverses the direction of absorption – “if we mix our own reflections with what we read; if we dissect the ideas and arguments of our author; if, by having recourse to all subsidiary means, we endeavour to clear the recollection of him in our minds; if we compare part with part, detect his errors, new model his systems, adopt so much of him as is excellent, and explain within ourselves the reason of our disapprobation as to what is otherwise.”⁹⁰ Assimilation, then, is not the same as absorption, but rather an active, discriminating process of producing a new standpoint. This process, not just hermeneutical but also rhetorical, provides the source of possibility for the pupil’s independence and suggests why that independence depends on the voluntary withdrawal of authority. By addressing the part played by reading in the development of private judgment in the child, Godwin follows yet goes much deeper than Cicero in showing how study transforms the language of the speaker, according it with free institutions.⁹¹

In this delineation of the reading process, Godwin’s distinction between the “moral” and the “tendency” of a text, given so much attention by recent critics, takes the pupil’s independence another step further. The distinction occurs in the context of an argument against controlling a child’s choice of reading matter. First, Godwin shows that different readers deduce different morals from (ascribe different intentions to) a work, and even authors have a hard time squaring the outcome (the tendency in the text) with some pre-existing intended moral. But second, Godwin asserts that moral and tendency do not even refer to the same thing. The moral of a work is “that ethical sentence to the illustration of which the work may most aptly be applied.” It is

constantly superceded by the tendency of (rather than in) the work, “the actual effect” which all the elements of the work are “calculated to produce upon the reader” – “calculated” but exceeding calculation since the effect “cannot be completely ascertained but by the experiment.”⁹² What is remarkable in Godwin’s argument is that he keeps shifting the subject and the object of control. The overt argument concerns the preceptor’s or the parent’s effort to control what the pupil may read and to avoid the pupil’s absorbing bad morals from a book. But soon we find that the pupil controls the text, because even authors cannot predict “where the brilliant lights of [their] story would fall, nor of consequence where its principal power of attraction would be found.”⁹³

This is not to say that readers have nothing to learn from texts. Certainly, the concept of the moral suggested that readers control the interpretation of a book, for incapable, perverse, and even “diligent” readers may miss “the true moral and fair inference from a composition.” But the concept of tendency takes this control from the hands of the reader as well and ascribes it to “the various tempers and habits of the persons by whom the work is considered” – in short, to components in the reading process that are not immediate and not wholly conscious.⁹⁴ This environment of muted control by writer and reader could return reading to exclusive control by the preceptor, who is “continually at hand” to guide the pupil through his multifarious reading “with the advantage of real voice, of accommodated eloquence, and of living sympathies, over the dead letter.”⁹⁵ Yet if conversation with the preceptor takes the form Godwin earlier evoked, then the determination of tendency remains open to negotiation and mutual persuasion. It is conversation (in the presence of the text) that finally determines the tendency of a text.⁹⁶

We can now see the reason for Godwin’s use of eloquence to arouse the desire of the preceptor for the conversational mission. Readers must be able to reach into past texts to converse with them in an exercise of their minds beyond what their preceptors can afford them. While the preceptor urges them to analyze and compare, and thus achieve distance

from what they read, the pupils also must learn how to achieve distance from the preceptor. As readers they may reach into past texts to draw from them, adapt them, and realize their own potential for freedom. In this project, however, the preceptor must enter into collusion. What can induce him to do this? Godwin arouses desire for the friendship that is within the preceptor's power to call into being through rhetorical self-control. The preceptor thus models change in public behavior, but (more important) insures that change by entering into the production of the social adult.

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Notes

¹ Adam Potkay, *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1994), 29.

² Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence*, 26-27; quoting from Hume's "Of Eloquence." To obviate confusion in the following discussion, let me define the terms rhetoric, oratory, eloquence, and conversation. Rhetoric, or the art of rhetoric, is used mainly to refer to systematizing the practice of speaking and writing in various forms, including oratory, history, and sermons. Often by association with the practice that is the source of these systems of rules, the term also refers to that practice. Oratory is used to refer to public speaking first, and the characteristics and functions anciently associated with public speaking, but then by extension to whatever form of speaking or writing succeeds upon these or adapts these – pulpit oratory, for example, but also some print journalism and addresses to crowds. Eloquence refers to accomplished speaking, for example of certain persons, or the body of accomplished speaking, for example, of certain nations, as well as a certain kind of speaking, mainly oratory, as opposed to "polite" speaking or conversation (see Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence*, Chapter 3). The term conversation traversed a multitude of meanings by the end of the eighteenth century, from intercourse, to commerce, to mainly verbal exchange. Eighteenth-century writers also recognize many kinds of conversation (in the last sense),

including serious and combative discussion, rule-bound polite conversation, free-and-easy conversation, and gossip; see Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), 86-87.

³ Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence*, 135. For studies exploring Hume's complexity on related issues, see John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sensibility: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), Chapter 1, and G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1992), 132-37.

⁴ Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988; paperback edition with corrections and additions 1989), 196-97.

⁵ Vickers, 198-99. For a more extensive account of the new rhetoric, see Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1971), Chapter 6, and especially 614-16 for Howell's reading of Hume's essay on eloquence as "curiously antiquarian").

⁶ During the century polite conversation becomes associated with the moral agenda of a rising class of professionals, commercial wealthy, and literati who try to maintain agreeableness while addressing serious topics and thus eschew combativeness and embrace candor and simplicity. These characteristics of moral agenda, class definition, and style comprise the ideology of politeness that Potkay, Barker-Benfield, Mullan, and others refer to. The political dimension of this ideology arises as eighteenth-century writers attempt to distinguish the social-reform implications of politeness from the political-reform ideals of parties and factions that espouse a civic humanist conception of government and citizen involvement, a conception that is frequently associated with ancient oratory and eloquence. The ideology of politeness included a valorizing of feminine company, in which the passions though not eradicated are gentled, yet the sanctioning of female hegemony in conversation also stimulated criticism on behalf of more philosophical and adversarial forms of conversation.

⁷ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 2 vols (London, 1783), facsimile reprint, ed. Harold F. Harding (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1965), 2:12. Blair adds, "and hence Demosthenes triumphed over all his opponents..." (2:12). See Lois Agnew's argument, "The Civic Function of Taste: a Re-assessment of Hugh Blair's Rhetorical Theory," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Spring 1998): 25-36. Agnew remarks that for Blair rhetoric was "a public endeavor" (26). "Although Blair's work may have served as a catalyst for moving rhetorical study in the direction of literature, his own mental processes were nevertheless grounded in his oratorical culture" (28).

⁸ *The Diary of William Godwin*, ed. Victoria Myers, David O'Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010), <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. Godwin was reading Hume quite heavily in May and July 1792, as well as occasionally 1792-1794, then again heavily July-August 1795 and in November 1795-January 1796.

⁹ Sympathy, in this sense, was not invented by eighteenth-century writers, but was a mainstay of ancient rhetoric. See, for example, Aristotle's discussion of the emotions with which listeners can sympathize: *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP; and London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1926), 2.2-17.

¹⁰ Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence*, 89, 90.

¹¹ Potkay, *Fate of Eloquence*, 86-87.

¹² Victoria Myers, "Oratory and History: Godwin's *History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*," *Godwinian Moments: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, ed. Robert M. Maniquis and Victoria Myers (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2011), 149-71.

¹³ For a discriminating consideration of the meaning of "virtue" in the civic republican tradition, to which Godwin was to some extent attached in this early work, see J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985, rpt. 1991), Chapter 2. Virtue in the republican sense, which could only obtain under

a “moral imperative” of equality, is disassociated from (or exceeds) government and law (42). Mark Philp argues that Godwin adhered to a concept of virtue that, deriving from his Dissenting culture, depends on a right to private judgment, but entails a duty to benefit the whole society; that is, Godwin emphasized duty as more fundamental than rights and disapproved of considering them as “discretionary” or “liberty” rights allowed by government (*Godwin’s Political Justice* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1986], 18). Philp brings out the natural law definition of one’s duty, knowledge of which is obtained by reason, hence the importance of securing private judgment (27-29). The meeting place between virtue in the republican sense and in Dissenting views appears then to be its exceeding government-made law and its according equal value to each voice, though the republican tradition was less broadly participatory. Godwin’s familiarity with these two views of virtue may also account for some of the tension in his views of conversation and oratory discussed later in this essay.

¹⁴ Hume, “Whether the British Government Inclines More to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic,” *Essays*, 52-53.

¹⁵ Hume, “British Government,” *Essays* 53. Moderation and impartiality characterize Hume’s aims and style throughout his *Essays*. For example, he entertains the possibility that an absolute monarchy (like that in France) may grant greater liberty “both of speech and action” than “altogether republican” governments like Holland, and that these extremes may actually approach each other, as they do in England, which is “a mixture of despotism and liberty, ... where the liberty predominates” (“Of the Liberty of the Press,” *Essays*, 10-11, 11-12). Conversely, while he argues that crown influence over members of parliament helps to maintain the balance of power in a mixed government where parliamentary power is so great, he also points out that the “checks and controuls” in “pure republics” are superior because not dependent on the character of a single person (“Of the Independency of Parliament,” *Essays*, 44-46).

¹⁶ Philp, *Godwin's Political Justice*, 173. Philp suggests that up to 1795 Godwin maintained his hopes for acephalous government, then between November 1795 and October 1797 he became more hopeful of parliament's reforming itself, and temporarily even aspired to parliament himself (Philp bases the latter speculation on inspection of unpublished manuscripts). According to Philp, Godwin's hopes diminished with the repression of the London Corresponding Society and the Foxite Whig secession from parliament (198-201).

¹⁷ Hume, "Of Essay-Writing, *Essays*, 535. Also see Potkay 77.

¹⁸ For the full argument backing this assertion (part of which is summarized in the next two paragraphs), refer to Victoria Myers, "Godwin and the Ars Rhetorica," *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Fall 2002): 415-44.

¹⁹ The role of actual conversation in the arguments of *Political Justice* is treated by Philp throughout *Godwin's Political Justice*.

²⁰ William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, ed. Mark Philp, with Austin Gee, Vols. 3 and 4 of *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 3:118. Hereafter cited as *PPW* with volume and page number.

²¹ *PPW* 3:121.

²² *PPW* 3:122.

²³ John Thelwall, *The Tribune* (London, 1796), 2:vii (Preface); quoted in Philp, *Godwin's Political Justice*, 196.

²⁴ William Godwin, *Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr Pitt's Bills, concerning treasonable and seditious practices, and unlawful assemblies*, in *Political Writings II*, ed. Mark Philp, with Austin Gee, Vol. 2 of *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 133.

²⁵ *Life of John Thelwall, by his Widow* (London, 1837), 51; quoted in Jon Mee, "'The Press and Danger of the Crowd': Godwin, Thelwall, and the Counter-Public Sphere," in *Godwinian Moments: From the*

Enlightenment to Romanticism, ed. Robert M. Maniquis and Victoria Myers (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 95.

²⁶ PPW 4:146. Many of Godwin's comments on conversation and reading may be found in Isaac Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind: or, A Supplement to the Art of Logick*, 2nd edition (London, 1743), http://books.google.com/book/about/The_Improvement_of_the_Mind.html?id=LMwAAAAAcAAJ

²⁷ PPW 4:146-47.

²⁸ Gary Remer clarifies the conceptions relevant to the oratory-philosophy issue that dovetail with the oratory-conversation issue. See "Political Oratory and Conversation: Cicero versus Deliberative Democracy," *Political Theory*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (February 1999): 39-64. According to Remer, Cicero himself saw private conversation as the appropriate venue for philosophical dialogue and preferred oratory as the forum for political debate. But the qualities Cicero assigned to philosophical conversation are those sought by modern advocates of conversation as a forum for deliberative democracy. Ciceronian political debate addresses "specific and immediate matters, seeking "concrete means" and "lead[ing] to action," unlike philosophical discussion, which addresses general ("indefinite") questions (41). Moreover, political debate takes place before a popular audience ignorant of dialectic, therefore needing emotional appeals to move it to action (43). Since (philosophical) conversation is abstract, it is not fit for a common audience. Cicero believed (philosophical) conversation might (eventually) aim toward practice, but not toward a specific action, because it approaches issues with "greater detachment" (46). It proves through reason and excludes anti-rational emotions, though admitting the emotions productive of friendship; and finally, conversation is not adversarial, but is aimed at a collective search for truth. Godwin was aware of these contrasts in working out the problems attending the choice of a conversational mode that nonetheless was to serve persuasive and civic-oriented functions. ²⁹ Hume, *Essays* 535.

³⁰ PPW 3:15.

³¹ See Myers, "Godwin and the Ars Rhetorica" for Godwin's allusions to the figure of Publius Mucius Scaevola in Cicero's *De Oratore* (421-25) and to character, oratory, and the statesman's career in Cicero's *De Re Publica* (431-33). On 25-28 February 1793, Godwin records in his Diary reading Cicero's famous speeches in prosecution of Catiline: *The Diary of William Godwin*, ed. Victoria Myers, David O'Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010), <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.

³² I use the term "civic-oriented" to indicate the ultimate civic usefulness of the type of conversation fostered in education, as opposed to "civic conversation" to indicate the type of conversation actually conducted to deliberate on political matters. My view in this essay to some extent modifies that of Jon Mee, who draws attention to Cicero's explicit distinction between the appropriate venues for oratory and conversation and to Cicero's remark that conversation "should have its own rhetorical institutes" ("The Use of Conversation": William Godwin's Conversable World and Romantic Sociability," *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Winter 2011): 574.

³³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, and London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1942, rpt. 1976), 1.1.12. References to this text cite book, chapter, and section. Famous for his elaborate "Oriental" style, Cicero himself departed from everyday language, but mainly in his early speeches. His terms here suggest those of Locke, who later joins other members of the Royal Society in advocating the simple style that Godwin also favors.

³⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.5.17-18, 1.6.20.

³⁵ Remer, "Deliberative Democracy," provides a useful context for evaluating these implications. In many ways, Remer's description suggests that Godwin's moves toward an acephalous society would be compatible with the approach of modern deliberative democrats. As Remer points out, "the appropriate forums for conversation, for both Cicero and the theorists of deliberative democracy, are largely not public assemblies, but nonofficial social gatherings" (50). Equality of

participation in conversation, preference for rational argument, and cooperative attitude characterize the views of Cicero and theorists of deliberative democracy and appear in Godwin's goals as well. Remer's final consideration, moreover, of how Cicero would critique deliberative democracy, reveals why in *The Enquirer* Godwin might wish to preserve some aspects of oratory even in conversation: "Cicero's choice of oratory can also be attributed to another, non-class-based assumption: that reason alone is insufficient in a large group, regardless of its social or class composition" (53). Remer's application to the large group might apply to the small group as well, namely that even educated audiences need to be moved to act on their knowledge (and for Cicero, as well as Godwin, action is paramount), and all human beings require both emotional and rational persuasion if they are to be moved to action.

³⁶ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.8.33.

³⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.10.44.

³⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.14.41-43.15.55.

³⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.15.55.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.15.57.

⁴¹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.16.60.

⁴² Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.7.28.

⁴³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.13.56.

⁴⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.21.79.

⁴⁵ Michael Prince's analyses of eighteenth-century philosophical dialogues (of Shaftesbury, Berkeley, Hume, and others) and his speculations on the rise of novels, essays, and other conversational genres are relevant here. See *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment: Theology, Aesthetics, and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 11, 13, 18.

⁴⁶ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.21.96, 1.21.99.

⁴⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.22.102.

⁴⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.24.111.

⁴⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.46.203, 1.47.204.

⁵⁰ William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature, In a Series of Essays*, in *Educational and Literary Writings*, ed. Pamela Clemit, vol 5 of *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 78. Hereafter cited as *PPW* with volume and page number.

⁵¹ See Mee, *Conversable Worlds*, 55-56 (regarding Jonathan Swift), 63-66 (regarding Hume), 72 (regarding Isaac Watts), and 90-94 (regarding Samuel Johnson).

⁵² 1.51.219, 2.7.28-29.

⁵³ See, for example, Cicero, *De Oratore* 1.49-53 and 2.1-2.

⁵⁴ *PPW* 5:78, 79, 79.

⁵⁵ Julie Carlson, *England's First Family of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2007), 5. See pages 4-5, 8-10 for more on Carlson's thesis that "the life/writings" of the Godwin-Wollstonecraft family "forge [interconnections] among family, writing, and public life" (4), an argument that obviates some important criticisms of Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere.

⁵⁶ *PPW* 5:84.

⁵⁷ *PPW* 5:89.

⁵⁸ *PPW* 5:113, 132, my emphasis.

⁵⁹ *PPW* 3:358.

⁶⁰ That this was a timely issue, and one related to the use of conversation in pedagogy, is suggested by Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994). Richardson points out that educationists increasingly chose a catechistic method over dialectic "as a disciplinary mode" and "a prime means of containing the new literacy" against skepticism (65).

⁶¹ *PPW* 5:106. Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*, points out that "The principle that instruction and discipline must be rooted in the child's affections is shared by nearly every Romantic-era

writer on education, including so conservative a moralist as Hannah More” (63). Also see Richardson on Locke’s and Rousseau’s “pervasive authoritarianism” (48-51) and the Edgeworth’s “controlled environment” for childhood education (53-55).

⁶² PPW 5:106.

⁶³ See Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 1.9, particularly for the emphasis placed by ancient rhetorics on the ethical and civic functions of praise and blame.

⁶⁴ PPW 5:106.

⁶⁵ PPW 5:107.

⁶⁶ PPW 5:108, 109.

⁶⁷ PPW 5:107. Gary Handwerk fruitfully pursues the dilemmas Godwin engages through his recognition of the power possessed by parent or preceptor: “despite his unremitting critique of the despotism inherent in education, Godwin also believes that despotism to be inevitable, perhaps regrettable, but also necessary” (“‘Awakening the Mind’: William Godwin’s *Enquirer*,” in *Godwinian Moments*, 103-24). The present essay attempts to palliate Handwerk’s judgment by investigating Godwin’s persuasive strategy in *The Enquirer*.

⁶⁸ PPW 5:133.

⁶⁹ PPW 5:109. Richardson comments that “The frankly hegemonic character of these proposals [by Thomas Sheridan, John Brown, and others] helps explain why many English radicals, despite their interest in educational reform, resisted schemes for a national system (*Literature, Education, and Romanticism*, 87).

⁷⁰ PPW 5:133.

⁷¹ PPW 5:133. Adam Smith illuminates the power harbored in sympathy when he discusses the restraints those desiring sympathy or approbation must place on their passions to overcome a spectator’s hesitations and doubts. The spectator thus is capable of controlling the behavior of those he observes by granting or withholding approval. See *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D.D. Raphael and A.I. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1984), 9-12.

⁷² PPW 5:134.

⁷³ PPW 5:115.

⁷⁴ PPW 5:116.

⁷⁵ PPW 5:134.

⁷⁶ PPW 5:135.

⁷⁷ PPW 5:119, 120.

⁷⁸ PPW 5:119, 5:222, 5:225.

⁷⁹ PPW 3:453.

⁸⁰ PPW 5:120.

⁸¹ Angela Esterhammer, *The Romantic Performative: Language and Action in British and German Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2000), 293.

⁸² Esterhammer, *Romantic Performative*, 291, 296.

⁸³ Esterhammer, *Romantic Performative*, 306.

⁸⁴ Esterhammer, *Romantic Performative*, 297.

⁸⁵ One should also recognize that, as Jon Mee has argued, Godwin owes a good deal to Isaac Watts' observations on conversation and reading. See Mee, *Conversable Worlds*, 24-26, 68-69, and 147-48. Also see Watts, *Improvement of the Mind*, 36, 63-64. In both reading and conversation, Watts expects active engagement, not simply agreement but criticism and correction of the author's arguments.

⁸⁶ PPW 5:96.

⁸⁷ PPW 5:96.

⁸⁸ PPW 5:101.

⁸⁹ PPW 5:103, my italics.

⁹⁰ PPW 5:137.

⁹¹ For a similar conclusion, see Carlson, *England's First Family*, 78-80.

⁹² PPW 5:139.

⁹³ PPW 5:138.

⁹⁴ PPW 5:138, 5:139.

⁹⁵ PPW 5:143.

⁹⁶ See Tilottama Rajan's discussion of moral and tendency in *The Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1990), 169.

