

Year's Work in English Studies 2020: Romantic Poetry

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Writing on Romantic poetry in 2019 placed significant emphasis on the critical and ethical implications of the Anthropocene, with one edited collection and two monographs focusing on ecologically grounded criticism. Anne Collett and Olivia Murphy's *Romantic Climates: Literature and Science in an Age of Catastrophe*, based upon two 2016 conferences marking the bicentenary of the year without a summer, presents a wide-ranging series of Australasian essays which seek to reconsider "how the Romantics responded to the changing climates of their day" and "how these climatic events shaped the development of Romanticism itself" (p. 1). While ranging across genres, in this account I will focus upon its treatment of poetry. Elias Grieg's 'Wordsworth in the Tropics of Cumbria' (pp. 33-58) sharply critiques an 'ongoing complacency about Wordsworth's nature' (p. 37), and re-examines Wordsworth's experimental 1790s poetry to argue that in poems such as 'Salisbury Plain', he turns to nature 'not as a mode of sublimation or avoidance of history, but rather as its most reliable and exacting register' (p. 41). Nikki Hessel's 'Keats and the poetics of Climate Change, 1816 and Beyond' (pp. 59-74) builds upon recent critical work on Keatsian botany to argue for 'the connection between those poems and the wider question of the peculiar climate of 1816' (p. 61), and in turn to consider poetry of our own era of climate change as potentially benefiting from the 'same productive uncertainty' (p. 72) that shaped poems such as the 'Ode to Psyche'. Clara Tuite's 'When the Earth Moves' (pp. 113-140) examines Byron's exile in Switzerland to consider 'how Byron's catastrophist writing mediates emotional disturbance' (p. 114), with especial reference to *Manfred*. Steven Hampton's 'Utopia or Dystopia? The Romantics in Switzerland, 1816' (pp. 141-157) examines depictions of Switzerland in Romantic literature, focusing upon Byron and Mary Shelley to argue *contra* writing which sees an older vision of the Swiss Alps as satanic being displaced by visions of its sublimity, numerous Romantic works 'make use of a dark, terrifying depiction of the alpine land' (p. 156) and the two readings exist in duality. James Phillips' 'Metaphor and the Unexpected: Byron's 'Darkness' and Responding to Ecological Disaster' (pp. 159-171) examines the liminal status of Byron's poetic vision between dream and

chronicle, arguing that its 'undecidability is at the heart of the poem's semantic impertinence' (p. 161) and the poem itself stands as an extended 'metaphor for the limits on the semantic elasticity of terms' (p. 167). American scholar Gillen D'Arcy Wood contributes a brief afterword, 'Ghosts of 1816' (pp. 191-199), reflecting upon the modern recasting of 1816 as 'a vital climate change narrative' (p. 193), and arguing for intellectual interconnectedness, entwining 'a new globalism in Romantic studies and a new poetics of climate' (p. 198), imperative goals for which *Romantic Climates* in its textual readings and theoretical interventions marks a notable step.

These environmental concerns continue in two articles on geology in Romantic poetry. In 'Slow Time' (*PMLA* 134:ii[2019] 315-31), Jonathan Sachs reads William Wordsworth, John Keats and Charlotte Smith in the light of Charles Lyell's geology. Lyell had shown that even apparently static rock was rippling with movement, if it was seen in the right timescale. This timescale Sachs calls 'slow time'. As Sachs demonstrates, this slow time is a force in poems such as 'Beachy Head' [1807], 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' [1819] and 'The Tables Turned' [1798]. Jeremy Davies makes a related argument in 'Lyric's Diurnal Course: Reading with Geology' (*Mosaic* 52:iii[2019] 1-17). Davies begins with a broad discussion of the 'geologic turn' in the Humanities, which he traces back to Lyell's concept of deep or slow time. In the second half of the essay, he uses Wordsworth's 'A slumber did my spirit seal' [1800] and Byron's 'So We'll Go No More A Roving' [1817] and test cases for his 'geological' mode of reading.

David Collings's challenging study *Disastrous Subjectivities: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Real* reads key Romantic texts in connection with Kantian critiques, in the process proposing to 'illuminate certain characteristic impasses in a particular cultural conjuncture by investigating in Kant and Romanticism alike the formation of what I will designate as the Real.' (p. 7). In a theoretical introduction, Collings argues against teleological narratives of secularisation and suggests the interpretative limits of historicist analysis. After two chapters analysing the novels of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, he accompanies a shift in focus from 'ethical to aesthetic violence' (p. 25) with a change of genre to poetry in chapters providing close readings of Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley. 'After the Covenant: Undead Subjectivity in Wordsworth's Alpine Sublime' examines *The Prelude's* alpine and diluvian passages as depictions of the 'splendid chaos of the earth's surface' (p. 85) and markers of a traumatic iteration of the sublime in which the 'modern subject is, in every sense, the subject of disaster' (p. 107). 'Trusting to the Billows: Byron's Challenge to the Real' addresses *Manfred*, 'Darkness', and several other works as Byron's poetic consideration of 'how to salvage a certain

ethical integrity within a denuded universe' (p. 109), with Manfred's death analogised as a counterpart of modernity itself, defining the modern subject as 'one capable of living in a world defined by a ruined star' (p. 132). 'Tarrying with Disaster: Ethical Destitution in Shelley's "The Triumph of Life"', perhaps Collings's most compelling chapter, sees Shelley as the emblematic poet of disastrous subjectivity, arguing that 'The Triumph of Life' culminates tendencies already present in 'Mont Blanc', moving beyond even its vast scale of geological disaster to conceive disaster as ever-present and immanent (p. 146) thus radically undercutting notions of developmental history. A thoughtful coda situates these developments within the Anthropocene, suggesting that there is 'no clearer way to trace the contours of a subjectivity proper to our moment than by reinterpreting the disastrous subjectivity inherent in modernity' (p. 172), casting genealogy as an ethical imperative.

Chris Washington's provocative *Romantic Revelations: Visions of Post-Apocalyptic Life and Hope in the Anthropocene* sees modernity in similarly perilous terms, looking back to the early nineteenth-century to argue that Romantic writers invent post-apocalyptic writing to 'design an ontologically radical social contract that includes both the human and the nonhuman' (p. 4), and raising the central paradox that such writing 'exemplifies how hope of and for life can only emerge precisely when there is no hope' (p. 4). While Washington's introduction is repetitive in restating its thesis, *Romantic Revelations* itself provides consistently engaging readings of Shelley, Byron and Clare, integrated with chapters on Mary Shelley and Jane Austen. 'The Mind Is Its Own Place: What Percy Shelley's Mountain Did Not Say' chiefly focuses on the ontological implications of 'Mont Blanc', seeing Shelley in terms reminiscent of *Candide* as 'a deflationary prophet urging us to tend to our own time instead of messing about in the hypotheticals of future existence' (p. 33), and arguing for its titular mountain as 'indicative of, because indifferent to, humanity's end' (p. 54). 'Byron's Speculative Turn: The Biopolitics of Paradise' centres upon *Cain* as embracing a catastrophist idea of human extinction to find 'a hope that emerges when there should be no possibility of it: the end of not being alive and the beginning of life as posthuman.' (p. 122). Washington's analysis of Clare foregrounds his depictions of animal suffering to argue that his work is a 'new form of conceptualizing life' (p. 127) and argues for a radically expansive idea of love, although the reader must tolerate Washington's willingness to deploy conceptual puns such as 'to bee or not to bee' (p. 150). After a final chapter on *Frankenstein* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Washington's coda reiterates his paradoxically post-apocalyptic hopes, arguing for the power of love to help anchor 'a nonhuman ontological

social contract' (p. 188) as an alternative to anthropocentric models, giving his conception a further Austenian tinge in a final allusion to *Persuasion's* description of those who love longest when existence or hope is gone.

Seth T. Reno finds his *Amorous Aesthetics: Intellectual Love in Romantic Poetry and Poetics, 1788-1853* in the observation that 'Romantic poets use "love" in their writings far more often than "nature" and "imagination", yet this remains unacknowledged in Romantic scholarship' (p. 1). From this starting point, his expansive treatment of Romantic love argues that 'seemingly inward-turning and escapist moves are also outward-turning engagements with the social world', and ones 'grounded in science, sociality, and critical thought' (p. 3). Reno presents this line of writing as developing upon a Spinozan conception of affective feeling, and situates Wordsworth within it as 'the preeminent poet of feeling, emotion, and affect' (p. 23). Accordingly, 'Wordsworthian Love' (pp. 27-86) is *Amorous Aesthetics'* longest chapter, presenting a poet as concerned with 'the real world of things' as 'the universe of things' (p. 31), and whose writing to 1805 displays 'an idea of intellectual love' (p. 34) woven throughout his poetry and poetics. Reno provides careful studies of a series of key poems from this period, from *An Evening Walk* to *The Prelude*, with a sensitive reading of *Tintern Abbey* as its centrepiece. An abrupt conclusion sees the later Wordsworth supplanting Wordsworthian love with 'Christian love' (p. 86), and in effect leaving Percy Shelley and John Clare to carry the torch. 'John Clare and Ecological Love' (pp. 87-112) traces a move from generalized love of nature to a more 'self-conscious and theoretical treatment of ecophilia' (p. 91), and 'Shelleyan Love' (pp. 113-165) challenges biographical readings of Shelley's lyrics to emphasise their formal and theoretical aspects, with Shelley's philosophy of love, seen as proto-Adornoian in its 'nascent negative dialectics' (p. 116) and interconnectedness. Reno's last two chapters move towards the blurred lines between late Romantic and early Victorian poetry, firstly arguing for Felicia Hemans as a poet who in her most radical work 'continued the Romantic tradition of intellectual love through her poetry of the affections' (p. 191). 'Tennyson, Arnold, and the Victorians: The Legacy of Romantic Love' (pp. 192-216) outlines a gradual transition away from intellectual love, with the early Tennyson at once continuing the tradition of Wordsworth and Hemans while shifting the poetics of love to 'bodily foci' (p. 194), and Arnold more self-consciously moving away from hope in his critique of intellectual love. Reno's coda urges the place of intellectual love as central to Romantic poetry and poetics, and as a tradition now more discernible thanks to the

twenty-first century's affective turn (p. 216), a shift in which *Amorous Aesthetics'* rigorously grounded readings provides a fine example.

The cultural formation of Romantic masculinities received exemplary treatment in Pete Newbon's richly detailed *The Boy-Man, Masculinity and Immaturity in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Newbon's study traces literary ideas of childhood in relation to the critical reception of Romantic poets, with William Wordsworth at its centre, considered as the poet of the 1790s whose work was 'singled out for remarkable—disproportionate—levels of ridicule on the grounds of their puerility' (p. 83) and after his rise to Victorian canonicity 'the definitive poet of childhood' (p. 265). Amid a wide-ranging history that spans the 1720s to the 1890s (a long nineteenth century indeed), Newbon identifies a turning point in the conservative response to the French Revolution: 'a paranoiac discourse which used terms describing gender non-conformity as an arsenal of rhetorical weapons' and attacked men for failing to adhere to 'proper masculine maturation' (p. 83). Echoes of these attacks are presented as still discernible in 1820s literary disputes, with the vitriol and scorn of the Tory *Blackwood's* against the Cockney school seen as 'inspired—at least in part—from the anti-Jacobin attacks upon 'baby-talk' radicalism in the 1790s, and in the numerous assaults upon 'namby-pamby' Wordsworth' (p. 156). Newbon's account is not limited to rhetoric and reception, examining how poets lived and wrote within these discursive structures, as in 'Little Johnny Keats: A Boy of Pretty Abilities' (pp. 149-175), challenging a standard critical narrative of Keats's odes of 1819 as strikingly 'mature' by suggesting that even his 'canonical lyrics are inflected by residual tropes of childlikeness and age inversion' (p. 166). Although it would have been fascinating for Newbon to consider the extent to which 1790s radicals too attacked their literary antagonists, most famously Edmund Burke, as unmanly, his thought-provoking genealogy invites further study in numerous fields, not least the ongoing critical reconsiderations of a time after the writings of even Romanticism's youngest 'boy-men' had grown old.

Stephanie Elizabeth Churms' *Romanticism and Popular Magic: Poetry and Cultures of the Occult in the 1790s* participates in a historicist recovery of a once-overlooked culture of magic which long survived the 1735 Witchcraft Act, reading several canonical and non-canonical poets 'through the lens of the surviving material occult cultures of the period' in order to discern 'how imaginative literature negotiated these modalities of popular magic' (p. 1). Churms' fascinating re-examination of the 1790s begins by recognising a relative lack of surviving textual evidence as a product of oral culture, and precedes poets such as Wordsworth,

Thelwall, and Coleridge with case studies of non-poetic texts from Hannah More's demystifying tract *Tawney Rachel the Fortune-Teller* to biographical pamphlets of magical practitioners. After further contextualisation through a useful discussion of contemporary political debates as a linguistic battle which not infrequently deployed 'a discourse of the occult' (pp. 82-83), Churms in 'John Thelwall's Autobiographical Occult' (pp. 109-130) analyses the many self-representations of *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement* with especial emphasis on the conjuror, a freeing persona seen as developed in response to 'constrictions placed on freedom of speech, association and publication' (p. 121). This conjunction between politics and magic persists throughout Churms' account, with chapters such as 'Robert Southey and the Conservative Occult' (pp. 215-261) reading Southey's 1799 *Poems* as an ambiguous response to *Lyrical Ballads* and its depiction of popular magic revealing 'the residual radicalism Southey maintained during the closing years of the eighteenth century as he continued to hope for social reform' (p. 215). *Lyrical Ballads* itself forms a central text, with Churms examining Coleridge and Wordsworth's collaboration across two chapters to suggest Coleridge's growing skepticism towards occult identities accompanies his conflicted feelings in the French Revolution's aftermath, tendencies combined in a probing reading of *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as depicting a figure increasingly 'entrenched within the superstitious belief system of his crewmates' (p. 199). *Romanticism and Popular Magic* closes with a statement of the critical potential of defamiliarization, describing magic as a multivalent medium through which writers could 'vocalise their reactions to intense governmental surveillance, the pressures that came with 'secret' knowledge, and the social responsibilities of the poet', nicely capturing a perspective 'alive to the possibilities of enchantment' (p. 270).

In *Lives of the Dead Poets: Keats, Shelley, Coleridge*, Karen Swann considers the impulse to biography in Romantic poetry. She reads Keats, Shelley and Coleridge as examples of 'premature arrest' (p. 2), whose failure to thrive in the real world was interpreted by biographers as proof of their superior poetic character. In Chapter 1, Swann considers how Keats described his 'posthumous life', during the time when he felt certain of imminent death (p. 31). She observes that Keats himself prefigured later biographical traditions, by imagining himself as 'the commodity, the celebrity, the canonical work'—which he would have to die to become (p. 41). This leads into Swann's discussion of Shelley's *Adonais* [1821] in Chapter 2. Swann interprets *Adonais* as a piece of biographical rhetoric, which 'seeks to transform the world that survives Keats into a world in which Keats's corpus, and in consequence Shelley's

own work, could survive' (p. 56). Shelley uses Keats's premature death to imagine a 'modernity' that still has a place for 'poetry' (p. 75). In Chapter 3 she turns to literary biography proper, examining how Shelley's circle created an image of Shelley the Poet in their published recollections of him. The focus then shifts in the final two chapters. Coleridge's 'premature arrest' was artistic stagnation, rather than death; and in her final chapters, Swann examines the figures of 'Late Coleridge' (Chapter 4) and 'Coleridge the Talker' (Chapter 5), the shadow-Coleridges of his later life. In Chapter 4, she offers insightful analyses of his later poems, while in Chapter 5 she analyses contemporary records of Coleridge's conversation, before critically reading Hazlitt's account of Coleridge in *The Spirit of the Age* [1825]. Swann paints a fascinating picture of the later Coleridge, a figure of insubstantiality whose daring intellect and pursuit of useless knowledge were shot through with insecurities.

The final general monograph on Romantic poetry for 2019 was Kate Singer's *Romantic Vacancy: The Poetics of Gender, Affect, and Radical Speculation*. This is a powerful inquiry into what Geoffrey Hartman called anti-self-consciousness. Singer argues that '[r]omantic poets of vacancy found a basis for knowledge not in bodily sensation but within the figural movements of language' (xvi). This is an original argument, at a time when embodiment and object-oriented ontology are dominant trends in poetics. Singer identifies five poets of vacancy in the period, to each of whom she dedicates a chapter. She begins in Chapter 1 with Charlotte Smith. Smith is perhaps the pre-eminant British Romantic poet of nothingness, and Singer does good work with her in this chapter. In her poetry, Smith 'seeks another form of affect outside sensation and sensibility' (p. 10). She often associates this form of affect with the sea, where she 'overwrites subjectivity, empirical or categorical, with a coastal, figural fluidity' (p. 29). In Chapter 2, Singer turns to Mary Robinson. Robinson is often described as an artistic or pyrotechnic poet, who wrote skilfully for effect, but Singer finds serious philosophy in Robinson's work. Robinson's apparent superficiality is actually a kind of critique; her 'poetic idiocy' allows sound to carry the kinds of meaning that words cannot (p. 37). Chapter 3 considers William Wordsworth and Percy Shelley together. These are the only male poets Singer considers, and in a nice twist, she focuses on how Wordsworth and Shelley portray singing women in their work. In Wordsworth these are literal women; in Shelley, Singer also considers his imagery of the wind, which he cleverly defends. Chapter 4 covers Felicia Hemans, who espouses a unique kind of vacancy: 'a brain overwhelmed by sensory data at the same time it shatters the mind's long-held transcendental means of understanding' (p. 96). Hemans, in Singer's view, is a poet of crisis.

Finally, in Chapter 5 Singer discusses Maria Jane Jewsbury. Singer is able to expand her discussion to take in the colonised world of Jewsbury's *The Oceanides* [1832-33]. On the waves between Britain and India, Jewsbury pursues the 'floating image' of the 'ineffable infant', an anti-empirical object that is in 'continuous transit' (p. 125). The discussion is dense and interesting, and will hopefully generate more interest in Jewsbury's complex body of work. This rounds off Singer's study, which is one of the more interesting and powerful analyses of Romantic subjectivity in recent years.

Taylor Schey's 'Romanticism and the Poetics of Political Despair'. (*ELH* 86 [2019] 967–96) is an essay explicitly haunted by twenty-first century politics, using a 2015 Toni Morrison essay as a launching point to ponder how and when a cultural prohibition against despair 'came to define the task of the artist in so-called dark times?' (p. 969). Schey explores the origins of '*left despair*' (p. 969) in the Romantic period, resituating it from a product of the post-Waterloo Shelley circle to Wordsworth's turn-of-the-century poems, in particular a draft of the 'Intimations Ode' (p. 970), itself inspired by Coleridge urging him to write a new epic 'addressed to those who have abandoned their revolutionary hopes' (p. 976). His reading hinges upon Wordsworth's use of 'glory' in the Ode as a code for his earlier political enthusiasms, and argues that his 1802-03 sonnets' more directly political commentary allow him to 'escape imaginatively from that situation in all its dread and intolerability' (p. 984), finding merit in his method while well aware of its situational nature.

Alexander Freer's 'Poetics contra Psychoanalysis' (*PoT* 40 [2019] 619-643) follows the promise of its bold title in arguing for the failings of psychoanalytic criticism, seeing misreadings of psychoanalysis as a mode of literary criticism as opening 'the way for a vague and generalizing redeployment of psychoanalytic concepts' (p. 620). Freer broadly sees meetings of literature and psychoanalysis as disfiguring one or both, but finds more potential in a recognition that the twain shall not meet, stating that critics 'can relinquish the ideal of their shared truth, and grasp, rather than efface, the resistance between them' (p. 623). His theoretically informed piece concludes with readings of the operations of Wordsworthian memory in 'Tintern Abbey' and Shelley's fragment 'On Love', in each case contrasting them with Freudian theory to suggest the potential for poetics and psychoanalysis to be studied in more productive ways 'in which each resists and exceeds the other, and in so doing resituate our thinking about both' (p. 640).

A special issue of *Studies in Romanticism* (58 [2019] 429-579) considered 'Song and the City', seeking to open the field for further study by resituating song in an urban context and uncoupling it from ballad. Ian Newman and Gillian Russell's introductory essay "Metropolitan Songs and Songsters: Ephemerality in the World City" (pp. 429-449) lucidly outlines the issue's aims, describing London in the Romantic period as 'a robust culture of song' and seeking to challenge a modern situation in which Romantic references to song have become 'so familiar as to be almost invisible' (p. 430). Newman and Russell rightly put emphasis on the 'productive indeterminacy and fluidity of song' (p. 432) in its ability to disturb boundaries and expose complex paths of dissemination. Leith Davis's "Between Archive and Repertoire: Astley's Amphitheatre, Early Circus, and Romantic-Era Song Culture" (pp. 451-479) addresses the role of song in London's first circus, giving light to ephemeral genres such as the 'slip song', and viewing Astley's Amphitheatre as 'a unique node in a complex and expanding network of song culture in the nation's capital during the Romantic era' (p. 456). James Grande's fascinating "London Songs, Glamorgan Hymns: Iolo Morganwg and the Music of Dissent" (pp. 481-503) considers the place of music in Dissent through the figure of stone-mason poet, showman, and 'self-proclaimed preserver of the Welsh bardic tradition' (p. 481), Iolo Morganwg. Grande's analysis of songs crossing borders endeavours to complicate centre-periphery models of understanding, while 1790s soundscapes are vividly evoked amid consideration of Morganwg's popular *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral* and its rewriting of 'God Save the King'. I. J. Corfe's "'Erin go Bragh" in London: Irishness in the Nineteenth-Century English-Printed Street Ballad' (pp. 505-523) explores a 'sound both familiar and strange' (p. 505) in its titular phrase, at once deployed by United Irishmen and found in comical and political songs. Corfe's analysis focuses upon songs such as 'Exile of Erin' and 'Sons of Fingal', linking them with Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* and other tunes, before considering how 'Erin go Bragh's place in English popular culture as a symbol directed against injustice. Susan Rutherford's 'John Brabham and 'The Death of Nelson"' (pp. 525-543) studies Brabham's popular 1811 song and its acquiring of new meanings over time as it became a vision rather than a 'direct experience' (p. 541) of the past. Lastly, Oskar Cox Jensen's "Joseph Johnson's Hat, or, The Storm on Tower Hill" (pp. 545-569) offers a close study of 'one man's performance of a single song' (p. 545), and discusses disabled black ex-sailor Joseph Johnson's career and cultural legacies as an example of 'the multiplicities of song culture' (p. 545). Jensen's finely argued piece closes an issue which

consistently urges us to listen more sensitively for the resonances of songs too easily overlooked as ephemeral.

Before we move into our discussion of particular authors, we pause to note several studies that study groups of authors together. We begin with Wordsworth and Coleridge. Elsa Hammond's 'Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Health of the Air' (*EiR* 26 [2019] 211-225) adds to the growing academic discourse tracing connections between Romantic poetry and contemporary science, depicting both poets as attuned to 'scientific discovery and socio-medical advice about the effect of air on health' (p. 212). Hammond's rewarding analysis briskly considers poems from 'Frost at Midnight' to 'Lines Written in Early Spring' against the background of the experiments of Joseph Priestley and others, with new understandings of plants as reinvigorating air helping provide 'freshly transformed inspiration for poetic engagement with the natural world' (p. 225).

Chris Townsend's 'Nature and the Language of the Sense: Berkeley's Thought in Coleridge and Wordsworth' (*R* 25 [2019]: 129-142) seeks to sketch a Romantic conception of the philosopher George Berkeley, one that 'places far greater emphasis on the arguments for a divine language of nature' (p. 130) than his oft-cited and occasionally mocked idealism. To this end, Townsend situates each poet in their knowledge of Berkeley, suggesting that Coleridge's deep familiarity likely led to Wordsworth too becoming familiar with his work. Through succinct readings of Book 13 of *The Prelude* and 'This Lime-tree Bower my Prison', Townsend compellingly argues that the rhetorical use of semblance in these poems marks an idiosyncratic and indeed 'historically unique reappropriation of Berkeley's thought' (p. 130), with their early poetics according harmoniously with 'the spiritually infused empiricism of Berkeley' (p. 137).

In *Wordsworth, Coleridge, and 'The Language of the Heavens'*, Thomas Owens sets out to correct a number of misconceptions about Wordsworth and Coleridge's scientific knowledge. He argues that both were fully abreast of contemporary developments in astronomy and mathematics, and that they both drew on contemporary science as a storehouse of metaphors and tropes in their poetry. In Part One, Owens explains the role that mathematics and astronomy play in Wordsworth and Coleridge's poetry. His method in Chapter 1 is risky, though suggestive. He identifies references to geometry in Wordsworth's *Excursion* (p. 1814) and Coleridge's notebooks, and then compares these references to works by Galileo and the Herschels. The risk is that similar concepts, such as 'triangle', may be used in substantially different ways in each context, invalidating the comparison. But Owens seems to skirt this

problem. In Chapter 2 he is on surer ground, identifying probable sources for Wordsworth and Coleridge's statements about mathematics.

Part Two focuses on Wordsworth. In Chapter 3, Owens analyses the 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty', in which Wordsworth strove to emulate John Milton's 'gravity, and republican austerity' (p. 68). The implication seems to be that this 'gravity' is somehow related to the physical force of 'gravity', but Owens makes little of this connection; instead he focuses on how Milton influenced Wordsworth. In Chapter 4 the scientific element is stronger. Owens argues that, in later life, Wordsworth learnt about cutting-edge science and mathematics from his friend William Hamilton Rowan, and this altered his perception of language. As evidence, Owen submits Wordsworth's mature revisions to *The Prelude* [1850]. After these two chapters on Wordsworth, Owens concludes his study with two chapters on Coleridge. In Chapter 5 he considers Coleridge's theory of the imagination, which he argues is built on an astronomical metaphor: the mind is like a solar system. In Chapter 6, Owens argues that William Herschel's discoveries provided materials for Coleridge's defence of the Trinitarian viewpoint in his mature theology. While the chapters on Wordsworth are somewhat uneven, Owens appears to be on stronger ground in his Coleridge chapters.

Next we note Madeleine Callaghan's *The Poet-Hero in the Work of Byron and Shelley*. Both Byron and Shelley are 'compelled by the relationship between poet and hero', argues Callaghan (p. 1). Although she begins by noting this parallel, Callaghan chooses to divide her book in two: Chapters 1-4 deal with Byron, and Chapters 6-9 deal with Shelley. This seems a missed opportunity, but she does include an 'Interchapter' that reads *Julian and Maddalo* [1819] and *The Island* [1823] alongside each other. She begins this comparative interchapter with a delicate analysis of *Julian and Maddalo*, doing justice to the subtlety of the poem, and explaining Byron's reaction to it. Although Byron felt chastened at Shelley's critique of his pessimism, Callaghan argues that in Shelley's poem, Julian (Shelley) and Maddalo (Byron) 'are remarkably like one another, with their backgrounds and enjoyment of debate making their espoused philosophies pale in comparison to their similarities' (p. 107). Shelley's poem poses the question: Is poetic heroism even possible? A few years later, Byron would revisit this question in *The Island*, which Callaghan reads as a kind of memorial to Shelley. This is a beautiful chapter, which combines fine close reading with excellent biographical context. It is a pity that the whole book was not written in this comparative mode.

Nonetheless, the author-focussed Chapters contain much valuable material. Chapter 1 takes in *Manfred* [1817], *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* [1812-1818] and *Beppo* [1818], in which the poet-hero is a solitary, isolated figure. Chapter 2 considers *Marino Faliero* [1820], in which Byron presents Faliero as 'a poet-hero open to both scorn and applause' (p. 55). Chapter 3, Callaghan turns to *Cain* [1821] and *The Deformed Transformed* [1824], in which the poetic hero is pushed beyond their capacities and experiences 'extinction' (p. 57). Finally, in Chapter 4 Callaghan presents *Don Juan* as the 'apotheosis' of Byron's particular brand of poetic heroism. The Shelley chapters consider a similar range of attitudes towards the poetic hero, though they follow the opposite trajectory. Where the Byron chapters end in apotheosis, the Shelley chapters begin there. In Chapter 6, Callaghan describes the 'heroic poetics' set forth in *A Defence of Poetry* [1821], *The Mask of Anarchy* [1819] and *Prometheus Unbound* [1820]. In subsequent chapters, she reveals layers of complexity to Shelley's poetics. She argues that the heroic protagonists of *Laon and Cynthia* [1817] are not merely heroes, but poets too, and undeserving of the scorn of later critics (Chapter 7). She then presents *Epipsychidion* [1821] as Shelley's first foray into deconstructing the poet-hero. The poem 'carefully blurs the line between self and poet-hero as [Shelley] foregrounds the problem of representing the "I" in poetry' (p. 171). Finally in Chapter 9, Callaghan argues that Shelley portrays two poet-heroes in *Adonais* [1821], the dead Keats and the living Shelley. Poetry exceeds the poet-hero in this poem, and in the end '[p]ower and control over his life's autonomy seem wrested from the poet as he is borne along by a power of his own invocation' (p. 205). In this way the poet-hero finally ondoes himself. Callaghan concludes this rich and detailed study with a final comparison: Byron's poet-hero 'decr[ies] the limits of his existence', while Shelley's poet-hero 'explores the precise nature of the relationships between his state and his conceptions' (p. 208).

To begin our discussion of particular authors, we note that 2019 was not a fruitful year for criticism of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, though it was a good year for textual scholarship. First, we note the appearance of William McCarthy's much-awaited *The Collected Works of Anna Letitia Barbauld. Volume 1. The Poems, Revised*. McCarthy is the world's leading Barbauld scholar, the writer of the best modern biography, and co-editor of the only edited collection on her work, which we have previously discussed in these pages. This new edition contains a number of new poems, which did not appear in McCarthy's 1994 edition, and will doubtless be the standard reference for Barbauld scholars in years to come. We await with eagerness the following volumes of her prose works, which have not been thoroughly edited since 1825. Scholars who

want a taste of what is to come may consult Jessica Lim's edition of 31 of Barbauld's letters, hitherto unpublished: 'Unsettled Accounts: Anna Letitia Barbauld's Letters to Lydia Rickards' (*TSWL* 38:i[2019] 153-200). In her introductory essay, Lim considers the letters as 'currency in an economy of friendship', shedding new light on the personality behind the poems [158].

We did locate one substantial piece of standalone Barbauld criticism for 2019: Luran Tallon's "Friendship, Better than a Muse, Inspires": Anna Laetitia Barbauld Claims the Sister Arts for Female Friendship', which appears in *The Circuit of Apollo: Eighteenth Century Women's Tributes to Women*, edited by Laura Runge and Jessica Cook. Tallon reads Barbauld's verse epistle 'To Mrs. P[reistley], with some Drawings of Birds and Insects' [c. 1767] in its original context, as a letter accompanied by artworks. Tallon argues that Barbauld sets out a new image of artistic inspiration, replacing the traditional relationship of 'male poet and female muse with the inspirational bond achieved through female friendship', and establishing new links between poetry and the 'sister arts' of painting and drawing (p. 107). This is a fine study of one of Barbauld's less well-known poems.

The next poet we consider is Bernard Barton, the Quaker Romantic. In 'Poetics at the Religious Margin: Bernard Barton and Quaker Romanticism' (*RES* 70:ccxcv[2019] 509-26), Christopher Stokes reconstructs the context of this largely forgotten writer. He situates Barton as a minority writer, grappling with a question that all religious minority writers confront: '... how does a *minority* literary identity negotiate the tension between the dominant culture and its own sectarian distinction?' (p. 510). Stokes focusses on Barton's use of litotes, a device that allowed him to draw on mainstream traditions while asserting his own Quaker pacifism.

It was once again a year of great vitality in Blake Studies. 2019 saw the publication of *The Reception of William Blake in Europe* [Bloomsbury, 2019], a monumental two-volume collection edited by Sibylle Erle and Morton D. Paley. The collection is commendably thorough, moving eastward from Ireland, passing through the Iberian peninsula, Northern Europe and Southern Europe, into the Slavic lands and culminating with a chapter on Turkey. Unfortunately only the second volume was provided for review, but the essays therein give a good indication of the book's overall quality. One highlight is Eliza Borkowska's essay on Blake's reception in Poland (pp. 473-99). She begins with the ironic observation that while Poland loomed large in Blake's life (he lived on Poland Street, and 'included Poland among the thirty-two Nations of *Jerusalem*' (p. 473)), Blake didn't loom large in Poland until the end of the nineteenth century. Her study of Blake's reception in Poland gives Borkowska an opportunity to consider some key

features of Polish Romanticism and Modernism. Polish Romanticism was melancholy and Gothic in its orientation, she argues, but Blake found a receptive audience among the optimistic 'Young Poland' movement at the end of the century, particularly in the great figure of Stanisław Brzozowski, who turned to Blake as a more healthful, optimistic alternative to his Polish Romantic forebears. The two chapters on Blake in Russia likewise manage to be interesting criticisms of Russian political and social history as well as studies of Britain's great modern prophet.

But it is William Coker's chapter on Turkey that really takes the scholarship in a new direction (pp. 649-66). Editing these pages for the last few years, we have encountered numerous studies of Romantic Orientalism. Scholars have devoted enormous effort to understanding how Romantic poets conceived of the Orient, and have succeeded in enriching the picture painted so wonderfully by Edward Said four decades ago. But still today, only a handful of Romanticists such as Nikki Hessel and Manu Samriti Chander have closely considered 'Oriental' perspectives themselves. Coker's essay therefore offers a refreshing departure. It is only in the last 30 years that Blake has begun to be translated into Turkish, Coker reveals (pp. 649-50). Despite this recent appearance, however, and the relative paucity of Blake scholarship available in Turkish, the incorrigible engraver 'punches above his weight ... in the media' (p. 650). Blake is a source of ideas and inspiration across the political spectrum in Turkey. He provides radical symbols and arguments to the feminist journalist Yeliz Kizilarlan, and is an icon of Heideggerian, anti-Enlightenment irrationalism for the pro-government columnist Yusuf Kaplan. At a time when Anglophone scholars habitually stress the Deleuzian, antinomian and uninterpretable elements of Blake's writing, Coker offers a potent reminder that texts can live in strange ways, and that a writer's influence is not bound by the preferences of Western scholars.

While Coker considers how Blake lives on in Turkey, Tuncer Yilmaz takes the discussion in a more comparative direction ('The Preincarnated Romantic: The Concept of Redeemer Poet in the Works of William Blake and Nefî' *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies* 7:xiii[2019]: 171-81). Yilmaz argues that several of Blake's ideas about the role of the poet are prefigured in the works of Nefî, a seventeenth-century Ottoman poet. Such genuinely comparative studies, which seek analogies between the literary histories of disparate early-modern literatures, remain rare in Anglophone criticism. Yilmaz draws numerous parallels between Blake's London and

Nefi's Istanbul, and concludes that both developed an idea of the poet as prophet to cope with unstable times.

Another critic with a refreshing take on Blake's reception is Maria Cecilia Marchetto Santorum, who explores Blake's impact on contemporary British graphic fiction ("The War 'twixt Sun and Moon": Evil and Gender in William Blake's Early Illuminated Books and Alan Moore's *From Hell*, *ES* 100:iv[2019] 387-406). From Blake, Moore takes the idea that evil comes in two forms: repression and revolution. But whereas Blake critiques the evil of revolution from a feminist angle, in Moore's universe revolution is simply amoral. To this may be added Joseph Viscomi's essay, 'Posthumous Blake: The Roles of Catherine Blake, C. H. Tatham, and Frederick Tatham in Blake's Afterlife' (*Blake* 53:ii[2019] n.p.). This is a long and extremely detailed piece of textual and biographical scholarship, which is difficult to summarise effectively in these pages. Through close analysis of archival sources, careful consideration of numerous copies of Blake's work, and detailed map-reading, Viscomi is able to retrace the movements of Catherine Blake, C.H. Tatham and Frederick Tatham in detail, offering new insights into Blake's immediate afterlife and the character of his marriage to Catherine. He concludes that the old theory that Catherine was an 'equal partner in Blake's firm' cannot be maintained (paras. 136-38), and calls on scholars to continue to investigate Catherine Blake 'more fully in her own right' (para. 140). Doubtless this long essay will encourage other scholars in this intriguing direction.

In a series of concise, amusing notes, G.E. Bentley Jr. illuminates several corners of Blake's work. Blake was a great poet of inebriety, but it seems that his preference was for wine over beer or gin ('Blake as inebriate' *N&Q* 264:ii[2019] 243-51). In another note Bentley considers Blake's extraordinary 'posthumous posterity', comparing the prices Blake hoped to get for his prints with the astronomical sums they fetch in modern-day auctions ('Blake on Sale: Blake's Watercolours, Temperas, Works in Illuminated Printing, Commercial Engravings, and Manuscripts in Catalogues of 1997-2016' *N&Q* 264:ii[2019] 251-68.) In his third note for the year, Bentley gives an overview of the Zoas, the most important figures in Blake's mythology, considering Blake's depictions of the Zoas in print and the influence of Ezekiel on his work ('Blake's Living Creatures Depictions of Zoas' *N&Q* 264:ii[2019] 234-43).

Romantic biology continued to be a fruitful topic of research in 2019. In 'Blake's Critique of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*', Ya-Feng Wu considers how Blake depicts life in *The Book of Thel* [1789] and the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* [1793], and compares his

depiction to Erasmus Darwin's in the *Botanic Garden* [1791]. Both Thel and Oothoon are trapped in a Darwinian nature, Wu argues. Through their plight, Blake criticises the patriarchal and illiberal dimensions of Darwin's natural philosophy. In 'Classical Elements: Darwin, Gilbert, Blake, and Coleridge', Paul Cheshire considers the way Blake and several of his contemporaries invoke the four elements of classical thought. Cheshire effectively aligns the four classical elements with the four humans of the body, Blake's four Zoas, Gilbert's fourfold 'hermetic geometry', Coleridge's 'Compass of Nature' and even (somewhat less convincingly) with Immanuel Kant's four categories of the understanding (*WC* 50:ii[2019] 147–65). Romantic writers seem to have seen the four elements as a useful framework they could adopt to provide structure to their thought, but Cheshire can find little evidence they took this ancient account of nature seriously. Jade Hagen connects Blake with more recent science in 'Network Theory and Ecology in Blake's *Jerusalem*' (*Blake* 53:iii n.p.). Reading Blake as a network theorist *avant la lettre*, Hagen concludes that he 'invokes words like "all" and the concept and imagery of the network to figure a mode of inclusivity and collectivity that can never be grasped "all" at once' (para 38).

This discussion of Blake and science continues in two chapters from *Systems of Life: Biopolitics, Economics and Literature on the Cusp of Modernity*, edited by Richard A. Barney and Warren Montag. In 'Writing Generation: Revolutionary Bodies and the Poetics of Political Economy' (pp. 135-61), Annika Mann moves from a discussion of Barbauld's 'To A Little Invisible Being, Expected Soon to Become Visible' [c. 1799] into a lengthy critique of Blake's *First Book of Urizen* [1794]. In her famous poem, Barbauld 'pits poetic speech and the mother's body against one another', raising the question whether poetry is able to be as generative as nature itself (p. 137). Blake takes up this challenge in *Urizen*, and depicts poetry as a generative force of frightening Malthusian power, that can potentially generate a new kind of mass public comprising undifferentiated bodies. In the following essay of the collection, Amanda Jo Goldstein continues the discussion of sexual reproduction in Blake's work ('William Blake and the Time of Ontogeny', pp. 162-200). Goldstein rightly observes that Romantic poets are typically thought to have taken an epigenetic rather than a preformationist view of life. She wittily reverses this scholarly trend by showing how Blake satirised certain forms of epigenesis in his work. Though she does finally concede that Blake supported the epigeneticists over the preformationists, she also manages to 'plurali[ze]' the idea of epigenesis, and to open up new avenues of discussion at this fascinating intersection of science and poetry (p. 185).

Stephanie Codsí combines science and religion in “‘Father, Father, Where Are You Going?’: Epicurean Deism and Absent Fathers in Blake’s Songs of Innocence and of Experience’ (*L&T* 33:iv[2019]: 357–75). Blake combines deistical ideas with atomic theory to critique the concepts of God and fatherhood in his *Songs*. Codsí considers the paradoxical ‘absence’ of God from Blake’s poetry, particularly in the 1790s, and shows how Blake built up the concept of God’s absence through a genuine engagement with Epicurean and Deistical literature.

2019 in fact saw several studies devoted to Blake’s religious ideas. Two essays on Blake’s religion appear in Joshua King and Winter Jade Werner’s collection, *Constructing Nineteenth-Century Religion: Literary, Historical, and Religious Studies in Dialogue*. In the first essay, Michael Hurley compares Blake to Gerard Manly Hopkins, another poet for whom ‘inspiration’ was a religious category (‘Theologies of Inspiration: William Blake and Gerard Manly Hopkins’, pp. 262-80). Hurley is well-known for his theological approach to literary criticism, and this comparative essay is written with his usual learning and tact. In the second essay, Peter Otto considers Blake from a biographical perspective (‘William Blake, the Secularization of Religious Categories, and the History of Imagination’, 281-302). He begins with the recent discovery that Blake’s mother and her first husband belonged to a Moravian chapel in London, and builds on this foundation to rewrite the history of Blake’s religious ideas. Otto draws on this context to interpret three of Blake’s designs, from the beginning, middle and end of his artistic life. He concludes with a new formulation of Blake’s anti-foundationalist theology. To these essays may be added Clare A Simmons’ ‘Blake’s “Holy Thursday” and “The Martyrdom of St. Paul’s”’ (*Blake* 53:iii[2019] n.p.). She considers religion from a social, rather than a theological angle, finding interesting parallels between a satirical poem in the *Comic Almanac* of 1838 and Blake’s ‘Holy Thursday’ poems [1789, 1794]. It turns out that Blake forms part of a tradition of sceptical verse, probing the morality of public religious events such as the presentation of charity children in St Paul’s cathedral.

2019 saw the latest of the ‘Literature in Context’ series devoted to Blake. Sarah Haggarty’s edited volume is as thorough and well-organised as other books in this series, and will certainly be an extremely useful resource for undergraduate students and teachers in years to come. It unfolds in 38 short chapters, which are too various to summarise in detail here. The first section concerns Blake’s ‘Life, Works, and Reception’, and covers all aspects of his writerly, artistic and professional lives, concluding with four essays that summarise the reception of his

work from the 18th century to the present. One interesting omission from the discussion is the non-illuminated books, which do not receive a separate chapter. Part 2 concerns 'Form, Genre, and Mode'. This chapter shows how far Blake scholarship has progressed in recent decades. Tilottama Rajan concludes the section with an essay on the traditional obsession of Blake scholars: 'System, Myth, and Symbol' (pp. 155-62), but the other six chapters in the section cover a whole range of different aspects of Blake's literary output, including an intriguing essay on Blake's invocation of 'Comedy' by Fred Parker (pp. 105-12). Part 3 is entitled 'Creative Cross-Currents', but is actually about Blake's influences—both in terms of who influenced him, and who he influenced. The late Stephen Prickett contributes an essay on the 'Bible' (pp. 165-72). Other essays in the section consider the 'big four' canonical poets of Romantic Britain—Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare (pp. 173-83) and Milton (pp. 184-91)—as well as eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets and painters who were closely involved with Blake or his work. The final section, on 'History, Society and Culture', provides a range of different contexts for Blake's work. These 13 essays approach Blake from a stunning range of angles, taking in science, philosophy, religion, and contemporary theory. In all, this is a fine addition to the 'Literature in Context' series, and can be wholeheartedly recommended to scholars and students of Blake.

There was also a strong strain of philosophical Blake criticism in 2019. Allison Dushane contributes an essay to *Romanticism and Speculative Realism*, a collection that appears frequently in these pages this year. She draws on the anti-phenomenology of Quentin Meillassoux to explore the ethical dimensions of Blake's illuminated books. Both Meillassoux and Blake espouse a certain kind of affective politics, she argues, in which hope is a crucial emotion. In a similar vein, Joel Faflak invokes Meillassoux to interpret Blake's *Milton* [1810] as '[o]ne of the most challenging accounts of feeling produced by Romanticism' ('Blake's Milton and the Nonlife of Affect' *WC* 50:i[2019] 36–54 (p. 37)). For both Dushane and Faflak, speculative realism provides a useful frame for understanding Blake's peculiarly reified mythology.

Of course, as a philosophical school, speculative realism is essentially a rejection of conventional Romantic-era epistemology as espoused by thinkers such as David Hume and Immanuel Kant. Blake was far from conventional in his time, but it is nonetheless salutary to turn to Chris Townsend's less anachronistic approach in 'Visionary Immaterialism: Berkeleyan Empiricism in Blake's Poetry' [*SiR* 58:iii[2019] 357-82]. Against such critics as Dushane and

Faflak, Townsend suggests that Blake's poetry can be situated effectively in the empiricist tradition. He admits that 'Berkeley's status as one of the so-called British empiricists makes him an unlikely source of influence for Blake' (p. 361), but through a series of close readings of Berkeley's works and several Blake poems, he uncovers a range of parallels between the two writers. For both Blake and Berkeley, conscious experience exceeds sensory perception, and 'minute particulars' undermine the salience of abstract categories. Tilottama Rajan reads Blake alongside another of his philosophical contemporaries in 'Blake, Hegel, and the Sciences' (*WC* 50:i[2019] 20–35). Rajan shows how Hegel develops his concept of 'nature' as a critique of Schelling, and then locates a similar movement of ideas in Blake's *First Book of Urizen*. In her analysis, both Blake and Hegel are vitalists, though they appreciate the problem of dead matter differently: 'Both Blake and Hegel want to see matter as self-assembling into organized life, though Blake is far closer to grasping the disaster of an immanence without transcendent guarantees' (25).

The major statement on Blake's philosophy this year must be Alexander Regier's *Exorbitant Enlightenment: Blake, Hamaan, and Anglo-German Constellations*. This is a fine piece of historicist scholarship as well as a detailed work of criticism on both Blake and the German philosopher Johann Georg Hamann. Regier begins by reconstructing Anglo-German literary relations in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. He rightly argues that scholars of English literature have tended to dismiss German influence prior to the 1790s, and draws on a range of archival materials to overturn this common misconception. There was a large Anglo-German community in London, German texts were frequently translated into English (Regier identifies at least 135 volumes in the period 1680-1790 (p. 36)), and several German writers, particularly Gessner, were widely read in England. Certain figures, such as Henry Fuseli, served as key nodes in the network, playing a role in both English and German cultural life (chap. 3). Having established this general context, Regier turns to Blake and Hamann specifically, whom he identifies as the most 'exorbitant' writers of the Anglo-German literary network. Though it seems unlikely that Blake and Hamann influenced one another, both of their works were circulating in one another's countries during their lifetimes, and to a certain extent both were responding to a shared cultural and political context. Regier identifies numerous interesting parallels in their writing. Both were 'radically anti-systematic' (p. 71). Both 'embrace a form of writing' that undermines the distinction between philosophy and poetry (p. 82). 'For both, the Bible turns out to be the most powerful vehicle to illustrate' the fact that 'poetry lies at the origin of *all* creative

thinking' [126]. Regier's analysis is rooted in detailed archival research and careful comparison of Blake and Hamaan's language, imagery and ideas. It is another hammer-blow against parochialism in British Romantic Studies, and will hopefully inspire more bold comparative work in future.

We turn now to Robert Burns, about whom only a single dedicated article appeared in 2019. Sarah Sharp considers how Burns inspired colonial writers of South African and New Zealand in 'Exporting "The Cotter's Saturday Night": Robert Burns, Scottish Romantic Nationalism and Colonial Settler Identity' (*R* 25:i[2019] 81–89). She begins by situating Scotland in the British Empire, then proceeds to closely analyse poems by John Barr and Thomas Pringle. Sharp contributes to a new strain of settler colonial studies in Romantic scholarship, and we look forward to more such essays from her pen.

We now turn to Byron, who once again was a popular topic of study for scholars in 2019. We begin with Michael Steier's coterie study, *Byron, Hunt, and the Politics of Literary Engagement*. There are many works that consider the relationship of Lord Byron and Leigh Hunt, but Steier approaches the topic with a new level of thoroughness. The book is structured chronologically. Steier narrates the literary careers of Byron and Hunt in parallel, which allows him to compare Byron and Hunt's differing approaches to authorship at different stages of their career, and provides a rich context for those points in their careers where they interacted or overlapped. Throughout, Steier tries to locate overlooked documents in the archive, which can enrich our understanding of this complex friendship. Chapter 6, on Hunt and Byron's co-editorship of *The Liberal* [1882-23], is particularly fine in this regard. Steier carefully pieces together Hunt's journalism and manuscript poetry to shed new light on Hunt and Byron's ill-fated magazine (which Steier insists was more of a success than usually thought).

The book as a whole is finely written and densely researched. Chapters 1 and 2 consider Hunt and Byron's early poetry. The two began their careers before the concept of 'adolescent genius' had fully taken root, and had to cross a tricky threshold into authorship (p. 12). But in their early years as writers, the cult of Thomas Chatterton grew ever stronger, and the two were pulled into a certain model of youthful poetry. Hunt tried to break away from this model, while Byron embraced it (pp. 36-37), but of course once they were adults, the juvenile aura faded away. The two poets turned to aesthetic satire, and took starkly opposing views on the raging debate about poetic form that had been unleashed by *Lyrical Ballads* [1798]. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the period of Hunt and Byron's closest intimacy, as Byron became drawn into the

circuit of Hunt's magazine, *The Examiner*, and the composition of Hunt's *The Story of Rimini* [1816] sparked a deep conversation between the poets about the nature of verse. The final two chapters describe the souring or abstraction of their relationship. In exile, Byron looked back on the so-called 'Cockney' poets with a mixture of friendship and scorn, and his co-editorship of *The Liberal* brought him closer to Hunt, only to throw the two writers apart again.

2019 also saw the publication of Vincenzo Patanè's *The Sour Fruit: Lord Byron, Love & Sex*, edited by James R. Schwarten and translated by John Francis Phillimore. Patanè is a Neapolitan Art Historian currently working in Venice, and is the latest in a long line of Italian Byron scholars. *The Sour Fruit* is 'a pendant' to Patanè's 2013 biography of Byron; it is designed to complement the earlier book with a more precise analysis of Byron's sexuality. It is broadly chronological in outline. In each chapter, Patanè identifies the key intimate relationships at that stage of Byron's life, and assesses the value of the primary evidence for this often obscure dimension of his private life. His overarching argument is that Byron was bisexual: '... for some years now, slowly but surely, an acknowledgment of Byron's bisexuality has gained ground outside the limited ambit of academic essays, in publications aimed at a wider public' (p. 149). Overall, it must be said that Patanè's treatment of the subject is more popular than scholarly. The chapters are short, and focus on communicating the key events in Byron's life, rather than on analysing the precise nature of his 'bisexuality'. Since the rise of Queer Theory in the 90s, scholars have of course become quite sceptical of broad terms such as 'bisexuality' when applied to disparate authors in different times and places without careful contextualisation. Nonetheless, the book does have value as a concise, easily-written biography; it could usefully introduce the lay reader to certain aspects of Byron's sexuality, which were historically suppressed as part of what Patanè calls the 'Byron Myth'.

The Byron Journal continues to be a vibrant forum of scholarly discussion. The journal published ten articles in 2019. The first two articles offer new insights into Byron's Orientalism. Piya Pal-Lapinski offers an essay on "'Byron Pasha" in Istanbul with Mozart and Rossini: The Seductions of Ottoman Sovereignty' (*ByronJ* 47:i[2019] 1-15). She carefully re-analyses Byron's key Ottoman poems—*The Bride of Abydos* and the Istanbul Cantos of *Don Juan*—before turning to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* [1787] and Rossini's *Maometto II* [1820] as points of comparison. By focussing on the figure of the Ottoman Sultan, she is able to effectively describe 'Byron's melancholy recognition of the aesthetic grandeur and simultaneous collapse of the Ottoman dynasty beneath the weight of its own imperial cosmopolitanism' (p. 13). G.B. Rizzoli

continues the discussion of Ottoman Byron in 'Fact and Fantasy in Byron's Encounters with Ali Pasha: With a New Byron Letter' (*ByronJ* 47:i[2019] 17-31). They publish a new Byron letter to Edward Everett, which helps recast Byron's fantasies about Ali Pasha: 'Byron's fantasy about Ali endured because it was never put to the test' (p. 28). Naïveté is not a quality often associated with Byron, and Rizzoli's detective work has added a new pixel to our image of this complex writer.

In his essay, Agustín Blanco considers Byron's Spain, a neglected topic in Romantic studies generally ('Romantic Land' Twice Invaded, and Twice Supported: Byron, Hemans, Moore, and 'Hafiz' on Spain, 1808–14 and 1820–23' *ByronJ* 47:i[2019] 33-44). Byron, Thomas Moore, Felicia Hemans and Robert Stott ('Hafiz') all wrote extensively on the Spanish wars of 1808-14 and 1820-23. Blanco aligns Byron and Moore, arguing that both set forth a 'patriotic' vision of the Peninsular campaign (p. 38), while Hemans and 'Hafiz' had a more 'conservative' view, and support the Spanish partisans only on the first occasion (p. 41).

The third and fourth essays of the volume cover Byron's inner conflicts. Francesco Marchionni considers Byron's scepticism in 'And Making Death a Victory': Scepticism and Personal Conflict in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II and 'Prometheus' (*ByronJ* 47:i[2019] 45-56). Marchionni focusses on Byron's engagement with Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, on which Byron drew to develop his chaotic, conflictual poetic identity. J V Hirschman takes a different approach in 'Lord Byron's Deformed Foot: A Medical and Biographical Assessment' (*ByronJ* 47:i[2019] 57-70). Hirschman identifies Byron's clubfoot as a case of *Talipes equinovarus*, 'a congenital abnormality [... which] occurs in approximately 1 in 1000 live births' (p. 58). He considers this diagnosis from a range of angles, considering the history of medicine, Byron's poems, the observations of contemporaries, and competing diagnoses made by Byronists down the years. He concludes that the diagnosis of clubfoot is virtually certain. Whatever the diagnosis, 'it was a lifelong source of shame to Byron' (p. 67). This is an extremely useful piece of scholarship, though it is a pity that Hirschman overlooks recent work in critical disability studies and neglects to apply his medical learning to Byron's major work on disability, *The Deformed Transformed* [1824]. Perhaps a later article could unpack the concept of 'shame' in more detail with the help of such additional research.

Turning now to the second issue of the year, we encounter two essays on the concept of 'improvisation' in Byron's work. Catherine Addison begins with the discussion with 'An Extemporary Pen: The Illusion of Improvisation in *Don Juan* and Other Poems' (*ByronJ*

47:ii[2019] 97-108). She begins with an admirably rigorous account of the concept of 'improvisation'. Since all behaviour involves '[a]n ability to react creatively to the unforeseen in lived experience', genuine improvisation 'must indicate a marked stylisation and degree of difficulty in an utterance or act' (p. 98). What follows is an exemplary analysis of Byron's language. Addison is a sensitive reader, and does a fine job of identifying the 'disfluencies' that create the illusion of 'spontaneous speech' in Byron's work, particularly *Don Juan* (p. 101). In the next essay of the issue, Christine Kenyon Jones takes a different approach ('[T]o hook my rambling verse on': Byron's Rhyme, Improvisation, and Motivation' *ByronJ* 47:ii[2019] 109-20). While Addison argues that Byron's 'improvisation' is a rhetorical effect, Jones argues that he used rhyme as a kind of compositional aid, which enabled him to improvise within the strictures of traditional verse form. She justifies this argument through a close reading of Byron's holograph manuscripts (pp. 112-13), and also by examining a rhyming dictionary he admitted to using (pp. 114-15). Thus these two essays offer starkly opposing—and potentially complementary—viewpoints on one of Byron's most distinctive traits as a poet.

The next essay displays the influence of object-oriented ontology, which is increasingly coming to dominate research in ecocriticism and subjectivity. In 'Oceans and Lakes: Byron's Interactions', Bernard Beatty considers how Byron affords agency to features of the landscape (*ByronJ* 47:ii[2019] 123-37). While object-oriented ontology often focuses exclusively on the actions of non-human agents, Beatty takes a broad approach, finding parallels between Byron's 'interactive' view of animals, things, and humans in society. Beatty's essay can usefully be paired with Aaron Ottinger's on 'Astral Guts: The Nemocentric Self in Byron and Brassier', published in *Romanticism and Speculative Realism* [157-174]. Ottinger adopts the concept of the 'nemocentric self' from Ray Brassier. The 'nemocentric self' is the view from nowhere, an object-centred take on reality [161]. Ottinger reads this concept into *Don Juan* [1819-24], focussing particularly on Cantos 9-12. It is in Byron's treatment of the body that he finds the best use for this concept: 'Byron sees [consciousness as] an algorithm of the gut, indefinitely churning its infinite quantities of information and expanding accordingly, thereby realizing rather than identifying with this dark underbelly' [169]. When he invokes this Deleuzian language, Ottinger brings into question just how new 'speculative realism' really is, but the essay is nonetheless quite a thrilling analysis of subjectivity in Byron's greatest work.

Emily Paterson-Morgan continues the volume with "If you would like to see the whole proceedings:" Criminal Conversation in Byron's *Don Juan* Canto I' (*ByronJ* 47:ii[2019] 139-52).

This is a fine piece of solid close reading. Paterson-Morgan identifies a strain of legalistic discourse in Canto I of *Don Juan*, which links the poem to a range of legal documents from the period, such as divorce petitions and witness testimonies. Through her readings of *Don Juan*, Paterson-Morgan is able to show how skillfully Byron 'incorpora[tes] legal diction and vulgar journalistic detail in a text which remains enriched and structures by more conventional literary allusions' (p. 150).

To complete this year's *Byron Journal*, Lara Assaad engages in a bold piece of speculative historical diagnosis, arguing that the Byronic heroes of *Manfred*, *The Corsair* and *The Giaour* can all be seen to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder ("My slumbers-if I slumber-are not sleep:" The Byronic Hero's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' *ByronJ* 47:ii[2019] 153-63). It is an arresting argument, which Assaad justifies with recourse to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* [APA, 2013] (p. 154). She suggests that Byron's exploration of post-traumatic stress may help to improve medical understandings of this disease today. One hopes.

Two essays from 2019 considered the rootless, wandering aspects of Byron's character. Carmen Casaliggi offers an analysis of 'Transnational Networks at Holland House: Staël, Foscolo, and Byron' (*EiR* 26:i[2019] 1-17). By reconstructing the social networks of Holland House during Germaine de Staël's London exile, Casaliggi is able to offer new insights in Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* [1807-8] and *The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale* [1813]. Betsy Bolton considers a different aspect of Byron's transnationalism in 'Byron's Ambivalent Modernity: Touring and Forced Migration in Don Juan', which appears in *Migration and Modernities: The State of Being Stateless, 1750-1850*, edited by JoEllen DeLucia and Juliet Shields (pp. 17-50). Bolton argues that *Don Juan* foreshadows twenty-first-century debates about refugee rights. She sees Juan and his narrator as dissolving aristocrats, who steadily collapse into one another and figure a more humane 'vagabond' consciousness.

The final Byron article we note for 2019 is Rolf Lessenich's 'Byron and Romantic Concepts of Inspiration' (*R* 25:ii[2019] 180-89). Lessenich begins with the strange claim that Byron 'is usually dismissed as fragmentary, erratic, chaotic, and contradictory in both his philosophy and criticism' [180]. It is difficult to credit this framing, given that Byron was famously the only poet to appear in Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy* [1945], and his comments on Wordsworth and the Pope controversy have been touchstones of literary criticism since the 1820s. Nonetheless, Lessenich does offer a creditable analysis of Byron's

'poetological statements' (p. 180). Byron '[l]ink[s] imagination and inspiration to madness', and offers a dark, unhealthy alternative to the mainstream of Victorian literary criticism (p. 184). How this theory of poetry as 'madness' relates to more recent debates in the theory of poetry Lessenich does not say.

We turn now to John Clare. The 2019 edition of the John Clare Society Journal begins with an obituary to Eric Robinson, penned by Kelsy Thornton ('Eric Robinson, 1924-2019' *JCSJ* 38[2019] 7-12). We do not normally notice obituaries in these pages, but Eric Robinson was a titanic figure of Clare scholarship, and it is worth reflecting on his contribution. He was famous for his Oxford edition, which sought to recover Clare's authentic voice by reproducing his poems as they appeared in manuscript. This mammoth edition is the bedrock of all subsequent Clare scholarship, and Robinson must be credited with Clare's central place in Romantic studies today. His contribution was also controversial, however: he claimed copyright in all the transcriptions of Clare's poems and argued strongly against alternative approaches to editing Clare's words. In the end, though, he did much more to enable than to stymie Clare studies, and surely all Clare scholars joined with Thornton in mourning his death.

Five essays follow, covering numerous aspects of Clare's verse. Richard Ness begins with "'Song of Experience: John Clare's Empirical Taste' (*JCSJ* 38[2019] 13-31). Ness considers how Clare questions 'human exceptionalism' with his theory of taste (p. 14). He argues that Clare's theory of taste is essentially empiricist, and traces Clare's ideas back to John Locke and David Hume. By focussing on a minute particulars as opposed to formal and abstract rules, Clare questions prevailing notions of taste in Romantic England. Ness's approach to Clare can be contrasted with David Collings' approach in 'Blank Oblivion, condemned life', which appears in *Romanticism and Speculative Realism* (pp. 75-92). Unlike Ness, Collings argues that Clare's poetry is deeply anti-empiricist. The empiricist sees reality as a play of perceptions, but Clare, argues Collings, often portrays reality as a play of objects that are independent of human experience. Thus in certain Clare poems, the poet himself is utterly absent from the scene. In fact, says Collings, Clare goes even further in some of his poems, and portrays objects themselves as absent. In the sonnet 'Obscurity' [c. 1830], for instance, Clare 'treats the wind's radical nonreceptivity as a figure for what one might call a *process-oriented non-ontology*, a movement of ongoing erasure that leaves no trace' (p. 78). While Ness and Collings adopt starkly opposing philosophical frameworks, they do agree in one key point: a central theme of Clare's nature poetry is the absence or dissolution of the self, whether this is understood as a

Humean dissolution of the self into experience (Ness) or the absence of the self from the network of material objects (Collings).

To continue our survey of 2019's *JCSJ*, we turn to Nic Wilson's 'John Clare's Contemporaries: The Shepherd, the Wheelwright and the Housemaid' (*JCSJ* 38[2019] 33-48). Wilson rightly observes that most biographical studies of Clare focus on his relationships with middle- and upper-class people in the cities and manors. The problem for biographers has tended to be: How did Clare become a professional poet? Wilson turns this on its head, asking instead: How did Clare live with his labouring-class fellows? She reconstructs Clare's friendship with the Newborn family, drawing Clare's journals, letters, and poems, along with parish records to do so.

The following essay is Thomas Bates's "Poet and Sculptor." (*JCSJ* 38[2019] 49-60). Bates is a sculptor, and in this engaging essay, he describes his long fascination with Clare as a subject for his sculptures. He includes numerous beautiful photos of his work, recounting the way Clare stalks his dreams: '... both bronze and plaster are imaginative portrayals of the poet who has so deeply influenced me and continues to do so, when and as images of 'him' surface as I work in my studio or as he seems to appear in dreams' (p. 60). There is a pleasing parallel between Bates's account of his own artistic inspiration, and Clare's later lyrics.

The final two essays in the volume track more familiar paths, considering the twinned themes of memory and nature in Clare's work. Timothy Heimlich focusses on Clare's mid-period poem, 'Remembrances' [c. 1835], in "Repetition and Melancholia in John Clare's 'Remembrances'." (*JCSJ* 38[2019] 61-76). He argues interestingly that the poem was influenced by Sir Walter Scott's work, and proceeds to demonstrate how Scott's 'stylistic signatures' pepper the poem (p. 65). Clare exceeds Scott, however, in his 'near-phenomenological' power of description (p. 71). John Lovett also considers Clare's poetry of place in "'The Lament of Swordy Well' and the Giving Spirit of Nature" (*JCSJ* 38[2019] 79-87). Like other readers before him, Lovett focuses on the way 'Swordy Well' gives a 'voice' to nature: '... what differentiates Clare's presentation of Swordy Well is his resistance to cliché. Instead of personifying his meadow-narrator as mythical, gendered deity, he characterises it as sentient ...' (p. 79). What makes Lovett's analysis particularly interesting is his comparison of Clare with the !Kung poet /Xashe (pp. 80-81). The idea that Clare is a kind of indigenous poet often lurks beneath the surface in Clare scholarship, and it is refreshing to see Lovett bring this theme to the surface.

While Lovett could perhaps have been more circumspect in his invocation of Indigenous cultures, the comparisons are fascinating.

Lovett's approach can be contrasted with Amelia Greene's, in her 'Ruin and Revelation: John Clare's Eco-Apocalyptic Aesthetics' (*Essays in Romanticism* 26:i[2019] 55–69). She also offers a reading of 'Swordy Well', but puts the poem into a theological rather than an ecocritical frame. She argues that Clare's poem draws on New Testament archetypes to add a prophetic dimension to the old meadow's lamentations.

Along with the 2019 *JCSJ*, the major Clare publication of the year was Andrew Hodgson's *The Poetry of Clare, Hopkins, Thomas, and Gurney: Lyric Individualism*. The book begins with two chapters on the general problem of 'Lyric Individualism' before devoting two chapters to Clare in particular. Chapter 3 considers the 'hit-and-miss' quality of Clare's work (p. 51). Hodgson argues that apparent weaknesses of Clare's poetry are actually a kind of strength: 'Inarticulacy was a cornerstone of Clare's poetic identity' (p. 53). Hodgson goes on to consider a range of Clare's love lyrics, exploring the ways Clare tries to establish his own voice precisely by writing a 'bad' kind of poetry; in the concluding pages of the chapter, he traces how this early experimentation morphed into the 'inimitable waywardness' of Clare's mature nature poetry (p. 74). In the following chapter, Hodgson turns to Clare's asylum poetry, and his experiments with alternative identities. Here Hodgson makes another innovative argument: 'Clare's poetry is just as often striking for its "poetical" as its "prosaic" textures, the seeming anonymity, rather than the distinctiveness of its manner' (p. 84). With these kinds of arguments, Hodgson establishes himself on the vanguard of what could be called the 'Kövesi school' of Clare scholars, scholars who seek to understand Clare's entire *oeuvre*, and to do justice to the variety of modes in which he worked. Whether this vein of scholarship will make Clare's love lyrics and later poetry more popular with readers remains to be seen.

It was a surprisingly quiet year for specific studies of Coleridge's poetry, though of course Coleridge appears several of the monographs considered above. The only book-length study of Coleridge in 2019 was J. C. C. Mays's *Coleridge's Dejection Ode*, which completes Mays's trilogy of monographs on Coleridge's verse. For Mays, 'Dejection: An Ode' (p. 1802) is the most complete and compact statement of Coleridge's overall position: it 'sets out more comprehensively and evenly than any other poem he wrote the aims of his mature verse and prose *together*, at the moment of discovery' (p. 2). Mays book is organised systematically. After an introductory chapter, he narrates the story of the poem's reception (chap. 2), and settles

underlying textual problems, including the relationship between the poem and the letter in which it first appeared (chap. 3). These chapters make space for Mays to elaborate his own approach to the poem. He considers its metre, rhyme and syntax in Chapter 4, its semantics in Chapter 5, and its overall structure in Chapter 6. In the final part of the book, he shifts from analysis of form to thematic analysis. Chapter 7 explains the theory of feeling Coleridge propounds in the poem. Chapter 8 considers how the poem fits into the totality of Coleridge's *oeuvre* after he defined himself afresh in *Biographia Literaria* [1817]. Chapter 9 situates the poem in the history of Western thought. As can be seen in this short summary, *Coleridge's Dejection Ode* is a tightly arranged book. Mays progressively expands the focus, moving smoothly from individual letters of the text to the vast and contentious realm of poetry, philosophy and poetry *tout court*.

Throughout the book, Mays's guiding focus is to fix on the correct Coleridgean analysis of the poem. He is not so interested in the poem's contradictions, or on creatively applying Coleridge's work to problems beyond his purview. He is interested in reconstructing Coleridge's own position, and tries to describe how 'Dejection: An Ode' provided a 'poematic solution' to problems that Coleridge himself was working through (p. 156). The great strength of his analysis lies in his mastery of Coleridge's life and work. When he turns his attention to a particular rhyme-sound, strophe, or concept, he is able to trace its origins in Coleridge's life and writings, and show how Coleridge's changes of mind rippled through later works. This kind of book has become unusual in recent years. No doubt Coleridgeans will find it an extremely useful resource when they turn to the Dejection Ode in future.

Other than Mays's monograph, it appears that the only dedicated study of Coleridge's poetry in 2019 was Jonathon Shears's "Old Men – and Women – May be Permitted to Speak Long." Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Voice of Experience' (*Romanticism* 25:iii[2019] 249-60). Shears considers the figure of the 'Old Man' and 'Old Maid' in Coleridge's work, comparing his use of these figures with Jane Austen's in *Emma* [1816]. Shears argues that if we pay attention to the elderly figures in Coleridge's poems, we can come to a new understanding of his own elderly self as the 'Sage of Highgate'. Coleridge suffered from 'anxiety of reception', the fear that his elderly garrulousness would deter his audience (p. 259); this anxiety is palpable in many of his poems, even as early as the *Lyrical Ballads* days.

Two articles in 2019 delved into Humphry Davy's place in Romantic science and poetry. Frank A. J. L James's 'Gas and Poetry: Humphry Davy in Bristol, 1798-1801' (*EiR* 26 [2019] 131-157) is a thoroughly researched and thoughtfully considered examination of Davy's

experiments, poems, and literary relationships during a pivotal period for both poetry and the Medical Pneumatic Institute. James's "microchronological" (p. 133) analysis covers rapidly changing contexts, and considers Davys's *Annual Anthology* poems, his friendships with Wordsworth and Coleridge among others, as well as his editorial assistance on Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*. This illuminating piece closes with a poignant reflection upon historical contingency, reminding us that what is remembered today as a key moment in English cultural history was in its own time "never straightforward" and that "no one really had a clear idea of when an endpoint (if any) would be reached until publication" (pp. 156-157).

Neşe Devenot 's Medical Ecstasies: Chemical Synthesis and Self-Experimentation in Romantic Science and Poetry' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 1-24) takes a longer view covering 1799 to 1830. Devenot argues for a mutually productive symbiosis of literature and science, stating that "just as nature poetry insinuated itself amongst the flasks and billows of a science laboratory, so did synthetic chemistry permeate the garden of Romantic nature" (p. 2). These linkages are deemed especially discernible in connection to self-experimentation and states of ecstasy, perhaps most interestingly in his treatment of Davy's posthumous *Consolations in Travel* as "a reciprocal adaptation of Wordsworth's theories of poetic composition" (p. 2). Devenot and James's articles are complementary accounts which highlight ongoing research into scientific sociability and Romanticism.

There was only one article dedicated to Felicia Hemans in 2019, though it is a fascinating one. In 'An Image in Lava: Annotation, Sentiment, and the Traces of Nineteenth-Century Reading', Andrew Stauffer uncovers some remarkable evidence of Hemans's nineteenth-century reception (*PMLA* 134:i[2019] 81-98). He considers several nineteenth-century editions of Hemans from the University of Virginia library, which are full of marginal annotations, often rather devout. Stauffer observes that nineteenth-century marginalia is a neglected source for literary study: 'Virtually ubiquitous, the marks of everyday reading in nonrare books remain uncatalogued and thus largely unavailable for analysis' (p. 87). Stauffer examines these annotations to Hemans carefully and humanely. He concludes that nineteenth-century 'readers found a language for their own baffled hearts' in Hemans's work, reversing the old idea that she is a mawkish or conventional poet (p. 90).

2019 was also a surprisingly quiet year in Keats studies. The *Keats-Shelley Review* featured two articles on Keats in the 2019 volume. In "'Some Scraps of Paper: The Autograph Manuscript of *Ode to a Nightingale* at the Fitzwilliam Museum', Suzanne Reynolds sheds some

new light on an old favourite (*KSR* 34:ii[2019] 140-58). This is a detailed work of textual scholarship, which tells the material history of Keats's first 'great Ode'. Reynolds begins in the May of 1819, a period of 'exceptionally fine weather' (p. 141). From this balmy Spring emerged Keats's supple *Ode to the Nightingale* [1819], which survives today in a single holograph manuscript. This manuscript is probably the very one that Keats wrote in that Spring of 1819, as Reynolds shows through some deft detective work, including at one point an interesting scientific analysis of the paper on which it is written (p. 147).

Nicholas Stanley-Price offers a similarly material analysis in 'The Grave of John Keats Revisited' (*KSR* 34:ii[2019] 176-93). Stanley-Price considers how Keats's grave has been maintained, visited, described and regulated since 1821. It has become traditional to describe the grave as 'marginal' or 'neglected', but Stanley-Price offers quite compelling evidence to the contrary. He provides copious maps, photographs, engravings and paintings, which make the grave's history particularly vivid.

The major Keats publication of 2019 is Brian Rejack and Michael Theune's edited collection, *Keats's Negative Capability: New Origins and Afterlives* [LUP, 2019]. It contains 16 essays, though only the first eight are studies of Keats himself; the remaining eight consider how 'negative capability' has been adopted and developed by twentieth- and twenty-first-century poets. In their Introduction (pp. 1-12), Rejack and Theune describe the origins of 'negative capability' in Keats's own writings, narrate the unusual history of the famous 'negative capability' letter, and discuss how the concept 'has also escaped the gravitational pull of Keats studies', thus explaining the non-Keatsian focus of Chapters 8-16 (p. 3).

Part One of the book contains four essays that provide background to Keats's invention of negative capability. Brian Bates begins with a discussion of pantomime (pp. 15-30). He begins with Keats's reference to 'the Christmas pantomime' in the famous 'negative capability' letter, and proceeds to explain how the pantomime values of 'playfulness, satire, bodily performance, and popular culture' underlie Keats's apparently ethereal concept ('Keats's Negative Capability: On Pantomime and "Irritable Reaching"', 15-16). In this new context, Keats's theory of poetry appears earthier and more fruitful than ever before. The next chapter, by Rejack himself, considers the impact that John Jeffrey had on the posthumous reception of Keats's 'negative capability' ('John ~~Keats's~~ Jeffrey's "Negative Capability"; or, Accidentally Undermining Keats', pp. 31-46). Jeffrey was the second husband of Georgiana Wylie Keats, who was married to George Keats, the poet's primary correspondent (p. 31). Rather alarmingly,

it seems certain that Jeffrey made mistakes in his transcription, and it is possible that '[t]he very term negative capability might not even be what Keats wrote' (p. 32). To assess the situation, Rejack analyses Jeffrey's practice as a literary executor, focussing in particular on the fact that he underlines 'Negative Capability' in his transcription. Rejack considers four possible scenarios in which Jeffrey either correctly or incorrectly underlined the phrase. His analysis is rooted in close analysis of Keats's handwriting and Jeffrey's transcription, and really sets a new standard of textual scholarship for this central concept in Keats Studies. The other two essays in this section place Keats in a more literary context. Michael Theune compares Keats's concept of 'negative capability' with Hazlitt's concept of 'natural capacity' ('Keats's 'Negative Capability' and Hazlitt's "Natural Capacity"', pp. 47-59). The phrase 'natural capacity' first appears in Thomas Hobbes, and was repurposed in Keats's day by his friend Hazlitt. Theune makes a good case that 'natural capacity' may be the missing 'source term' for Keats's famous phrase (p. 49). Finally, Carmen Faye Mathes surveys a number of nineteenth-century women writers who detected something like 'negative capability' in his work before Keats's famous letter was published in 1848 ("that strong excepted soul": Nineteenth-Century Women Read Keats', pp. 60-76). Barrett Browning, for example, develops a theory of Keats's poetry which 'unites Keatsian intuition and agency without the impressionability so often ascribed to negative capability' (p. 68). Her survey of other possibilities in the interpretation of Keats is fertile and hopefully inspirational.

Part Two of the book considers negative capability as a reading tool. Cassandra Falke begins the section with an essay on 'Negatively Capable Reading' (pp. 79-92). She draws together Jon-Luc Marion and Keats to lay out a new phenomenological account of reading, which justifies the apparently excessive or useless act of reading for pleasure. In the following essay, Kurtis Hessel considers negative capability as a form of interdisciplinary practice ('Knowledge's "gordian shape": Keats and the Disciplines', pp. 93-107). Keats strove against the increasing disciplinarity of knowledge in Romantic England. Negative capability was one of the tools he developed to break down the boundaries between poetry and medicine. Jeanne Britton continues with a more specific consideration of 'irritability' as a component of negative capability ("Irritable Reaching" and the Conditions of Romantic Mediation', pp. 108-21). She agrees with Hessel that medicine forms an important background to the concept, and like Hessel, she reads negative capability as a 'mediating' concept. Her focus, however, is on the anxiety of influence. According to Britton, Keats used negative capability to find a place in the tradition of English

poetry, rather than to assault received disciplinary boundaries. Finally Emily Rohrbach compares Keats and Hazlitt as readers of poetry, arguing that Keat's theory of poetry has an overlooked 'historiographical dimension' (p. 123). As already mentioned, the remaining essays move beyond Keats, but the eight essays of Parts One and Two indicate that there is still much to learn about the inventor of negative capability, even if the horse has bolted in the centuries since.

To conclude our survey of Keats in 2019, we can note two final essays. Kang-Po Chen analyses one of Keats's major narrative poems in "'Sick within the Rose's Just Domain": The "Material Sublime" and Pathological Poetics in Keats's *Isabella; or, the Pot of Basil*' (*Romantik* 8:i[2019] 35–58). It is a long and detailed analysis of the poem, which concludes with Chen's assertion that Keats 'equat[ed] erotic love and poetic imagination as both self-annihilating experiences' (p. 57). Finally Greg Ellermann offers a strikingly contemporary analysis of Keats in 'Plasticity, Poetry, and the End of Art: Malabou, Hegel, Keats', another contribution to *Romanticism and Speculative Realism* (pp. 197–216). In a volume otherwise devoted to anti-Kantian speculations about objective reality, Ellerman makes the bold move to include the decidedly post-Kantian Hegel. He justifies this by choosing the Hegelian Christine Malabou as his representative speculative realist, and also by the anti-historicist argument that 'plasticity, understood as the reciprocal giving and receiving of form, already belongs to the aesthetic analysis of poetry' (p. 197). In other words, Malabou's concept of 'plasticity' can serve as a middle term between Keatsian poetry and contemporary philosophy, since it is a concept that precedes both. Ellerman concludes that the plastic form of Keats's verse enacts Malabou's creative re-reading of Hegel. In the famous second-last line of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' [1819], 'Keats's speculative sentence oscillates productively between its two terms', 'beauty' and 'truth' (p. 211). This oscillation 'can only be described as speculative', pointing forward to the speculative realism of today (*ibid*).

2019 was a rich year for studies of Letitia Elizabeth Landon, seeing a monograph and five articles amid her ongoing critical rehabilitation. Lucasta Miller's *L.E.L.: The Lost Life and Scandalous Death of Letitia Elizabeth Landon, the Celebrated 'Female Byron'* is the first Landon biography since Julie Watts's rewarding dual biography *Poisoned Lives* [2010], and the first to fully incorporate Cynthia Lawford's archival discoveries of Landon's three children by her literary patron William Jerdan, material here bolstered by Miller's own considerable research. Befitting the author of the widely acclaimed *The Brontë Myth* (p. 2001), Miller is attuned to the

construction of authorial reputation, beginning (after a brief prologue on Landon's mysterious death) not with Landon's 1802 birth but 'L.E.L.'s first appearance in print, and describes her work as 'the biography not just of a woman but of an imaginary persona, an image, a poetic brand' (p. 13). Miller's account usefully contextualises Landon's early 1820s poetry against the background of societal reaction against Shelley and Keats, and highlights her work's profound intertextuality, deeply concerned with symbols and masquerade, in short the product of a woman 'less a winsome sentimentalist than a proto-postmodern' (p. 15). While Miller keeps Landon's voluminous writings in mind throughout, her work's emphasis upon social scandal and proto-Victorian hypocrisy grows, seeing Landon's long affair with Jerdan as not only 'the key to understanding her life', but also through Landon's equivocal representation of her secret, 'the key to understanding much of her poetry' (p. 33). Although this approach suits a well-paced and highly readable biography which narrates the decline of Landon's fortunes and literary reputation, the interest of her readings of Landon's early lyrics makes one wish that at points Miller had been able to engage more fully with Landon's poetry, albeit at the risk of interrupting narrative flow.

While Miller's biography emphasises Landon's life and brand over her poems, several other scholars urged her work's relevance and value. Sarah Anne Storti's 'Letitia Landon: Still a Problem' (*VP* 47 [2019] 533-56) is particularly emphatic on this point. Arguing like Miller that Landon was not a sentimental poetess, Storti considers Landon 'a brilliant media theorist' and practitioner (p. 533) whose poetry explored art in an age of mass production. Storti's analysis highlights the significance of Landon's publication histories and contexts in understanding her 'imaginative dynamics' (p. 539), seeing critics as lead astray by delving into Landon's political arguments rather than considering poems such as 'The Chinese Pagoda' as clever engagements with print media (p. 536). Storti is well aware of her project's ambition, but argues forcefully that Landon's 'unique strengths' (p. 552) risk remaining hidden if our critical preoccupations remain unquestioned.

Jonas Cope's 'Scrapped Sentiment: Letitia Landon and Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book, 1832-1837' (*R* 25 [2019] 190-204) reads Landon's work as editor (and chief author of) *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap-Book*, arguing her many poems present a series of competing moral positions within single volumes, with the challenging implication of rendering such moral positions 'more easily interchangeable than one would like to think' (p. 191). Cope's engaging analysis sees a porousness between Landon's content and form, with the former absorbing the

'spontaneity of the poetic form' (p. 193) and the poetic form absorbing some of the content's seriousness, producing a poetry which reveals no absolute moral hierarchy.

Theresa Adams' 'Thinking about Feeling: Letitia Elizabeth Landon and the Problem of Professionalism' (*EiR* 26 [2019]: 89-104) also argues for Landon's sophistication. Considering whether Landon's sentiment documents her personal feelings or is merely professional, Adams presents early criticism which rendered Landon's feelings and those of her characters as synonymous (p. 89). She views Landon's work as reworking familiar Enlightenment ideas of sympathy, rendering it 'an eroticized form of mutual pleasure' rather than a source of moral judgment, and breaking down 'the distinct roles of spectator and spectacle' to experiment with perspective (p. 92). Nor is Landon's stance seen as static, with Adams suggesting her 'complex dynamics of affect transmission' (p. 104) evolved in response to critical reception and the marketplace.

Eric Eisner's 'Landon's Local Attachments: Urban Mobility, Literary Memory, and the Professional Woman Writer' (*SiR* 58 [2019] 27-50) engages with Landon's 1830s writings to argue her focus on urban energies allowed her to be remembered as 'a quintessential voice of the city' (p. 28). Eisner argues that reading Landon's urban affinities challenges literary narratives which see the mid-nineteenth century as a relatively rural interlude between two periods in which urban women and modernity are associated (pp. 31-32). Eisner's reading ranges from lyrics such as 'Piccadilly' to the novel *Ethel Churchill*, and traces Landon's influence upon Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, seeing her not only as a sentimental poet of the exotic but standing forth as 'one voice of the poetry with which the city is filled' (p. 44).

Lastly, Stephen Behrendt's 'This Is Not an Improvisation: Letitia Landon and the Slipperiness of Taxonomy' (*EuLeg* 24 [2019] 283-300) considers the 'structural and methodological procedures associated with improvisation' (p. 283), read through Landon's 1824 poem *The Improvisatrice*, seen as a 'virtuoso interdisciplinary performance' (p. 284). Behrendt situates Landon's work in a rich background of Romantic improvisations, noting the influence of Madame de Staël's *Corrine*, and argues that despite Landon's own claims of its rapid production, careful reading of the poem and its songs highlights the level of care placed in its composition. A thoughtfully speculative conclusion links the poem with Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* as suggesting 'all experience is in some sense improvisational' (p. 297).

Thomas Moore was the subject of a monograph and two essays. Sarah McCleave and Triona O'Hanlon's rich collection *The Reputations of Thomas Moore: Poetry, Music, and Politics*

follows a tripartite structure, with sets of essays addressing Moore's reputations as a poet, the dissemination of his work through musical networks, and his reputations as transmitted through nineteenth-century political networks. McCleave's opening essay 'The Role of Community, Network, and Sentiment in Shaping the Reputations of Thomas Moore' (pp. 1-21) situates the collection as a whole, like *Studies in Romanticism's* 'Song and the City' issue depicting the portability of song and sentiment in the nineteenth century, here exemplified by Moore's popular *Irish Melodies*. Throughout, Moore's work appears as popular and versatile, boasting an 'extraordinary capacity for establishing sympathy' (p. 10), and easily adapted to suit 'different purposes, circumstances, and historical moments in the course of the nineteenth century' (p. 18). To this end, its authors examine sites from English Canada to satirical poetry in Bombay's *Oriental Sporting Magazine* to the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s. *The Reputations of Thomas Moore* is to be commended for the consistent quality of its essays and its geographical diversity. Not only do we see Moore's reputations develop across the Anglophone world, but Sara Medina Calzada's 'Thomas Moore in the Hispanic World' (pp. 60-78) and Kathleen Ann O'Donnell's 'The Influence of Thomas Moore in the Nineteenth-Century Greek-Speaking World' (pp. 188-213) highlight his dissemination in other international contexts, with the latter particularly fascinating in its discussion of radical Balkans scholars employing translations of Moore's work to help unite 'people of different faiths' (p. 206).

Two articles examined aspects of Moore's epic narrative poem *Lalla Rookh*. Yuan Yin's 'Thomas Moore's Confectionary Orientalism' (*SEL* 59 [2019] 763-85) evokes the poem's place in the 'European cultural imaginary' (p. 763) and its association with food. Initially noting curious legacies such as a 'Lalla Rookh' (p. 764) punch at a late-nineteenth century New York restaurant, Yin's argument takes a more substantive turn in highlighting contemporary critics' use of 'exotic ingestion' as a metaphor 'to re-establish the distinction between selfhood and otherness that Moore himself undermines' (p. 766) through his depiction of the impact of British global commerce. In Yin's well-written essay, goods traverse bodily boundaries and stock representations read more closely become 'surprisingly unstable' (p. 769).

While Yin's article raises Moore's Irishness as a possible causal factor, Mansour Bonakdarian's 'Locating Ireland in Iran of Thomas Moore's 'The Veiled Prophet': Allegory, History, and Unsettled Interpretive Trajectories' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 519-540) reads Ireland in greater detail. Building his argument upon Moore's techniques of allegory, Bonakdarian proposes that Moore's 'Veiled Prophet' is a coded 'portrayal of the 1641 Catholic uprising in

Ireland' (p. 521). While aware that with the absence of direct confirmation by Moore, 'no definitive historical correspondence can be assigned to this section of Lalla Rookh' (p. 526), Bonakdarian's analysis is compelling, ranging across Moore's oeuvre from early writings on religious tolerance to an allusion deep within the 1846 fourth volume of Moore's *History of Ireland* (p. 536).

Amelia Opie's poetry featured in one 2019 essay. Shelley King's 'Lyric Sociability: Object Lessons in Female Friendship in Amelia Opie's Occasional Verses' (pp. 176-193), the final essay in *The Circuit of Apollo*, reads Opie's tributes to Frances Kemble Twiss and Elizabeth Vassall Lemaistre as notable examples of a type of sociable verse which appears in her poetry from 1807 to 1830. King's lucid essay argues for the power of 'social connections in the context of the role played by material objects in mediating identity' (p. 177), and traces Opie's poetic identity across decades of friendship with (and annual poems for) Lemaistre.

Three essays and a book chapter examined the life and poetry of Mary Robinson. Jerrold E. Hogle's 'The Gothic-Romantic Hybridity in Mary Robinson's Lyrical Tales' (*EuLeg* 24 [2019] 368-79) presents Robinson's 1800 collection *Lyrical Tales* as a provocative challenge to *Lyrical Ballads*, with particular focus upon her 'pointedly Gothic images and allusions' (p. 370) that 'bring out the 'knotted' undercurrents already in—the attempts at full imaginative coalescence in several of that collection's poems' (p. 370). Herrold notes that his piece builds upon previous scholarship reading these texts in tandem, and through careful readings of 'All Alone' and 'The Poor Singing Dame', establishes that Robinson's 'fulsome brilliance' (p. 377) helps tease and draw out hybridities Wordsworth and Coleridge's work as well as her own.

Susan Civale's 'Beyond the power of utterance': Reading the gaps in Mary Robinson's *Memoirs* (p. 1801)', in her *Romantic Women's life writing: Reputation and afterlife* (pp. 141-202), argues for Robinson's conscious strategies of self-representation as helping her straddle multiple 'contradictory identities' (p. 141). While Civale largely focuses upon the *Memoirs*, her study is also of use for students of Robinson's poetry in its examination of her literary afterlife, including the 'personal affinity' and 'literary respect' (p. 187) of several nineteenth-century women writers, and a 1930 introduction which decades before her modern scholarly rehabilitation focuses 'more on Robinson's verse than on her life' (p. 189).

Two chapters in the collection *Women's Voices and Genealogies in Literary Studies in English* discuss Robinson. Valentina Pramaggiore's "A woman of enlightened understanding': Politics and Feminism in Mary Darby Robinson's Literary Production' (pp. 108-121) reads 'Ainsi

va le Monde' and 'The Deserted Cottage' in conjunction with her *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination* to emphasise her social and political influence, arguing for her status as 'a foremother who deserves to be remembered and celebrated' (p. 120). Wilmarie Rosaldo Perez's 'A Case Study of *The Emigrants* and *The Fugitive*: The Poetry of the Exiles in Charlotte Turner Smith's and Mary Darby Robinson's Literary Works' (pp. 150-163) concisely studies 'The Fugitive' as sympathetic and politically engaged, aligning it with Smith's *The Emigrants* in their mutual questioning of 'ideas revolving around national identity and citizenship' (p. 161).

Two articles engaged with Walter Scott's poetic works, each concerned with his complex temporality. Andrew Lynch's 'Last Minstrels: Medievalism, Emotion and Poetic Performance in Walter Scott and Goethe' (*Postmed* 10 [2019] 423-38) chiefly addresses *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* for its approach to the medieval past, seeing Scott's poem as 'a strange combination' of distance and intimacy, combining cognitive disdain and 'aesthetic and emotional closeness' (p. 429) mediated through sound. Lynch ably situates Scott's minstrel narrator, and argues for historical poetry as creative performance flexibly allowing new alignments with the past.

Penny Fielding's 'Border Police: Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, the Law, and the 1790s' (*SSL* 45.1 [2019] 23-38) closely engages with Scott's ballad collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in the context of the Borders region. Her article reads his introduction to argue for Scott's fastidious research of and familiarity with historical law, and presents his work as establishing 'an uneasy temporality in which neither the Early Modern past nor the (supposedly) Enlightenment present offer a single framework for interpreting the law' (p. 24). Read in this light, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* is an 'act of antiquarian reconstruction' (p. 38) which challengingly interweaves past and present to show a history marked by the questions and uncertainties of the 1790s.

2019 saw the publication of two articles and a chapter on Anna Seward. Franscesca Blanch Serrat's 'I Mourn Their Nature, but Admire Their Art': Anna Seward's Assertion of Critical Authority and Old Age', (*ES Review* 40 [2019], 11-31), follows her 2018 essay 'Thine Sacred Friendship': Anna Seward's 'Llangollen Vale' and the Female Romantic Community' in taking a primarily biographical approach. Here the focus is on Seward's dispute with James Boswell, and her attempts to assert critical authority despite his often-misogynistic criticism, as previously noted in Claudia Karloff's *Anna Seward and the End of the Eighteenth Century* (pp. 259-60). Serrat considers Seward's demystifying sonnets on Samuel Johnson in passing (pp. 16-17),

while addressing in more detail the Benvolio letters of 1786, later correspondence in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and Seward's late publication history to suggest that Seward ably withstood Boswell's consistently 'heated and insulting' (p. 28) attacks to coolly articulate her authority.

Ruth Knezevich's 'Margins and Modernity: A Geocritical Approach to Anna Seward's *Llangollen Vale*' (*R 25* [2019] 69-80) focuses more directly on Seward's poetry, and in particular her careful use of paratexts. Although Knezevich's 2016 *ABO* article "Females and Footnotes: Excavating the Genre of Eighteenth-Century Women's Scholarly Verse" had briefly considered Seward's annotations as literary criticism, here she delves more deeply into Seward's footnotes, to fine effect. Knezevich analyses 'Llangollen Vale' and 'Hoyle Lake' through a geocritical lens, arguing that in the spatial and temporal juxtapositions created through their interplay of text and annotation, these poems both narrate and comment upon Welsh history, highlighting the 'geocritical complexities' of Seward's 'poetry and prose as well as her position within the wider framework of transporting Romanticism.' (p. 71) This well-written article closes by urging scholars to 'expand our conception of the page and its possibilities' (p. 80), and itself demonstrates the rich potential for material analysis.

Susan S. Lanser's 'Sapphic Circuitry: Anna Seward's Equivocal Tribute to 'Llangollen's Vanished Pair' (pp. 142-154), in the collection *The Circuit of Apollo* reconsiders Seward's famed friendship with Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby. Arguing against a tradition of writing which considered her *Llangollen Vale* as "sheer encomium" (p. 143) in its celebration of a feminised idea of progress, Lanser suggests that Seward can only pay homage at a price, with the poem physically erasing Butler and Ponsonby to present an elegy to what was in reality still a flourishing relationship.

Percy Shelley remained a rich subject for Romantic scholarship, with three monographs and twenty-two articles published. Seeking to justify another entry into the familiar field of Shelley biography, John Worthen stresses the need for a concise volume with 'a concentration upon the actual' (xvii) and which prioritizes 'contemporary and documentary testimony' (xx-xxi) over belated recollections: his 400-page *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Critical Biography* is written with these basic principles in mind. Worthen's account is divided into four parts, with Part I briskly surveying Shelley's first twenty years, and emphasising the formative importance of his aristocratic background in presenting a poet who openly declared his hatred for 'the canker of aristocracy' yet was 'upper-class through and through' (p. 5). Worthen's careful

approach towards source material permeates his discussion of Shelley's years at Oxford, noting Thomas Jefferson Hogg's 'ubiquitous unreliability' as a source and seeking to ground his accounts in other evidence when available (pp. 35-36), including Shelley's recently-rediscovered *Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things*.

Part II, 'Lover of Mankind, Democrat & Atheist 1811-1818' (pp. 55-189) again presents Shelley's idealism and class background as acting in tension, for instance describing Shelley's behaviour towards Elizabeth Hitchener as 'like his father and his grandfather -- and many other members of his social class' in feeling a natural superiority, while also sincerely seeking to cast 'the women he met into ideal mistresses' (p. 69). This section also introduces Worthen's structure of separating narrative-oriented chapters and analytical chapters on single key works, in this part covering *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, and *Laon and Cythna*, albeit retaining thematic continuity in remarks such as his judgment that *Queen Mab* is indicative of 'the attitude of the upper-class man accustomed to imposing his own views upon others' (p. 95).

Parts III, 'Expatriation, Italy 1818-1821' and IV, 'No Rest or Respite 1821-1822' address Shelley's last years in Italy. Part II's basic structure is followed, although pleasingly attention is given to lesser studied works such as *Swellfoot the Tyrant*. Perhaps most welcome in these parts and *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* as a whole is Worthen's consistent focus upon the construction of Shelley's texts from manuscript to print, with prose capturing the excitement of the compositional process, as in his description of *The Mask of Anarchy*, beginning with a fragmentary line until 'then, from an abruptly ink-laden nib, the first stanza of The Mask broke on to the page, almost complete...' (p. 256). Similarly, his account of Shelley's final months thoughtfully refrains from presenting his late writing as portentous, reminding us that Shelley was unaware of his impending fate and thus there are 'no such things as last poems here' (p. 342).

Although Worthen's scrupulous approach is generally welcome and he is admirably aware of the impossibility of fully covering Shelley's life and work in a single volume, his biography's depiction of Mary Shelley is ambiguous. He highlights her role in posthumously inventing Shelley's 'reputation and career as a professional poet' (p. 389) while largely focusing on their personal distance in Shelley's last years to the exclusion of interpretations which seek a closer literary reading. Fortunately, Anna Mercer's *The Collaborative Literary Relationship of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* addresses this latter topic in great detail. Her work argues for a 'shared writing life' (p. 9) and moves Shelley scholarship beyond an

understanding of *Frankenstein's* collaborative development as singular to depict the 'Shelleys as authors who are intrinsically linked' (xv) in their composition, and in the process challenge old myths surrounding this relationship.

Following an introduction which usefully situates Mercer's study within existing scholarship, Chapter 1, '1814-18: London to Europe - Collaborative Beginnings' presents a peak collaborative period, not only reading *Frankenstein*, but also drawing upon a broader corpus to argue the Shelleys 'engaged in a reciprocal process of creative idea-sharing, drafting, reading, and copying, which had a hugely important effect on the works that they produced' (p. 30). Mercer's methodology shines in her rigorous use of MS. 13,290, with its cluster of texts (including Percy's early review of *Frankenstein* and Mary's translation of Apuleius's 'Cupid and Psyche') suggesting that their work shows 'a confluence of ideas, forming and mutating during composition' (p. 42).

Chapters 2 and 3, 'Literary Exchanges in Italy' and 'The Italian Period and Shared Composition' move to 1818-1822. Here Mercer notes a tradition of criticism which focused closely on a 'narrative of discord' (p. 77), and closely reads published works and manuscripts to establish that despite periods of personal alienation and loneliness, the two still collaborated, contributing to and challenging 'each other's writings' (p. 80). Chapter 2 discusses *The Cenci* and *Matilda* as products of 'a shared intellectual climate and common creative inspiration' (p. 87), while Chapter 3 turns to manuscript poems and notes the effects of Mary's later editorial decisions, as in her movement of *Julian and Maddalo* from a poem of 1820 to one of 1818 leading it to be misleadingly connected to Mary's note on 'verses, which he hid for fear of wounding me' (p. 110).

Mercer's last two chapters, 'Approaching Posthumous Editing as Collaboration' and 'Intertextual Connections and Mary Shelley's Later Novels', explore their posthumous literary relationship in more detail. Chapter 4 covers the now somewhat familiar story of Mary's influence over Percy's reputation through her editing of his works, emphasising the immensity of her task and arguing that her 'apparent self-deprecation' helped diminish perceptions of the 'reciprocal collaborative elements in their relationship' (p. 138). Chapter 5 presents Mary as continuing to 'respond to PBS's writings in her original work' (p. 164), covering both *The Last Man* and lesser-known texts such as her satirical 'The Bride of Modern Italy'. A brief afterword reflects on the Shelleys as a 'profound and successful collaboration' (p. 186), and looks forward to future studies of Romantic collaboration, with Mercer's work well illustrating their potential.

Colin Carman's *The Radical Ecology of the Shelleys: Eros and Environment* studies Percy and Mary Shelley, although as he addresses the two in separate chapters, his chief intermingling instead lies in combining ecocriticism and queer theory. Carman's study centrally argues that the Shelleys 'challenge us to adopt a different understanding of the human species and its deeply intimate, even erotic, interrelatedness with its environs' (p. 1). Nature and queerness are seen as entangled, with nature favouring 'interdependencies' over 'iron-clad categories' (p. 4), and Carman surmising *eros* as 'shorthand for any form of sensuous unification' (p. 7).

After an introduction which traces critical precedents from Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (p. 1978) to the seminal works of Timothy Morton, Carman writes specifically on Percy in Chapters 1 and 2, which will be our focus here. "'The Nature of Love and Friendship": Ecotones and Other Fine Lines in PS's Writings on Romantic Friendship' (pp. 37-75) centrally discusses Shelley's 1818 tract *A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks*, seen as one of the most singular documents of the Romantic age (p. 9) in its arguments for homosexuality as a time-honoured tradition with natural causes. Carman interestingly discusses the *Discourse's* intellectual influences, including Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, and sees Shelley's idea of male *eros* as an eco-tone where two eco-systems overlap (p. 67), in a fashion echoed by *Julian and Maddalo* and its 'loving friendships' (p. 44).

Chapter 3, 'Percy Shelley's Hermaphroditus: Queer Nature and the Sex Lives of Plants in *The Sensitive-Plant* and *The Witch of Atlas*' (pp. 77-117) moves in its analysis from place to human form, providing a well-argued reading of its central poems as informed by the context of Linnaean ideas of plant sexuality and illustrating Shelley's 'interest in the natural sciences and the homologies he locates between human and nonhuman organisms' (p. 10). After discussing Mary Shelley in Chapters 4 and 5, Carman's conclusion (pp. 191-199) returns to the central question of productive entanglement, seeing the Shelleys' work as enlarging our affective sphere in its bringing together of 'people, places, and erotic pleasure' (p. 12), a process of imperative importance amid 'the environmental and cultural challenges' (p. 199) of the Anthropocene.

With 2019 marking the bicentenary of both Shelley's *annus mirabilis* and the bloody Peterloo massacre, 1819 featured prominently in the year's writing on Shelley. Three articles addressed his work in the context of Peterloo. Philip Connell's "A Voice from over the Sea": Shelley's Mask of Anarchy, Peterloo, and the English Radical Press' (RES 70 [2019] 716-31)

skilfully combines detective work and literary exegesis to argue that the sources Shelley drew upon included not only the 'moderate, middle-class reformism' of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* but 'more uncompromising' (p. 719) radical accounts. While rightly noting Shelley's *Mask of Anarchy* is a 'substantial imaginative reworking' (p. 724) of its prose sources, Connell suggests that its urgency owes much to 'Richard Carlile's outraged, articulate, and politically audacious journalistic response to Peterloo' (p. 731).

Mary Fairclough's 'Peterloo at 200: The Radical Press, Simultaneous Meetings and *The Mask of Anarchy*' (*KSR* 33 [2019] 159-74) follows from Fairclough's earlier writing on the Romantic crowd to argue Shelley engages with a radical strategy of overcoming distance through 'coordinated simultaneous meetings' throughout Britain, designed 'to produce a nationwide chorus of protest and solidarity' (p. 160), a spectre continuing to haunt popular discourse even after the passing of the Six Acts. Fairclough closely reads the *Mask* for echoes of radical literature and reflects upon Shelley's situation in Italy, aware of his personal distance from the fields of Peterloo while 'committed to closing that gap' (p. 173).

Lisa Kasmer's 'National Trauma and Romantic Illusions in Percy Shelley's *The Cenci*' (*Humanities* 8 [2019] 94-106) moves past Shelley's immediate response to argue that Peterloo deeply marked his subsequent writing, seeking to delineate 'the sociopolitical milieu of 1819 in political and confrontational works' (p. 94), in particular his verse drama *The Cenci*. Kasmer reads *The Cenci* through the lens of trauma theory, suggesting that Shelley's revulsion towards 'coercive government and nationalism' loses itself in his contemplation of the 'beautiful pathos' (p. 95) of national trauma's effects witnessed in Beatrice, turning to a more traditional narrative to do so. The shift from national to domestic suffering and its ideological implications are well considered in her fine reading.

Nora Crook's 'Shelley's Jingling Food for Oblivion: Hybridizing High and Low Styles and Forms' (*EuLeg* 24 [2019] 329-47) also reads 1819 as a crucial period of his work, explaining that his poems of late 1819 are where 'his polemical popularizing and his most exalted lyrical impulses converged in full flow' (p. 330). Her argument focuses on Shelley's complex engagement with 'jingling' verse, at points seen as something to be avoided and at others able to bolster his work. To this end, Crook's reading ranges confidently from 'Ozymandias' to 'Song: Men of England' to scraps of popular verse adapted in an 1819 notebook (although Crook wryly remarks that given its Judeophobic nature she wishes Shelley had forgotten the latter (p. 337)), and is closely attentive to his distinctive rhythms.

Antoine Dechêne's "But the Cold World Shall Not Know": A Reading of Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Julian and Maddalo" as a Detective Story' (*Clues* 37.1 [2019] 61-69) pursues the literary genre of the metaphysical detective story, arguing that the titular poem is 'characterized by many of the themes and narrative tropes proper to metacognitive investigations' (p. 62), with a broader sense of mystery anticipating not only detective fiction but also Herman Melville's 'Bartleby, the Scrivener'.

Three articles consider Shelley's verse dramas of 1820, *Prometheus Unbound* and *Swellfoot the Tyrant*. Katie Alyssa Hunt's 'Jupiter of Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* Reconsidered' (*ANQ* 32 [2019] 28-30) focuses sharply in its short space on Act 2 of *Prometheus Unbound*, positioning Jupiter as 'simultaneously aligned with Shelley's reading of Satan and the Father' (p. 30) and thus breaking down the play's superficially Manichean structure, suggesting that strictly dualist readings overlook nuance and risk undermining 'its model of revolutionary perfection' (p. 30).

Nancy Moore Gislee's 'Shelley's Oppositional Songs' (*EuLeg*, 24 [2019] 348-367) is based upon a divide of song and lyric, arguing that debates on aesthetics and Shelley's political interventions risk being 'muddied' (p. 348) if Shelley's songs are subsumed within a broader category of lyric. Gislee adroitly excavates a distinct lineage of Shelleyan song, beginning with Shelley's planned 1812-13 volume of 'Minor Poems' and able to unite broad traditions of 'urbane and marginal' song (pp. 350-51). Her analysis places interpretative weight upon his poetic dramas, seeing *Swellfoot's* politically charged choruses in the context of a 'proposed yet never-completed' (p. 357) volume of popular songs planned in the wake of Peterloo.

Michael J. Neth's "This Remarkable Piece of Antiquity": Epic Conventions in Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus; or, Swellfoot the Tyrant* (*EuLeg* 24 [2019]: 386-422) extends further back in its analysis, reading Shelley's poetry as marked by 'encyclopaedic' (p. 400) knowledge of classical literature, and *Swellfoot* as a work which rewards close attention to its generic hybridity. Neth deftly situates *Swellfoot* in epic tradition, arguing that its ambitions reach beyond Popeian mock epic to produce an at-times dizzying play written in 'high experimental mode' (p. 404), which appropriates Homeric epos to situate the closing of a tumultuous age in the 'coarse bedroom farce' of the Queen Caroline Affair (p. 415).

Continuing this examination of Shelley's 1820, two articles study his posthumously published 'Letter to Maria Gisborne'. Steven E. Jones' 'Shelley's 'Letter to Maria Gisborne' as Workshop Poetry' (*EuLeg* 24 [2019] 380-395) considers Shelley's seemingly playful verse

epistle as a poem 'literally written in a workshop', 'surrounded by the material objects of mechanical invention' (p. 381). With reference to 'A Defence of Poetry', Jones focuses intimately on the poem's personal context, including Henry Gisborne's engineering work and Shelley's failed Mediterranean steam-boat scheme, to read the 'Letter' as 'a self-reflexive lab report, a demonstration of poetic productivity in an improbable setting' (p. 392). Jones's conclusion sees the poem and its melancholy undercurrent as highlighting the tensions of workshop poetry written amid the separation of poetry and science (pp. 391-92) in the age of steam.

Michele Speitz's 'Lyres, Levers, Boats, and Steam: Shelley's Dream of a Correspondent Machine' (*SiR* 58 [2019] 231-64) focuses on creative intermingling rather than melancholic separation. She presents Shelley's work as bringing together 'sublime ecology and technology' (p. 232), and ascribing sublimity 'to inventions deemed especially generative, destructive, or inescapably ubiquitous' (p. 232). Speitz above all focuses on the numerous intellectual challenges raised by Shelley's work, arguing that his expansive view of intermingled natural, technological, poetic and social progress at once complicate 'shallow ecology' and 'quixotic notions of a solitary Romantic poet' (pp. 260-61). Her closely argued article sees Shelley's 'situational adjacency and transformational community' (p. 254) as qualities well suited to his age and ours.

Six articles focused on aspects of Shelley's late writings of 1821-22. Bysse Inigo Coffey's 'Wrecked in that Convulsion': *Epipsychidion* and Rhyme' (*KSR* 33 [2019]: 71-80) fascinatingly engages with the poem and the poet's 'vacillating attitude to rhyme' (p. 72), seeing many of his rhymes as self-reflexive comments on rhyme itself, which evaluate both the negatives and positives of the device. Coffey depicts rhyme as at once part of the poem and distanced, nicely capturing this inherent tension in his statement that as rhyme 'helps to build the work, it also narrates its progress like a covert marginal gloss' (p. 74). In addition to close reading of Shelley's many rhymes, Coffey also traces seventeenth-century literary debates on rhyme's purpose, seen as 'laced' throughout *Epipsychidion*, a complex poem in which rhyme operates as a 'critical observer' (p. 80).

Valentina Varinelli's 'Accents of an Unknown Land': Percy Bysshe Shelley's Writings in Italian' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 255-263) finds new meaning in a body of work often ignored in anthologies. (p. 256). Varinelli argues convincingly that Shelley's Italian writings cannot be purely ascribed to 'infatuation' (p. 257) for Teresa 'Emilia' Viviani, establishing their relationship to

Shelley's canonical works of 1820-2, and exploring the significance of a review in which Shelley takes on an Italian persona. Her conclusion concisely sees the Italian writings as a new phase in Shelley's search for an audience, 'no less admirably quixotic than when he distributed propaganda by means of hot air balloons and bottles dropped into the sea.' (p. 261).

Anthony Uhlmann's 'Spinoza, Aesthetics, and Percy Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry'' (*TPr* 33 [2019] 721-38) reads Shelley's influential late essay through the lens of Baruch Spinoza's seventeenth-century writings, arguing that Spinoza's works 'construct an aesthetics' (p. 722) and that Shelley in turn helps shed light on or develop some aspects of Spinozan aesthetics. Uhlmann centres these aspects on the common distinction between imagination and reason, seeing both writers as provocatively associating imagination and synthesis (p. 731) as an act of creation. His account usefully presents the Shelleys' familiarity with Spinozan thought, and helps lay theoretical ground for further study of this influence within Romantic poetry.

Antonella Braidà turns to a more recent influence upon Shelley's essay in her "Mme de Staël's Influence on Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: Empowering Women's Politics through Literature" (*KSR* 33 [2019] 81-95) After surmising many suggested influences upon *A Defence of Poetry*, Braidà cites de Staël's *De la littérature* (read by Shelley in 1815) to suggest that read together, the two 'reveal similarities in structure, and in the choice of particular literary and historical examples to justify their arguments' (p. 84). Braidà's reading is well argued and she is attentive to the context of Shelley's engagement, interestingly discussing early translations of de Staël to argue they largely erase an association between ancient slavery and patriarchy more extensively made in the original French, and possibly drawn upon by Shelley. She concludes by separating the Shelleys' disinterest in de Staël's personal life from her intellectual influence, with both Percy and Mary foregrounding 'her unique contribution to the role of women in history, literature and society' (p. 95).

Alexander Freer's 'Percy Shelley's Touch; or, Lyric Depersonalization' (*MP* 117 [2019] 91-114) articulates 'the significance of touch for lyric theory' (p. 92), suggesting that touch raises indeterminacy between intimacy and distance, and that this indeterminacy creates important implications for Romantic poetics. After giving a more general account of lyric theory, Freer addresses the role of touch in Shelley's lyrics to Jane, noting that even biographical analysis cannot establish 'whether their invitations, addresses, and touches emerged as representations of real events, wilful provocations, or lighthearted fantasy' (p. 99). In a series of sensitive readings, Freer emphasises their profound ambivalence, seeing the unfinished 'Lines Written in

the Bay of Lerici' as almost hovering between 'representational and imaginative content' (p. 111), and the Jane poems collectively as an 'ongoing experiment in the ethics and aesthetics of address' (p. 112).

Clan Duffy's "Time Is Flying": Lyrical and Historical Time in the Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley' (*Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences* [2019] 18: 37-49) presents and analyses a previously unpublished June 1822 manuscript fragment for its reflections on 'the passage of time as a process of loss' (p. 38). This poignant fragment serves as a point of departure for an examination of Shelley's temporality, finding a general contrast between the pessimism of his lyrics and a more 'progressive understanding of historical process' (p. 39) in his political works, albeit one in which even Shelley's narratives of successful revolution cannot 'wholly trust in time' (p. 39). Duffy succinctly covers poems from *Queen Mab* to *The Triumph of Life*, like Freer reminding readers of the interpretative difficulties an unfinished work raises in considering Shelley's attempts at answering complex problems of personal and historical time.

Two articles read Shelley's writing through the lens of dissolution and decline. Alan Weinberg's 'Against the Evidence: "Persuasion" and the Facts of Experience in Shelley's "A Future State"' (*KSR* 33 [2019] 55-70), is like Duffy's piece a recuperative project, providing the first 'sustained exploration' (p. 56) of Shelley's relatively overlooked 1818-19 essay 'A Future State'. This closely argued article provides a lucid exposition of Shelley's argument, drawing out his philosophical attitude towards death and exploring it in the context of Shelley's other Italian writings, including both unpublished prose pieces such as 'The Coliseum' and the poetic fragment 'A Vision of the Sea'. Weinberg's account also deals with the complexities of Shelley's text, including cancelled continuations, in exemplary fashion, incorporating them into his analysis and including an edited transcription of an alternate ending (p. 69).

David Kepler's chapter 'Genre and Archive Fever in Romantic Poetry: Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Ozymandias' and the Sonnet', published in David Kerley and Timo Muller's *Poem Unlimited: New Perspectives on Poetry and Genre* (pp. 17-30), considers similar themes within a canonical poem. Kepler draws on Derridean notions of archive fever to read Shelley's sonnet as an exploration of 'the epoch's desire to archive as well as the precarious nature of the archiving process and of contemporary archives' (p. 18). To this end, Kepler considers the ambiguities of Shelley's sources, and studies his text to argue that 'the poem's form figures the dissolution of its content' (p. 25). A hurried conclusion traces the poem's anthologisation,

suggesting its presence in late nineteenth-century volumes compiled in a context of British imperialism adds new ironies.

Two articles in the *European Romantic Review* drew out links between Shelley's poetry and twentieth-century leftist thought. Emily Sun's 'Shelley's Voice: Poetry, Internationalism, and Solidarity' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 239-247) studies the work of Chinese nationalist poet Lu Xun, with his 1908 essay 'On the Power of Mara Poetry', seen to extend the 'international legacy of European Romanticism' (p. 239). Sun argues that Shelley and Xun place emphasis upon voice, with their resonances suggesting a 'logic of solidarity whose complexity exceeds identification and imitation' (p. 240), and their commonalities most keenly felt in moments where the two poets demonstrate 'critical self-consciousness vis-à-vis language itself' (p. 246). While further evidence for Shelley's Chinese reception would have been useful to Sun's argument, her article nonetheless raises an intriguing line of analysis.

Alan Weinberg's 'Reading Shelley and Adorno on 'Life': A Further Exploration' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 501-517) argues that the writings of Frankfurt School thinker Theodor Adorno sympathise with Shelley's 'aesthetic figuration of resistance politics' (p. 501). Although this link is not original, Weinberg's analysis is still useful. Strongly grounding his analysis in Adorno's knowledge of Shelley's works, Weinberg draws parallels between *Minima Moralia's* aphorisms and Shelley's fragmentary writings, and finds echoes of 'The Triumph of Life' (pp. 507-508) in Adorno's rhetoric. While mindful of their dissimilarities in philosophy of history, Weinberg finds their affinities striking, eloquently describing them as writers willing to bear 'life's attrition unflinchingly in the patient knowledge that whatever of good might remain has been put through the hardest of tests' (p. 513).

Finally, two articles aim to draw thematic connections across Shelley's writing career. Alexander Freer's second piece of 2019, 'A Genealogy of Narcissism: Percy Shelley's Self-Love' (*NCL* 74 [2019] 1-29) argues that Shelley's oeuvre is marked by poetic narcissism, but a distinctive mode that 'obliges us to rethink the concept of narcissism and its relation to selfishness' (p. 1). With especial attention given to 1818-1822, Freer reads a series of key texts to show Shelleyan love as simultaneously centring on and abnegating the self. His analysis also incorporates Shelley's use of previous writers on the subject from his disagreements with Lord Kames to his 'complicated relationship' (p. 12) with Plato's *Symposium*. Freer depicts the latter as crucial in Shelley's formulation of a 'conception of self-love that weakens the boundaries of the self in a quest for likeness' (p. 25), one later reinforced in *A Defence of Poetry*.

Coffey's second 2019 article, 'Shelley's Poetry of Air' (*WC* 50 [2019] 219-36) traces the significance of air and breathing to Shelley's poems, stating that even compared to Romantic poetry's common concern for 'breathing and inspiration, S's fascination was unique for its intensity' (p. 219). Presenting this fruitful engagement, Coffey notes the influence of David Hartley and Isaac Newton on Shelleyan thought, and examines poems from *Laon and Cythna* to *Alastor* and beyond, with a comparison of cosmic imagery within *Adonais* and Shelley's final notebook standing as 'a powerful testament to his ability to marshal complex scientific ideas in the service of verse' (p. 234). Coffey concludes by describing the resonance of 'Shelley's air' (p. 235), one well mirrored by his writings themselves.

2019 saw a welcome increase in scholarship on Charlotte Smith, with Smith (in addition to the two chapters noted above) the subject of a monograph and five articles. Bethan Roberts' *Charlotte Smith and the Sonnet: Form, Place and Tradition in the Late Eighteenth Century* is the first monograph to focus entirely on Smith and the sonnet, seeing her works as 'constituted by these three intertwined concerns: with tradition, place, and the sonnet form itself' (p. 2). To this end, Roberts situates Smith in the context of an eighteenth-century revival of sonnet form, seeing her work in dialogue with poets such as Thomas Warton and Thomas Gray, while moving across *Elegaic Sonnets'* expanding editions from a predication on 'various aspects of tradition' (p. 10) to a more experimental stance to a model which encompasses both positions.

Chapter 1, 'The Eighteenth-Century Sonnet' writes against a 'dominant narrative' (p. 11) of a sudden 1780s sonnet revolution headed by Smith, instead excavating a more gradual revival not only inspired by Milton or Petrarch, but also inspired more broadly by 'a new interest in the literature of the past' (p. 12). This background is presented through a brief survey of Smith's predecessors from Thomas Edwards to William Hayley, closing with Smith's paratextual references to these writers.

Chapter 2, 'Tradition', focuses on *Elegaic Sonnets'* first and third editions, and more particularly on the figures of the nightingale and the river, with several sonnets studied to argue Smith 'uses inherited themes to engage with different literary traditions and place herself as a woman writer within them' (p. 29). In her analysis, Roberts is receptive to poetic structure, allusion, and the effects of *Elegaic Sonnets'* changing form, seeing the nightingale as effectively 'receding' (p. 38) in later editions.

Chapter 3, 'Innovation', argues for *Elegaic Sonnets'* 1789 fifth edition as a turning point in Smith's relationship with literary tradition. This shift is mapped through the river's replacement

by the sea, with Roberts arguing that it is in Smith's sea sonnets in which her 'distinctive voice and innovative use of the sonnet form really emerges' (p. 71). Although ranging from 1786 to 1800 in analysis, Roberts focuses on Sonnet XLIV through a close reading to present its setting as 'intertwined with the sonnet's formation' (p. 91).

Chapter 4, 'Wider Prospect', shifts from textual formation to literary reputation, again giving emphasis to Sonnet XLIV through its afterlives, which shed light on Smith's literary reputation and 'posthumous obscurity, as Smith's posthumous fate is played out upon the churchyard landscape' (p. 99). The chapter closes with a concise study of Sonnet XCII, presented as the work of a poet 'tired of sonnets' (p. 130), and a statement of the fragility of Smith's reputation.

Chapter 5, 'Botany to Beachy Head', surveys the last decade of Smith's poetry, arguing that her work moves away from 'vast seascape' to 'the close-up observation of the botanist or naturalist' (p. 133). Roberts traces echoes of Smith's sonnets in 'Beachy Head', and sees her shift as one which 'simultaneously effaces and empowers herself canonically' (p. 159). Although Roberts' close focus on key symbols and tropes unfortunately leads to many Smith sonnets being excluded or given relatively little attention, her careful contextualisation is nonetheless welcome.

Daniel Froid's 'Charlotte Smith's Ugly Feelings' (*SEL* 59:iii[2019] 605-24) also examines *Elegaic Sonnets*, suggesting that Smith's melancholic poems challenge reader expectations and deflate notions of the sublime in order to articulate 'a sense of suspended agency that draws attention to and resists the gendered implications of the sublime aesthetic.' (p. 606) Froid provides serviceable readings of sonnets XII, XLIV, XLVI, and LXX to propose the poems consistently resist catharsis, although its argument is unfortunately undermined by Froid's curious categorisation of the Burkean sublime as primarily about mastery rather than vastness or terror.

Trish Bredar's 'Wild Wanderings: Gender and Pedestrian Travel in Charlotte Smith's *Elegaic Sonnets*' (*ERR* 30 [2019], 149-164) too reads Smith's collection as subversive, arguing that 'the transgressive discourse of female mobility operating throughout *Elegaic Sonnets* disrupts the traditionally male-centered narrative of British Romanticism's peripatetic poet.' (p. 150) To this end, Bredar studies several poems, including Sonnets LXII and LXVII, interpolated from Smith's novels *Montalbert* and *The Old Manor House* with (Bredar suggests) a shift in narratorial gender. She recognises the complexities of Smith's sonnets, nicely describing

'Sonnet IV—To the Moon' and its dual mobilities: 'the arduous, unavoidable pilgrimage and the brief, joyful, and potentially subversive deviation from the prescribed path.' (p. 154) While carefully avoiding too optimistic a vision of the 'triumphantly mobile woman', Bredar sees the sonnets as works of 'transgressive potential' which make welcome space for female travellers within overly masculine traditions of Romantic pedestrianism (p. 162).

Teddi Lynn Chichester's 'Charlotte Smith's "The Sea View": Reimagining Burke's Sublime and Beautiful' (*ANQ* 33 [2019]: 48-52) considers Smith's 1797 sonnet as innovative for re-evaluating both ancient poetic hierarchies and Burke's 'psycho-aesthetic categories' (p. 40) of the beautiful and sublime. Her reading succinctly presents Smith as blurring Burkean boundaries, initially to elevate sublime objects as beautiful and in the poem's closing sestet as bloodily intermingled, 'blotting out not just a view, but a vision' (p. 51).

Two other articles provide close readings of Smith's posthumous masterpiece 'Beachy Head'. Alexandra Patterson's "Tracing the Earth: Narratives of Personal and Geological History in Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head*" (*R* 25 [2019], 22-31) is an engaging study of Smith's creative use of her own textual past. Building upon John M. Anderson's observation that Smith's allusiveness is most visible in regard to her own works, Patterson presents 'Beachy Head's allusions to and echoes of 'Sonnet V: To The South Downs' as collectively creating a new history, exploring 'not only how histories can be read anew, but also what it means both to read and to narrate histories of the landscape and the self' (p. 24). Her article elegantly closes by drawing together the fossils of Beachy Head and the textual artifacts of Smith's sonnets as offering lessons in understanding the world and ourselves within it.

Anne D. Wallace's 'Interfusing Living and Nonliving in Charlotte Smith's "Beachy Head"' (*WC* 50 [2019]: 3-19) finds creative and ethical potential in the poem's famous indeterminacies. She considers both the poem's narrator and its compassionate hermit as at points inhabiting a position neither living nor dead, and argues more broadly for the poem's rich and intermingled imagery of deep time as breaking down conventional ideas of categorical distinction between subjects, the earth and the sea (p. 4). In this well-argued reading, Wallace compares Smith's project to Keats's 1817 ode 'To a Nightingale', seeing both poems as allowing the 'delusion of achievable happiness' to give way to 'not-unhappiness', finding contentment in negative capability.

Robert Southey's poetry was studied in three articles, with two seeking to complicate simple narratives of his transformation from radical to reactionary. Jonathan Taylor's 'The Hydra

of Tyranny, The Fall of Robespierre and the Early Demise of Robert Southey's Revolutionary Enthusiasm' (*R 25* [2019] 143-156) is a close study of Southey's early poetic dramas and epics which argues that while he continued to declare his republicanism throughout the 1790s, Southey was by 1793 already 'profoundly disillusioned with the theory and practice of revolution' (p. 144). Taylor's rigorous analysis draws upon the figure of the hydra, associating Southey's usage with a history from seventeenth-century linkages between the hydra and the multitude to the loyalist poetry of *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

Lynda Pratt's 'Robert Southey and his Age: Ageing, Old Age and the Days of Old' (*R 25* (p. 2019) 271-280) reads widely across Southey's oeuvre in order to study his presentation of 'the trajectories both of his individual life and of the time and the society in which he lived' (p. 271). Pratt thoughtfully considers Southey's reflections on aging and his keen attentiveness towards his literary posterity, and presents a nuanced account of his attitudes towards societal change. While recognising Southey's sad decline, she urges readers to refrain from allowing his late senility to 'obscure the range and complexity of his comments about the subject in his earlier, active, articulate years' (p. 274), complexity well highlighted by her cogent analysis.

Benjamin Colbert's 'From *Domus to Polis*: Hybrid Identities in Southey's *Letters from England* (p. 1807) and Blanco White's *Letters from Spain* (p. 1822)' (*EuLeg 24* [2019]: 301-14) is less immediately concerned with Southey's poetry in its study of a prose travelogue, but focuses heavily upon its echoes of *The Prelude* (including allusions previously overlooked by W. J. B. Owens) as highlighting Southey's 'anxieties about homelessness' (p. 305). Surveying their restless works, Colbert sees Southey, White, and Wordsworth as 'testing the grounds of national character' (p. 310).

Helen Maria Williams's poetry featured in a single essay. Natasha Duquette's 'Painting in Bright Characters: Helen Maria Williams's Poetic Tributes to Anna Seward, Elizabeth Montagu, and Marie-Jeanne Roland' (pp. 123-141), published in *The Circuit of Apollo*, presents the motif of female friendship as breaking down borders and conventional periodisation. Duquette argues compellingly against too easily separating Williams's early poetry of sensibility from her politicised 1790s writings, with her consistently "laudatory portrayal of women's sympathetic intellectual, and artistic connections" forming "a constant thread throughout her writing" (p. 123). Focusing on friendship as theme also allows Duquette to read relatively little-studied poems such as 1784's 'To Mrs. Montagu'.

William Wordsworth remains a central Romantic poet, and (in addition to texts mentioned above) was the subject of three monographs and thirty-five articles. 2019 saw a notable emphasis on Wordsworth's later poetry, treated not as Bloomian 'dreadful poetic dotage' but a 'varied and surprising' (p. 12) body of work. Tim Fulford's scholarship figured strongly with a monograph and three articles. Fulford's recuperative *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1814-1845* refrains from a simple survey, and studies the most illustrative works to help create 'a wholler Wordsworth' (pp. 7-8). His rewarding and revisionist study is organised into four parts. Part 1, 'Producing a Poet for the Public' (pp. 17-94), centres upon 1815's *Poems by William Wordsworth*, stating its significance as the first text in which Wordsworth 'publicly staked his reputation on being a poet of imagination' (p. 18) and discussing its relation to tradition. Fulford's sensitive reading of poems such as 'Yew Trees' and 'Inscriptions' articulates the shifts in Wordsworth's politics and poetics which alienated later critics, including his acceptance of patronage, while suggesting that Wordsworth continued to more subtly challenge assumptions through 'the manipulation of formal traditions and print layout' (p. 43).

Part II, 'Spots of Space: Materializing Memory' (pp. 97-174) reads Wordsworth's poetry of 1814-1829 through the lens of the memorial poem, covering sites and spaces not for the formation of Wordsworth's mind as in *The Prelude*, but with increasing focus upon public history, helping a local and national community to 'find itself' (p. 9). Fulford sees a departure from the romanticization of the self to a more impersonal mode where 'traditional institutions' rather than solitary sight or oral tradition maintain 'meaning and value against the depredations of time and history' (p. 124). Again, this move is not presented as simply reactionary: Fulford adds the context of reception of Wordsworth's poems, and highlights the innovations of his attempts to make poetry 'an adequate witness to the complex and often troubling production of the present by the past' (p. 93). While Chapter 3 addresses several poems, Chapter 4 offers an extended reading of 'Tired of Climbing Toil', excavating its long process of composition and revision. Fulford considers it as a bravura meditation on poetry and its relation to time which pays loving homage to Dorothy's influence and signals key themes of Wordsworth's post-1820 works, 'loss, memory, and adaptation to the diminished' (p. 147).

Part III, 'The Politics of Diction' (pp. 177-211) examines poems from 1819 and 1835 to challenge a critical tradition of the later Wordsworth falling into 'stylistic ossification' (p. 174). Fulford's approach conveys the anxiety of influence as double-ended, with an alive and active Wordsworth becoming 'more like his admirers than he cared to admit' (p. 9). He presents

Yarrow Revisited as among the most 'explicitly critical' (p. 175) poetry of Wordsworth's career in its attack on the Poor Laws, while remaining rightly aware of its real limits, stating that 'may have resented the system that impoverished laborers, but he was afraid of the consequences of their politicization' (p. 194). Chapter 6 focuses on Wordsworth's relation with the poet Ebenezer Elliott, whose *Corn Law Rhymes* helped bring 'the radical Wordsworth out of the closet' (p. 208), albeit with unfortunately little attention to how Wordsworth's relatively politicised poetry was received, as such focus may have more clearly highlighted the extent to which these poems were received as a departure.

Part IV, 'Late Genres' (pp. 214-287), covers Wordsworth's late sonnets and evening poems in relation to social issues, largely religion. This provides a useful category to consider Wordsworth's hundreds of sonnets in this period, mining their tensions to suggest that the ostensibly orthodox Wordsworth could still be considered 'at best a maverick churchman' (p. 218). Chapter 8 reads the *Evening Voluptuaries* in sequence, arguing for their status as great poems of old age and truly profound meditations, at their best 'innovative, thought-provoking, moving' (p. 287). *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1815-1845*, is a major study which succeeds admirably in revealing a later Wordsworth 'surprisingly various' (p. 7) in his work.

Fulford's articles expand upon facets of his thesis. 'Wordsworth Elegizing the Lyrical Ballad in the 1830s and 1840s' (*SeL* 59 [2019]: 787-812) presents Wordsworth's elegiac poetry as marked by two major shifts from 1805 and the mid-1830s onward (pp. 789-90), and treats three late poems as 'neglected achievements' (p. 791). Again canvassing the terrain of the *Evening Voluptuaries* and giving more space to 1845's 'Forth from a Jutting Ridge', Fulford argues that Wordsworth's triumph in these works is 'a less solipsistic response to grief' (p. 809) than predecessors like Charlotte Smith and contemporaries such as Alfred Tennyson, reworking elegy as loco-descriptive poetry and allowing it to again take up its ethical task.

'Generic Mixing in Wordsworth's "Elegiac Musings in the Grounds of Coleorton Hall, the Seat of the Late G. H. Beaumont, Bart"' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 541-555) analyses a single 1830 poem to consider the question of how Wordsworth's memorial writing changed with time and his accumulation of losses, becoming more allusive and communal. He argues again for a Wordsworth less inclined to the egotistical, seeing his late elegy-epitaphs to contemporaries such as Robert Southey and Charles Lamb as written 'for the sake of communal consolation and continuity' rather than a poet looking 'into his own mind' to enshrine the spirit of the past (p. 553).

Finally, 'Representing Dementia in Wordsworth's Late Memorials' (EiC 69 [2019] 282-308) sees Wordsworth rising to the poetic challenges raised by the dementia of family (most notably Dorothy) and friends and 'using all his technical resources to speak of matters he found bewildering, painful, and embarrassing, without sentimentality, condescension, or indignity' (p. 282). Fulford presents these poems as ones of 'genetic hybridity and formal mixing' (p. 282) and considers Wordsworth's difficulties in capturing his subjects while downplaying aspects which could offend social convention by suggesting unseemly 'deformity' (p. 290). Fulford surmises the poet's achievement as 'undoing the separation of epitaph and elegy' (p. 305), and his prodigious scholarship too can be seen as an attempt to undo too absolute a divide between early and late Wordsworth.

In addition to Fulford's essays, three other articles examined aspects of Wordsworth's later work. Li-Hsin Hsu's 'The Romance of Transportation in Wordsworth, Emerson, De Quincey, and Dickinson' (*R* 25 [2019] 45-57) considers literary responses to new technologies as 'distinct aesthetic experiences of modernity' (p. 46). Hsu reads Wordsworth's 1833 sonnet 'Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways' in relation to Emily Dickinson's 'I send Two Sunsets —', and describes Ralph Waldo Emerson's first experience of railways as mediated by a recent literary pilgrimage to Rydal Mount. Hsu's account continues into the 1840s, juxtaposing Emerson's visionary view of American technological promise against Wordsworth's growing regionalism and opposition to the Kendal and Windermere Railway. Her subtle analysis presents Wordsworth's ambivalences, and rather than simply juxtaposing national attitudes, argues that Emerson and Dickinson's enthusiasm for modernity was expressed in 'profoundly Wordsworthian' (p. 55) terms.

Ralph Pite's 'Wordsworth, The River Duddon, and John Dalton's 'Ultimate Particles' (*WC* 50 [2019] 180-201) re-evaluates 1820's sonnet sequence *The River Duddon* and argues that although the river itself was already a conventional subject for eighteenth-century sonnets, Wordsworth's sonnet sequence is more innovative. To this end, Pite examines potential influences, beginning with Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and finding a more surprising source in the works of chemical philosopher John Dalton, Although Pite concedes no definitive evidence survives to show Wordsworth directly knew Dalton or his work (p. 182), his analysis adeptly combines exploration of early-nineteenth century science with careful study of Wordsworth's poetic forms and structures, seeing the sonnet sequence 'particularly in Wordsworth's employment of it' as emphasizing 'separation between parts, approaching a kind

of atomism.' (p. 189) Pite's conclusion finds a unity in Wordsworth's 'sense of the nation', his grasp of history and of individual lives, each 'Daltonian and particulate' (p. 196).

Jakob Risinger's 'Wordsworth's Water Power' (*WC* 50 [2019] 202-18) presents another historical context for the *River Duddon* sequence. Reaching back to *The Prelude* and its many references to power (p. 203), Risinger argues that Wordsworth is deeply engaged with hydropower, analogised with Shelley's fascination with steam engines (p. 206). *The River Duddon* appears pervaded by consciousness of 'the immense power of moving water' (p. 211), and at points rendering water power and poetic power 'effectively indistinguishable' (p. 214). While Risinger refrains from seeing this consciousness as undermining standard notions of Romantic poets as critics of 'dark satanic mills of industrial capitalism' (p. 214), he detects an anticipation of Emerson's pragmatic view of power. Having begun with an image of the young Wordsworth 'wading in a mill-race amid a power that would absorb and haunt him in later years' (p. 215), Risinger's ambitious conclusion moves to the end of Wordsworth's life, presenting a February 1850 anecdote of Henry David Thoreau's fascination with a miniature watermill as revealing Wordsworth and the author of *Walden* shared 'recognition that the only power that matters is private' (p. 217).

Moving back to Wordsworth's earlier career, three articles address his 1790s radicalism. Mark S. Cladis's 'Wordsworth: Second Nature and Democracy' (*PaL* 43 [2019] 89-106) presents a Romanticism which 'honored both tradition and liberty, both second nature and progressive democracy' (p. 90), and situates Wordsworth as a poet who understood democracy as a culture or ethos rather than a product of political institutions. Cladis's argument seeks to reclaim tradition and place from Burkean conservatism, although Cladis rightly notes Burke's own complexities. Against this background, Cladis argues against James Chandler's influential account of Wordsworth's Burkean turn in the late 1790s to suggest unlike his later thought, the early Wordsworth combines 'second nature and progressive politics' (p. 93). While largely attentive to the nuances of Wordsworth's changing positions, at points Cladis elides these shifts to present a singular ideal Wordsworth speaking to the present, where 'our hope and our duty, as Wordsworth understood it' lies in the 'cultivation of a robust cultural democracy' (p. 104).

Duncan Wu's 'Wordsworth and Robespierre' (*EiC* 69 [2019] 16-36) refrains from such an expansive view, opening with the contentious figure of twenty-five million Frenchmen in 'Letter to the Bishop of Llandalf' (p. 16) as derived from Robespierre's speeches. Wu traces their connections, seeing Robespierre as 'the informing presence' (p. 17) behind much of

Wordsworth's 'Letter', and studiously identifies suggestive commonalities of phrasing, such as Wordsworth's 'march of revolution' recalling Robespierre's "la marche de la révolution" (p. 20). Wu cautions against uncritical use of Wordsworth's account of Paris in *The Prelude*, and contextualises his revolutionary fervour of early 1793 as 'less unthinkable' (p. 27) than such support would appear by September 1793's decisive shift to Terror. Although focused on 1792-93, Wu's conclusion argues for a longer if more subtle influence, wittily noting of 'The Recluse's' utopian ideal that 'Only a former student of Robespierre could have invented a process so grotesquely overdetermined' (p. 28).

Venus Bargouth's 'Wordsworth's "The Baker's Cart"' (*Connotations* 28 [2019] 141-62) examines a 1796-97 fragment best known for its foreshadowing of a 'concern with the struggles of the rural poor' (p. 141) that would characterise several politicised 1798-1800 poems. Bargouth describes her paper as the first to 'explain the significance of this fragment in Wordsworth's early career as a poet of social critique who drew on the mental condition of the suffering lower orders' (pp. 141-42) in order to cultivate sympathy and implicitly demand reform. Her work moves confidently across a series of contexts, from the protest poetry of 'Salisbury Plain' to 1790s magazine poems to Burkean ideas of sympathy. Bargouth also gives emphasis to its unfinished state and finds interpretative meaning in an unresolved attitude to suffering, presented as a further statement of *The Borderers*' reminder that 'suffering is permanent, obscure and dark' (cited 159).

Eight articles focused on *The Prelude*. Brian Bates' 'Wordsworth & the Sonnet as Epic Prelude: A Response to Stephen Fallen and Henry Weinfeld' (*Connotations* 28 [2019] 235-249) comments on two articles from the 2016/17 issue of *Connotations* and focuses on the Wordsworthian sonnet, seeking to 'spotlight how central blank verse sonnet making was for W's thinking and development as an epic poet' (p. 236). Bates reads three sonnets, one each from Books I, V, and XIII, and emphasises the form's flexibility in Wordsworth's hands. This selection in turn informs his closing argument that the sonnet serves 'as an epic prelude, interlude and postlude' which speaks to our relationship with the natural world and 'prophesies our collective liberation of mind and union of spirit' (p. 244), in effect seeing the three sonnets as an epic in miniature.

Mark J. Bruhn's 'The Prelude, 1794' (*WC* 50 [2019] 370-388) follows his 2018 monograph *Wordsworth Before Coleridge: The Growth of the Poet's Philosophical Mind, 1785-1797* to argue against the 'frequently retailed developmental story' (p. 371) of a decisive

1798 Coleridge-influenced turn to philosophical reflection. Here, he re-examines 1794 as a pivotal year which helped make *The Prelude* possible. Bruhn sharply challenges standard accounts of Wordsworth's influences, downplaying William Godwin's 'dispassionate political reasonings' (p. 374) to suggest Scottish common-sense philosopher Dugald Stewart as a more likely source. Bruhn draws upon intriguing parallels between Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* and Wordsworth's correspondence for his abortive journal *The Philanthropist* to present 1794 as exhibiting 'profound reorientations' (p. 386) in Wordsworth's poetry and politics which would fundamentally influence the philosophical poetry to come. Although Bruhn's analysis is unfortunately monocausal in its focus on 'a single inspiring source' (p. 386), he invites further study into the growth of Wordsworth's mind.

Similarly challenging revisionary work appears in Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz's "'Rapt Auditors!' Burke and the Revision of Rhetorical Violence in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*" (*ERR* 30 [2019] 297-306). This article re-examines Wordsworth's use of Edmund Burke, arguing against James Chandler's 1984 *Wordsworth's Second Nature* that Wordsworth's 1850 apostrophe to Burke is not simply an emblem of a conservative turn but rather forms 'an epochal meditation in miniature on the intertwined histories of the concepts of rhetoric, politics, and poetry.' (pp. 297-298). Hoffman-Schwartz's analysis conveys the strangeness of Wordsworth's imagery, considering his depiction of Burke-as-oak as leaning towards the grotesque (p. 304), if lamentably without considering Burke's own use of the 'British oak' in *Reflections upon the Revolution in France* [1792].

Joel Faflak's 'Feeling as Hyperobject in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*', published in *Romanticism and Speculative Realism* (pp. 55-73) participates in a broader project of 'rethinking feeling in romanticism as a complex matrix of representational and cognitive possibilities' (p. 55), with feeling and thinking more interrelated than once thought. Focusing largely on the 1798-99 two-book *Prelude*, his densely theoretical account draws upon Bruno Latour and Timothy Morton to argue that rather than being a therapeutic text as famously recollected by John Stuart Mill, the *Prelude* presents feeling as a 'foreign territory' (p. 59). Although Faflak occasionally strains to express his argument, at one point describing 'Wordsworth's struggle with the thingy-ness of feeling itself' (p. 67), he connects Wordsworthian dispossession with contemporary ecocritical thought.

Toshiaki Komura's 'Theorizing Elegaic Consolation as a Transitional Object: The Arab Dream in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*' (*ERR* 30 [2019]: 25-41) sees Book 5's Arab Dream

as a key source for Wordsworth's 'formulation and critique' (p. 25) of consolation. Through reading the episode and its perishing texts, Komura argues that Wordsworthian consolation hinges on a mechanism of 'fiction-believing' (p. 26), a fragile combination of belief and disbelief which differs from conventional Romantic ideas of a striving for textual afterlife and instead 'gains its sublimity precisely from its temporary and ephemeral nature' (p. 26). His study presents the episode as the only non-plural use of 'consolation' across *The Prelude*, a poem which in its awareness of multiplicity and ephemerality destroys 'consolatory fictions' (p. 38) while celebrating the mind's cognitive functioning.

Aby surveying the grounds of *The Prelude*'s gibbet mast on the moor episode, Bernadette Guthrie's 'The Base on Which Thy Greatness Stands': Self-Fashioning and the Grounds of the Past in *The Prelude*' (*ERR* 30 [2019] 181-197) argues the Wordsworthian self is 'constructed on something that is not so much absent as it is unencounterable' (p. 182). Guthrie views the gibbet as sign of an old superstition refusing to give up the ghost (p. 182), and reads Wordsworth's revisions of this passage across his 1805 and 1850 editions as showing that 'the past ironically becomes more visible as it becomes more illegible' (p. 183).

Pasquale S. Toscano's 'A Parliament of Monsters': Genre, Disability, and the Revival of Epic Ability in Wordsworth's *Prelude* (*DSQ* 39.4 [2019]: n.p) addresses Wordsworth's shifting representation of disability. Juxtaposing criticism which hailed Wordsworth's early depictions of the 'epistemological resources of non-normative embodiment' against Stuart Curran's judgment of *The Prelude*'s harsh view of disability as 'demonic', Toscano argues that the contrast arises from a change in genre. The move from ballad to epic is presented as superimposing 'ready-made battle-lines' between a virile hero and 'the sluggishly-monstrous, aberrant creatures who stand in his way', especially visible in Book 7's account of London. Toscano's fascinating close reading is attentive to Wordsworth's echoes and repetitions, presenting a poet more indebted to epic's 'generic conventions' than once assumed, and in its thoughtful conclusion expresses the ethical challenge of exposing limited definitions of heroism in order to uncover 'corresponding ableist associations' that still linger.

Kathleen Lundeen's 'Wordsworth's Despotic Eye' (*PCP* 54 [2019] 252-272) writes of *The Prelude* as an exploration of sight's complexities, and asks 'When we see the world through the medium of art, does that enable or subvert the moral witnessing of crises?' (p. 253). Lundeen argues that the poem broadly emerges as a 'postmodern experiment' on if existence can be known free of sight's filters and whether it is a worthy aspiration, the dilemma James Joyce's

Ulysses once referred to as the 'ineluctable modality of the visible.' Through careful readings of Wordsworth's renderings of London and Paris, she posits the poem as presenting two kinds of sight: an aestheticising version which 'transmutes people and events into images' (p. 269) and avoids responding to actual suffering, and a more challenging mode through which the poet invites his readers to 'look through the eye rather than with it and, thereby, engage in true moral witnessing' (p. 269)

Katherine E. Blake's 'Urban Burial Reform in William Wordsworth's 'Village Churchyard' (NCL 74 [2019] 279-304) reads Wordsworth's *Essays Upon Epitaphs* as revealing 'crucial insights into cultural beliefs about death and memorialization in their moment' (p. 279) and providing insight into Wordsworthian 'class politics' (p. 282). Blake's study is one of reception, situating the *Essays* within a broader moment leading to the 1840s urban reforms of Edwin Chadwick, who by incorporating Wordsworthian passages into his 1843 *Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns*, reappropriates Wordsworth's text as not simply 'a pastoral vision' but as 'a full-throated endorsement of a national cemetery' (p. 299). Her conclusion leaves open the possibility of further research to this end, and argues that Wordsworth's fluidity as a writer at once enabled him to 'outlast the structures and conceptions he represented' and be wrapped into 'difficult and troubling legacies far beyond the scope of his work.' (pp. 303-04).

Mariam Wassif's 'Wordsworth's "Poisoned Vestments": Classical Rhetoric and Material Culture in the Poetry and Prose', (PQ 98 [2019] 363-388) places the *Essays Upon Epitaphs* in broader rhetorical context, arguing that Wordsworth lived and wrote in an 'epoch of political and commercial revolutions' which 'saw change occurring more rapidly and becoming perceptible' in changing fashion (p. 364). Wassif's expansive study sees Wordsworth's image of the poisoned vestment as a sign of 'soulless modernity' (p. 370), and presents passages from Wordsworth's account of Cambridge in *The Prelude* as indicative of his 'heightened sense of time and of its rapid passing' (p. 372). Befitting a piece which ranges in historical contexts from Renaissance poetry to ancient rhetoric, Wassif concludes by seeing Wordsworth's rhetorical gesture as one that sweeps across time, adapting 'an ancient figure to the pressing concerns of modernity' (p. 383).

Adam Potkay's 'Wordsworth's Hope' (WC 50 [2019] 265-89) argues against M.H. Abrams's classic idea of Romantic naturalized hopes to find Wordsworth's view 'not in the end very different from Augustine and Boethius, Cowley and Crashaw' (p. 265), and increasingly

severe towards worldly aspirations. Potkay provides short accounts of 'The Idiot Boy' and 'The Mad Mother', seeing the late 1790s Wordsworth as expressing domestic hopes while finding broader national or European ones more vexing. He sees 1805 as a turning point, with John Wordsworth's death leading to his brother's hopes becoming 'unequivocally orthodox' (p. 282). Potkay's most compelling passages examine Christian hope in Wordsworth's later poetry, visible in his new works and in his revisions of *The Prelude* and other poems (p. 285). Through his reading of Wordsworth 'encrusting' (p. 284) orthodoxy over once more ambiguous passages, Potkay stresses the conceptual potential of his earlier less determinate notion, seeing an 'open-ended and irresolutely theological' (p. 286) idea of hope as perhaps Wordsworth's greatest conceptual contribution to Romanticism.

Angus Ledingham's 'Wordsworth's Ostentatious Neutrality' (*EiR* 26 [2019]: 19-39) presents a poet who even in the *Lyrical Ballads* is attracted to 'morally neutral stances' (p. 19) and challenges readers to reconcile neutralised words with his 'avowed preoccupation with ethics' (p. 20). Ledingham's essay considers questions of textual meaning on the level of the individual word with sensitivity and nuance, suggesting the difficulties and potential of maintaining such a stance in the 1790s. His discussion of Wordsworthian 'superstition' against the background of Godwin and Priestley's more didactic definitions is instructive to this end, with 'Wordsworth's neutral "superstitious"' seen as illustrating 'particularly vividly the pressures to which neutrality was subject and to which it was perhaps also a response' (p. 38).

The emotional register of Wordsworth studies in 2019 extended to a monograph on his mirthful moments, Matthew Bevis's *Wordsworth's Fun*. The author of 2013's *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction*, Bevis challenges ideas of humourlessness to argue that Wordsworth's feeling for comedy is somewhere between central and peripheral, emerging in poetry 'driven by a need to *have* pleasure as well as by a wish to make sense of it, and that pleasure is often felt as paradoxical, riddling, solitary' (p. 3). Bevis concentrates on Wordsworth's poetry to the 1805 *Prelude*, with leisurely-paced close readings of works from 'I wandered Lonely as a Cloud' to 'To Joanna' finding passages of laughter, pleasure, and indeed fun. *Wordsworth's Fun* highlights the fluidity of eighteenth-century definitions of humour, and shines in its attention to influence and reception, finding something more than mere philistinism in the well-known story of many early readers of *Lyrical Ballads* laughing at what they read, hinting that perhaps his 'detractors were picking up on something in the poetry that later supporters have tended to downplay, or excuse, or deny' (p. 9). Carefully qualified in its conclusions and erudite in its studies of textual

influence, Bevis's monograph is a rewarding work of defamiliarization, presenting a poet whose early work displays a 'strange fusion of seriousness and levity' (p. 21), and reminds us of what is potentially lost if feeling Wordsworth is a poet we 'know too well' (p. 16).

Mark Sandy's "Strength in What Remains Behind': Wordsworth and the Question of Ageing' (*R* 25 [2019] 261-270) argues for Wordsworth as deeply engaged with 'the aged and aging' (p. 261), seeing this concern as operating concurrently with his 'Rousseauvian investment in child-like modes of consciousness' (p. 262). Sandy thankfully refrains from a strict dichotomy of age and youth, instead emphasising 'a series of subtle, shifting, and contradictory interactions between states of youth and old age' (p. 262). His analysis covers early poems such as 'The Discharged Soldier', 'Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman', and 'Michael', and although his relatively narrow focus is understandable, Sandy's lack of breadth leaves sweeping statements such as 'invariably, Wordsworth's representations of the elderly are doubles of their youthful counterparts, readers, and narrators' (p. 269) open to question.

Tess Somervell's 'Wordsworth and the Deluge' (*SiR* 58 [2019]: 183-208) investigates Wordsworth's views on the diluvian. She critiques views of Wordsworth's floods as 'negative images of revolution or visions of apocalypse', instead seeking 'a more optimistic reading' (p. 186). This relative optimism is found in the Deluge's potential to span cultures, which even in Wordsworth's most conservative moments could still highlight cultural 'continuities as well as differences' (p. 197). Somervell assuredly incorporates texts from *Descriptive Sketches* to *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* and numerous contexts from contemporary poems such as Smith's *Beachy Head* to Alexander von Humboldt's scientific expeditions. While noting Wordsworth's ambiguities, she sees his idea of the Deluge as a model to imagine 'how the sea might traverse and overcome national, geographical, and temporal boundaries to transport news, people, objects, and ideas', and a hauntingly intermittent presence in his work. (p. 205).

Three articles read Wordsworth through what may be defined as a philosophic lens. Charles J. Rzepka's 'Against Expressivism: Wordsworth's Cyberpoetics' (*WC* 50 [2019]: 389-412) studies Wordsworth's expressivism and the *Lyrical Ballads* through the 'language of cybernetics' (p. 405), finding significance in Wordsworth's experiments, especially against a more expansive conception of eighteenth-century experiment as 'the action of trying anything, or putting it to proof; a test, trial' (p. 392). Rzepka provides interesting background on eighteenth-century science, and sees Wordsworth's famed definition of poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings as beautifully succinct yet unclear and conceptually

flawed. Unfortunately, Rzepka's own prose falls into occasionally awkward computing metaphors, as in a statement that the 'readers of *Lyrical Ballads* must undergo a software update' (p. 405), and while proclaiming that cybernetics help reveal Wordsworth's aims in *Lyrical Ballads* 'in an entirely new light' (p. 406), his closing section presents an idea of communicative models closely analogous to already familiar eighteenth-century theories of sympathetic projection.

Focusing on pedagogical connections, Duncan Driver's, 'Wordsworth's 'We Are Seven': Reflections on the Secondary English Classroom' (*ChE* 26 [2019] 77-88) argues Wordsworth's initial extended-dash is an 'object lesson' (p. 78) in adding meaning through reduction, paralleling a good lesson's 'anticipatory set' (p. 81) as both calming and intriguing. Driver considers the rhetorical failures of Wordsworth's narrator as a reminder for teachers to encourage 'expanded ways of thinking and being' (p. 87) rather than closing down creativity.

Jakko Toikkanen's 'Intermedial Experience and Ekphrasis in Wordsworth's 'Slumber' (*PAnS* 17 [2019] 107-24) divides previous responses to 'A slumber did my spirit seal' into 'shock' and 'anti-shock' readings, and seeks a potential unifying third response in the 'concept of intermedial experience and the rhetorical device of ekphrasis' (p. 109). Toikkanen examines modes of interpretation to argue that while the reading self conventionally 'reduces experience to an interpretive position' (p. 110), the empty space of the stanza-break in 'A slumber' simultaneously maintains and disrupts a 'sense of subjective closure' (p. 110). Toikkanen places especial emphasis on Paul de Man and Richard Adelman's readings, before a conclusion of productive paradoxes, seeing the poem as locked in a diurnal course in which the read turns into the seen and back again, its ongoing shock in effect 'the reader's intermedial experience of being unable to maintain a sense of interpretive stability and subjective closure except through comforting illusion or the premonition of death' (p. 121).

2019 again showed strong interest in ecocritical studies of Wordsworth's poetry, with three articles and a book chapter on this subject. James Engell's 'Wordsworth's Earth, Nature, Strength' (*WC* 50 [2019] 166-79) argues that his oeuvre reveals 'a consistent, conscious, and profound distinction' (p. 167) between nature and earth. The two are not entirely separate, with Engell studying *The Prelude*, the *Intimations Ode* and other poems to propose that Wordsworth presents a 'new, resonant depiction of earth and its elements' because 'he treats them as allied with the generative and creative powers' (p. 168) of nature and the philosophical mind. This relationship hinges upon the contrast of natural endurance and permanence, briefly analysing

'Westminster Bridge's depiction of a slumbering city where earthly things "are not to be confused with nature, and each house, seemingly laid asleep, will eventually become a ruined cottage" (p. 176). While it would have been welcome for this thesis to be more fully considered in the light of Wordsworth's other treatments of this theme ('A slumber did my spirit seal' comes to mind), Engell's argument is nonetheless provocative.

Amelia Klein's 'The Poetics of Susceptibility, Wordsworth and Ecological Thought' (*SiR* 58 [2019] 105-28) avoids Engell's dichotomy to focus on Wordsworth's conception of nature, seen as so challenging that (unnamed) past critics depicted him abandoning nature rather than revising their own interpretations. Klein surmises her own view as a poetics of susceptibility, 'at once a form and an ethos of attentive receptivity to nature's otherness, indeed to otherness as such (pp. 107-08), which eschews a simplistic idea of ecological harmony to 'countenance the unknowability and otherness of the nonhuman with something approximating grace' (p. 109). Klein ranges from the canonical *Tintern Abbey* and its 'sense sublime' to unpublished fragments in the *Alfoxden Notebook* urgently asking why 'we with nature have no sympathy' (p. 113). Like Lundeen's 'Wordsworth's Despotism', Klein problematizes ideas of description too closely aligned with the visible as productive of a 'consumerist, exploitative mode' (p. 119) of interaction with others, and dismisses definitive statements of a single Wordsworthian 'nature' as arrogant. She finds stimulus for ecological thought in Wordsworth's distinctive faculty to 'movingly encounter and dramatize nature's resistance to description and explication' (p. 123), even as it remains unable to betray the heart that loves her.

Seth T. Reno and Crystie R. Deuter's 'Eco-Literary Tourism in Wordsworth Country', in *Literary Tourism and the British Isles: History, Imagination, and the Politics of Place* (pp. 93-117) combines reception studies and eco-criticism to examine eco-tourism of the Lake District and the particular notions of Wordsworth tourists hold. Their account confidently integrates eighteenth-century material and modern scholarship, reading Wordsworth's 'adoptions and adaptations' (p. 96) of eighteenth-century guidebooks in his early poetry, and then tracing the long history of eco-literary tourism in the Lakes. Wordsworth's call for preservation of the Lake District is shown as anticipated by notions of the picturesque, with Wordsworth's early works *An Evening Walk* and *The Vale of Esthwaite* poeticizing picturesque aesthetics (pp. 100-101). The chapter's second half helpfully summarises ecocritical thought on Wordsworth, moving from the popularity of his *Guide to the Lakes* to the oscillations of modern critical readings, from skeptical 1980s new historicist accounts to Jonathan Bates's landmark *Romantic Ecology* (p. 1991) to a

post-2010 third wave challenging ideological critique by 'recovering the scientific, medical, and philosophical valences of Romantic ecology' (p. 109). Reno and Deuter close with an enthusiastic view of modern eco-tourism, where visitors to Grasmere learn about Wordsworth through sophisticated perspectives that render him 'more complex and more authentic' (p. 110)

Reception remained an important theme in 2019's studies of Wordsworth, featuring prominently in a monograph and four articles. Katherine Bergren's *The Global Wordsworth: Romanticism Out of Place* argues for repurposing as mutually constitutive, describing its central writers Jamaica Kincaid, J.M. Coetzee, and Lydia Maria Child, not as 'mere receivers of Wordsworth but as his makers: it proposes we read them in order to understand him' (p. 2). In her brisk introduction, Bergren perceives Wordsworth's relative absence from the modern global turn in Romantic studies as obscuring Wordsworth's worldliness, as a poet who from 1805 to 1835 'increasingly envisions the local and the global as imbricated rather than opposed' (p. 11). Her monograph highlights *Wide Sargasso Sea's* reworking of *Jane Eyre* as a classical example of productive reinterpretation, and investigates how 'how such repurposings inspire interpretations of Wordsworth's poetry that have previously been unclear or invisible' (p. 9).

Chapter 1, 'The Global Routes of Daffodils' (pp. 23-50) introduces Bergren's basic structure of pairing key Wordsworthian texts with their interlocutors to discuss broader circulation and reception, although it is the only chapter to avoid a single central interpreter. Bergren discusses two textual groups, the first fascinatingly examining nineteenth-century textbooks and exams across the British Empire, and the second reading three Caribbean novels 'written in the wake of daffodils' (p. 24), in particular Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, a text in which 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' does not appear but instead lurks beneath its surface. Bergren is mindful of the inevitably selective nature of her groupings, but sees them as highlighting an inherent doubling in the 'local embeddedness' of Wordsworth's work: 'the specific places his writing represents and the specific places where others wrote it into new existences' (p. 23), placing daffodils in new locales.

Chapter 2, 'Landscape Pedagogy in J. M. Coetzee, *The Prelude*, and the Lucy Poems' (pp. 51-96), studies two Coetzee novels, the autobiographical *Boyhood* and 1999's *Disgrace*, arguing that 'returning to the Lucy poems after witnessing how they proliferate in Coetzee's depiction of the Eastern Cape changes how I interpret their representation of the natural landscape' (p. 55). Bergren connects Wordsworth's depiction of Cambridge with the pedagogical failings of *Disgrace's* lecturer David Lurie, considers his attempted transpositions of

Wordsworth to South Africa, and reads Lucy Lurie in parallel with Wordsworth's Lucy, now appearing as 'an otherworldly precursor' to a character 'whose relationship with the land is always also a relationship with the nation' (p. 87). Although Coetzee and Kincaid's adaptations of the Lucy poems had featured in Nicole Gervasio's 2018 article 'The Power of the Weak Signifier', Bergren's study delves more deeply into their connections rather than reading Lucy's adaptability as a product of her amorphousness.

Chapter 3, 'Globalizing England: Lydia Maria Child and *The Excursion*' (pp. 97-144) highlights *The Global Wordsworth's* chronological flexibility, studying nineteenth-century America while moving forward in Wordsworth's oeuvre to *The Excursion*. Victorian canonicity forms Bergren's point of departure, asking 'What did those readers like in a poem that we find so difficult to tolerate or even acknowledge today?' (p. 97) Her study engagingly examines the poem's rich American afterlife and Lydia Maria Child's use of Wordsworth in her abolitionist literature, in particular her creation of a 'politically potent global Wordsworth' (p. 99). Bergren also highlights how closer attention to American reception rewrites chronologies of English criticism, with Child's idea of Wordsworth's 'prescriptive moral value' predating Matthew Arnold's assertion of English poetry addressing 'how to live' by fifty years, and within a text 'recommending specific political action' (p. 112). Perhaps fittingly for a chapter so attuned to time, 2019 itself shows Bergren reading *The Excursion* through the shadow of Brexit as simultaneously upholding and undercutting an 'isolationist vision of England' (p. 101).

Chapter 4, 'Localism Unrooted: Jamaica Kincaid and the Guide to the Lakes' (pp. 145-182) returns to Jamaica Kincaid to help draw out an ecocritical reading of Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* as 'linking his localism not with his construction of the nation but rather with his awareness of Britain's colonial expansion' (p. 146). Kincaid's Caribbean context and experience of ecological imperialism are seen as formative, although Bergren's chapter is arguably her most diffuse, straining to incorporate the *Guide* and a broader account of 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' and its legacies. Fortunately more light is shed in her conclusion, closing in a well-expressed image of interdependence as both textual and technological: 'his writing is, in turn, indelibly shaped by technologies whose compression of the Anglophone world aided in his poetry's dissemination' (p. 188).

While Bergren's monograph examines the British colonial world, two book chapters focus upon Wordsworth's reception in China, and are complementary in their approach. Ting Guo's 'Nature and the Natural: Translating Wordsworth's 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' (pp.

1807/15) into Chinese', in *British Romanticism in Asia: The Reception, Translation, and Transformation of Romantic Literature in India and East Asia* (pp. 221-47), examines how Wordsworth's concept of nature is 'represented through translation and intersects with indigenous discourses on nature' (p. 222). Although noting previously overlooked 1940s versions, Guo focuses upon late twentieth and early twenty-first century iterations, including a rich period with nine separate translations between 1980 and 1995. Guo draws out the meaning of editorial decisions, and despite individual variations finds them commonly adapting Wordsworth's original poem to more closely fit 'the Chinese indigenous view of nature' (p. 233), a textual transformation made visible through Guo's interesting discussion of alterations in structure and tense, with particular attention given to Yang Deyu and Gu Zhengkun's translations of 1990 and 2004.

Ou Li's 'Two Chinese Wordsworths: The Reception of Wordsworth in Twentieth-Century China', in *Romantic Legacies: Transnational and Transdisciplinary Contexts* (pp. 287-303), provides a helpful overview which adapts MH Abrams's notion of 'two Wordsworths' to see a 'strange disassociation' between the radical preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, a source of inspiration for nationalist New Culture Movement leaders (an inspiration she covers in fascinating detail), and 'the poet who produced poems that looked traditionalist enough to be readily transplanted to an ancient foreign culture' (p. 287). Li sees Wordsworth as protean, his combination of radicalism and 'an almost mundane ordinariness and traditional ethics' (p. 294) leaving him eminently adaptable. She evokes competing views on Wordsworth, and traces the long influence of a post-war Communist reading which dismissed Wordsworth as a 'reactionary' (p. 287). While Li notes modern accounts have somewhat corrected this idea, she sees the Chinese Wordsworth as resembling an earlier conception of the 'Victorian sage whose canon is confined to the short lyrics and whose greatness is diminished by his deceptive simplicity' (p. 288). Li's thoughtful conclusion sees Chinese transformation of Wordsworth's poetry and poetics as an ongoing and even necessary process, 'whose modification constantly reshapes the original even in the process of renewing its life' (p. 300).

Two 2019 essays of contrasting scope examined Wordsworth's politicised reception within Britain. Kim Wheatley's '*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the Politics of Wordsworthian Feeling', published in *Politics and Emotions in Romantic Periodicals* (pp. 151-173), reads a 'succession of laudatory accounts' (p. 151) by John Wilson in *Blackwood's* from 1818 into the late 1820s to argue that while ostensibly glancing towards a separation

between politics and poetics, these accounts helped to solidify the magazine's 'nationalistic Toryism' (p. 152). Wheatley situates *Blackwood's* treatment of Wordsworth as initially written in defence of Francis Jeffrey's oft-cited *Edinburgh Magazine* attacks but moving towards a more systematic rewriting of Wordsworth's narrative of human affections. His narrative deftly details Wilson's encomiums to Wordsworth and his 'own beloved England' (p. 166) while reminding readers that as late as 1828, Wilson could criticise Wordsworth as insufficiently respectful to revealed religion, and adds useful context to the poet's post-Napoleonic reception.

John Strachan's 'Wordsworth among the Fascists' (*EiC* 69 [2019] 37-50) moves into the 1930s to examine Wordsworth's appeal to English fascists through material printed within newspapers supportive of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. Strachan's reading unveils Anti-Semitic invocations of Wordsworth's sonnet response to the prospect of French invasion, and confident assertions of Wordsworth's suitability as a far right icon, with a 1939 *Action* correspondent simply writing of 'William Wordsworth, National Socialist' (pp. 38-39). Although Strachan's individual examples are striking and at times disturbing, his broader argument is weakened by a concluding judgment that as a central pillar of English culture, Wordsworth's influence simply spanned the 1930s political spectrum. This statement occludes the intriguing question Strachan raises of *why* Wordsworth could strongly appeal to fascist readers of the time in favour of a more anodyne statement of his canonicity.

Finally, two articles addressed the intricacies of editing and republishing Wordsworth's oeuvre. Written by an elder statesman of the field (and editor of the *Cornell Wordsworth's* edition of the Salisbury Plains poems), Stephen Gill's 'Wordsworth and His Editors' (*EiC* 69 [2019] 1-15) maps the terrain covered by modern editors, focusing on disputes over 'matters of principle and practice', their role in creating a 'field of enquiry' (p. 2), and raises questions of how to serve contemporary readers. Gill's study is rooted in an account of Wordsworth's own editorial practices, traced across his collected works and highlighting his strident hatred for 'chronological order as a publishing principle' (p. 7). Gill pays due homage to the *Cornell Wordsworth* while questioning aspects of its approach, noting the effects of textual exclusions such as the 'Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes', and seeing some intended Wordsworthian juxtapositions as now less discernible to modern readers. His engaging survey closes by imagining the ideal editorial principles to be followed by a hypothetical new digital edition able to highlight authorial intention and the 'preservation of the artifact through the manner of its representation', a collection both self-reflexive and all-encompassing.(p. 15).

Like Gill, Michael Pickard's 'The Textual Future of Wordsworth's Classification of his Poems' (*SiR* 58 [2019] 285-307) seeks to complicate ideas of chronological arrangements as 'self-transparent' (p. 285) by exposing their history in order to understand our own editorial assumptions and 'conduct a needed reconsideration of Wordsworth's own interpretive schema' (pp. 286?) Pickard more fully details Wordsworth's nineteenth-century editions, noting that his own thematic arrangement was the only approved structure in use between 1815 and the first scholarly edition of 1882. Pickard also examines early-twentieth century editorial decisions, describing Ernest de Selincourt's publication of Wordsworth's working manuscripts and his influential judgment of the 1805 *Prelude* as 'the frankest and most direct' expression of Wordsworth's voice. After describing the *Cornell Wordsworth's* innovations and presenting the ongoing divides of modern scholarship through various published versions of Wordsworth's manuscript 'The Ruined Cottage', Pickard appeals to the once-overlooked significance of Wordsworth's editorial intentions, urging future editors to be aware of the historicised judgments underlying Wordsworth's many iterations, a variety itself well on display on the rich breadth of Wordsworthian scholarship in 2019.

We conclude our survey of 2019 with Ann Yearsley, who was the subject of a single essay in 2019. Terry Griner's 'Ann Yearsley and Thomas Beddoes: Friendship and Pneumatic Medicine in Hotwell's' (*EiR* 26 [2019] 159-175) builds upon modern studies of Romantic sociability and science to situate Yearsley's poetry in the context of Bristol's scientific culture as 'poetic interventions in the era's politicized scientific debates' (p. 160). Griner's consistently engaging article begins by reading 'Clifton Hill, Written in 1785', as a challenge to ideas of sickly delicacy, before turning to Yearsley's 1790s pneumatic sonnets as quietly appropriating 'features of radical discourse' (p. 173) and helping open 'relational space for women' (p. 174) in fields then traditionally considered masculine.

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