

Year's Work in English Studies 2018: Romantic Poetry

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Text

Romantic Poetry and Poets in General

The last 40 years have seen a significant expansion of Romantic studies, as new authors, genres and national traditions have entered the scholarly consciousness. Julia Wright takes stock of these developments in 'Irish Romanticism: "Whence and What are Ye?"' (*ERR* 28[2017] 421-30). Wright argues that studies of Romanticism have been dominated by English practices, as English practices have dominated much else in world civilisation over 'most of the last millenium' (!) (p. 425). This claim may be somewhat overstated, but her description of a different Romantic chronology, in which that *annus mirabilis* of Irish literature, 1811, is at the centre, is intriguing and well argued. We still have a way to go, she suggests, before our university curricula offer students a truly global Romantic poetry.

The opening essay in this year's volume of *Studies in Romanticism* aims to critique another limitation of academic Romanticism. 'Black Romanticism: A Manifesto' (*SiR*, 56[2017] 3-14) is Paul Youngquist's call for a new kind of academic activism: 'what *can* we do?' (p. 3), he asks, having sketched the brutal context of black deaths in the contemporary U.S.A. What Romanticists can offer, he argues, is a radical critique of 'the ethnoclass Man' (p. 5). Romantic literature itself is implicated in the creation of this monolithic concept that rules out alternative 'genres of the human' (*ibid.*). Through a reading of 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture' [1803], Youngquist sets out to demonstrate how the 'weapons' and 'strategies' of 'black Romanticism' (p. 14) can be used to stage a radical critique of Romantic poetry's implicit racial biases.

Pam Perkins takes a practical approach to widening the scholarship in "'She has her ladies too": Women and Scottish Periodical Culture in *Blackwood's* Early Years' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 253-61). Women were essential to *Maga's* development, both as subjects of the essays—e.g. Mary Shelley and Germaine de Staël—and as writers in its pages—e.g. Felicia Hemans and

Anne Grant. In this detailed essay, Perkins demonstrates how complex were the magazine's engagements with women writers and readers.

A series of articles in 2017 continued the old tradition of interpreting canonical Romantic poets within their literary coterie. Madeleine Callaghan offers a piece on 'Byron and Shelley's Poetry of 1816' (*WC* 48 [2017] 26-32). This was a crucial year in both poets' development, as they met, dissented, and found fertile soil in their differences. Shelley found a new 'artistic direction center[ed] on transforming experience into poetry' (p. 26), while Byron clarified his sense of 'the singularity of the mind which experiences' (p. 29). For Callaghan, these two friends model a particular kind of literary coterie, united in creative disagreement rather than common purpose.

Byron was also capable of artistic agreement with his friends, as Justin Tonra shows in 'Pagan Angles and a Moral Law: Byron and Moore's Blasphemous Publications' (*ERR* 28 [2017] 789-811). Since Jeffrey Vail's pathbreaking study of *The Literary Relationship of Lord Byron and Thomas Moore* [JHUP, 2001], scholars have paid increasing attention to the close, creative and harmonious partnership of Byron and Moore. Tonra offers a close comparison of Moore's *Loves of the Angels* [1822] and Byron's *Cain* [1821], supplementing Vail's analysis of *Loves* with Byron's *Heaven and Earth* [1821]. Tonra analyses his examples in their legal and publishing context. As poets who pushed the bounds of taste, Moore and Byron were enmeshed in the same 'complex matrix of legal and commercial perspectives,' a matrix that 'b[ore] very directly on questions of authorship and notions of authorial identity, autonomy, and stability' (p. 798). To evade the guardians of good taste, they had to ceaselessly reinvent themselves.

Tim Fulford focuses on the other great canonical literary coterie in 'Southey's *Christabel*; Coleridge's *Thalaba*' (*ERR* 28[2017] 659-77). This fine article is not an essay, but rather an edition of an obscure manuscript of Robert Southey's. It turns out that in 1800, Southey wrote a few hundred lines of verse responding to Coleridge's 'Christabel' [1797, 1800], lines he intended for *Thalaba* [1801]. Fulford reproduces the lines, carefully explicates their textual history, and then concludes with a reflection on Southey and Coleridge's creative partnership. Though their friendship ebbed and flowed, Southey and Coleridge retained a shared purpose of 'metrical innovation' (p. 670). Fulford's carefully analyses this project in their letters and poems, and offers a fresh interpretation of the Lake School's poetic theory, which is so often interpreted in terms of Wordsworth's call for the democratisation of poetic diction in *Lyrical Ballads* [1798].

Fulford's concern with prosody continues in the next two articles, both of which focus on the creativity of Romantic rhyme. In 'Romantic Rhyme and the Airs that Stray' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 111-22), Oliver Clarkson and Andrew Hodgson uncover the Romantic's 'special enthusiasm for rhyme' (p. 111). They consider a whole host of examples from numerous poets, in each case demonstrating that Romantic poets used rhyme in an inventive, questioning, and spontaneous manner. Michael O'Neill makes fundamentally similar arguments in the following essay of the issue, 'Gleams and Dreams: Reflections on Romantic Rhyme' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 123-32). He begins wittily with an analysis of some poems that rhyme 'gleam' with 'dream' in what he claims is a 'quintessentially Romantic' way. His theme is the 'awryness' of

Romantic rhyme, particularly in Wordsworth (p. 129). Like Clarkson and Hodgson, he affirms the imaginative and inventive aspects of Romantic rhyme. By warping the traditional forms of English verse, Romantic poets explored both the 'comforts' and 'discomforts' offered by the structuring force of rhyme (p. 129).

Science and literature remained a fruitful interdisciplinary paradigm in 2017, as the final three articles of this section testify. In 'Linnaeus's Botanical Clocks: Chronobiological Mechanisms in the Scientific Poetry of Erasmus Darwin, Charlotte Smith, and Felicia Hemans' (*SiR*, 56[2017] 223-52), Melissa Bailes analyses the period's wide-ranging debate over the 'movements, sentiency, and timekeeping mechanisms' of plants (p. 224). Her three poets engaged with the debate in different ways. Erasmus Darwin is often seen as a 'mechanical' poet, but Bailes shows that in *The Loves of the Plants* [1789], he actually 'struggles to harmonize mechanism and animism' (p. 228). Charlotte Smith, by contrast, draws a clear distinction between the 'artificial' realm of clocks and chimes, and the 'natural' realm of flowers and the seasons (pp. 236-8). Writing some decades later, Felicia Hemans addressed a different context, in which science and poetry were separating into different spheres. Her flower-poetry was more obviously mythical and religious (p. 244).

Ivan Orvitz moves the focus from science to technology in 'Fancy's Eye: Poetic Vision and the Romantic Air Balloon' (*SiR* 56[2017] 253-284). He sees the air balloon as a 'technology of fancy' (p. 255). It was an invention that 'facilitated fancy's signature movement: embodied wandering' (p. 257). By drawing together a wide range of examples—anonymous newspaper poets, canonical writers like Keats, lesser known ones like Philip Freneau and Mark Alcock, and philosophers like Beattie, Coleridge, and Duff—Orvitz is able to show how the advent of the balloon changed what Romantic writers understood fancy to be. While the poets lauded the balloon as a material means of taking a 'flight of fancy', actual balloonists had to confront the 'hyperrealism' of the world seen from the sky (p. 270).

Marcus Tomalin offers 2017's final major reflection on Romantic science and poetry in "'An Invaluable Acquisition": Sandglasses in Romantic Literature' (*ERR* 28[2017] 729-49). The sandglass was of course an old technology by the time the Romantics were writing, but it remained a potent image of time. This is partly because, as Tomalin argues, the newer technology of the clock had yet to homogenise time in European society (p. 733). Tomalin brings into sharp relief the hourglass's connotations of 'anachronism' (p. 732) and 'atomism' (pp. 733, 738) in the period, considering quite a dazzling array of different poets in the process.

There were three major articles in 2017 on the poetic response to Waterloo. In 'First as Farce, then as Tragedy: Waterloo in British Song' (*SiR* 56[2017] 341-359), Oskar Cox Jensen shows how music, poetry, and politics can intertwine in subtle and unexpected ways. He begins with a *bravura* analysis of a series of texts that juxtapose waltzing and the battle of Waterloo, culminating in his analysis of Robert Shorter's 'plebeian response' to the event, 'On Seeing in a List of New Music, *The Waterloo Waltz*' [1817]. He then takes the reader on a tour of popular song in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, revealing how the different traditions of patrician and

plebeian music remembered the conflict. The article is supplemented by free online recordings of more than 50 such songs, available from the author's soundcloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/napoleonandbritishsong>.

Like Jensen, Jeffrey Cox also focuses on popular culture in 'From Pantomime to Poetry: Wordsworth, Byron, and Harlequin Read Waterloo' (*SiR*[2017] 56 321-40). Both popular and literary writers, he argues, struggled with the same question in the wake of the battle: how to represent such a sublime scene? How to honour the fallen while celebrating the victory? In his pantomimes on the topic, Charles Dibdin 'seem[ed] to want to draw attention to the difficulties in dramatizing monumental historical events like Waterloo' (p. 329). Cox shows how this tension also runs through Wordsworth and Byron's poetry. In his 'Thanksgiving Ode' volume (1816), Wordsworth struggles to determine 'what sort of poet' could adequately address the event (p. 330). Byron turns Wordsworth's anxiety on its head in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III* [1816]. He wallows in the grubby and difficult realities of the battle in a way that Dibdin and Wordsworth find difficult, but 'urg[es] resistance' and the preservation of revolutionary hopes (p. 337).

The final Waterloo essay for 2017 is Stuart Andrews' 'Pilgrimage to Waterloo: Lake Poets and the Duke' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 53-61). The essay is a fine work of careful scholarship. Combing through letters, articles and poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, Andrews reveals the shifting and complex opinions the three poets held towards the Duke of Wellington. They were all appalled by the Convention of Cintra, not so much because of the French escape, as because it tarnished the noble cause of Spanish liberty. But by the 1820s, looking back on Waterloo, all three of the Lakers had turned Wellington into a hero.

Like Orvitz and Cox, Daniel White takes us off the beaten track of canonical verse in his essay on "The Slangwhangery of the Jargonists": Writing, Speech, and the Character of Romanticism' (*SiR* 56[2017] 453-478), though he does so in a different manner. Where Orvitz and Cox introduce a multitude of non-canonical authors into their essays, Cox focuses on how canonical figures Wordsworth and Hazlitt theorised the informal writing they encountered. 'Slang', he argues, 'reveals a meaningful gap ... between Romantic theory and practice' (p. 454). He uses 'The Gaberlunzie Man', a popular ballad frequently reprinted through the period, as a key example of a text where slang terms shimmer and crack, supporting radically opposed readings of the story. Cox then turns back to Wordsworth and Hazlitt, showing how they forestalled this disobedience of language by striving for a kind of middle style, what Wordsworth called the 'common' (p. 446), or Hazlitt called the 'familiar' (p. 469). This is one way they buttressed their claims to universality.

Nine monographs and edited collections were published in 2017 that considered Romantic poets or poetry in general. They demonstrate that historicism, women's writing, and critical theories of selfhood continue to dominate scholarship in Romantic poetry.

Romantic poetry was once seen as resolutely anti-urban, as a revolutionary and revolted response to the growth of the stinking metropolis. In recent years, however, scholars have discovered that Romantic poets actually responded to the city in a range of ways. In *Urbanization and English Romantic Poetry* [CUP, 2017], Simon Tedeschi sets out to synthesise and develop this rich vein of scholarship. He claims that in the eighteenth century, a 'dominant discourse' took hold, in which urbanisation was equated with progress; in the Romantic period, an 'alternative discourse' arose that questioned its assumptions (p. 17). Chapter 1 is a study of the earlier discourse, which for Tedeschi was exemplified by John Gay's *Trivia* [1716] and William Cowper's *The Task* [1785]. Gay's poem described a new moral code for the city, which amounted to 'the urbanisation of the gentry, and the gentrification of the urban' (pp. 27, 29, 32, 38). Cowper, by contrast, found the bustle of city life unbearable and promoted rural retirement instead. The final section of the chapter revisits the most canonical representations of the city in Romantic poetry, Blake's 'London' [1796] and the London episode from Wordsworth's *The Prelude* [1805].

The following four chapters present four different case studies. Chapter 2 traces the evolution of Coleridge's views on urbanisation from his Pantisocratic youth to his theological age. Coleridge's aim throughout his life was to find a space of autonomy in an increasingly busy modern world. Eventually he 'recasts autonomy as an epistemological or theological quality: ... One may live in the city, hold a job, and still write and read poetry' (p. 101). Chapter 3 revisits Wordsworth. Tedeschi argues that the city looms large even in Wordsworth's most pastoral poems. Urbanisation, for Wordsworth, is not merely a matter of city living—it betokens a fundamental change in the entire national mentality. Chapter 4 is a study of Percy Shelley, who criticised British urbanisation from a republican perspective. For him, the growth of cities was undermining Parliament's already suspect claim to represent the people as a whole. The final chapter considers Mary Robinson and Anna Barbauld together, as poets who saw urbanisation through feminist and political-economic lenses. Urbanisation betokened commercialisation, luxury and economic inequality, all of which threatened the morality of polite society and the harmony of the social order. In his conclusion, Tedeschi stresses once more the variety and complexity of Romantic responses to urbanisation, and bewails the way Romantic poetry has been turned into a 'fetish' in much modern writing on urban life (p. 213).

Debate has raged for hundreds of years over how fictional biographies ought to be. Should biographies idealise and entertain, or should they restrict themselves to documentation of fact? Are these aims indeed opposed? Is mere documentation in any way possible? With her collection, *Biographical Misrepresentations of British Women Writers: A Hall of Mirrors and the Long Nineteenth Century*, Brenda Ayres adds a new layer of empirical richness to these issues. As she explains in her introduction (pp. 1-16), the aim of the collection is 'to expose the distortions, gaps, inconsistencies, biases, contradictions, mistakes, misconceptions, and misappropriation of information on several key women writers ... [of] the long nineteenth century' (p. 4). Two of these writers are Romantic poets Laetitia Elizabeth Landon and Felicia Hemans.

In her essay on 'Laetitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838): Whose Poetess?' (pp. 93-110), Katherine Montwieler shows how a sophisticated poet can evade the biographer's gaze. Her opening pages show how approaches to Landon's life have transformed over the last two centuries. Her contemporaries were fascinated by her mysterious and potentially transgressive sexuality: 'If Landon's verse was fast and easy, so was she' (p. 94). When her work was rediscovered by feminists in the 1970s, Landon's life was analysed under a completely new paradigm. Victorian readers had fretted that the poet was immoral and unconventional. Now readers felt that she was in fact too 'willingly submissive to cultural codes in both her life and work' (p. 95). In the following discussion of Landon's life, Montwieler does a fine job of revealing that in fact Landon was more complex and changeable than either of these simple narratives suggests. Through a series of examples, she shows how Landon cannily deployed poetic and social conventions, shifting her pose to adapt to an altering cultural landscape. Landon is in fact so 'elusive', concludes Montwieler, that when we examine her life and work 'we see our own critical preoccupations more clearly than we see the ostensible subject herself' (p. 106).

Helen Luu takes a different approach in her essay, 'The After-lives of Felicia Hemans (1793-1835): Biographical Misconstructions' (pp. 111-128). She focuses primarily on two early biographies of her subject, Henry F. Chorley's series of expanding memoirs from 1835-6, and Harriet Hughes' beautiful one-volume *Life* of 1840. Luu demonstrates that Chorley was a sophisticated biographer, whose work is characterised by a 'tension between "history" and "character"' (p. 113), between the desire to explain Hemans' poetic, public persona and her private person, which could be wicked and wry. In the latter part of the essay, Luu shows how Hughes strove to present Hemans in a more conventional way. Where Chorley had striven to achieve an 'authentic' portrait of the poet (p. 115), Hughes strove for a 'correct' picture (p. 125), with all the connotations of moral rectitude the word implies.

In their immense, groundbreaking edited collection, *A History of Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry*, Jennifer Putzi and Alexandra Socarides set themselves the daunting task of 'narrating an emerging history of American poetry in which women writers play a vital role' (p. 3). What follows is an extraordinary collection of essays on almost every aspect of women's poetry in nineteenth-century America, from 1800-1900. Of interest to scholars of the Romantic period, the first section, '1800-1840, American Poesis and the National Imaginary', begins with Mary Louise Kete's sharp, insightful essay on the only two women 'of the millions [...] stolen from Africa and sold into slavery in British colonial America' to be 'remembered as poets' (p. 17), Lucy Terry Prince and Phillis Wheatley. Having beaten 'the odds by being remembered at all', Prince and Wheatley, in Kete's reckoning, pose 'an ongoing challenge to the ongoing project of tracing an African American literary tradition' (p. 17), resisting easy incorporation into developmental or foundational narratives of literary history. This challenge turns out to be an opportunity to reflect on the 'inherently hybrid and protean cultural formation' of the 'Black Atlantic', predating 'social formations, such as that of an American or African American national identity, that had not yet come into being' (p. 18), and associated questions of posthumous reputation, race, historicity, and canonical status. Tamara Harvey's essay, 'Before the Poetess: Women's Poetry in the Early Republic', wittily considers the distinct but related problem of women's status, authority, and

identity as poets through *The Massachusetts Magazine*'s 'embarrassing excess of Constantias', the much-coveted pseudonym of Sarah Wentworth Murray, who suddenly faced a 'prior claim' from Judith Sergeant Murray, a pile-up the magazine solved by adding an asterisk to Murray's 'Constantia*' (p. 37). Kerry Larson, meanwhile, explores the peculiar 'exultation of the medium' (p. 53) of poetry in 'The Passion for Poetry in Lydia Sigourney and Elizabeth Oakes Smith', the first of several essays on Sigourney, clearly a crucial figure. Aside from Michael C. Cohen's fascinating reappraisal of coterie and manuscript verse in 'Album Verse and the Poetics of Scribal Circulation', all other essays in this portion of the book deal with Sigourney in some way. Desirée Henderson's marvellous survey, 'The Friendship Elegy', examines the friendship elegies of Sigourney and others, 'a subgenre of the elegy that demonstrates how generic conventions could be leveraged to promote the status of women's relationships and women's writing' (p. 106); Elizabeth A. Petrino, in 'Presents of Mind: Lydia Sigourney, Gift Book Culture, and the Commodification of Poetry', finds Sigourney 'capitalized on the gift book's popularity by contributing to a wide variety and compiling at least seven volumes herself' (p. 88); and, finally, in 'Gendered Atlantic: Lydia Sigourney and Felicia Hemans', Gary Kelly explores the link between these two central women poets of the period, separated by the Atlantic. This is a crucial, expertly organised volume.

Marshall Brown takes the issue of self-identity in another direction in his contribution to *Inventing Agency* [Bloomsbury, 2017], edited by Claudia Brodsky and Eloy LaBrada. In 'I think, therefore I feel' (pp. 17-27), he wonders what the relationship is between thinking and being, consulting William Wordsworth, John Clare and John Keats along as three of his many informants. Descartes had claimed that we exist because we think: but does this mean that we *only* think, or is our power of thought just a part a larger self? (p. 17) Wordsworth lent towards the second answer, describing mental states that are arguably thoughts but lack Descartes' sense of 'cogitation' (p. 20). Clare had a different take, suggesting in his darker moments that mere thinking was no kind of existence at all (p. 21). Keats meanwhile longed for a life without thoughts, but found it impossible to 'feel his existence without taking the trouble to think' (p. 22). Brown compares these poets to a range of mostly Romantic writers and thinkers, with all the graceful erudition to which his readers have become accustomed.

At least as influential and pervasive in its appropriately eerie cultural afterlives as Romanticism, the Gothic continues to reach into the present. *The Gothic and Death* [MUP, 2017], consummately edited by Carol Margaret Davison, is a volume that presents the many terrible aspects of the Gothic, from its instantiation to the present, arranged around 'one of the foremost terrors at the heart of [the] field of study' (p. 1): death. In this enjoyably wide-ranging study are two essays of specific interest for any scholar of Romantic poetry. Opening the collection, Serena Trowbridge dwells on 'Past, present, and future in the Gothic graveyard', exhuming the ways in which 'death is refigured in the wake of Graveyard Poetry' (p. 21), specifically the poetry of Thomas Gray, Edward Young, and Robert Blair, all of whom produced master texts that haunt Romantic poetry. Adam White's essay, 'Deadly interrogations: cycles of death and transcendence in Byron's Gothic', reads Byron's verse dramas, particularly *The Prisoner of Chillon* and *The Two Foscari*, as caught up with Gothic questions of repetition and suffering and

what White defines as ‘Romantic’ attempts at ‘transcending death and death-like conditions’ (p. 88), before moving on to detect something ‘distinctively Byronic in the play’s treatment of death.’ (p. 89). These two fascinating essays aside, there is much to enjoy in this ironically lively volume about death.

Bo Earle’s ambitious and wide-ranging study, *Post-Personal Romanticism: Democratic Terror, Prosthetic Poetics, and the Comedy of Modern Ethical Life* [OSUP, 2017], takes on Hegel’s formulation (via Marx) of history as tragedy doomed to be repeated as farce, and attempts to apply this formula to our numbed, bathetic present by way of the Romantic lyric. Earle’s contention is that what he terms the ‘ascendance of abstraction’, the means by which we de-individuate history and experience even in the process of individuating it, has left us ‘phenomenally exiled from the real events of our own history’, and, since this ascendance, ‘like climate change itself, is retraceable to the historical advent of industrialization’, Romantic poetry—specifically lyric poetry—‘could be of particular use’, as a means of sensitizing us to these numbnesses as locations of potentially liberating disruption and/or difference (p. 5). After a brief preface that takes in Trump, the Black Lives Matter movement, and climate change, the book settles into a fairly orthodox chapter structure covering the Big Six minus Coleridge: Wordsworth, Blake, Byron, P. B. Shelley, Keats. Chapter 1, ‘Wordsworth, Apocalypse, and Prosthesis’, examines Wordsworth’s lyrics, including ‘Simon Lee’ and ‘We are Seven’, as works in which, rather than discrete exercises in proprietorial sympathy, ‘Wordsworth makes poetic failure negatively bespeak the weight’ of what Earle terms moral ‘worlds’ (p. 8) or planets—with consequences for our responses to climate change and suffering, a conclusion heavily influenced by Timothy Morton. Chapter 2, ‘Blake’s Infant Smile: Facing Materialism’, charts Blake’s important modifications and surprising affinities with Lockean subjectivity via Freud, the two representing the ‘aptly incongruous bookends of the long nineteenth-hegemony of the bourgeois subject’ (p. 35). Chapter 3, ‘Byron’s Sad Eye: The Tragic Loss of Tragedy’, examines the appropriately Byronic ‘paradox that the loss of the tragic art form’ in the self-consciousness and commodity culture best represented by the Byronic brand ‘could not be presented as tragedy without implicitly refuting itself.’ (p. 65). Finally, Chapters 4 and 5, ‘Shelley’s Viral Prophecy: The Erotics of Chance’ and ‘Keats’s Lame Flock: the Erotics of Waste’, present the former as desperately committed to an ‘inherently excessive’ sympathy, bodied forth in a poetic imagination that ‘necessarily’ but productively and consitutively ‘fails’ (p. 117), and the latter as resting more comfortably in such excess, a cool critic of consumerism and masturbatory or wasteful poetics even in the process of recognising their inescapability (p. 169). This is a novel, urgent, but ultimately flawed book, let down by a lack of cohesion and a conflicted thesis.

Michael Gamer’s *Romanticism, Self-Canonization and the Business of Poetry* [CUP, 2017] is a somewhat misleadingly titled but extremely well researched study of how Romantic poets arranged for their works to be reprinted. Though this may seem a niche topic at first, Gamer makes some powerful arguments for its relevance. By choosing which poems to reprint and when, Romantic poets and publishers shaped the public image of the writer: re-collections ‘are necessarily representations of an *authorial* self’ (p. 4). Re-collections are driven simultaneously

by economic and aesthetic forces. By studying them, Gamer argues, we can bring together book history and the study of literary subjectivity.

Chapter 1 considers Wordsworth's *Poems* [1815]. Wordsworth was such a self-conscious self-canoniser that Gamer has the opportunity in this chapter to survey the history of the collected edition. Citing the examples of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Torquato Tasso and Alexander Pope, Gamer reveals the social nature of literary re-collection, and the different forces at play when living rather than dead poets are collected. He goes on to consider the various eighteenth-century attempts to publish a poetic canon, most of which Wordsworth claimed to hold in utter contempt. This historical discussion provides a rich context for Gamer's discussion of the vexed and multilayered *Poems* of 1815.

Following chapters are more focussed. In Chapter 2, Charlotte Smith offers a contrast to William Wordsworth. She sold the copyright in her poems as she printed them, making it essentially impossible to produce a collected edition at the end of her life. Earlier, however, she did have control over the shape her growing collection of *Elegiac Sonnets* [1787], and Gamer shows how she used ordering, paratexts and additional poems to reshape her authorial persona. Chapter 3 considers the Della Cruscan. It was by moving from magazine publication to book collection, argues Gamer, that these internationalist poets challenged the literary powers-that-be and brought on the ire of William Gifford. Chapter 4 returns to Wordsworth, and the expanded *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800. Chapter 5 is a welcome study of Robert Southey, who used his ascent to the poet laureateship to consolidate his reputation after a decade of busy miscellaneous writing had fragmented it. Unfortunately, accepting the post exposed him to 'pressures to conform to government policy' (p. 167), and as he himself freely admitted, it was the salary as much as the honour that led him to accept the job Sir Walter Scott turned down. The final chapter considers the cultic collectors of Shelley poems and paraphernalia after the young poet's tragic death at sea. It rounds off a subtle and original study of book history, the canon and the figure of the poet.

James Whitehead describes his volume, *Madness and the Romantic Poet* [OUP, 2017], as 'a cultural history of a set of ideas attached to poetry and poets, and an exercise of sorts in the sociology of literary identity' (p. 11). Setting out to discover why the image of the 'mad poet' became so popular over the nineteenth century, Whitehead moves more-or-less chronologically. The first two chapters consider how Romantic writers engaged with ancient Greek, early modern and eighteenth-century ideas of madness. The next two chapters consider the Romantic period itself: how did Romantic-era doctors and literary reviewers understand the relationship between madness and creativity?

The final three chapters serve the meat of the argument, directly analysing the popularity of the 'mad poet' myth in the nineteenth century. Chapter 5 examines several mid-century biographies. Nineteenth-century biographers had a 'drive towards the admirable or heroic life' (p. 132), while also condemning Romantic poets for their supposedly mad behaviour. Poised between admiration and contempt, Romantic biographers of the period wrote remarkably polyvalent

books (p. 141), and foreshadowed the later development of psychobiography. Chapter 6 surveys a range of medical and pseudo-medical writers of the later century, who drew on Romantic examples to develop their theories of insanity. Nineteenth-century theorists like Francis Galton and Cesare Lombroso drew on the commonly accepted tropes of mad Romantics to provide evidence for their theories. In doing so, they set the terms for twentieth-century psychological debates on the topics of insanity and creativity, and demonstrated significant continuities with the writers of Whitehead's earlier chapters.

The book culminates with a chapter on the Big Six plus John Clare. These poets all, in different ways, confronted the possible connection between madness and inspiration. Madness was a frightening prospect for men who claimed to be great poets because they were psychologically superior. Percy Shelley is the poet who inspires Whitehead's best criticism. This is hardly surprising: in 'Alastor' [1815] and 'Julian and Maddalo' [1818-19] Shelley takes a thoroughly Whiteheadian approach to the central questions of the book. It is a pity that Whitehead did not spread the net wider. Mary Robinson's 'The Maniac' [1793] or Felicia Hemans' frightening drama on collective delusion, *The Vespers of Palermo* [1823] could have provided rich examples for his argument. *Madness and the Romantic Poet* is in any case a fine and wide-ranging study.

We received notice of two volumes in WVT Trier Verlag's *Studien zur Englischen Romantik* series, but the publisher declined to provide review copies. *Romantic Ambiguities: Abodes of the Modern*, edited by Sebastian Domsch, Christoph Reinfandt and Katharina Rennhak [WVT, 2017] responds to Christoph Bode's *Ästhetik der Ambiguität* [Max Niemeyer, 1988] to explore the relationship between the 'ambiguity' and the 'modernity' of Romantic literature. Bode himself is the editor of *Romanticism and the Forms of Discontent* [WVT, 2017], whose contributors place Romantic concepts of 'discontent' in the broader history of emotions. Both of these volumes are testament to the influence of Bode, surely Germany's leading scholar of British Romanticism, and it is a pity we are not able to provide a more detailed review of their contents.

2017 also saw the publication of a fine new textbook aimed at undergraduate students of Romanticism. Michael O'Neill and Madeline Callaghan's *The Romantic Poetry Handbook* is a comprehensive and compact introduction to British Romantic poetry. It is a commendably varied volume, that pays tribute to the great widening of Romantic scholarship since the 1970s. It is a pleasure simply to reflect on the 18 poets selected for consideration, six of whom are women. Though one might quibble with some choices—why include Thomas Lovell Beddoes and not Joanna Baillie?—the volume does present a very reasonable version of the canon taught in universities today.

For this very reason, however, the book throws into sharp relief continuing limitations in the scholarship and pedagogy of Romantic poetry in English. It is telling that Ireland, Wales and Scotland are here represented by only four writers: Thomas Moore, Felicia Hemans, Robert Burns and Lord Byron. Hemans and Byron, of course, always described themselves as English, despite their places of birth or abode. The complete absence of writers from elsewhere in the

British empire is also telling. No Canadian or Australian poet is present, nor are any of the literary figures—most notably Sir William Jones—who worked in other colonies. Absent too are any Romantic poets who wrote in British languages other than English, as for instance the Welsh hymnodist Ann Griffiths. All this makes the book's claim to be a comprehensive introduction to 'British' Romanticism rather suspect. One might also wonder whether the restriction to 'British' writers continues to make sense at all, when the British empire was so vast and disparate in the Romantic period, and the literary ties between Britain and the United States so strong.

It is not usually the place of *Year's Work in English Studies* to engage in such extended analysis, but *The Romantic Poetry Handbook* is a good illustration of both the breadth and the confines of 'Romantic Poetry' in Anglophone world today. It is a beautifully written and well-organised textbook, which will be of great value to undergraduates in English departments around the world. The introduction offers a series of short reflections on a range of themes in the study of Romantic poetry, from the 'Definitions' of Romanticism to 'Romantic Poetry and the Reader'. There follows a detailed timeline, which provides a rich European context for the writers focussed on in the book. The following section comprises a series of 2-page biographies of the poets. These could perhaps have been a little longer and more vivid. The strong heart of the book, however, is the 'Readings' section. Each 'Reading' focuses on one or a few texts. O'Neill and Callaghan are to be commended for the deft way they combine close reading and scholarship in these delightful essays. Students will surely find them invaluable models for their own work. The book concludes with a further reading section, and this brings us now to our consideration of the individual poets who attracted particular scholarly attention in 2017.

Anna Laetitia Barbauld

E.J. Clery's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven: Poetry, Protest and Economic Crisis* [CUP, 2017] is a landmark in Barbauld studies: the first full-length monograph on her longest and arguably most serious poem. It begins with a reflection on the myth that William Croker's savage review of the poem ended Barbauld's career as a poet. Clery deftly unpicks the myth, arriving at the core question of her study: what about the poem provoked the inventor of the word 'conservative' to such ire? (p. 6)

In the following 7 chapters, Clery moves methodically through the poem, carefully unpeeling the layers of its rhetoric and allusions. In the opening lines of the poem, Barbauld cleverly shifts from a conventional pacifist position to an analysis of Britain's political economy (chap. 1)—an extremely original topic for a poet of the period to cover (p. 19). Britain's military might, based on its island fastness, is a myth in a globalised economic world (p. 27). In the next section of the poem (chap. 2), Barbauld introduces a satirical element by addressing Britain and detailing its moral wrongs (p. 43). Analysing Barbauld's satire, Clery comes to the delightfully counterintuitive conclusion that the savage reviewer Croker was actually Barbauld's 'ideal reader'; so offensive would he find Barbauld's satire that 'he could feel its strategies on his pulse', and 'decode' them all perfectly (p. 37). Barbauld then turns about to praise rather than

satirise Britain (chap. 3), but through diligent scholarship Clery is able to show how ‘polemical’ Barbauld’s praises are (p. 59), how her examples of great Britons paint a very particular picture of her home. This builds into the following chapter’s discussion of Barbauld’s peculiar brand of ‘stoic patriotism’. *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* was a long time coming. Barbauld had developed stoic ideas throughout her earlier writings, but never before had she intervened like this, in the midst of things, ‘with a clear oppositional message’ (p. 80) and an intention to propound it whatever the cost.

At this point the quality of Barbauld’s poem changes, and so do Clery’s interests. Hitherto Clery has carefully traced historical, topical and ideological allusions in the poem, carefully situating Barbauld in the political context of her period. In the final three chapters of her explication, she turns to focus on Barbauld’s lyrical and visionary tendencies. There is a ‘reflexive quality or knowingness’ to Barbauld’s prophetic verse (p. 92), which as Clery shows, brought the older poet close to the younger Coleridge. Unlike Coleridge, however, Barbauld emerges as a ‘dispassionate’ kind of prophet (p. 101). In the following chapter, Clery exposes the ‘parodically multi-voiced weave’ (p. 119) of *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, the way it uses contradictions and disjunctions to portray an open-ended reality. The ruin of empires coincides with the ‘jostling of ideological struggle’ in the everyday world (p. 136). In the final chapter of explication, Clery binds together her whole argument about Barbauld’s economic, political, religious and poetic concerns with a bold and original argument: that the mysterious ‘Spirit’ that Barbauld claims is the motor force of history is no spiritual being, but rather an allegory for ‘Public Credit’ (p. 140). We will leave it to readers to judge the power of this provocative economic interpretation.

In the final section of the monograph, Clery considers the aftermath of Barbauld’s poem. Chapter 8 is a remarkable blow-by-blow chronology of the events of January to June 1812, taking in the events of Barbauld’s life and the progress of the government’s war policy, both of which build towards a strange coincidence. Henry Brougham succeeded in enacting an Barbauldian policy, and had the government’s Orders in Council repealed on the 16th of June in an effort to avert war with America. Croker, Barbauld’s public nemesis, was absent from the chamber when the votes were cast. The final chapter considers the poem’s aftermath in the press, and the final years of Barbauld’s life. In her conclusion, Clery meditates on *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*’s role in ending use of the trade blockade as an instrument of government policy, and on Barbauld’s place as a woman in the British public sphere.

William Blake

Joseph Fletcher’s ‘Leibniz, the Infinite, and Blake’s Early Metaphysics’ (*SiR* 56[2017] 129-55) draws out some remarkable parallels between Blake’s critique of empiricism and Leibniz’s. Blake’s early philosophical poems espouse a panpsychist view of nature that has much in common with Leibniz’s, but Blake goes beyond his German predecessor in positing a ‘radical monistic view of pantheism’, in which God is synonymous with the material universe (p. 130). It is surprising that Fletcher does not mention Spinoza in this connection, but the essay is nonetheless rich in content. Fletcher compares Blake’s early poems *No Natural Religion* [1788],

All Religions Are One [1788] and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* [1790] with Locke's *Essay* [1689], Berkeley's *Dialogues* [1713], and finally with a selection of Leibniz's metaphysical works to demonstrate the artisan poet's strikingly original contribution to pantheist and panpsychist thought.

Lucy Kellett takes a more formalist approach in "Crooked roads without improvement": Rhyming and Unrhyming in Blake' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 133-44). She observes that for Blake, rhyme was a symbol of mental imprisonment. This did not simply mean he abandoned it, however. In his early poems, and even in his later epic *Jerusalem* [1804] he used rhyme to represent the divisions and structures of human consciousness. In *Jerusalem* in particular, he switches between rhymed and unrhymed verse to symbolise his theory of 'Contraries' (p. 143).

Lord Byron

Byron continues to be the most international of British Romantic poets, as Diego Saglia and Alan Rawes' new volume *Byron and Italy* [ManUP, 2017] demonstrates. This edited collection features contributions from Czech and Italian scholars, as well as from distinguished Romanticists from Britain and the United States. In their introduction (pp. 1-22), Saglia and Rawes indicate why Byron's work continues to resonate across Europe. Behind all the myths—the debauchery in Venice, the heroism in Ravenna—the 'the real, historical "Anglo-Italian" Byron' was a keen observer of Italy and successfully incorporated Italian traditions into his writing (p. 3). The collection examines Italy as a 'construct' in Byron's writing, as a stage where he performed his poetry and personality, and as a social world where he lived as a human being (pp. 11-12). What harmonises the collection is a common focus on Byron's deconstructive and generative power. His experience of Italy was destabilising, enabling him to cut through British prejudices and recombine disparate cultural materials into marvellous verse.

The first essay in the collection, by Nicholas Halmi (pp. 23-43), considers Byron's 'transhistorical identification' with some great figures of Italian poetry (p. 25). He focuses on the poems of 1817-20, showing how Byron 'insinuates a Byronic Italianness' in *The Lament of Tasso* [1817], *The Prophecy of Dante* [1819], his part-translation of *Morgante Maggiore* [1819-20] and two stanzas from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV* [1818].

The next five essays consider Byron's experiences of Italian life. In 'Byron's ethnographic eye: the poet among the Italians' (pp. 44-60), Gioia Angeletti demonstrates that Byron was a skilled ethnographer, who pierced through the romanticised prejudices of his British contemporaries and described a 'contingent' Italy in his letters (p. 45). He was attuned to 'individual' and 'local' aspects of Italian life (p. 51), though as Angeletti shows, Byron's zest for 'directly experienced, present-day Italy' eventually palled into 'disenchantment' (p. 54). Jonathan Gross brings out another aspect of Byron's travelling style, in his essay on 'Byron's Scottish Identity in Italy' (pp. 61-76). Byron filtered his experiences of Italy through his decidedly unstable sense of Scottish, English and British identity.

Where Gross and Angeletti consider Byron's experience of Italian culture, Mauro Pala analyses Byron's apprehension of the Italian landscape (pp. 77-93). Byron was a typical Romantic, for whom landscape description was normally a kind of self-portrait, as Pala demonstrates through a close reading of *Childe Harold IV*. Jane Stabler similarly emphasises how 'creative[ly]' Byron apprehended physical reality (p. 96), in her essay on 'Byron and Italian Art in Ravenna' (pp. 94-111). In the opening pages of the essay, Stabler cleverly reconstructs Shelley and Byron's experience of art in Ravenna, where British tourists trained in Michelangelo and his contemporaries struggled to perceive the beauty of the city's Byzantine mosaics (p. 98). She links this to her interpretation of *Cain* [1821], which she reads quite convincingly as a study in perception and misperception. Rounding off this series of essays on Byron's Italian experiences, Bernard Beatty considers Byron's responses to 'Italian Catholicism' (pp. 112-29). Revisiting the Italian poems analysed by Halmi, Beatty reveals how Byron deconstructed his own Protestant identity in Italy, shifting and complexifying his opinions of the Catholic Church.

The final five essays of the volume place Byron's 'Italianism' in the context of European literature. Arnold Anthony Schmidt compares Byron to Alessandro Manzoni in his essay 'The politics of the unities' (pp. 130-48). Both Manzoni's *Il Conte de Carmagnola* [1820] and Byron's *The Two Foscari* [1821] feature the figure of the *condottiero*, which they use to symbolise a liberal political ideology, but the two playwrights take opposite approaches to dramatic form, Manzoni adopting a loose Shakespearean structure where Byron rejects the English tradition and adheres to the three unities. Mirka Horová also offers a study of Byron's Italian plays in her essay 'Playing with History' (pp. 188-207). In *Marino Faliero* [1821], *Foscari* and *The Deformed Transformed* [1824], Byron mined Italian history to critique the Western notion that European society is inherently civilised and progressive. In the following essay, Peter W. Graham reads *Mazeppa* [1819] and *Parisina* [1816] in the context of Romantic orientalism (pp. 149-65), showing how they reveal Byron's evolving sense of 'Anglo-Italian identity'. Alan Rawes shifts the focus to Western Europe in 'This "still exhaustless mine": de Staël, Goethe and Byron's Roman lyricism' (pp. 166-87). The three titans of European Romantic literature all viewed Rome as a place of pilgrimage. In *Corinne: ou l'Italie* [1807], *Italienische Reise* [1816-28] and *Childe Harold IV* respectively, de Staël, Goethe and Byron meditate on the educative value of a Roman holiday, drawing subtly different conclusions about art, politics and the transience of things.

Byron and Italy quite rightly concludes with an analysis of Byron's finest Italian poems, *Beppo* [1818] and *Don Juan* [1819-24], from the pen of editor Diego Saglia (pp. 208-26). In a remarkably compact discussion, Saglia sketches the key Italian contexts for the poems, and draws on Friedrich Schlegel's definition of irony as 'permanent parabasis' to explain their contradictory and ambivalent structure (p. 209). Thus ends this exemplary collection. It is finely organised, takes in a wide sweep of Byron's life and work, and is a model of international scholarly cooperation. Scholars in the English-speaking world must continue to marvel at the productivity of what might now be called the 'Parma school' of Romantic studies, which continues to draw the study of British Romanticism out of what can be rather narrow confines.

The final main work on Byron for 2017 is Robert Morrison's elegant essay, '*Blackwood's* Byron: The Lakers, the Cockneys, and the 'throne of poetical supremacy' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 272-81), which falls into three clear sections. His aim is to survey Byron's relationship with the conservative magazine north of the Tweed. The first section consider the series of Byron reviews John Wilson wrote for *Blackwood's*, the second considers John Lockhart's essays on the lordly poet, and the final section offers a close reading of Byron's unpublished essay, 'Some Observations upon an Article in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*' [1820]. Morrison nicely brings out the strange symbiosis of Byron and conservative cultural critics. On the one hand, as he, Wilson and Lockhart all realised, they all had much in common when it came to poetry and culture. On the other, they could not see eye-to-eye politically, and once Byron published the magnificently risqué *Beppo* [1818], they could no longer see eye-to-eye in artistic taste either.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge and Contemplation, edited by Peter Cheyne, has already been mentioned above, in the 'Romanticism: General and Prose' section. But several of its essays concern Coleridge's poetry directly, and are considered below.

J. C. C. Mays begins the collection with a general reflection on 'Contemplation in Coleridge's Poetry' (pp. 19-34). He opens with a 'slow motion' (p. 24) reading of 'First Advent of Love', a six-line poem whose every syllable Mays picks over to show how it communicates a certain 'state of mind' (p. 23). He then expands his focus, citing to a range of examples to show how Coleridge strove in prose for 'clarity of mind', while engaging in a different kind of contemplation in his poetry, in which he 'work[ed] through [the] arguments on his pulse' (p. 28).

Kathleen Wheeler and Cristina Flores both consider how Coleridge's poetry interacts with the thought of specific philosophers. Wheeler's essay, 'Coleridge, John Dewey, and the Art of Contemplation' (pp. 60-76), is really a broad study of the affinities between Romantic poets and American philosophers. She reads Dewey's *Art as Experience* [1958] as a Romantic affirmation of art's ability to expand human perception and enrich our moral lives. Citing examples from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, Wheeler shows how the earlier poets anticipated many of Dewey's concerns with the '*de-generation*' and '*re-generation*' of imaginative vision (p. 74). Flores considers an older philosopher in her piece, "'Contemplant Spirits": Ralph Cudworth and Contemplation' (pp. 211-20). Having described Coleridge's intense reading of Cudworth in some detail (pp. 213-5), she turns to 'Religious Musings' and the Conversation Poems, showing how these works express a vision of 'plastic nature' (p. 218) that is fundamentally in tune with Cudworth's monistic metaphysics.

In an interesting turn, Michael McGhee offers a 'Buddhist Response' to 'Fears in Solitude' and 'Frost at Midnight' (pp. 263-77). He analyses Coleridge's theory of reason, faith, and the trancelike states of the soul in the context of Christian doctrine, before re-introducing the familiar Buddhist concept of 'mindfulness', which is best understood as a 'balanced and progressive integration, bringing about an enlarged and sustained awareness' (p. 271). In the concluding

pages of the essay, McGhee argues persuasively that Coleridge aspires to a similar kind of enlarged, sustained attention to the wideness of the world in his contemplative verse.

The other essays in the volume will be of great interests to students of Coleridge and of philosophy. At a time with 'interdisciplinary' threatens to become an empty buzzword, it is a true pleasure to encounter a book like *Coleridge and Contemplation*, in which scholars of many disciplines collaborate to produce a rich range of responses to a rich and wide-ranging writer. Humberto Garcia takes things in a different direction in 'Coleridge, India, and the Spectral Banyan Tree' (*SEL* 57[2017] 701-24). Trees are potent symbols of nation, class and creed. For Coleridge, the spreading banyan with its massive gloomy branches was an 'arboreal icon of Indian paganism' (p. 716), particularly in his notebook poem on the Fakir. To contextualise Coleridge's horrified response to the banyan, Garcia uses Thomas Maurice's *Indian Antiquities* [1793-1800] as a point of reference. In Maurice's 'fanciful historiography' (p. 703), the banyan is part of a vast global history, in which prehistoric Brahmins migrated to Britain and planted the roots of Druidism on European soil. Both Maurice and Coleridge contrast pagan tree-worship with the supposed civility and rationality of Christian worship. The East had its many-stemmed banyans, the West its stolid and unified oaks.

This interdisciplinary interest in Coleridge the philosopher-poet continued in the two essays on his poetry in 2017's *Romantic Circles PRAXIS Series*, both in Tilottama Rajan's themed issue on 'Romanticism and the Rights of the Negative'. In 'Positive Negation: On Coleridge's "Human Life"' (*RCPS* [June 2017]), David Collings considers Coleridge's hypothetical denial of immortal life in his late poems. In the strange movements of Coleridge's mature mind, oblivion after death morphs into death-in-life and finally into a sense of 'surplus' (para. 12). Coleridge was sensitive to the paradoxes of negativity, the way it can twist into an uncanny kind of positivity. Marc Mazur considers another kind of negativity in 'The Immaterial "Christabel": Reading Revision Before and After Publication' (*RCPS* [June 2017]), not oblivion, but 'retreat'. What was Coleridge fleeing from when he withheld 'Christabel' from the public? (para 5) Mazur argues that he was in retreat from a public sphere that did not accord with his definition of a healthy polity. If his decision to withhold the poem can be seen as a 'voluntary retreat', his decision to publish entailed an 'involuntary retreat' because of the poem's fragmentary condition (para 14). Christabel retreats 'as subject' (*ibid.*), evading the reader and the poet, simultaneously frustrating and preserving the 'desire for completion'. This issue of *RCPS* underscores how Romantic poetry continues to perplex, continuing Coleridge's project for a more sinuous and interconnected form of consciousness.

Elizabeth Fay also uncovers the sinuous and interconnected aspects of Coleridge's phenomenology in her essay on 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' [1798]. In 'Coleridge Finds Spinoza's Dharma Nature' (*WC* 48[2017] 128-37), Fay carefully unpacks the 'Rime' to reveal its engagement with the philosophy of Spinoza, Leibniz and Böhme. Although Coleridge had yet to read Schelling when he composed his famous ballad, Fay is able to show that he anticipated much of his later engagement with the idealist philosopher. What runs through all Coleridge's

idealism, she concludes, is a theme that links him to Spinoza and to Indian philosophers—a critique of the ‘crime of self-passion’ (p. 135).

Sean Barry continues the discussion of Coleridge’s philosophising in ‘Old Words, New Words, Wrong Words: Coleridge’s Poetics of Interruption in ‘The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere.’’ (*ERR* 28[2017] 379-85). Barry finds that the ‘Rime’ has much to say to contemporary debates about the narrative self. Coleridge weaves a sophisticated narrative in the ‘Rime’, but constantly interrupts it with neologisms, anachronisms, and abrupt beginnings or turnings away. This narrativity with disruption charts a middle course, claims Barry, between the strong narrative theories of self promulgated by communitarians like Charles Taylor and Martha Nussbaum, and the anti-narrative philosophy of contemporary Cartesian Galen Strawson.

Julie Carmada covers similar ground in ‘Pig Looks, Snake Looks: Coleridge’s Poetics of the Unsaid’(*ERR* 28[2017] 333-42). Not only does Coleridge disrupt narrative, he disrupts utterance. Coleridge, like other Romantic poets, is often interpreted as a writer of overflowing ego, but in this piece Carmada tries to give a sense of ‘Coleridge the Listener’ (336), a man who strove to achieve ‘mutual, sympathetic comprehension’ (337). Having demonstrated Coleridge’s conversational powers in life, Carmada shows how the conversation poems are marked by a ‘capacity for multisensory response’ (338).

Brittany Pladek contributes the fourth major essay on Coleridge’s ‘Rime’ for 2017. Like Carmada and Berry, she takes an ethical approach to the poem in “‘A Radical causation.’” Coleridge’s Lyrics and Collective Guilt” (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 62-74). Comparing the ‘Rime’ and ‘Fears in Solitude’, Pladek elucidates Coleridge’s subtle thoughts on collective and personal guilt. He had an ‘individualist model’ of collective guilt (p. 63), argues Pladek. Applying this model to the morally complex ‘Rime’, she claims to resolve the long-running debate about the poem’s moral coherence.

Though Coleridge remains of primary interest to scholars as a thinker, scholars still maintain interest in his practice as a poet. Olivia Reilly offers a formalist analysis of his verse in “[A]nother and yet the same”: Rhyme’s Music in *Kubla Khan*’ (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 145-54). Reilly begins by analysing some of Coleridge’s comments on music. His theories on the subject were characteristically sophisticated. She then notes how Coleridge extended his theory of music to the study of rhyme, and precedes to read ‘Kubla Khan’ [1798] as a sustained reflection on the musical (read: dialectical, anticipatory, intervolved) structure of its own poetic form. Her vindication of Coleridge’s skilled poesis rounds off 2017’s discussion of his verse.

John Clare

The 2017 issue of the *John Clare Society Journal* reveals that ecopoetics and formalist analysis remain at the heart of Clare studies today. Fiona Stafford leads the issue with her essay on ‘Clare and the Splendid Sycamore’ (*JCSJ* 36[2017] 7-16), an extended reading of Clare’s ‘In massy foliage & a sunny green’. Stafford reveals Clare’s concern for ‘ordinary’ things like

sycamores (p. 8). She considers his use of the sonnet-form, his apprehension of time and survival, his accurate portrayal of the tree's many details, his sense of the tree's cultural and historical associations and his sense of openness, uncertainty and wonder. This is a model close reading of a poet who well repays the effort.

Peter Cox's essay, 'From the World Away': Clare and the Hermit's Life' (*JCSJ* 36[2017] 17-30) takes a more biographical approach, as does Robert Heyes's 'A Keats-Clare Connection Refuted' (*JCSJ* 36[2017] 49-56). Cox examines the books Clare is known to have read, to determine which writers and traditions influenced Clare's idea of the hermit. He then surveys a wide range of Clare's poems, showing how the poet refracted his experience of people in his community through these traditions of hermitude. Heyes also trawls through Clare's letters with the comb of the scholar, but with a more practical purpose: to determine the truth about a manuscript in the New York Public Library. In 1917, the collector Samuel Loveman believed he had happened upon a remarkable artefact. It was a letter of John Clare's with a couplet from 'Lamia' written in the margin—in the handwriting of John Keats. Sadly, as Heyes reveals, the letter is in fact not one of Clare's, though the scrap of 'Lamia' in the margin was certainly put there by Keats. Heyes tells an engaging narrative of obsession and mystery. Fans of Umberto Eco or *The Aspern Papers*, or sufferers from Derridean archive fever, will likely enjoy Heyes's tale of a dedicated Clarean of old.

The remaining two essays in the issue, Michael Falk's 'The Nightjar's Shriek' (*JCSJ* 36[2017] 31-48) and Stephanie Kuduk Weiner's 'Exemplary Figures in Clare's Descriptive Poems' (*JCSJ* 36[2017] 57-68), are studies of the the aesthetic and epistemological underpinnings of Clare's poetry. Weiner, the author of one of the finest Clare monographs, contributes an insightful essay on the semantic structure of Clare's nature imagery. Clare is often praised for his detail and particularity, but Weiner demonstrates that really his imagery is usually not particular but 'exemplary'. When he describes animals and people, '[t]hey are usually singular—the milkmaid, the hare, the nightingale—and yet they are not individuals' (p. 57). Clare 'seldom particularizes within groups' (*ibid.*), and this disinclination to particularise is one of his most characteristic features. His poems are epistemologically optimistic. The world is 'universally intelligible' for Clare, everything is 'unfailingly meaningful' (p. 60), because he can always see the category or kind to which each thing belongs. There are no unidentifiable birds, no uncategorizable stones, no unnameable places for Clare. Weiner stresses that Clare's categorizations are far from 'rigid' (p. 61). His poems are experiments in dynamic perception. Through the simple act of observation Clare orders and synthesizes all the components of his reality.

Falk's essay also considers the Clare's implicit philosophy of perception, drawing on a database of sonnets to systematically compare Clare's rhyme-schemes and syntactic structures with those of Charlotte Smith. Statistical analysis reveals crucial similarities between the sonnets of Clare and Smith, especially when compared to those of Wordsworth, introduced to the study as a control. Clare and Smith had a preference for parataxis, for Shakespearean or experimental rhyme schemes, and held to a common 'aesthetic of variety' (p. 34). Nonetheless important differences emerge. Clare's use of rich rhyme and couplet sonnets introduce distinctive

dynamics into his form of description, while Smith's interest in extreme or diseased mental states distinguish her poems in important ways from both Clare's and Wordsworth's. Falk concludes that common Wordsworth-centric narratives of the Romantic sonnet do not do justice to its variety, and obscure the particular achievements of sonneteers like Clare and Smith.

The issue of the *JCSJ* is beautifully illustrated with botanical and zoological prints, and ends with an extremely useful bibliography of recent Clare scholarship compiled by Andrew Hodgson and Erin Lafford.

Adam White's *John Clare's Romanticism* [Palgrave, 2017] is a comparative study of Clare and four other Romantic poets: William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, John Keats and Robert Burns. White sets out to prove that Clare is a Romantic. To do so, he trawls Clare's works for images and phrases reminiscent of these other Romantic poets. Like Byron, Clare wrote movingly of the destructive effects of time. Like Burns, he wrote lilting love lyrics. Like Wordsworth, he described the mind in the process of comprehension. Where most other Clare scholars stress the immediacy of Clare's poetry, its focus on the here and now of ecological consciousness, White argues that Clare was actually interested in the power of the imagination to shape and mediate experience. He wrote his poems in 'a Romantic visionary mode' that expressed faith in the power of the mind to master the world (p. 117).

Simon Kövesi takes a starkly opposing view in *John Clare: Nature, Criticism and History* [Palgrave, 2017]. Indeed, far from trying to prove that Clare was a proponent of powerful 'Romantic' subjectivity, Kövesi argues that Clare tried to move beyond the ego and achieve a 'free plurality of "existences", a multiplicity of free writing selves' (p. 88). The book begins with an extended meditation on 'John Clare and Place'. For 200 years, Kövesi argues, Clare scholars have insisted that Clare is a 'down to earth' poet (p. 3), a lower-class figure who lacks 'agency' or 'artistry' (p. 8). Against this, Kövesi sets out to prove that Clare was a 'deliberate' and 'intellectual' poet who developed new ideas and practices as time went on (p. 10).

Clare was not always or only a poetic photographer, taking images of what lay directly before him. Kövesi uses the examples of *The Parish* [c. 1823] and 'To My Cottage' [1821] to show how Clare could perceptively describe different layers of social, religious and political meaning in the space around him. He goes on, in dazzling fashion, to show how Clare was also a poet of no-place, a man who identified with rootless and aristocratic poets like Lord Byron, a student of alienation as well as belonging. He contrasts this with modern-day 'domesticising' practices of remembering Clare in museums, memorials and events (p. 43).

Having shuffled off this critical legacy of Clare the local, immediate, and lower-class poet, Kövesi turns to three crucial themes in Clare's verse. Chapter 2 concerns 'ecocentrism', Chapter 3, Clare's writing practices and textual history, and Chapter 4, his treatment of women. In each case Kövesi builds on the revisionist case set out in Chapter 1. Clare's 'ecocentrism' and lack of ego have often been understood in social terms—Clare was a nobody in class terms, and was a nobody in his verse. Kövesi demonstrates, however, that Clare actually developed his

anti-egoistic poetics by philosophically analysing the presentation of self in earlier Romantic poems. Similarly, Clare's spelling, diction and punctuation have often been linked to the fact he was a 'Northamptonshire peasant'. Accordingly, his modern editors have split into two camps: those who argue that Clare's rough manuscripts represent his authentic voice, prior to officious middle-class correction, and those who argue that if we leave Clare's poems uncorrected, we cannot perceive the poet behind the peasant. Kövesi criticises both camps for their absolutism: what we need is an open-ended textual scholarship, that will 'enable engagement with the textual complexity' of Clare's body of work (p. 138). In his chapter on women, Kövesi shows a different side of his case. Clare was an inveterate writer of love lyrics and satires, in which he expressed a range of (not always attractive) views about women and their role in society. If we continue to read Clare primarily as a poet of place, then these aspects of his work will continue to be obscure or simply ignored.

This is a landmark publication in Clare scholarship that justifies Clare's increasingly central place in studies of Romantic poetry. Kövesi concludes the book with a thoughtful essay on Clare's contemporary relevance in an age of historicist scholarship, literary tourism and period drama. He ends wistfully, with the aspiration for a more creative and open-ended criticism.

In her essay, 'Moles, Molehills, and Common Right in John Clare's Poetry' (*SiR* 56[2017] 157-76), Katey Castellano contrasts human labour with 'nature's work' (p. 158) in Clare's poetry. Clare is often seen as a writer of georgics, a singer of labour, but Castellano argues that Clare departs from the georgic tradition by emphasising 'non-human' labour (*ibid.*). Her key example is the mole. Clare describes the mole as a 'Rude architect', a hidden creature normally only visible by its molehills, the 'marks of its labor' (p. 161). Through a series of close readings, she shows how Clare uses the mole's unceasing underground labour to critique the reigning ideology of improvement.

Theresa Adam's article, 'John Clare and the Problem of Audience' (*ERR* 28[2017] 625-42) is a thoughtful reflection on how Clare navigated the confusing waters of the early nineteenth-century literary marketplace. The book trade was marketising during the period, but was still characterised by 'the persistence of patronage', particularly for labouring-class poets (p. 626). At the beginning of his career, Clare accepted patronage, but as time went on, increasingly forswore his patrons and attempted to reach a public of his peers. In his later poems, as Adams arrestingly puts it, Clare displays a 'desire to be commodified' (p. 635). But the market he dreamed of did not exist, leading him to 'idealize' and 'abstract' his readers in his difficult and provocative last poems.

Clare was not merely a writer, of course, but was also an avid reader. Andrew Hodgson unpacks the various emotions—'enthusiasm, self-assurance and self-deprecation' (p. 103)—with which Clare read his great predecessor Wordsworth ('Clare on Wordsworth' *WC* 48[2017] 102-09). The essay begins with Thomas De Quincey, and his recollection of Clare's deep and terrible admiration for the Lake Poet. Hodgson sets out to refute De Quincey's account, moving through a series of Clare's letters and poems to show how he grappled with Wordsworth's example,

drawing on the older writer to think through issues of poetic practice, nature, imagination and artifice.

Joseph Cottle

Joseph Cottle is not frequently the subject of research in Romantic poetry. All the more delightful, therefore, is Paul Cheshire's 'Cottle's Bristol Album, 'Evening' and the 'Insane Man at Dr Fox's' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 15-26). At the period in the mid 1790s when Bristol was the unknown capital of Romantic poetry, Cottle kept an album of his friend's poems. Robert Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge all contributed poems to the album, but Cheshire is more interested in 'an Insane man at Dr Fox's', the unfortunate anonymous author a poem entitled 'Evening' in the volume. Cheshire offers a reading of the poem, observing its musical qualities, and suggests quite probably that it influenced Coleridge when he sat to write 'Eolian Harp' [1795].

Humphry Davy

Sharon Ruston considers another less-studied poet in her essay, 'Humphry Davy in 1816: The Letters and the Lamp' (*WC* 48[2017] 3-6). The essay is a pre-publication introduction to *The Collected Letters of Humphrey Davy* [OUP, 2019]. Ruston considers a number of the letters that shed new light on the priority of Davy's most famous invention, the safety lamp. Scholars of Romantic poetry, however, in the final pages of the essay, when Ruston introduces Davy's unpublished poem, 'Thoughts after the *ingratitude* of the Northumbrians with respect to the Safety Lamp'. The poem is largely of interest as a biographical document, a window into Davy's 'bitter but also resilient' frame of mind at the end of the Safety Lamp affair (p. 14).

Charles Harpur

Interest in the Australian Romantic poet Charles Harpur is growing as the 150th year of his death approaches. In 'Charles Harpur: The Editorial Nightmare' (*JASAL* 16:ii[2017] 1-14), Paul Eggert introduces readers to the knotty textual legacy of this complex writer. Harpur was an inveterate reviser, whose manuscripts contain dozens of expanding and contracting versions of his poems. Eggert distinguishes the 'editorial' from the 'archival' function, and shows how advances in compositing software and web technology have enabled a new kind of edition more suitable to Harpur's manuscript *oeuvre*.

John Keats

John Keats in Context is a wide-ranging and well-organised collection of 34 short essays, divided into six parts: (I) 'Life, Letters, Texts'; (II) 'Cultural Contexts'; (III) 'Ideas and Poetics'; (IV) 'Poetic Contexts'; (V) 'Influence'; and (VI) 'Critical Reception'. In a remarkably compact introduction (pp. 1-5), Michael O'Neill evokes the 'vibrant' aspects of Keats's poetry, and gives a

useful summary of twentieth-century Keats scholarship before introducing the main sections of the volume.

Part I, on Keats's 'Life, Letters and Texts', has a pleasing arc. Sarah Wootton commences the section with a pungent meditation on the ways we remember Keats's life (pp. 9-18), comparing Jane Campion's film *Bright Star* [2009] with the recent biographies of Andrew Motion [1997] and Nicholas Roe [2012]. There is a tension in these texts, claims Wootton, between 'elusive states of being' and 'artistic agency' (p. 16). This claim frames the next five essays in Part 1, each of which vividly evoke elusive moments of Keats's life, while trying to relate his experiences to his growth as a poet. Nicholas Roe contributes two essays (pp. 19-27, 28-37), the first co-written with Hrileena Ghosh, on Keats's early years in London. The first essay makes a compelling argument that 'medicine and poetry served the same purpose' for Keats. The second is remarkable for its vivid and detailed descriptions of Keats's seventeen months at Guy's Hospital. The next three essays in the section pick up on later aspects of Keats's life: Heidi Thompson (pp. 38-47) describes his familial, friendly and romantic relationships with women, and gives pleasing emphasis to the women other than Fanny Brawne; Shahidha Bari (pp. 48-55) retells the heartbreaking narrative of Keats's death in Rome; Jeffrey C. Robinson (pp. 56-65) considers Keats's travel, giving extended treatment to the Scottish Tour of June-August 1818. The final two essays in the section shift from the facts of Keats's life to its documents. Madeleine Callaghan (pp. 66-74) analyses the form and structure of Keats's letters. John Barnard gives an impressively comprehensive survey of Keats's textual history, from 1817, the date of his oldest surviving manuscripts, up to 2009, the date of Stephen Hebron's selected facsimile edition.

Part II describes the 'Cultural Contexts' of Keats's verse. Gregory Leadbetter provides a smooth segue from the biographical concerns of Part 1 to the intellectual themes of Part 2. He begins his essay on 'The Hunt Circle and the Cockney School' (pp. 89-98) with a sketch of Leigh Hunt and his contemporary reception, before describing Keats's intense involvement with Hunt's project, and his eventual transcendence of it. Part 2 then opens out into a discussion of wider contexts. Timothy Webb (pp. 99-107) describes the range of Keats's Londonian interests—walking (p. 100), window shopping (p. 101), 'routs' (ibid.), the theatre (p. 103). He makes a convincing case that this 'Cockney' poet was a London writer. Richard Cronin's essay is ostensibly about 'Politics' (pp. 108-16), but quickly morphs into a discussion of the artifice of Keats's verse. Grant F. Scott continues Webb and Cronin's analysis of the importance of Leigh Hunt to Keats's poetics in his essay on 'Sociability' (pp. 117-125), but his argument broadens to consider how Keats's private writings 'aspire[d] to the phonetic immediacy of conversation' (p. 120). The last two essays of Part 2 take off in fresh directions. Nancy Moore Goslee (pp. 126-35) describes London's art scene and shows how it influenced Keats's ekphrastic poetry. Anthony John Harding puts Keats in mythological context (pp. 136-45). At this ultimate cultural horizon, Keats emerges as a poet plying the crosswinds of transience and eternity (p. 142).

Part III moves away from life and London, and places Keats in the more purely intellectual contexts of 'Ideas and Poetics'. This section also has a coherent structure: the first two essays discuss writers who influenced Keats, the next three essays consider some key concepts of

Keats's thought, and the section ends with an essay on Keats's theory of poetry. Porscha Fermanis provides an overview of Keats's reading of Enlightenment thinkers like Robertson and Voltaire, before revealing the remarkable ways in which Keats echoed the thought of thinkers like Adam Ferguson, Hugh Blair and Immanuel Kant whom he appears never to have read (pp. 149-58). Duncan Wu gets specific in his convincing discussion of Hazlitt's influence on Keats (pp. 159-67). Charles W. Mahoney traces the history of Keats's theory of the imagination (pp. 168-77), revealing how the poet moved from 'confidence to scepticism' in his thoughts on the topic (p. 177). Wu and Mahoney both show how important Hazlitt's influence was on Keats, and Seamus Perry continues the discussion in his essay on 'The Poetical Character' (pp. 178-87). Perry agrees with Wu and Mahoney that Hazlitt's writings helped Keats to form his idea that the poet's self is really 'not itself' (p. 180), and quite effectively proves that Keats's concept of the 'negative life of the imagination' (p. 184) was not simply an idea, but a motivating force in his poetry. Stacey McDowell takes the discussion away from ideas and into the Keatsian realm of experience in her essay on 'The Senses and Sensation' (pp. 188-97). Through a series of close readings, she shows that there are two 'modes' of sensation in Keats: a 'mimetic' mode and a freer 'associative' mode (p. 195). This segues nicely into editor Michael O'Neill's essay on the interwoven, resonant structure of the Odes (pp. 198-206).

Part IV transitions from the intellectual to the literary context. The first four essays describe the poets who most influenced Keats, and the final three essays consider the major poetic genres in which Keats wrote. According to Chris Murray (pp. 209-219), Keats distinguished himself from his English contemporaries by appreciating the philosophy of Dante's poetry (p. 214), and combined Dante with *King Lear* [1606] to produce the *Hyperion* poems (pp. 216-7). Beth Lau considers a wider range of influences (pp. 220-8), revealing a progression in Keats's ideas about the poetic canon. At the start of his career, he agreed with his contemporaries in rejecting the Augustan poets and lionising the renaissance (p. 220). But as he matured, he showed greater receptivity to Augustan modes, emulating Dryden in *Lamia* and Pope in *The Jealousies*. The next two essays focus on poets of Keats's time. O'Neill considers a range of poets (pp. 229-37), but reserves most of his energy for a subtle discussion of Keats's 'conflicted response' to Wordsworth's poetry (p. 234). Jane Stabler (pp. 238-47) deals quickly with Keats's dismissal of Coleridge, before considering at some length how the erotic impulses of Shelley and Byron inflected his notions of beauty. Andrew Bennett's essay on 'Ballad, Romance and Narrative' (pp. 248-57) is a fine beginning to subsection on genre, with its reflections on Keats's 'deformations and deviation from convention' (p. 248). Susan J. Wolfson's essay on 'Epic and Tragedy' (pp. 258-68) follows on smoothly, beginning with Keats's 'Adieu to Romance' (p. 258). Rather than focussing on genre, however, Wolfson offers an extended close reading of the *Hyperion* poems. Christopher Miller concludes Part IV by telling the familiar story of Keats's 'development' from a sonneteer to the writer of the Great Odes (pp. 269-77).

Parts V and VI both consider the aftermath of Keats's poetry. The three essays in Part V show how he influenced later writers, the four in Part VI analyse the reactions of scholars and critics to his verse over the last 200 years. Herbert F. Tucker (pp. 281-90) considers how Victorian poets strove to 'contain' Keats's dangerously seductive verse (p. 287). Michael O'Neill argues

that twentieth-century poets have found Keats more straightforwardly inspirational (pp. 291-9). Mark Sandy briskly summarises Keats's North American reception, from the Transcendentalists to Roth and Stevens (pp. 300-9). It is a pity the same consideration was not given to the rest of the English-speaking world. Kelvin Everest kicks off the final series of essays on Keats's critical reception, by showing how 'disconcertingly different' Keats's poetry was for his contemporaries (pp. 314; 313-22). Francis O'Gorman goes on to show how voyeuristic concern over Keats's love life warped his critical reception through the nineteenth century (pp. 323-30). Matthew Scott shows how this Victorian inheritance was deconstructed in the twentieth century (pp. 331-39), building up to the turning point in the 1960s, when for the first time the whole range of Keats's poems and the full extent of the surviving documents were finally taken into account (p. 336). Richard Marggraf Turley concludes the volume on a wry note (pp. 340-9), by surveying the 'critical biases' of recent scholarship (p. 340). His summary takes in a wide range of critical approaches to Keats, confirming the vitality and importance of Keats studies today. These essays on Keats' reception conclude this excellent collection. The book's organisation is impeccable. The essays are concise and digestible enough to suit the undergraduate reader, and packed with enough details and witty observations to please the most experienced scholar.

Serena Trowbridge continues the consideration of Keats' reception in 'Gender and Space in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings of "The Eve of St. Agnes",' her contribution to *Poetry in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings* [Peter Lang, 2017]. As she demonstrates, the sensuous jewellery of Keats' verse attracted the Pre-Raphaelites. Millais' *The Eve of St Agnes* [1863], Hunt's *The flight of Madeline and Porphyro* [1848] and Arthur Hughes' *The Eve of St Agnes* [1856] all celebrate the dramatic and lyrical aspects of Keats's great work of narrative. In the final section of her essay, Trowbridge throws these Keatsian qualities of sensuality and drama into relief, by contrasting these examples with Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal's painting *The Eve of St. Agnes* [1850], based not on Keats's poem, but on Tennyson's stiller and more contemplative work of the same name.

Eric Eisner considers a less well-known chapter in Keats's reception in 'Drag Keats: Mark Doty's Cockneys Poetics' (*ERR* 28[2017] 387-93). The contemporary American poet Mark Doty is often accused of Keatsianism, and Eisner carefully considers the evidence of this charge. In the end, he concludes, Doty is able to draw productively on the earlier poet because of 'the way Keats disconnects style from unique selfhood' (p. 392). The shifting music of his verse is not constrained by a particular personality.

Stacey McDowell picks upon this theme of disconnection in her essay on 'Shiftiness in Keats's "Ode on Indolence"' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 27-37). She draws fascinating connections between 'Indolence's' unstable textual history, its themes of 'generative passiveness' (p. 28), and Keats' famed theory of Negative Capability. She argues that all these strands can be drawn together under the rubric of 'shiftiness', offering close readings of the poem as evidence.

Tristram Wolff likewise picks up on the fleeting aspects of Keats' poetry in 'Surface Feeling, or What Ephemerality Does to Reading in Hazlitt, Hogarth, and Keats' (*ERR* 28[2017] 349-60). Interdisciplinary scholars have in recent years done much to illuminate 'deep time' in Romantic

poetry, argues Wolff, and have neglected 'shallow time', the time of instants or moments in Romantic poetry. He begins with a long comparative discussion of Hogarth and Hazlitt's intertwined theories of wit and beauty. For these two writers, 'images fairly vibrate with possibilities' (p. 355). Having built up this framework Wolff then turns to Keats, bringing out the contradictory aspects of fleeting and freezing time in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' [1819].

Thomas Moore

While *Blackwood's Magazine* was reliably hostile about most things emancipatory, Daniel S. Roberts argues in "'The Only Irish Magazine": Early *Blackwood's* and the Production of Irish 'National Character'" (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 262-71), that it took a surprisingly complex line on Ireland. Examining Maga's engagements with Moore's smash hit, *Lalla Rookh*, allows Robinson to explore the nuances of the magazine's position on Ireland.

Frederik Van Dam, meanwhile, in 'Waterloo Remembered: Thomas Moore and the Diplomatic Legacy of the Battle of Waterloo in the Nineteenth Century' (*SiR* 56[2017] 379-398), accounts for Moore's relative silence on this period-defining battle by highlighting the Irish poet's interest in the battle's 'diplomatic aftermath' (p. 381), as shown in his two popular satires, *The Fudge Family in Paris* and *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*.

Julia M. Wright squares up to another side of Moore in her wonderfully researched and entertaining essay, 'Cosmopugilism: Thomas Moore's Boxing Satires and the Post-Napoleonic Congresses' (*SiR* 56 [2017] 499-523), opening with a fascinating account of the popularity of boxing and boxing slang in Regency satire. Moore was, Wright argues persuasively, quick to pick up on this, incorporating boxing and boxing slang into his popular satirical poetry of 1818 and beyond.

Edward Rushton

Grégory Pierrot's essay, 'Droit Du Seigneur, Slavery, and Nation in the Poetry of Edward Rushton' (*SiR* 56[2017] 15-35), looks at the chronically under-considered poetry of Edward Rushton, specifically the poetry he wrote against slavery after his transition from sailor in the trade to radical abolitionist. Among many aspects considered in this insightful, wide-ranging essay, Pierrot focuses particularly on the idea of revenge in anti-slavery poems, and the way in which British poets managed their own uneasiness at the prospect of outright slave rebellion and self-determination.

Charlotte Smith

Bethan Roberts's essay, "'Breaking the Silent Sabbath of the Grave": Charlotte Smith's Sonnet XLIV and Her Place in Literary History' (*ERR* 28[2017] 549-570), delves deeper into the peopled ground of Smith's most famous sonnet, excavating an extraordinarily complex pattern of appropriation, imitation, and, most appropriately, 'disintegration' (p. 554) of eighteenth-century

poetic tradition. Roberts usefully and sensitively complicates the established view of Smith's sonnet as a radical break with tradition, replacing this easy narrative with something far more nuanced.

Tobias Meneley's ambitious essay, 'Late Holocene Poetics: Genre and Geogistory in *Beachy Head*' (*ERR* 28[2017] 307-314), asks a vast question: 'What do we learn [...] if we reperiodize literary history in relation to, and as expressive of, epochal change at the scale of the Earth System?' (p. 307) What follows is a rich and complex reading of Smith's *Beach Head*, with particular attention to the ways in which Smith conceptualises and figures 'the flow of energy on Earth' (p. 313).

Meanwhile, in 'The Negative Turn: Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* and the Right not to Communicate' (*RCPS* [June 2017]), Samuel Rowe makes a radical departure from critical orthodoxy in exploring 'counter-sentimental in Smith's writing', specifically her sonnets, which maintain a 'stony silence on the cause of their despondency.' Characterising Smith's sonnets as practicing 'affective dissociation and phenomenal withdrawal from the world', Rowe claims 'Smith for a Romantic tradition of lyric negativity.'

Percy Shelley

Matthew C. Borushko examines the Shelleyan sublime in 'Perils of the Sublime: Ideology in Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Alastor*' (*ERR* 28 [2017] 643-658), using the *Alastor* poet's encounter with the veiled maid as a departure point for a thoroughgoing account of Shelley's anxieties about the sublime and 'the habits of mind it compels.' (p. 644).

Carmen Cassaligi's 'From Coppet to Milan: Romantic Circles at La Scala.' (*WC* 48[2017] 59-66) considers the importance of cosmopolitan centres like Milan for the work of the second generation of Romantics, particularly Shelley. This is a highly pertinent and pointed essay that insists on the significance of Europe in any formulation of British Romanticism.

Bysshe Inigo Coffey throws himself into the breach between materialism and idealism in Shelley's poetry. Coffey's essay, 'Shelley's *Alastor* and "On a Future State"' (*WC* 48[2017] 39-46), attempts to do away with 'the various linear narratives' of Shelley's movement from materialism to idealism, arguing instead that 'Shelley did not seek to resolve the relation between the material and immaterial world [...] but to actuate and enact the dynamic between sensuous reality and the gaps and pauses that punctuate it.'

Benjamin Colbert, in 'Romantic Palingenesis, or History from the Ashes' (*ERR* 28 [2017] 369-378), uses the 'metaphorically rich discourse' of palingenesis, or birth from the ashes, to consider 'the ways in which Shelley problematizes the suture between organic selfhood, individual consciousness, and social-political history'. While Shelley's work abounds in images of resurrection and rebirth, Colbert skilfully reveals an entropic undersong of disintegration, disruption, and decay.

J. D. Lamperez's essay, "'Strong hold and fountain-head of their idolatry": The juggernaut in the work of Claudius Buchanan and Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*' (SiR 56[2017] 423-452), identifies the mysterious 'Car of Life' at the centre of Shelley's late, unfinished poem as 'the Indian god-cum-metaphor known as the Juggernaut' (p. 423). Lamperez explains Shelley's unique use of this popular metaphor by reference to Claudius Buchanan, 'an East India Company provost and chaplain whose own reimagining of this divine personality transformed it from Indian deity to British idea.' (p. 424)

Monika Lee offers a series of beguiling reflection on place and influence in 'Shelley and Rousseau: The Mirror and the Lake' (WC 48[2017] 52-59). Pursuing Shelley and Byron on their famous sailing trip around Lake Geneva in 1816, Lee argues that, for Shelley, the most important conversation of Shelley's Swiss sojourn was 'the ongoing intertextual dialogue between Shelley and Rousseau'. (p. 53).

Daniel Westwood's 'Movement in 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty'' (WC 48[2017] 32-39) offers an accomplished formal reading of Shelley's preoccupation with 'the role of movement in quest narrative' (p. 32), finding, in Shelley, a poet who valorises 'the act of seeking as that which lays a pathway through the uncertainties of human experience.' (p. 39).

Michael O'Neill examines the influence of Dante on Shelley in 'Turning to Dante: Shelley's *Adonais* Reconsidered' (WC 48 [2017] 119-128), contending that, particularly in *Adonais*, Dante 'increasingly had come to the fore as the type of "great poet"' for whom Shelley reserved a prophetic function.

Robert Southey

In 2017 Ian Packer and Lynda Pratt completed the next volume in their marvellous, open-access project of collecting and annotating Southey's letters, part of his wider rehabilitation as an important and valuable object of study in the period. The *Collected Letters of Robert Southey, Part Six (Romantic Circles[2017]* https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Six/index.html) is fully accessible online, and, like the past installments, has a wonderfully helpful index, a series of neat biographical sketches for each of the correspondents, and remains a joy to use. Southey's epistolary style is fresh, easy, and chatty, and the volume offers further insight into the life of the hardest-working Laker.

Stuart Andrews, in 'Southey on Coleridge: Bristol Letters, 1799 - 1803' (WC 48 [2017] 168-172), offers an account of Southey's opinions on Coleridge, and his life as a 'Bristol Poet' (p. 168), as reconstructed from Southey's Bristol letters.

Mary Tighe

Harriet Kramer Linkin casts welcome light on Mary Tighe in 'Locating Irish Romanticism in Mary Tighe's Poetry and Prose' (*ERR* 28[2017] 431-445), illuminating her cloudy, sporadic presence as the quintessential Irish woman poet of the period. In a wide-ranging survey of Tighe's work, Linkin shows 'how completely [Tighe] could enact the connection between the personal and the political' (p. 432), and provides a number of fascinating readings of Tighe's work next to more canonical Romantic poets.

Catherine Upton

Dan Froid's electronic edition of Catherine Upton's *The Siege of Gibraltar & Miscellaneous Pieces* (*Romantic Circles*[2017] <https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/upton/index.html>) reminds us again of how much textual recovery work remains to be done in the period. Readers will find Froid's introduction useful in placing Upton and her patriotic celebration of the Great Siege of Gibraltar.

William Wordsworth

Wordsworth studies continued to flourish in 2017, with new sites of scholarly enquiry opening, and apparently well-trod paths revisited for further insight. In 'Wordsworth's Unwelcome Visitors' (*WC* 48[2017] 77-84), Quentin Bailey revisits the question of Wordsworth's vagrants, both as victims of specific social conditions and as prompts to more general questions about hospitality and duty of care, by way of the current refugee crisis.

Toby R. Benis, meanwhile, in 'Vagrants and Neighbors in *The Prelude*' (*WC* 48[2017] 84-87), looks to 'neighbors' and 'neighborhood' as a way of exploring 'social belonging' (p. 85) without succumbing to partisanship or nationalism, contrasting neighborly bonds with vagrancy in Book IV of *The Prelude*.

Kelvin C. Black's "'Bound by "the Principles of 1776": Dilemmas in AngloAmerican Romanticism and Douglass's *The Heroic Slave*' presents an interesting parallel movement in the politics of William Wordsworth and Frederick Douglass. Black re-reads the Burke vs. Paine debate in light of Douglass's novel, *The Heroic Slave*, a book Smith believes marks Douglass's reconciliation with sympathetic nationalism, and detects a similar accommodation in *The Prelude*.

Julia S. Carlson's essay, "'With Gentle Hand/Touch-": "The Horrid Blank of Nature" and the New Feel of Reading' (*ERR* 28 [2017] 279-288) offers a fascinating survey of Romantic attitudes to the 'new haptic technologies' (p. 280) emerging in France, precursors to braille. Carlson argues persuasively that these new sensory worlds filtered through into conceptions of subjectivity and models of private reading, concluding with an ingenious and insightful reading of Wordsworth's 'The Blind Highland Boy'. Wordsworth's fascination with blindness has often been remarked on,

but Carlson here brilliantly finds a source for this fascination in the material culture of the late eighteenth century.

Clay Daniel introduces yet another complicating factor in the fraught relationship between Wordsworth's poetry and politics in 'Milton, Politics and *The Prelude*' (*WC* 48[2017] 172-177), pointing out a range of fascinating clashes and contradictions in Wordsworth's identification (or not) with his great republican forebear.

A fascinating addition to Wordsworth studies, Hugh Davis's essay, "'As If Admonished from Another World": Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Schopenhauer, and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*', in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men at 75*, edited by Michael A. Lofaro, considers problems of perception, representation, and knowledge in Book VII of the *Prelude* and James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. While careful to acknowledge that 'the situation to which James Agee hoped to do justice in 1930s rural Alabama was far removed from the urban spectacle of teeming London' (p. 97) in Book VII, Davis reveals a number of far-reaching parallels between the two authors - with consequences for our reading of both.

Eric Lindstrom meditates on a different sort of praise between famous men in his essay, 'Mourning Life: William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 38-52), a fascinating, responsive account of Shelley's many Wordsworthian turns - both for and against. Charting this switchback course, Lindstrom discerns in Shelley's imagination a 'dialectical energy of thought that works much like the alternations of an electrical current' (p. 49).

Carmen Faye Mathes's haunting essay on the effects and affects of sound, 'Listening not Listening: William Wordsworth and the Radical Materiality of Sound' (*ERR* [2017] 315-324), begins with Canadian poet Jordan Scott's recordings of ambient sound in the Guantánamo Bay Detention Center, before considering the often involuntary scenes of hearing in Wordsworth's poetry, with particular attention to 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture'.

Steven Matthews's *Ceaseless Music* attacks its canvas with pleasingly broad brushstrokes: 'This book considers how the revolutionary autobiographical epic, *The Prelude*, altered and changed in its author William Wordsworth's mind', 'how the poem changed the minds of his readers', and 'authors across the centuries since' (p. viii). What follows is a series of lightly-researched reflections on Wordsworth's self-originating epic and 'how it is that poetry sounds out the world, how it sounds out of the world, how it demands attention as a way of understanding who we are, where we are' (p. ix), interleaved with brief biographical anecdotes of the Wordsworth circle and Matthews himself, riffs on brain science and aesthetics, and the odd original poem inspired by or related to a famous Wordsworthian work or landmark. Matthews's openly avowed inexperience and status as a kind of poetic lay-preacher - 'I take it you do not know who I am', (p. 1) the first chapter begins - sets the tone and sometimes yields dividends. Insights like the following, for example, are all the better for being put simply: 'Perhaps it is Wordsworth's supreme confidence that there is a story of his life to be woven which is the most inspiring aspect of *The Prelude*.' (p. 130). These insights, however, are rarely

pursued in any detail or complexity, and Matthews sometimes falls into truism or factual inaccuracy in the process of scoring a rhetorical point. 'Why [...] should I be the one reflecting on *The Prelude*? By what right?', Matthews asks, since 'I am not known as a scholar' (p. 1), before answering himself: 'Hubris would say, well, Wordsworth himself was unknown when he began work on *The Prelude* [...] He had published only 'his' section of *Lyrical Ballads*' (p. 2). In fact, Wordsworth had published two long poems and a number of shorter poems before 'his' section of the *Lyrical Ballads*. While Matthews's purpose, as part of Bloomsbury's 'Beyond Criticism' series, may be an admirably levelling one, this endeavour is undermined by the price: an eye-watering £85. This is a book that struggles to identify its audience - a suitably Wordsworthian dilemma.

Stacy McDowell's essay, 'Rhyming and Undeciding in Wordsworth and Norman Nicholson' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 179-190), offers sensitive and witty readings of two great Cumbrian poets separated by time (but not very much space). Reading Wordsworth's 'Yarrow Unvisited' with and against Nicholson's 'Askam Unvisited', McDowell draws out the deft poetical footwork underlying both poems which facilitates their authors' mutual fascination with 'unvisiting', and the various themes of temporality, memory, and imagination this curious concept suggests. This is a marvellously intricate but unfussy account of how skillfully these two poet matched or deliberately mismatched content with form.

Joseph McQueen, meanwhile, revisits *The Prelude* with Walter Benjamin as a guide in 'Remembering the Revolution: Wordsworth, Benjamin, and Mnemonic Critique' (*ERR* 28[2017] 241-258). Highlighting the way in which 'emphasis on Wordsworth's inward turn and subsequent political apostasy risks obscuring the moments in his work, particularly those in *The Prelude*, that are not simply reactionary' (p. 242), McQueen argues that, via Benjamin, memory can be a vehicle for political recovery - a claim that has major consequences for readings of *The Prelude*.

Joel Pace's luminous essay, 'Afterthoughts: Romanticism, the Black Atlantic, and Self-Mapping' (*SiR* 56 [2017] 113-123), revisits the poetry of Phillis Wheatley, recasting Wheatley as a Romantic by showing how 'Wheatley's critiques of Enlightenment ideology anticipate Romanticism' and the '[a]utobiographical pentameter (p. 116)' usually deemed specifically Wordsworthian. In doing so, Pace shows how Romanticism might look if the Atlantic, specifically the Black Atlantic, is placed at its centre.

Taylor Schey courses on the borderline between similarity and difference in 'Limited Analogies: Reading Relations in Wordsworth's *The Borderers*' (*SiR* 56 [2017] 177-201), producing a brilliantly insightful and nuanced account of this most difficult of Wordsworthian texts. After a vigorous account of the conflict between symbol and analogy in the work of David Hume and major theorists of Romanticism, Schey goes on to read the repetition, illegitimacy, and mistaken identity at play in *The Borderers* as an attempt to grapple with the use and misuse of analogy, and the difficulty of ultimately discerning where difference and similarity begin and end.

John Williams presents a novel reading of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* in 'Wordsworth, Shelley, and the Riddle of *Peter Bell*' (*Romanticism* 23[2017] 75-87), showing, firstly, how this befuddling poem depends on a tradition of folk 'riddling' rarely acknowledged in Wordsworth's work (p. 76), and, secondly (for the first time) how Shelley's furiously satirical response, *Peter Bell the Third*, drew on Thomas Moore's wildly popular Phil Fudge satires (p. 82). Williams concludes his wide-ranging reappraisal, by way of an ingenious series of biographical readings, of the original poem with an answer to the riddle at its heart - 'Peter Bell is William Wordsworth' - before closing, appropriately, with an even more potent mystery: 'we are still left with the question, 'Who is William Wordsworth?' This is the riddle that was to haunt Wordsworth's poetry to the end of his life, and beyond.' (p. 86). The search continues.

Kim Wheatley, meanwhile, mines a rich seam of Wordsworth's poetry in 'John Cowper Powys and the Inhuman Wordsworth' (*ERR* 28 [2017] 773-788), using Powys's writings to excavate the 'stony version of Wordsworth' (p. 777), who champions a kind of heroic insensibility.

Books Reviewed

Ayres Brenda, ed. *Biographical Misrepresentations of British Women Writers*. Palgrave. [2017] pp. xiv + 291. €99.99. ISBN 9 7833 1956 7495.

Bode, Christoph, ed. *Romanticism and the Forms of Discontent*. WVT. [2017] pp. 216. €26.50. ISBN 9 7838 6821 7391.

Brown Marshall. 'I think, therefore I feel'. In Brosky Claudia and LaBrada Elroy, eds. *Inventing Agency: Essays on the Literary and Philosophical Production of the Modern Subject*. Bloomsbury. [2017] pp. 272. £90. ISBN 9 7815 0131 7149.

Cheyne Peter, ed. *Coleridge and Contemplation*. OUP. [2017] pp. xxii + 332. £65. ISBN 9 7801 9879 9511.

Clery E. J. *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven: Poetry, Protest and Economic Crisis*. CUP. [2017] pp. xii + 308. £75. ISBN 9 7813 1698 7278.

Davis Hugh. "As if admonished from another world": Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Schopenhauer, and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*'. In Lofaro Michael A., ed. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men at 75*. UTP. [2017] 95-112. \$54. ISBN 9 7816 2190 2614.

Davison Carol Margaret, ed. *The Gothic and Death*. MUP. [2017] pp. xvi + 240. £75. ISBN 9 7817 8499 2699.

Domsch Sebastian, Reinfandt Christoph, Rennhak Katharina, eds. *Romantic Ambiguities: Abodes of the Modern*. WVT. [2017] pp. 308. €35. ISBN 9 7838 6821 7278.

Earle Bo. *Post-Personal Romanticism: Democratic Terror, Prosthetic Poetics, and the Comedy of Modern Ethical Life*. OSUP. [2017] pp. xiv + 212. \$84.95. 9 7808 1421 3520. eb \$19.95. 9 7808 1427 5863.

Froid Dan, ed. *The Siege of Gibraltar & Miscellaneous Pieces*. Romantic Circles [2017] <https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/upton/index.html>

Gamer Michael. *Romanticism, Self-Canonization and the Business of Poetry*. CUP. [2017] pp. xvi + 330. ISBN 9 7811 0715 8856.

Kövesi Simon. *John Clare: Nature, Criticism and History*. Palgrave. [2017] pp. xii + 266. €99. ISBN 9 7802 3027 7878.

Matthews Steven. *Ceaseless Music: Sounding Wordsworth's The Prelude*. Bloomsbury. [2017] xxiv + 221. £85. ISBN 9 7814 7423 2784.

O'Neill Michael, ed. *John Keats in Context*. CUP. [2017] pp. xvi + 373. £75. ISBN 9 7811 0707 0554.

— and Callaghan Madeline. *The Romantic Poetry Handbook*. Wiley. [2017] pp. xiii + 344. \$90. ISBN 9 7811 1830 8738.

Putzi Jennifer, Socarides Alexandra, eds. *A History of Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry*. CUP. [2017] pp. xvii + 440. £67.99. ISBN 9 7811 0708 3981.

Rawes Alan and Saglia Diego, eds. *Byron and Italy*. Manchester UP. [2017] pp. 264. £75. ISBN 9 7815 2610 0559.

Tedeschi Simon. *Urbanization and English Romantic Poetry*. CUP. [2017] pp. vi + 282. £75. ISBN 9 7811 0841 6092.

Trowbridge Serena. 'Gender and Space in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings of "The Eve of St. Agnes".' In Andres Sophia and Donnelly Brian, eds. *Poetry in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings: Transcending Boundaries*. Peter Lang. [2017] pp. xiii + 181. \$92.95. ISBN 9 7814 3314 0785.

White Adam. *John Clare's Romanticism*. Palgrave. [2017] pp. xi + 332. €99. ISBN 9 7833 1953 8587.

Whitehead James. *Madness and the Romantic Poet: A Critical History*. Oxford University Press. [2017]. pp. xi + 330. £55. ISBN 9 7801 9873 3706.