Qiping Yin and Literary Community: A Yin-ean Reading of Communities in *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village*

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Abstract: Focusing on the seminal contribution that Qiping Yin has made to the theorization of "community," this article's aim will be twofold: it will introduce the central ideas of communication, the affective nature of individuals' engagements with one another as part of the process of communion, and shared pleasure as defining features of Yin's innovative reconceptualization of community. It will then showcase these ideas in practice as part of a Yin-ean reading of communities in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village*, showcasing the potential of Yin's ideas beyond the Victorian works from and in relation to which they were first derived. Serving as a platform for the international dissemination of a leading Chinese literary scholar's conceptual work, the article seeks to highlight the originality of these concepts, as well as their usefulness for future work on community.

Keywords: Qiping Yin; community; Yin-ean reading; Oliver Goldsmith; *The Vicar of Wakefield*; *The Deserted Village*

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标题：殷企平与文学共同体：《威克菲尔德牧师传》和《荒村》中共同体的"殷式"解读

内容摘要：本文聚焦殷企平对"共同体"理论建构所作的开创性贡献，主要包含两个层面的研究目标：其一，阐释殷企平对共同体概念进行创新性重构的三项核心要义，即交往与沟通、个体在共融过程中相互联结所体现的情感属性，以及共同分享的愉悦；其二，运用殷企平的共同体理论，细读奥利弗·哥尔德斯密斯的《威克菲尔德牧师传》和《荒村》，分析两部作品中的共同体叙事，以此说明该理论不仅适用于其形成之初所依据的维多利亚时期文学文本，而且具有跨越不同时代和文本类型的阐释效力。本文致力于搭建中国学

界与国际学界对话的桥梁，系统介绍殷企平提出的共同体理论，彰显其核心概念的原创性，并论证该理论对于共同体文学研究及其后续发展的方法论价值。

关键词：殷企平；共同体；殷式解读；奥利弗·歌尔德斯密斯；《威克菲尔德牧师传》；《荒村》

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According to Raymond Williams, "community" designates "an alternative kind of group-living," distinct from "the more formal, more abstract and more instrumental relationships" of society (Williams 75). He emphasizes that "unlike all other terms of social organization [...] it seems never to be used unfavourably" (Williams 76), and numerous interpretations of the concept have been offered since this statement was first made. Its complex dynamics, as represented in literary works, have been extensively studied by the "pioneering" work of one Chinese scholar, in particular (Wang 14). It is the aim of this article to chart the seminal contribution that Qiping Yin has made to the theorization of "community" and literary community studies more generally. The article will focus on three ideas that have repeatedly featured in Yin's work: the role that interpersonal communication (and its means) plays in a community, the affective nature of individuals' engagements with one another as part of the process of communion, and the subject of shared pleasure as constitutive to truly communal life. It seeks to disseminate these elements of his theoretical framework among an international audience, at the same time demonstrating how future literary scholars may want to engage with his theory of community by adopting it in their practical criticism.

Well known to Chinese scholars, who have read his publications in some of the most renowned periodicals at home, Yin's work on community has been grounded in detailed engagements with Western models, including those advanced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tönnies, J. Hillis Miller, and Raymond Williams, among others.[1] His critique of these earlier models is insightful and persuasive. And yet, his own model—which is largely, though not exclusively, applied to Victorian literature—deserves to be better known internationally: it reflects innovation and Chinese ethical thinking that will make it particularly apposite to adopt in relation to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

1 SeeYin Qiping, "Space, Cultural Materialism and Structure of Feeling: Reflections on the Chinese Reception of Raymond Williams," *Cambridge Quarterly* 1 (2012): 163-179; Yin Qiping, "Community: A Keyword in Critical Theory," *Foreign Literature* 2 (2016): 70-79.

British literature. Its concern with ethics, feeling, and communication, as well as the coupling of community with pleasure, makes it of particular value in readings that seek to question models of communities formed in periods of industrialization and rapid urbanization. It is exactly the threat of fragmentation to communities that has frequently accompanied modernity which has stimulated Yin's reflections on the structure of feeling and shared pleasure in deep community.

Yin's Community of Deep Feeling: Communion and Shared Pleasure

In a recent article on community in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Yin, objecting to readings advanced by Lucy Newlyn and Simon J. White, argues in favour of the poet's "multidimensional" conception of community, which he "developed from different perspectives" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 159). Rather than reading the "self" "in terms of its responsibilities to community" (Newlyn 59), as Newlyn does, or privileging "the role of community in the development of the individual" (White 59), as White does, Yin advocates a reading of a Wordsworthian "deep community." This community is one of profound communion in which "Wordsworth attaches great importance to the depth of communication in his pursuit of the depth of community" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 162). While Newlyn instrumentalized the community members' obligations to the social structure they inhabit, White, in turn, reduced this structure to a formative, institutional mechanism conditioning the individual's "development." According to Yin, the community imagined in *The Prelude* is more dynamic than both Newlyn and White acknowledge: it hinges on acts of coming together, exchanges, and the communal experience of pleasure and attachment to the community.

It is this central focus on communion and communication as part of authors' literary community building that has characterized Yin's wide-ranging literary community studies, a subject he has probed in relation to numerous works and developed conceptually in an attempt to do justice to authors' idiosyncratic castings of community in relation to notions such as "culture," "the common reader," and "pleasure."[1] Profound feeling is essential for interpersonal connections to develop that ensure a "common destiny of mankind" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 163) where the community, characterized by social harmony, ensures collective well-being. Rather than interpreting the individual's

1 See Jin Jia and Yin Qiping, "Weaving Tapestry of Literary Minds: Cultural Glimmers in the Fractures of Modernity: An Interview with Professor Yin Qiping," *Journal of Zhejiang International Studies University* 5 (2025): 8-13.

relationship with the community and the role of communal life for the individual as separate, Yin argues in favour of a broader notion of communion, as part of which solitude gains pertinent significance for Wordsworth's speaker: for it is the temporary removal from the community which allows a reflectiveness that cements communal ties, aligning the individual with others. The state of solitude affords the opportunity for self-communion and the cultivation of deep feeling but also the longing for attachment. Wordsworth's assigning of "mental power and genuine virtue" to "rural laborers" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 165) signals a particular type of envisaged, natural—though not pastoral—community where the ideal way of communal life is realized in the country: it is there that the manual labour on the field promotes both virtue and "mental power" while communion with others develops aesthetic aptitude and creativity, as in the production of communal song. In fact, it is natural in this community to cultivate both the land and the intellect, as well as the imagination. For that reason, Yin maintains that "community building is unthinkable without the cultivation of the individual mind" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 165), though not every mind needs to be cultivated, as individuals also benefit from others' cultivation through shared endeavours. In other words, mechanisms of communal reading or the dissemination of thought via song ensure that virtue and culture are narratively experienced by the collective, even though these narratives are not arrived at through individual communion with the self but through communion with others.

One particularly innovative aspect of Yin's theory of community in Wordsworth pertains to the abolition of "the idolatry of instrumental reason and mechanism." Rather than following idols blindly, members of the community turn to Nature, "for that is where he [or she] can draw inspiration as to the ways in which such idolatry can be abolished" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 165) and an alternative mode of social formation can be identified. Concretely, this means the community's rejection of mechanistic and institutionalized rationalism that establishes and enforces unnatural boundaries between human beings, at the same time that (aesthetic and virtuous) pleasure is cultivated. The rural community's distinctness from urban ways of life is defined by its integrative character: Its members embrace encounters with strangers, rather than understanding these meetings as moments of "alienation" in which they experience a potential threat to their sense of communal cohesion. In fact, as Yin demonstrates, many of the exchanges involving strangers and the poet-speaker recorded in *The Prelude* are "symbolic of in-depth communication and a vision of the deep

community" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 168). What becomes clear in these exchanges is the pervasiveness of community as a social ideal one wants to be part of, irrespective of national and cultural affiliation: Wordsworthian community, especially when it introduces the rural population, conveys notions of simplicity and virtue, both rooted in agricultural labour, which delight the poet-speaker. He is but an observer, yet he nevertheless derives joy from his experience of this rural way of life. For this community is one of natural man, living in harmony with his peers, while at the same time extending his contentment to those who seek similar communion and are of like disposition. It also includes "the bond of brotherhood that brings together the living and the dead" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 172) and that centrally positions cultural memory as a force of cohesion bringing different generations of community members together and facilitating their meaningful engagement. In doing so, it counters the fragmentation of modernity, keeping connections between the living and the dead alive and encouraging a sense of both tradition and belonging. Following the elimination of the mechanistic institutionalization of reason from the community, this intergenerational-familial communion, including with the dead, as in Wordsworth's "We Are Seven," secures contentment to the members of the community who recall and recollect the past, making it present again.

In his article Yin concludes his argument regarding the community Wordsworth outlines in *The Prelude* by defining the centrality of Williams's idea of the structure of feeling in this imagined social entity. Individualism is not regarded as detrimental to communal life but drives it through the individual's altruistic investment in their attachment to others: "For him [Wordsworth], individuality and community need not be contradictory, one being inseparable from the other and vice versa. In his imagined communities, each member has a strong sense of belonging and a robust sense of personal identity and, on the other hand, the community model is made possible and for ever enriched by various individuals whose minds are cultivated, hence capable of love and empathy" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community under the Pen of Wordsworth" 174). Wordsworthian deep community thus is affective, the individuals making up this social group never neglecting those of their peers who may need their support by privileging the collective. Rather, the various storyworlds of Wordsworth's poems allow more complex solutions, marginal figures—such as the "idiot boy," Johnny, or the girl from "We Are Seven"—being meaningful members of different kinds of communities of feeling.

In subsequent publications Yin has interlinked "community" and "pleasure,"

as in his "Communal Pleasure in Jean Rhys's Fiction." His notion of "aesthetic pleasure that implies a sense of communal well-being and a yearning for communal feelings" (Yin, "Communal Pleasure in Jean Rhys's Fiction" 332) is posited as an essential constituent of a community that ensures the harmonious and healthy coexistence of pleasure and a desire for belonging as part of a communal way of life. The pleasure Yin probes is grounded in "taste," the recognition on the part of an individual that—as part of their experience—pleasure is shared, rather than only felt individually and in isolation from the community. Taste denotes not merely the sensing of the (moral-)aesthetic, including a state of being attuned to an intrinsic value of aesthetic pleasure, both on its own and in relation to others. In his sensitive reading, Yin disentangles characters' sensations of pleasure as well as how they are framed rhetorically as part of a lexicon of delight and enjoyment. Even though the sharing of pleasurable experience is particularly complex in Rhys's fiction, its very process is essential to the well-being of the community, since it demonstrates the abolition of idolatry of selfish consumption and obsession Wordsworth had already advocated. According to Yin, pleasure is a spiritual resource for the community, since it stimulates the imagination, as well as the "aesthetic of pleasure" (Yin, "Weaving Tapestry of Literary Minds: Cultural Glimmers in the Fractures of Modernity: An Interview with Professor Yin Qiping" 11) shared by its members.[1]

Furthermore, Yin notes in a macro-study of the subject of shared pleasure in the community that socializing affords pleasure (Yin, "Communal Pleasure and Community Building in English Literature"). He contrasts the protagonist of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria or The Wrongs of Woman* (1798), who longs for sincere human interaction, "social pleasure" —an ideal of "social enjoyment" rejected by her rationalist husband. This shared pleasure is felt not only by those directly involved in the interaction, but can also be experienced empathetically by others who witness this shared pleasure. Yin avers that Wollstonecraft's idea is "innovative because it builds a bridge between joy, empathy, and community" (Yin, "Communal Pleasure and Community Building in English Literature" 44). It is not limited to interactions between two individuals only but open to involvement by individuals of a larger social grouping who entertain interpersonal interest in and concern for one another. This sharing of joy by proxy, so to speak, is also evidenced by Wordsworth's solitary figures who sympathize with the happiness they identify in the rural and agricultural population. Later nineteenth-century examples, such as George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, which Yin analyzes, also convey the sense of joy derived from labour, a pleasure

1 All translations of quotations from Qiping Yin's work in Chinese were furnished by my doctoral student, Xiaomeng Jin. My sincere thanks to her for her assistance.

the eponymous character seeks to communicate to others. Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy are likewise shown to introduce shared pleasure—in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* shared pleasure being derived from the community listening to singing and music. According to Yin, Hardy "uses music and art to evoke joy, thereby uniting people's hearts — exactly what a true community needs" (Yin, "Communal Pleasure and Community Building in English Literature" 47).

The above brief account has offered an exposition of key ideas in Yin's theory of literary community. Those aspects have been focused on that, to this author, at least, have appeared as of special significance, especially in terms of how they may be applied to future interpretations of literature. While many of the ideas pertaining to community were developed in relation to nineteenth-century literature, Yin's conceptual framework is also suitable for application to earlier works. Utilizing his conceptual repertoire, the remainder of this article will offer readings of communities in two of Oliver Goldsmith's works, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) and *The Deserted Village* (1770).

Goldsmith's Communities Reconsidered: A Yin-ean Reading

In the Georgic vision of community Goldsmith devises in his novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, it is the process of the vicar's admission and his becoming central to the community, a transition from self-centred individual to communally minded individual, which constitutes the work's primary focus. At the end of the tale, Dr Charles Primrose "re-establishes his authority as pastor and father on the basis of a new and sentimental ethic of sincerity" (Murray 329) by which he had not been characterized on his arrival in his new parish. The community he enters after his removal from Wakefield is shown to welcome him warmly, but his active immersion and integration in its social structure is not showcased until he communicates directly with his parishioners—on the occasion of his being seized by the officers of law for debt. Once in prison, he forms a community of fellow prisoners to whom he preaches and whom he instructs in useful communal skills that will ensure limited income and self-sufficiency, as well as initiate the reform of their manners. Communication on his part is key to the readers' recognition of his being a true pastor, who helps to cultivate his flocks' minds and hearts. But communication of a different kind—and not exclusively related to Dr Primrose—plays a role that facilitates the formation of a community of feeling: it is the largely neglected intra-communal instances of storytelling, including the singing and recitation of ballads, which foster cohesion among individuals, both within the Primrose family and beyond it.

The performance of ballads is a shared communal activity, which takes place at public gatherings such as festivities. It is not restricted to class-specific groups, the same narratives operating as part of the social formation of all members of the community. As such, they provide interpersonal pleasure as well as a cultural-moral education promoting virtue. Largely based on oral culture, ballads represent the common reader's earliest source of edification, one that is frequently shared mnemonically, rather than materially in the form of print media. This oral inscription of ballads and their singing involve interactive audience participation as part of which narratives are presented and understood collectively. Rooted in the spoken word, these narratives evoke memories and stimulate stories that incorporate the ballad texts' relevance for the structure of feeling defining the community. As such, they bring past experience and present community feeling together, generating a sense of tradition, belonging, and attachment that binds all members together.

Though a baronet, Mr Burchell, alias Sir William Thornhill, inhabits both the rural community over which Charles Primrose presides nominally as vicar and the London sphere of power and wealth that furnishes him with dominant authority. He is recognized as being one of those "harmless people" who visited the Primroses once their agricultural work had been completed when their visitors "had several ways of being good company" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 23): "while one played the pipes, another would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's last good night, or the cruelty of Barbara Allen" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 23). The music accompanying the ballads that are being sung reinforces the affective nature of the poems, which showcase a structure of feeling that is intimately known to the community. Ranging from the tragic Scottish tale of the exploits and hanging of Armstrong to that of the unrequited love of Barbara Allen, the ballads are composed in "the original language of men in an infant state of society": they are "uncontrouled by the custom, and the manners which in an advanced community are termed polite" (Pinkerton 1: xvi). These productions are knowledge platforms: they support the affective cultivation of the community, in the process shaping individuals in a way that makes them, as Yin has observed, capable of "empathy" (Yin, "The Meaning of Community" 174). For they "touched the passions truly and effectively" (Pinkerton 1: xviii). Ballads, like penny histories, were "still very much part of a living tradition" (Neuburg 17) of communal learning and, as such, underpinned essential communal literacy. Burchell himself sings ballads, and his particular fondness for children whom he instructs in the popular lore of oral literature evidences his own simplicity of heart. The narrator, Dr Primrose, reveals:

> He was famous, I found, for singing them ballads, and telling them stories; and seldom went without something in his pockets for them, a piece of gingerbread, or a halfpenny whistle. [...] he sung us old songs, and gave the children the story of the Buck of Beverland, with the history of Patient Grissel. The adventures of Catskin next entertained them, and then Fair Rosamond's bower. (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 30-31)

Burchell's privileging "old songs" over new productions such as "fine modern odes" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 92), which he deems expressive of "false taste" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 40), testifies to his conviction that the former function as culture texts capable of an education of affective literacy that instils virtue and values such as patience and endurance. Burchell's reifications of the storyworlds of the tales he introduces to the Primroses bring a culture of the past to life at the same time that the audience is supposed to suspend their disbelief that these are works of fiction, recognizing them as authentic stories evidencing a structure of feeling worth emulating. These songs' performance generates pleasure, the productions themselves serving as instances of the "taste" and cultivation that Yin considers central to the harmonious functioning of the community. In one instance Burchell introduces his ballad of "Edwin and Angelina" as a covert mechanism to signal his affection for the vicar's daughter, Sophia: the work is expressive of a more refined sentimental poetics than the "vulgar ballads" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 90) Mrs Primrose prefers to more fashionable productions, but it nevertheless functions as a model narrative of finally achieved harmony and union that prefigures Burchell's transition to the centre of the Primrose family's communal structure. At the same time, according to James P. Carson, it also functions as an example of "art" that "restore[s] the republican and Saxon virtues of simplicity, temperance, and hospitality" (Carson 177), an indigenous poetry diametrically opposed to Sophia's sophisticated tragic-sentimental tale of Celadon and Amelia.

Burchell is not the only named ballad singer, the vicar's sons, Moses and Dick, as well as Farmer Williams (who taught songs to Dick), being referenced as entertaining the family with humorous productions such as "Death and the Lady," "the Dying Swan, or the Elegy on the death of a mad dog" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 90). The social and situational contexts of the desired performance of a song in Chapter 17 are made clear by the vicar, who tells his son that he is in need of a song as a counter-measure to the grief he has lately experienced. In this respect, the ballad called for is supposed to be as "soothing" as Burchell's singing

of the unhappy tale of Johnny Armstrong. Strikingly, in both cases tragic ballads are considered "soothing," since they communicate real "pain" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 93): as a result, they inspire sympathy for the sufferer and relativize personal unhappiness, as in the vicar's case. The significance of these old songs rooted in the oral tradition becomes clear when Goldsmith impresses on the reader that the vicar's book knowledge, specifically his obsession with the Whistonian controversy, proves useless in offering consolation. By contrast, he is susceptible to the powers of music and song, as these appeal to his feeling self, rather than predominantly to his intellect.

The shared pleasure that is derived from musical performance is an inextricable part of Goldsmith's conception of the community as Georgic. In fact, in *The Deserted Village* the poet understands it as essential to the functioning of the community, it serving as an alternative kind of work—or cultivation (to use Yin's term)—to complete the daily routine of individuals. When the vicar is welcomed by his new parishioners at the start of Chapter 4, the narrator characterizes the self-sufficient nature of the local community but also that their life of "cheerful" labour was punctuated by meaningful instances of productive leisure: "they had almost all the conveniencies of life within themselves." However, their non-communion with urban life ensured that "they still retained a primæval simplicity of manners, and frugal by long habit, scarce knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with chearfulness on days of labour; but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 21). Their "primæval simplicity of manners" aligns them with the historical mores of the ballads sung at their entertainments. The "intervals of idleness and pleasure" are collective gatherings on the occasion of which communal bonds are reinforced, and it is such an "interval" that the vicar and his family experience as they are greeted by their parishioners, "drest in their finest cloaths, and preceded by a pipe and tabor" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 21-22). Not only does the parishioners' appearing "in their finest cloaths" indicate the joyousness of the occasion. Rather, the instrumental music played transforms this welcome into a spectacle that communicates in different ways the parishioners' investment in a communal habitus that seeks to make the Primroses feel at home and part of the community. This welcome is thus part of an alternative labour that sustains social formation and communal cohesion and that reaches out to individuals, with an aim to connect with them—much in the same way that Dr Primrose reaches out to the prisoners once he delivers his first address in gaol. While the Primroses' first day in their new parish is "a day of finery" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 24) for the community, it differs fundamentally

from the first Sunday when the family, despite the vicar's admonitions, are "drest out in all their former splendour" (Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* 24) to attend church. Theirs is not the same ritual as that performed by the community a few days earlier, for they seek distinction from the parishioners and an individualism that does not adopt the collective's social vision. Theirs is an individualism detrimental to the kind of communal vision identified by Yin in *The Prelude*. Likewise, despite his being the pater familias, Charles Primrose is not, at that point, respected as such by his family, though his parishioners revere him. Through their dress, then, the vicar's wife and daughters not only demonstrate their disobedience to his wishes, but they also outwardly manifest that they are not yet part of the community. It is the younger children, specifically through Burchell's influence, who are early absorbed into it, Olivia retaining an ambition to marry above her station that prevents her integration until the end of the novel.

The superficial markers of status that Mrs Primrose wants to retain to assert her difference from the community are shown to be meaningless once profound feeling is acknowledged as essential to sustaining the family unit, especially at crisis points in the narrative such as the house fire or the vicar's declining health in prison. The institutionalization of status that had helped Squire Thornhill to establish such dominion over the Primrose family is, likewise, shown to be meaningless once they are opposed by the genuineness of feeling between family members and lovers. In fact, the trappings of culture—the vicar's hobby-horsical learning regarding the Whistonian controversy, the "fine" ladies' supposed sophistication (even while their true coarseness is recognized), and the squire's ignorance presented as cultural confidence—are detrimental to the community, for they are instances of "the minimization of work" (Bataille 114) that maintains communal relations. The prospect Goldsmith outlines at the end of the narrative focuses on an alternative culture of feeling and empathy that Burchell, who has learnt to moderate his own excessive passion prior to his meeting the Primroses, will embody as new pater familias once he has married Sophia. Whereas the squire and the ladies of the town represent existences not useful to the community because they are not invested in productive work that will also benefit others, Burchell stands for an activist ethos and "agrarian virtue" (Carson 177) that sustain the commonwealth of the community through his own physical exertion. In his dual role as Sir William and Burchell, the character inhabits both the realms of the city and the country: in his former identity he harnesses the insights from his social-political function for the good of all, even enabling scoundrels such as Ephraim Jenkinson to be reformed and integrated into the community. As Yin maintains in his reading of Wordsworthian

community, communion—continuous exchange and empathetic investment in those needing support—underpins the feedback mechanism necessary to ensure the organic exchange of feeling in a deep community. This is also evident in Sir William—Burchell, who in his different roles as politician, harvester, and storyteller, interacts with individuals from different spheres and ages, fostering understanding and promoting "an organic connectedness between the social classes" (Griffin 78).

The pairing of labour and pleasure that is already signalled in Goldsmith's description of the vicar's welcome by the community is rendered more concisely in a range of vignettes the poet introduces in *The Deserted Village* where the speaker recalls a past of Georgic innocence and joy:

> How often have I paused on every charm,
> The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
> The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
> The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill,
> The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made. (9-14)

The speaker's vignette, reassembling past impressions into an ensemble highlighting key sites of the community, also captures the essential ethos of the village: its busyness, on the one hand, that is productive activity in the form of agricultural cultivation and the mill being turned by the water of the brook to produce flour. On the other, the village is also defined by the monumental hawthorn bush, a meeting place for old and young, boasting "seats" where encounters and communication can occur. Each of the sites mentioned possesses "charms," for they all are expressive of the character of the village's communal life, which is defined by Georgic labour and, as I have argued elsewhere, its essential feature, pleasure, in the form of entertainment such as the gatherings by the hawthorn bush after the duties of the day (Jung 510-529): "toil remitting lent its turn to play, / And all the village train, from labour free, / Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree" (16-18). "Toil" is cast as "remitting," rather than ceaseless, allowing the village people to enjoy "sports"—entertainments more broadly, including dances—on the occasion of which individuals not only commune with one another but also new unions (between lovers) are formed. These sports are productive of shared pleasure, since the village's intergenerational socializing allows for exchanges and storytelling in the form of ballads and other oral narratives that prove edifying at the same time that they strengthen a culture of remembering, relating the present to the past and

existing traditions. In contrast to the communal practices featured in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which are current and represent, according to Robert A. Bataille, a "realistic view of country life" (112), those of the later poem are retrospectively introduced, as part of a lament for a kind of community then vanishing. Framed by terms of stability and continuity, the speaker's initial nostalgic evocation of the village he once inhabited is one of security and decency in which old and young live harmoniously with one another.

Goldsmith fleshes out the "repeated pleasures" (23) which, in his novel, he had only briefly referenced. To the speaker of *The Deserted Village*, these pleasures are central to his vision of the community, occupying a long section of the poem (16-34); they constitute its "charms" (31), and evening "sports" "taught even toil to please" (31-32). The extended eulogy on the harmony and pleasures of the community contrasts effectively with what follows it, the "desolation" (38) that has destroyed both the village and its communal way of life. In his reminiscences of past happiness, the speaker recalls the "sweet confusion" of sounds he used to listen to in the evening:

> Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
> Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
> There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
> The mingling notes came softened from below;
> The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
> The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
> The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
> The playful children just let loose from school;
> The watchdog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
> And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
> These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
> And filled each pause the nightingale had made. (113-124)

Listening to the evening soundscape, the speaker, despite the polyphony of sounds he hears, perceives a delightful pseudo-musical spectacle in which humanity is integrated into the natural setting, alongside such different birds as geese and the nightingale. He senses the children's joy as they repair home from school, as well as the affection between the swain and the milkmaid singing to one another. Seeking "the shade," both humanity and the animals mentioned lose their distinctness and blend into a social realm where they harmoniously coexist. The "mingling notes"

are "softened" just as much as the outlines of the village below his vantage point become less distinctly visible, the clarity of optical precision being replaced by his feeling of connectedness with what he senses. Goldsmith's soundscape is innovative. It frames the scene in terms of the community that he had initially grounded, at the start of the poem, in several key sites and subsequently through activities—including the sports—members of the community engage in after work, once they enjoyed productive, pleasurable leisure.

Conclusion

In an early essay, entitled "The Revolution in Low Life" (1762), Goldsmith had provided a focused description of a "happy community" subsequently—like that of *The Deserted Village*—destroyed by "a seat of pleasure" (282), a mansion, constructed in its place. In miniature, the author's two-page account presents a rural community, "inhabited by a race of men who [had] followed the primeval profession of agriculture" (282) resembling that of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The individuals making up the community are, however, linked in ways more explicitly spelt out than in Goldsmith's novel. For they represent an affective social group connected by feeling and attachment, who "By a long intercourse and frequent intermarriages [...] were all become in a manner one family" (282). These familial ties were severed, however, with the introduction of commerce, wealth, and interest at which point "the connexions of kindred were [...] irreparably broken" (283). Local attachment, a bond the individuals forming the community have with the locality, while not emphasized in the novel, is central to "The Revolution in Low Life." The dislocation of the village inhabitants from a place they are attached to in proto-familial terms bereaves them of the ability to sustain emotional connectivity. The feeling that creates cohesion in the community is thus contingent on being anchored in a locality. It cannot be relocated, according to Goldsmith, as affective attachments to sites such as the hawthorn bush or memories of such evening soundscapes recorded by the speaker of *The Deserted Village* are uniquely embedded within a communally shaped physical landscape. The speaker's response of nostalgia is an indication of his sense of irretrievable loss, which can, however, be mediated through recollection along proto-Wordsworthian lines. For in the latter's poems the imagination reifies past pleasure and its "beauteous forms" (Wordsworth 164), translating them in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" into a sensation that is "Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart" (Wordsworth 164).

The readings of two of Goldsmith's works have centred on the structure of feeling that Yin considers an essential backbone of community. Focusing on the

nexus between the affective power of communion and shared pleasure, the article has probed the significance of ballads as an affective medium that instils a sense of authentic tradition, as well as values, in the community for which Burchell performs in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. These songs are presented at social gatherings that are participative and that represent an integral part of the Georgic vision of Goldsmithian community. Integral to the structure of feeling, they function as "inalienable elements of a social process" (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 133) that facilitate intergenerational social exchange as well as the continuous formative shaping of individuals. Being performed by different individuals in the novel, they are shared cultural texts that are adapted to audience needs, their different modes (ranging from tragic to humorous) reinforcing varying social practices. The ballad thus serves as a counter-institution to polite, printed literature: it utilizes an oral mode of communication that is retained mnemonically by the members of the community who recall these works on appropriate occasions. This oral heritage represents a treasured resource of collective memory and affective resonance that is cultural and social, rather than profit-driven, as the rational tenets defining urban commerce are.

Communal gatherings portrayed in both *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village* are occasions on which pleasure, largely through conversation, music, and interpersonal engagements, is shared. In fact, Goldsmith's communities illustrate the complexity of Yin's idea of shared pleasure, focusing especially in *The Deserted Village* on the "sweet" joy experienced by the speaker on the occasion of communal evening activities. His lyrical subjectivity filters the experience of being both an onlooker to others' happiness and a participant deriving pleasure from such immersion in communal life. Yin's emphases on intra-communal communication, the structure of feeling, and shared pleasure designate a particular iteration of a deep community. Beyond these concepts, however, it is his sensitivity to the language of affection, attachment, and communion, as well as his skill at unravelling the nuances of the organicity of community, which this article has sought to introduce in this Yin-ean reading of Goldsmith's communities.

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