

Year's Work in English Studies 2019:

Romantic Poetry

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Suzanne L. Barnett's lively and entertaining study is an appropriate place to begin this section as it, like many other books published in 2018, works to connect Romanticism with other periods and temporalities. Addressing the question of the so-called second generation Romantics' interest in classical paganism, Barnett breaks new ground in taking this interest seriously. More than simply a fashion for Greek tags and titillating statuary, paganism was, in Barnett's words, 'a theme of key importance to the young Romantic writers: a reclamation of the mythology and imagery of the classical world characterized not only by philosophy and reason [...] but also by wildness, excess, and ecstatic experiences—all of which registered as decidedly un-Christian (even anti-Christian) and potentially subversive.' (2).

Following a motley and fairly open-ended crew of Romantic pagans, unified under the convenient banner of the Shelley circle – including, among others, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock, but, curiously, not Keats and Byron – the former being too well-covered by scholarship, and the latter too Christian – Barnett attempts to show that, as much as it could be, Romantic paganism was a serious business of wine, jollity, and song, with serious political ends. Paganism, she writes, 'was a loaded idea at the turn of the nineteenth century, an idea that entangled religion, politics, and aesthetics in the popular imagination and, quite deliberately, in the poetic projects of the Shelley circle'. (11). While Barnett's case is slightly overstated – particularly in the way she formulates a quarrel between first and second generation Romantics over the uses and abuses of paganism – there is much of value in this study. Barnett's readings of Percy Shelley are especially suggestive, and her chapter on *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) is a highlight. Reading this extraordinary work as 'the culmination of his development of his pagan-inspired ideology of ecstatic dissolution, an ideology that increasingly relies on the idea of music', Barnett looks to the opera and ballet being staged in Italy during the Shelley's residence there as the prompt for Percy's taking up of 'lyric poetry's ancient bedfellow [...] as a more direct and effective means of communication than postlapsarian language.' (6). While it is mildly inconvenient to Barnett's argument that the turn to music as a truer language was commonplace among first generation Romantics, the historical recovery work around Shelley's greatest poem still pays dividends, and more than justifies the writing of this enjoyable and informative book.

'When early nineteenth-century critics wished to indicate the potential influence and longevity of their favourite contemporary authors', writes Nikki Hessell in the opening pages of her ground-breaking study, *Romantic Literature and the Colonised World: Lessons from Indigenous Translations*, 'they turned to the map of the colonised world' (1). Acknowledging the extraordinary mobility, reach, and portability of Romantic texts from the nineteenth century on, Hessell co-locates the Romantic period with an age of colonial expansion and consolidation, during which works by canonical Romantic authors such as William Wordsworth, Felicia Hemans, Robert Burns, and Walter Scott 'travelled in the literal and figurative baggage of the diasporic British population', and even held official posts as 'prescribed' works of 'the European canon and the English language [...] building blocks of the imperial education system in British India', for example, as well as in 'the curricula of the mission schools for indigenous children in the Pacific throughout the nineteenth century'. All of which, Hessell suggests, should remind us that "English literature formed a central part of the colonial project [...] English literary texts were synonymous with the experiences of colonisation", and the Romantics were 'crucial to this project' (2-3).

While the colonial context of Romanticism has been an object of study for some time, and Hessell is quick to acknowledge new work from scholars like Manu Samriti Chander and others on Romanticism's 'influence on and overlaps with the work of colonised writers', what distinguishes Hessell's study is its unique focus on 'indigenous-language translations of Romantic texts'. These translations, Hessell argues, 'offer a different avenue for examining the ways in which Romantic literature could be adapted to the literary traditions of colonised populations and speak to their concerns', with the 'potential to resituate the critical discussion in ways that take account of new autonomous indigenous remakings of British literature, rather than simply the representation of indigenous peoples in that literature.' (4). As well as a provocative reversal of gaze, such translations replace the single or binary perspectives of established narratives of colonial encounter for multiple, mobile, and dynamic interactions between colonised and coloniser through Romantic texts – texts which, as Hessell shrewdly notes, continue to offer 'shared situations, interests, and anxieties [...] around traditions, language, authority, and land'. Romantic texts, in Hessell's words, 'were always already concerned with colonisation, and thus it is perhaps unsurprising that those same discourses caught the eye of indigenous-language translators' (5). Readings from the "edge", in this instance, can be confidently traced back, through Hessell's work, to the very "centre" of the Romantic period – culturally and geographically – an approach that produces and recovers a

number of novel and far-reaching readings and conclusions that have the potential to change our approach to the period as a whole.

Beginning with Felicia Hemans, ‘not only one of the most popular poets of the nineteenth century’ but ‘also the preeminent poet of colonisation’, each chapter examines a key translation – of an author, a text, or group of texts – in Hemans’s case, the translation of her poems into Māori ‘by members of the settler population’ in Aotearoa New Zealand ‘with the aim of reaching indigenous readers’ (29). Progressing from Hemans to Burns (whose work, Hessell notes, ‘was so familiar that it became incorporated into their own languages’, transliterated by famous Māori elder and translator Reweti Kōhere as “Ropata Purana” (57)); to Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, serialised ‘in the Hawaiian-language newspaper *Ke Au Okoa*’ (93) in the 1870s; to the complex interactions of home, property, naming, and ownership in Wordsworth’s poetry when read through indigenous architecture; to the imperial medical practices seeded in Keat’s ‘Isabella, or the Pot of Basil’, revealed in the Malayam translation of the poem by Moorkoth Kumaran in 1927, Hessell reveals multiple points of similarity and difference between the texts and their translators, showing, with consummate skill, the ways in which Romantic texts, even as they were used as tools of cultural domination, often turned in the hands of those who wielded them, offering, in translation, sympathy, mutual engagement, and even a shared language of resistance. As Hessell concludes, indigenous-language translations ‘are not just novelties, nor simply evidence of the global power and reach of Romantic literature’ – rather, they ‘have the potential to reshape entirely our approach to texts and to authors that we think we know well’ (229).

2018 witnessed the publication of a major collection by one of the most influential voices in the field: Marjorie Levinson’s *Thinking Through Poetry*. This notice will focus in detail only on the Introduction, the only hitherto unpublished essay in the volume, but the book as a whole is a welcome reminder of what has made Levinson such a prominent voice in Romantic studies, and serves as a summary or capstone of her scholarly career.

In her introduction, Levinson looks back over thirty years of scholarship and tries to elicit the key threads. Her work is a defence of the ‘intellectual dimension of poetry’ (4), its ability to generate new concepts, to test and refine our understanding of things. It is also a defence of a certain kind of critique, which Levinson defends against new conceptions of ‘shallow’, ‘erotic’ or less ‘critical’ forms of reading. It is true, she argues, that in her work she often observes a poem’s ‘blind spots’, but this is not simply a matter of attacking or debunking a poem:

By analogy to a visual field, textual fields do not merely contain blind spots, they come into being in relation to some particular blindness ... Paradoxically, the existence of this blind spot ... is the condition of seeing at all. (9)

After surveying the contents of the volume, Levinson concludes with an extended discussion of 'through-thinking', as in *thinking through a problem*, both as something poems do, and as something critics do. Addressing a range of writers, but in particular Martin Heidegger, John Keats and Donna Haraway, Levinson arrives at a muscular picture of thought. The through-thinker works progressively through a problem, 'if not solving [it], then coherently and in step-by-step fashion addressing it' (29).

This is Levinson's vision of a critical poetry, and of a poetic criticism. It is borne out in the essays that follow. The two parts are divided loosely by chronology and methodology. Part 1 (Chapters 2-6), mostly from the 80s and 90s, comprise historicist readings of the Romantic lyric. The essays are digressive and expansive, branching off into long discursive footnotes and trailing off into appendices. Levinson's commitment to 'through-thinking' is evident, as is her passionate devotion to Wordsworth, the only Romantic poet who gets sustained attention in these pages. The section ends somewhat incongruously with Levinson's famous essay 'What is the New Formalism?' (Chapter 6), though the chapter does round out the section with a contrast to her earlier works. Part 2 expands the frame theoretically, as Levinson experiments with what she calls 'postclassical' modes of critical awareness. Chapter 7 considers the morphogenesis of clouds in Wordsworth, Chapter 8 applies Gottlob Frege to the 'Lucy poems', Chapter 9 combines grammar, Gilles Deleuze and actual photographs of frost to unfold the intricate structure of Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight' [1798]. Chapter 10 builds from a close analysis of Wallace Stevens to a thrilling analysis of the 'implicate' and 'explicate orders' of poetry, with a nod to physicist David Bohm (250-52). In this passage we encounter one of the most prominent New Historicists claiming that a poem is a 'single, continually self-specifying plane' (252), an order all of its own. In the Conclusion, Levinson encapsulates her later, post-historicist theory of lyric. A lyric is 'thought happening', a depiction of the existence or occurrence of consciousness (261), and it is to be understood as a kind of 'self-organization (or self-assembly)' (255), in which the 'entity' (the poem) and its 'environment' (the context) 'co-create' one another (267-72). With her idea of 'entity/environment cocreation' Levinson comes full circle, demonstrating that the expansive, scientifically-inspired work of her later years can be synthesised with the more focussed historicist work that made her famous. It will be for readers to judge whether this synthesis is truly possible and worthwhile.

Three books in 2018 systematically considered the breakdown of self and world in Romantic literature. In her study, *Awful Parenthesis: Suspension and the Sublime in Romantic and Victorian Poetry*, Anne C. McCarthy argues that ‘suspension’ was a figure for ‘the ontological crisis of contingency and discontinuity as it was experienced in ... the nineteenth century’ (p. 6). Suspension makes the world present by its absence, and indicates the existence of things by their inexistence. Poets of the period used it to suggest that ‘the world might not coincide with itself’. For her Romantic exemplars, McCarthy selects Coleridge and Percy Shelley. Readers interested in McCarthy’s discussion of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti may turn to the Victorian Poetry section of the present volume.

In her first chapter on Coleridge, McCarthy considers how the poet describes the suspension of his own consciousness in ‘Frost at Midnight’ and ‘The Nightingale’. In these poems, she argues, Coleridge is able ‘to occupy multiple subject positions at once’ by entering a trancelike state (32), and though he purports to synthesise his experiences, is ultimately unable to do so. This self-fragmentation is essential to Coleridge’s theory and experience of the sublime. Moving through his letter on the Scaffell incident, and into a discussion of the *Biographia Literaria*, McCarthy argues that in later years Coleridge achieved a more coherent sense of consciousness. By 1802, Coleridge had developed ‘a set of aesthetic practices that enable him to hold himself together while opening to the unknown and the contingent’ (44). She continues her discussion of Coleridge in the following chapter, revealing how the fragmented and incomplete forms of ‘Christabel’ and *Aids to Reflection* [1825] reflect Coleridge’s complex feeling of ‘poetic faith’ (52).

In her third chapter, McCarthy shifts attention to Percy Shelley. Where Coleridge’s sense of the suspended self was difficult, shifting, and uncertain, Shelley’s is more triumphant: for him, self-suspension is a kind of ‘ecstasy’ (86). In such an ecstatic state, the ‘sublime’ ceases to be a figure of dominance, as it is in Kant. In a poem like ‘Mont Blanc’, Shelley suspends ‘the very structures of reference and conceptual thought that make it possible to distinguish the dominant from the dominated’ (91). In her beautiful reading of this poem and ‘Alastor’, McCarthy shows how Shelley’s exploration of suspended conscious undoes the distinction between one thing and another, between mind and world, between life and death.

The second book on Romantic breakdown is Jonas Cope’s remarkable study, *The Dissolution of Character in Late Romanticism*. In *Dissolution*, Cope suggests that later Romantic writers systematically debunked the notion that an individual person has a stable or essential character. Here we consider just his chapters on Hartley Coleridge and Laetitia Landon, two poets who

remain on the fringes of Romantic studies. Readers may consult the other Romanticism chapters of the present volume if they are interested in Cope's other preoccupations.

Hartley Coleridge strove to achieve a 'a "pleasurably" insensate, amoral, structureless, characterless state' in his poetry (122). According to Cope, this drive for dissolution led Hartley towards atheism, contradicting ostensibly orthodox Christian faith. Life and death are curiously intermixed in Hartley's verse: 'organic development serves the broader aim of organic dissolution or regression' (127). In his readings of Hartley's poems, Cope skillfully draws out contradictions in the imagery. Hartley uses dissipating smoke as a metaphor for the eternal soul (131). He links the image of a 'peaceful vale' and a 'grassy sod' to the blaring trumpet of the Last Judgment (134). The chapter demonstrates that Hartley Coleridge is truly a mystical poet of note, who turned the failures of his personal life into great literary achievements.

In his chapter on Landon, Cope tackles those core Romantic themes: sincerity and authenticity. Landon has a nomadic 'I', which is at times rooted in nature, at other times pleasantly flowing through society. She expresses starkly opposed opinions in her poetry. In 'Linmouth' [1833], she rejects Wordsworth's poetry of nature and solitude (161). In 'Rydal Water and Grasmere Lake, the Residence of Wordsworth', she prostrates herself before Wordsworth, describing his house as an 'altar-stone' (p. 164). Her nomadic persona makes judgments of authenticity impossible; the emotion of her poetry 'is neither "real" nor unreal, principled nor unprincipled...' If we use such words, we assume that her poems '[reproduce] the contents of personal or dramatic "characters" – concepts she has destabilised before the act of composition' (165). In the end, she is an author without an 'authorial voice' (166).

Larry Peer's edited collection *Transgressive Romanticism* [Cambridge Scholars, 2018], completes this trio of 2018 books on the breakdown or destruction of self and/or world. Readers may turn to the other sections of the present publication for an account of the book generally. Here we note just the six chapters (out of a total 11) that focus on Romantic poetry.

Two essays set the scene, describing how we might approach transgressive poetics in the Romantic period generally. Richard Eldridge tackles transgressive lyricism in his 'Texts of Recovery: Post-Hegelian Reflections on the Work of Romantic Lyric' (10-26), while Kevin M. Saylor considers transgressive epic in 'Future Founding: The Romantic Transformation of Epic' (115-132). Eldridge suggests that Romantic lyricism allows us to transgress the boundaries of humdrum selfhood ('staleness, hyperconventionality, and failures of attentiveness') and achieve a more 'animated life' (10). Drawing on Hegel, he sets out to show how this style of transgressive consciousness really *is* transgressive. He confronts critics who would claim that

Romantic 'transgression' is really just the reinstatement of a certain kind of white male European self-satisfaction, turning to Hegel for assistance. What makes Romantic transgression truly transgressive, he concludes, is its inner contradiction: Romantic poets write of both the impossible and the necessity of being 'human' (24), and in this way can speak to the oppressed as well as the privileged.

Saylor proposes a similarly axiological definition of transgression in his essay on Romantic epic. What distinguishes Romantic epic, he argues, is its subjectivity and future focus: Romantic epic is rooted in 'the poet's own imaginings' rather than 'history', and towards a 'new founding' rather than back on a golden age (116). Saylor's examples are Blake's *The Four Zoas* [c. 1796-1807], *Milton* [c. 1804-11], *Jerusalem* [1804-c. 1820], Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* [1817], Wordsworth's *Prelude* [1805] and Keats's 'Hyperion' poems. In his view, what makes these poems 'transgressive' is the repudiation of classical epic norms.

As can be seen from Eldridge and Saylor's essays, *Transgressive Romanticism* as a whole really focuses on the familiar theme of Romantic self-assertion, rather than on the neglected forms of Romantic self-vitiation explored by McCarthy and Cope. Nonetheless, the essays on specific poets and poems contain much of interest. There are two essays on Keats. In "'Utterance Sacreligious": Poetic Transgression in Keats's *Hyperion* Fragments' (27-41), James H. Donelan makes a similar argument to Saylor. He sees the *Hyperion* poems as a new kind of epic, which is 'transgressive' due to its transcendent psychological character. Lloyd Davies offers a more original reflection in his essay, 'Between Poetry and Music: Keats's "To Autumn" and Beethoven's *Cavatina*' (42-60). He focuses on a single line of Keats's famous ode [1820] – 'Where are the songs of spring?' – comparing it with a movement from Beethoven's 13th String Quartet (Op. 130). Through this comparison, he seeks to reveal how 'Where are the songs of spring?' should be intoned, and in this way unravels the apparently serene mood of the poem. Davies uncovers a haunting dissonance in the poem, in which 'plenitude' is simultaneously a figure of 'loss' (53). In this way the poem transgresses the demands of a unified subjectivity.

The final two essays on poetry in the volume focus on political and religious transgression. Thomas H. Schmid examines Benjamin Bailey's conservative, imperialist attack on the ostensibly liberal administration of Ceylon (61-75); meanwhile Richard Johnston considers the fratricidal moral economy of Byron's *Cain* [1821] (151-69). Schmid's essay is a useful and thought-provoking analysis of a largely forgotten work of poetry: Benjamin Bailey's *Poetical Sketches of the Interior of Ceylon* [1841]. Bailey's *Sketches* combine wistful Romantic descriptions of Sri Lanka's natural beauty and architectural heritage, with ugly attacks on the culture and practices of native Sri Lankans (63). In a perverse way, Schmid observes, Bailey's

writings are transgressively anti-imperialist: he debunks liberal-Christian imperialist myths, though not because he believes in the emancipation of the colonised, but because he finds the imperial yoke too light! In his essay on *Cain*, by contrast, Johnston considers a progressive transgression of official Christian values. In a brisk, well-researched essay, he shows how *Cain* overturned traditional Christian cosmology in the poem, opening Byron up to the well-known attacks that the poem brought down upon him.

Jonathan Sachs continues the discussion of Romantic non-existence in a different key, in his monograph on *The Poetics of Decline in British Romanticism*. His first two chapters establish an interesting theoretical framework for 'decline', showing how time was quantified in the evolving sciences of historiography and political economy. In insightful readings of Edward Gibbon, Adam Smith and William Playfair, Sachs shows how writers in the emerging social sciences manipulated their timescales to recontextualise ideas of 'decline' and 'progress'. Both Gibbon and Smith narrate the decline of forms of life—Gibbon of the Romans, and Smith of former 'aristocratic' forms of civilisation. But by placing this narratives in a larger temporal context, Smith and Gibbon convert them into narratives of progress. The decline of one group becomes the precondition for the emergence of another (37-38, 42-43). Playfair wanted to convert decline into progress in another way: by portraying time graphically in his charts, he sought to make the causes of decline clear, allowing his readers to identify and arrest them (53). Recontextualising decline could prevent it from actually happening. Like Smith, he felt that decline could be measured, and therefore manipulated.

The next chapter forms a bridge between Sachs's chapter on social science and the literary analysis of later chapters. Reading works by Oliver Goldsmith, Vicesimus Knox and John Stuart Mill, Sachs fleshes out the period's understanding of the 'decline of literature'. These writers were primarily anxious about literature's decline, argues Sachs, because of the great increase in 'literary production' in the later eighteenth century; the 'saturation' of the book market 'contributed to the [period's] sense of temporal acceleration and [its] fractured, heterochronic sense of time' (71). While social scientists were considering the possibility that society could collapse, literary figures were worrying that literature was already on the way down, and with it, one of our primary means of understanding modern life. In their various ways, Goldsmith, Knox and Mill all suggest a similar solution: an enlightened criticism must create a comprehensible canon of literary texts, and resist the market's tendency to push writers towards the lowest common denominator of literary taste.

Having established this rich historical context, Sachs offers three concise chapters on Barbauld, Coleridge and Wordsworth. In *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* [1812], Barbauld contrasts 'the

transience of worldly power and the possibility of culture' (105). The decline of the state serves as a backdrop for a ringing acclamation of culture's immortality. England may fall into ruins, but its ruins will be '*classical* ruins modeled on Greece and Rome', thus preserving what is most important about England itself, its achievements (112). In Wordsworth's 'The Ruined Cottage' [c. 1795-7], different temporalities overlap and intersect, creating a distinctive 'time parallax' (140). The poem complicates ideas of progress and decline, suggesting that 'natural and cultural time' are incommensurable (133). Finally Coleridge establishes a strong contrast between the 'accelerated present', and the slow time of the past (145). This leads him to a distinctive understanding of history. In the modern world, 'historical change' both intensifies and becomes 'non-synchronous' (156). Sachs suggests that in this realisation, Coleridge looks forward to the twentieth-century Marxist historiography of Walter Benjamin and Giovanni Arrighi, a thought that would surely have perturbed this devotee of Edmund Burke (154-55).

Throughout these readings of Barbauld, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Sachs is sensitive to the many different kinds or flavours of time that weave themselves through the poems. He makes many fine critical observations about the nature of different temporalities, such as 'the complete time horizon of antiquity' (112), 'daytime and seasonal time' (128), and the 'restless iteration of the new', a phrase he takes from Peter Fritzsche (147). His sensitivity to different styles of temporality, reminiscent of the great Mikhail Bakhtin, is one of the more attractive aspects of his study. He concludes with a chapter that links the Romantic poets to Charles Darwin, revealing how poetic explorations of time intersect with Darwin's recasting of biological time in his famous works.

David Stewart, meanwhile, engages with a different kind of timeliness in his lucid and deftly argued study, *The Form of Poetry in the 1820s And 1830s : A Period of Doubt*. Picking up in the late teen years of the nineteenth century and carrying on into its thirties, Stewart investigates this fascinating and, he argues, distinct intertidal zone between the Romantic and Victorian periods, 'figured, typically, as a lull in literary history: the time between Romanticism and Victorianism in which little happened.' (p. 1). While Stewart shows that this sense of 'lull' is often the creation of later critics in service to various canonical agendas, he nevertheless insists that

the period's status as an embarrassment did not come from nowhere. Poets and readers during this period worried constantly about the status of the art in a way that transmits itself to the forms their poems took. They worried in particular about their relation with the market: with the novel an increasingly respectable genre and the periodical press

expanding confidently, poets could no longer assume the central place in culture they had long taken for granted. (1-2).

In this new or heightened moment of cultural anxiety, those writing, reading, and writing *about* poetry responded in a variety of ways, and Stewart sets out to survey these responses under three broad groupings: those poets and critics increasingly preoccupied with form and formal questions; those wrapped up in implications of the wildly popular annuals of poetry; and, most enjoyably, those '[d]ashing, sparkling comic writers like Thomas Hood and Winthrop Mackworth Praed' who 'produced poetry that seems both slight (and therefore akin to the ornamental culture of the annuals) yet brilliantly formal too.' (13).

Key to a great deal of the anxiety around popular poetry between 1820 and 1830 was its apparent femininity, an anxiety compounded by the prevalence of women writers and readers, and their grouping around the wildly popular and profitable annuals. As women poets like Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon reached new heights of fame and commercial success, challenging traditional hierarchies of poetic import, the 'relationship between poetry and gender became a problem that poets, readers, and critics worried at, rather than a stable set of positions among which one might locate a particular poet' (12). As Stewart shrewdly notes, this newly popular, commercial position put pressure on these poets in unique ways, producing anxieties about their own roles and self-conception as women writers. Stewart asks us to 'consider the troubling fact that the female poets of this period produced poems that were sold in a market that desired exactly such commodified femininity', and, further, that the commercial viability of their work 'was, for women more than men, a dominant aspect of their creativity' (11) – a concern very much alive in our own historical moment as so-called Instagram poetry, a fundamentally feminised genre, continues to dominate the market.

Stewart's subsequent discussion of Hemans's death poetry – a genre of overwhelming and predictable popularity in the annuals – is a book highlight. Faced with a critical orthodoxy that finds Hemans's death poems formally dead, arguing that Hemans fits her work to generic conventions 'so well that she becomes fixed in it, unable to speak to readers beyond that limit', and more recent critics who 'have been keen, sometimes strenuously so, to bring [Hemans's] work to life by showing how it engaged with its present moment', Stewart concludes, with characteristic grace and economy: 'I want to suggest that the problem is not one we should seek to resolve too quickly.' (128-9). In a study that concerns itself with the recovery and rehabilitation of 'a period of doubt', when 'poets and readers doubted the nature of their art', Stewart reminds us again and again of the remarkable fecundity of this peculiar emotion: it was

'doubt, this book shows, that prompted a remarkable series of formal and cultural experiments that can help us rethink the forms of poetry.' (2).

The deep, often invented Romantic past is raked over again in Jeff Strabone's lucid and entertaining account of the eighteenth-century bardic resurgence, *Poetry and British Nationalisms in the Bardic Eighteenth Century: Imagined Antiquities*. This book will be of particular and slightly pained interest to those working in what is still, for the moment, the United Kingdom, as it places questions of indigeneity, antiquity, and national identity at the heart of Romantic literature, outlining the ways in which Romantic writers discovered, invented, rehabilitated, and forged a lineage of ancestral poets and 'archaic native poetry' (2) to shore up continuities and assert newly sharpened national differences and identities. As Strabone writes,

The literary histories which today distinguish England, Scotland, and Wales as culturally distinct nations all draw on the work of the eighteenth-century figures who edited, adapted, understood, and misunderstood their own nations' rediscovered medieval poetry. The stakes of my argument are thus a revised understanding of the literary canons of the British nations specifically and the role of poetry in the rise of modern European nationalism generally[.] (3).

One of the more remarkable aspects of this revival is its sudden onset. For Alexander Pope, who looked to classical antiquity, the 'ancients were foreigners'; for Robert Southey 'the ancients were indigenous medieval bards whose culture of song and ceremony marked the native origins of a national literature'. (2). A major cultural shift has here taken place, the laying of a 'foundation for an essential element of modern nationalism: the construction of the nation as a community defined chiefly not by dynasty, religion, laws, political boundaries, or sovereignty but, rather, by a shared native culture of age-old historical duration' (2), and Strabone is careful to stress its novelty. While hearkening back to an imaginary Anglo-Saxon past as strategy of national integrity has its origins in Elizabethan protestant propaganda, Strabone argues convincingly that what differentiates the Romantic enterprise of antiquarian nationalism is its focus on literature – and poetry in particular. The 'neo-retro formal features introduced in eighteenth-century poetry', Strabone contends, 'assert—at the level of form—a continuity with a long-lost, and largely imaginary, version of the nation's past.' (3).

In the chapters that follow, Strabone traces his argument through what he identifies as the two major strands of the Romantic bardic revival: the recovery, rehabilitation, and printing of "ancient" works; and the incorporation of and innovation on antiquated forms in new work, forging a continuity between present and past. This ground has been covered before, but

Strabone's theoretical foregrounding of the connection between poetry and nationalism – two crucial and intersecting imaginary communities – offers fresh insights, as does his focus on less canonical figures like Alan Ramsay – in whose hands 'the courtly, aureate, cosmopolitan Middle Scots poets became rugged, native, freedom-loving bards who had defended the nation from foreign encroachment' (78), and Welsh bard and creative anachronist, Iolo Morganwg (AKA Edward Williams), for whom 'the real and the fake seem to have been porous categories' (231). So much so that, when Strabone turns his attention to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the reader is perfectly placed to see the complex mediation of 'neo-retro' antiquity written into Coleridge's poetic practice with new eyes – and appreciate again the usefulness of this compelling study.

Dahlia Porter's novel study, *Science, Form, and the Problem of Induction in British Romanticism*, starts with a fascinating meditation on the parallels between 'our moment' of digital revolution, in which 'digital devices and platforms format and mediate our experience; the virtual structures social and object worlds', and the scientific and print revolutions at the 'end of the eighteenth century'. As the 'artifacts and specimens from across the globe [...] pouring into European storehouses and museums' began to seem like 'another iteration of the proliferation of print', Porter writes, nature, like the internet, began to 'look like a heap of minutiae, the totality of which was ungraspable.' (2).

Porter's book, however, 'is not simply about information saturation in Britain around 1800, a moment that is eerily, pointedly analogous to our own' – it's also 'concerned with the method authors used to turn a heap of particular instances into the expression of something larger, and the consequences of that method for books produced in the Romantic period.' (3). In search of a suitably unifying term for this method, Porter lights on induction, specifically the 'inductive method of seventeenth-century experimental philosophy'. Induction, in Porter's reckoning, became 'over the course of the eighteenth century, a template for producing minds and texts across many fields of knowledge production', including 'eighteenth-century writing about optics, astronomy, botany, chemistry, cognition, emotions, economy, grammar, history, aesthetics, the production of visual art, and literary criticism', and 'authors from Robert Boyle to Samuel Johnson to William Wordsworth' followed the 'steps of induction to compile and organize raw materials, with the eventual goal of forging them into a less or more coherent expression of a truth' (3, 5).

This already vast expanse of fields, texts, and authors is stretched yet further with the extension of induction to form, genre, and even the printed page, offering thrilling new insights and vantages on the connection between paratexts and book and printing histories with authorial and scientific method. Reading key works from a range of Romantic writers, including William

Wordsworth and Erasmus Darwin, Porter finds such texts 'were composites', the sources of which

might include notebooks of first-hand observations or experimental results, stories overheard and noted in passing, records of conversations, commonplace books of textual accounts, or books read and annotated. Whatever combination of sources the authors used, texts made by following inductive method are all products of splicing, grafting, and mixing bits of other written materials onto and into each other. (5).

Footnotes, collections, and anthologies are likewise conscripted, with facsimile pages from texts like Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden, Part II* [1789] and Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* [1794], among others, included to show how the often unstable but productive 'outcome of inductive method is made legible' (13) on the printed page. The capaciousness of Porter's formulation of induction, however, is the source of a singularly ironic dilemma. Stretched this far, induction becomes so general as to easily encompass any example; it begins to hang loose from the specific historical case Porter wants to make for induction as a method taken up to deal with empirical and material influx. There is no reason, for instance, why induction could not be argued to characterise Shakespeare's plays, and, taken to extremes, why Porter's claims about 'splicing' and 'grafting' might not be microscopically detected in the splicing of sentences in paragraphs, or words in lines. Nevertheless, the chapters that make up this highly original book are filled with brilliant and thought-provoking readings of central and less well-known texts and writers, and the methods of inductive reading prototyped here are sure to provide influential approaches for future workers in the field.

Nicholas Roe's groundbreaking study of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the radical beginnings of a dominant strand of British Romanticism in the turbulent 1790s, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years*, celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2018. First published in 1988, Roe's book remains the best and most suggestive guide to the entanglement of Wordsworth and Coleridge (and, therefore, Romantic poetry as a whole) with the French Revolution and radical politics, providing brilliantly researched contexts and insightful readings, both poetic and biographical, of these two poets and their early work. Handsomely reissued by Oxford University Press, this uniquely valuable book has been scrupulously updated and expanded, with new material, a new appendix, and, most engagingly, a new Preface and splendid new introduction. In it, Roe sketches out the changes in scholarly practice over the last two decades – reminding us that, in 1988, when he was finishing his book, 'there were no electronic research resources, no laptop computers, and no e-mail' (1) – and updates,

complicates, and deepens his reflections on Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the revolutionary decade by way of his own history.

Adapting his doctoral thesis while working as a lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast, from 1982-5 – in the 'aftermath of the hunger strike by Irish republican prisoners: 'shoot to kill', the 'Droppin Well' bombing, and the murder of law faculty lecturer Edgar Graham outside the University Library" – Roe was struck by the 'poets from Northern Ireland' who 'proved disarmingly resourceful', '[c]apable of being in many minds', and 'told a way through those bitterly riven times much as poets of the mid-1790s had done in theirs' (1-2). This fluid movement between historical epochs, with a sensitive attention to the intervention of history in poetry and poetry in history, continues to distinguish Roe's work. Roe ends his new introduction, characteristically, with a beginning, readdressing his famous conclusion 'that the failure of the French Revolution had 'made Wordsworth a poet' by reminding his readers that he 'did not say what kind of poet I thought he had become.' After a Keatsian riff on negative capability, moon phases, and the movement of the tides a certain number of miles above Tintern Abbey, Roe throws the question of Wordsworth and Coleridge's radical years open again by retracing their steps as they journeyed up the Wye valley, in company with Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy, a short time after the composition of 'Tintern Abbey', to visit notorious exiled radical, John Thelwall. What was the purpose of this visit, Roe wonders, so soon after Coleridge had advised Thelwall there was no hope of his settling near them in Nether Stowey – famously writing 'Come! but not yet!' – and what might Thelwall have thought? Roe writes: "Come! but not yet!" might have been Thelwall's response as he watched all three of them ambling up to his new home', these 'figures from his former life with whom he now realised he had to break – even if the poets themselves seemed to be having second thoughts about that. To find out why this might have been so, please read on.' And so I did.

Paul Cheshire has done Romantic studies a signal service with his new edition of William Gilbert's esoteric poem *The Hurricane* [1796]. This is more than an edition, however, as the title demonstrates: *William Gilbert and Esoteric Romanticism: A Contextual Study and Annotated Edition of The Hurricane*. *The Hurricane* is esoteric in two senses: it is barely studied, and it is actually a 'theosophical poem' of deliberately esoteric import. Cheshire's study begins with a series of chapters providing key historical and intellectual contexts. These chapters are a mix of biography, literary criticism and intellectual history. Cheshire sketches Gilbert's relationships with some of the key figures in Bristol Romanticism: Joseph Cottle, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Robert Southey. He surveys Gilbert's journalistic and publishing activities. The discussion is brisk and readable, and will be of interest to Romantic scholars generally. Not only does the

book serve as a fine introduction to the Bristol scene, but it draws out important ways in which Gilbert influenced the more familiar figures of the canon.

Part Two of the book comprises *The Hurracaine* and Cheshire's commentary. The text itself is beautifully presented. Cheshire has provided copious though unobtrusive footnotes, identifying key textual variants, clarifying esoteric terminology and revealing some rather obscure references. All the paratexts of the original printed edition have been included (indeed, Gilbert's notes and other paraphernalia are considerably more bulky than the actual poem), again with Cheshire's expert annotation. The later chapters of the book provide a wide-ranging literary analysis of the poem. Chapters 6 and 7 make sense of the poem's complex hermetic and theosophical elements, and will surely be of great use to all first time readers of the poem. Chapter 8 puts the poem in its historical and imperial context, while Chapter 9 rounds off the book with a consideration of Gilbert's place in British Romanticism. An obscure poet is brought to light, and a new terrain of Romantic thought is opened to the view.

James Rovira has surely brought many smiles to many faces with his edited collection on *Rock and Romanticism: Post-Punk, Goth and Metal as Dark Romanticisms*. In the introduction (1-26), Rovira sets out his claim that 'rock [is] a modern expression of Romanticism' (2). Rock musicians and Romantic poets respond to a similar context: the Romantic period's '[p]ervasive industrialism, widespread global trade, and the spread of European colonial enterprises' are broadly similar to the twentieth century's 'two world wars followed by the rise of global capitalism and ... global communism' (6). Romanticism is at its core a 'set of affective responses to capitalism and modernity', responses which can be seen in certain kinds of rock music as well as in the poetry of two centuries ago (9). He then considers the vexed, 'overdetermined' relationship between Romanticism and the Gothic, terms that recur in intermingled fashion throughout the book (11). When it comes to defining rock, Rovira demurs. The word has evolved over the decades, and as an editor he allows his contributors each to provide their own conception of the musical genre (14). Not all the essays in the volume deal directly with Romantic poets, so in what follows we only focus on four of the essays. Readers interested in the other aspects of the book may consult the Romanticism: Fiction and Romanticism: General and Prose subsections of the present volume.

In her amusingly-titled "'Bliss was it in that shirt to be alive": Connecting Romanticism and New Romanticism through Dress' (45-60), Emily A. Bernhard-Jackson considers the parallels between the 'Big Six' canonical male Romantics and the self-professed 'New Romantics' of the 1970s and 80s. She justifies her interest in dress by observing a key difference between the two movements: while the original Romantics were primarily a literary movement, the New

Romantics 'used the self as both their weapon and their battlefield' (47). The New Romantics aped Regency dress as a symbol for Romantic individualism (49). They wrapped themselves in scarves and flowing robes as an echo of Romantic Orientalism (ibid). Throughout her analysis, Bernhard-Jackson shows that in the 1970s and 80s, the Romantic poets had in large part become a set of inherited images circulated by the mass media. Despite this indirect relationship with the original 'Romantics', the New Romantics did manage to recover something of their professed forefathers' rebel spirit.

Caroline Langhorst's essay on Joy Division's Ian Curtis finds specific Romantic echoes in Curtis's lyrics ('A Northern "Ode on Melancholy"?: The Music of Joy Division', 83-100). After surveying Curtis's Manchester, and considering the Romantic myth that has grown up around Curtis since his death, she turns to Byron and Keats. In 'When We Two Parted' [1815], Byron suggests that losing his lover is like losing his self; such loss of control typifies Curtis's lyrics (95). Likewise, both Keats and Curtis mingle 'the feeling of numbness or loss of self' and the 'direct confrontation with extreme states of mind' in their verse (96).

Matthew Heilman searches hard for linguistic parallels in his essay on feminine figures in the music of Yorkshire metal band, My Dying Bride (215-34). The band's lyricist, Aaron Stainthorpe, has a reputation as a particularly literary songwriter. Focussing on Stainthorpe's 'lyrical fascination with female archetypes', Heilman finds specific parallels between the band's lyrics and the poems of Poe, Keats, Swinburne and Baudelaire, among others (218-19). Heilman uncovers a series of troubling images, most of them at least potentially misogynistic, but argues that both Stainthorpe and his Romantic predecessors deconstruct the simplistic binaries that inflect their images of women (229).

The final essay in the volume to deal directly with Romantic poetry is Julian Knox's 'Ashes against the Grain: Black Metal and the Grim Rebirth of Romanticism' (235-57). He begins with a lyrical discussion of Novalis's Hymns to the Night [], arguing that they figure a '[t]urning away from the light', a 'journeying across the cosmos' and a 'courting [of] death for death's sake' at least as familiar to fans of rock and roll as to readers of Romantic verse (237). Like Heilman, Knox refers to a dizzying variety of Romantic poems, and like Langhorst, his primary interest is in loss of self, darkness, and uncertainty. The essay rounds out the volume nicely, recapitulating the central themes of revolt, the interpenetration of Romanticism and the Gothic, and the artistic vitality both of Romantic poetry and rock music.

In the final stages of writing, it came to our attention that Rovira brought out a second similar anthology in 2018 under a slightly different title: *Rock and Romanticism: Blake, Wordsworth,*

and Rock from Dylan to U2. This volume contains a number of essays on how Blake, Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge and European poets influenced or resonate with twentieth-century rock musicians. We will give a full assessment of the contents in next year's issue.

Claire Knowles continues to make exciting interventions in the study of public poetic culture in the Romantic period. In 'Della Cruscanism and Newspaper Poetics: Reading the Letters of Simkin and Simon in the *World*' (*SiR* 57[2018] 581-600), Knowles considers how the 'second wave' of Della Cruscanism in the 1790s makes a mockery of scholars' overconfidence. Scholars have hitherto assumed that Della Cruscan verse is simple to define and identify. Not so, says Knowles. Her primary example in this essay is Ralph Broome, AKA 'Simkin', who wrote a flood of poetic epistles to the *World* newspaper in the 1780s and 90s. Focussing just on 1789 allows Knowles to draw out many subtle interconnections in Simkin's context. She concludes from this case study that scholars have overstated the influence of Robert Merry on the Della Cruscan movement, and overlooked how newspaper editors made use of contributors like Simkin to seize control of Britain's public culture of poetry (597-98).

The lyric has long been the central genre of Romantic studies, and 2018 saw the publication of several essays reconsidering the nature and purpose of the Romantic lyric. Lindsey Eckert has made an important contribution with 'Reading Lyric's Form: The Written Hand in Albums and Literary Annuals' (*ELH* 85[2018] 973-97). Focussing on 'album verse', Eckert considers the link between genre and mode of publication, arguing that the album poem was a distinctive lyric mode specific to the Romantic period. She draws together structuralist accounts of lyric with the historicising tendencies of New Lyric Studies, revealing how the materiality of album verse opened up new avenues for poetic expression in the period. Album verse as highly self-reflexive, 'focus[sing] on the affective power of seemingly banal, predictable poetry', lifting what could seem a tawdry commercial venture into a higher aesthetic space (p. 986).

Tim Fulford makes a similar argument ('Science and Poetry in 1790s Somerset: The Self-Experiment Narrative, the Aeriform Effusion, and the Greater Romantic Lyric' *ELH* 85[2018] 85-117). In the traditional understanding of the 'Greater Romantic Lyric', the poet transcends material reality through a process of inner meditation (85-6). Like Eckert, Fulford argues that Romantic lyrics are actually rooted in materiality. Using Thomas Beddoes as a case study, Fulford sketches the 'culture of inquiry' that reigned in Britain at the time Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote *The Lyrical Ballads* [1798]. He then applies this framework to show how Coleridge and Wordsworth explore 'the world's effects on the self and the self's effects on the world' in their famous conversation poems.

Onno Oerlemans's 'Sing and Be Heard: Birdsong and the Romantic Lyric' (*Mosaic* 51[2018] 1–16) notes the 'special affinity' poets and poetry seem to have 'for birds, and asks '[w]hy might this be the case?' (2). This question prompts a re-reading of the many birds – mostly nightingales – in key lyrics from Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, among others, via an examination of the science of birdsong. While Oerlemans's survey of birdsong and lyric produces a number of beguiling examples and some keen insights on the poetic attraction of birdsong, his conclusion, that 'birdsong poems can—and indeed ought to be—read as responses to the natural world, and not just as about the poets, poetry, and the human' (14), is curiously unambitious, given the quality of the work that precedes it.

Dallin Lewis takes the study of Romantic poetry into uncharted territory with an interesting piece on 'Violence, Gender, and the Politics of She-Tragedy in British Abolitionist Literature' (*ERR* 29[2018] 459–72). Lewis offers a reading of Peter Newby's *The Wrongs of Almoona* [1788] and William Hutchinson's *The Princess of Zanfara* [1789], two obscure works of abolitionist verse. Both of these poems feature the death of a female slave, followed by reconciliation between freed male slaves and their erstwhile male overlords. Characterising these poems as a kind of 'she-tragedy', Lewis argues that the death of the female slave is cathartic, enabling the male survivors to reconcile. Though Newby and Hutchinson can both be seen as abolitionists, Lewis stresses the 'political dead-ends' of the abolitionist she-tragedy (471).

Matthew Rowlinson's 'Onomatopoeia, Interiority, and Incorporation' (*SiR* 57[2018] 429–45) opens a new and fascinating area of study by considering a 'largely unnoticed volume published in 1832' that 'appears to have been the first work on birds to include nonce-transcriptions of their calls as an aid to identification.' (429). *The Minstrelsy of the Woods, or Sketches and Songs Connected with the Natural History of... British and Foreign Birds* (1832) is the launching point for a series of readings of transcribed birdsong in Romantic poetry, from Keats, to Scott and beyond. While Rowlinson's argument, that 'onomatopoeia incorporates animal sounds into human speech, while excluding any possibility that they might belong to language in their own right' (432) seems unnecessarily fraught, his recovery of this text and the questions it allows will prove of great value to future work on this subject.

Natalie Roxburgh and Felix Sprang chart another path through the already wonderfully variegated garden of Romantic Botany in 'Knowing Plants, Knowing Form: Probing the Poetics of Phyto-Centric Life' (*EJES* 22[2018] 224–40), showing the ways in which poets from Erasmus Darwin forward have used (or not used) poetry to speak and think vegetable thoughts. Starting with Darwin's 1791 smash-hit, *The Botanical Garden* and reaching the present, via John Clare, in Alice Oswald, Roxburgh and Sprang seek to draw our attention back to form – poetical and

botanical – as ‘an organic and dynamic phenomenon’ – one that ‘will help us to conceptualise the space inhabited by the *homme-plante*, the space where humans and plants are entangled with each other, to the degree where talking about them as completely separate entities becomes problematic.’ (p. 237).

Michael Tomko, meanwhile, tackles the complexities of religion in ‘The Reformation Revisited: The Romantic *Via Media* from Barbauld to Wordsworth’ (*ERR* 29[2018] 579–600). Engaging closely with Robert Ryan’s *The Romantic Reformation* (1997), Tomko positions the Anglican Church as the *via media* or middle way between ‘between dissenting Protestantism and Roman Catholicism [...] by which the Established Church appropriated the moderated, regulated goods of the two unwanted extremes’ (579, 581-82). The article concludes with ‘two representative readings of Anna Letitia Barbauld’s ‘The Groans of the Tankard’ from her *Poems* (1773, 1792) and Wordsworth’s ‘Old Abbeys’ from his *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822). While these are skillfully executed, the selection of poems is strikingly odd, and more than a little convenient. Like many arguments based on finding a “middle”, Tomko’s essay, while drawing valuable attention to the varieties of religious politics in the period, comes off as pat.

We note an essay by Stephen Behrendt on ‘Using Romantic-Era Laboring-Class Poets to Explore Cultural Archaeology’, published in *Teaching Laboring-Class British Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, pp. 159–67. Unfortunately, we could neither obtain a review copy for the publisher, nor locate a copy in any British or Australian library.

Having considered general studies of Romantic poetry, we now turn to studies of particular poets.

Though no monographs were published on Anna Laetitia Barbauld in 2018, she continued to attract detailed scholarly attention. In her essay on ‘The “Fellowship of Sense”: Anna Letitia Barbauld and Interspecies Community’, Inhye Ha contributes to the growing literature on Barbauld’s animals (*SiR* 57[2018] 453-78). Ha observes that scholars have tended to interpret Barbauld’s animals through a political lens: the mouse in ‘The Mouse’s Petition’ [1773] and the caterpillar in ‘The Caterpillar’ [c. 1816] are usually seen as disenfranchised underlings deserving of greater respect. (454). Ha takes the study of Barbauld’s animals in a new direction by considering their biological and psychological aspects. Barbauld’s animals are also aesthetic objects, Ha reveals, and are vehicles for Barbauld’s sophisticated ideas about the interrelations between aesthetic judgement, ethics, and the community of living things.

Lauren Schachter takes a fine-toothed comb to Barbauld’s *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven, A Poem* (1812) on the hunt for prepositions in “One Universal Declension”: Barbauld and the

Romantic Preposition' (*MLN* 133[2018] 1172–87), arguing that Barbauld's peculiar usage of this "class of words often maligned or ignored by eighteenth-century English grammarians and rhetoricians" means that *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* 'can also be read as an allegory for the possibilities for English in and beyond 1811.' (2). This is a fascinating – if not always entirely convincing – account of the political potential of small, apparently insignificant words.

2018 was a moderate year in Blake studies, seeing the publication one edited collection and several articles.

The relationship between Romanticism and the Gothic continues to be vexed and fascinating, as is attested by Chris Bundock and Elizabeth Effinger's edited collection, *William Blake's Gothic Imagination: Bodies of Horror* [2019]. Bundock and Effinger make an interesting move in the introduction to the book. Historically, it was the Gothic that was marginalised, as the popular, creaky, melodramatic cousin of the more reputable Romanticism. But today, according to the editors, the problem is quite the reverse. Gothic studies is on the rise, and the canonical Romantic poet Blake has become 'a spectral, marginal figure'! This is despite the great influence Blake has had on our own 'contemporary Gothic subculture', and the obviously Gothic features of Blake's visual style and anti-Enlightenment philosophy.

Part I of the book considers how the Gothic in the literal or narrow sense influenced Blake's work. How did he engage with Gothic architecture, and the Gothic revival of the later eighteenth century? In "'Living Form': William Blake's Gothic relations", David Baulch considers the evidence of Benjamin Heath Malkin, one of Blake's early biographers. Malkin is a singularly incompetent critic of the Gothic. Though he purports to explain Blake's 'Gothic style', he 'fails to include any of the instances of Blake's work that might actually qualify as Gothic in the literary sense of the term'. But Malkin is still useful, says Baulch, because his failures of understanding throw the poet-painter's own concept of Gothic form into relief. This concept of 'Gothic form' then informs Baulch's reading of the *Joseph of Arimathea* engraving and *Jerusalem*. In his contribution to this section, Kiel Schaub situates the figure of Rahab in a broader Gothic context, buttressing close reading of the poem with consideration of Horace Walpole, William Wordsworth, Biblical analogues and the novels of Ann Radcliffe. To round off this section, Claire Colebrook draws out the philosophical elements of Blake's Gothicism. She begins with a broad discussion of the 'Gothic line', a distinctive aesthetic feature of Gothic architecture. She goes on to argue that Blake's own Gothic line was anti-absolutist: 'Blake's use of point of view is Gothic (and counter-Kantian) and ... this style (or form) relates directly to ontology (or content).'

Part II of the book, 'The Misbegotten', considers Blake's portrayal of the human body. Jason Whittaker reveals a tradition of bodily horror that links Blake, John Milton, H.P. Lovecraft and Ridley Scott. It is a wide-ranging discussion, revealing the importance of 'fission and fusion' to Blake's writing of horror, and culminating in a discussion of the android David's Blakean simplicity in Scott's *Prometheus* [2012]. The following essays by Lucy Cogan and Stephanie Codsí focus more exclusively on Blake's own writings. In 'William Blake's monstrous progeny', Cogan considers 'body horror' in *The [First] Book of Urizen*. She suggests that Blake's body horror was part of his response to the French Revolution, when many were anxious that the body politic would disintegrate. Codsí's essay on 'Blake's Gothic humour' suggests the Blake's horror may have been more tongue-in-cheek. His evocation of the 'shock and revulsion' of bodily dissection was admixed with 'a curious sense of Gothic humour'. Blake's humour reveals the gap between science's desire for clarity and the mystery of the Gothic; the vivisectionist may desire a clear knowledge of organs, but the Gothic body grins back at them mysteriously.

Part III of the book is rather miscellaneous. Peter Otto's brilliant archaeological reading of a plate from *The [First] Book of Urizen* draws together many of the themes from Part II: bodily horror as a metaphor for the upheaval of the French Revolution, Blake's designs as a response to the icky engravings published by the anatomists, Blake's antinomian criticism of the absolutist mind. Blake depicts a 'monstrous present and an alien body', in which past and present weave into one another, and the possibility of regeneration is always latent in the chaos of reality. In the second essay in this section, Ana Elena González-Treviño brings another consideration to the collection, discussing Blake's representation of female space.

Part IV of the book draws out the erotic elements of Blake's Gothicism. Mark Lussier again stresses Blake's antinomian: there is always a gap in Blake's work between what the 'eye sees' and the 'heart knows'. Drawing on Lacan and Deleuze, among other, Lussier does real justice to the complex, vibrating elements of Blake's poetry. Tristram Connolly takes the discussion of eroticism in a more amusing direction, considering the problems of impotency and masturbation in Blake's more explicit poems. In *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, Oothoon echoes the 'good sex' ideology peddled by Blake's contemporary James Graham. The essay is a useful tonic after a series of essays extolling Blake's complex, liberatory, relativist poetic project—it turns out there was a dash of prudery to his personality as well.

In a pleasantly counter-intuitive essay on Blake and Newton, L.J. Cooper argues that Blake was not against Newton himself, but rather 'institutionalised Newtonianism' (*ERR* 29[2019] 247-69). In fact, Blake draws on Newton's concept of 'absolute space' to attack Newton's own disciples,

turning the masters' weapons against the servants. Cooper's essay draws attention once again to the sheer complexity of Blake's responses to the world.

Karen Hadley offers a sophisticated ecocritical reading of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* [1793] ('Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and the Biopolitical Unconscious'. *PMLA* 133[2018] 314-28.) Hadley draws a connection between Foucauldian biopolitics and 21st-century ecocriticism. In the poem, she argues, Blake shows how biopolitics turns spaces into human environments, situating animal and non-animal life in a single political framework. She uses Oothoon's marigold as her key example, analysing the flower from a range of perspectives. She tracks the marigold's presence through the illustrations. She considers Erasmus Darwin's writings on the marigold, scientific illustrations of the flower, and broader socio-political themes. In the end this enables Hadley to understand the poem's 'cyclical' structure in a new way (324-35).

There was one volume published in the *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* in 2018, on 'Romanticism and Affect'. Unsurprisingly, Keats and Coleridge feature in the volume (see below), but it was a pleasure to encounter Mark Lussier's essay, 'Affective Textualities: Reconstructing Subjectivity in Blake's *Marriage*' (*RCPS* [May 2018]). Keats and Coleridge are obviously poets of sensation and affect. The affective dimension of Blake's poetry is harder to perceive. In order to reveal this affective dimension, Lussier focuses narrowly on the 'I' of the poem, which constantly 'vacillates between active and passive modes'. He argues that the poem's collage-like structure inaugurated a new mode of poetic subjectivity, a fitful, oscillating, flighty subjectivity. Drawing on his 35 years teaching the poem, Lussier speculates that it is this complex subjectivity that inspires such a remarkable range of responses in his students.

In an essay positively teeming with ideas, Tristram Wolff draws out the multiple selves and worlds available in the Romantic lyric, a form so often read devoted to singular visions as to characterise the entire period. In 'Being Several: Reading Blake with Ed Roberson' (*NLH* 49[2018] 553-78), Wolff couples Blake with contemporary poet Ed Roberson to outline the ways in which both poets encourage the undoing or destabilising of the self in multiplicity, an idea extended to ecology and history, and a view or approach to history that shows how 'past and present might work together as a "now" made of many ongoing, interanimating histories.' (554). A supple, fascinating, multiply engaged joining of the Romantic and the contemporary, this essay deserves deep and repeated engagement – it feels, as Blake does, like the future.

2018 saw the publication for three scholarly books devoted to Lord Byron, attesting to his continued place at the centre of Romantic Studies. The decades of his scholarly neglect are well and truly over.

The first monograph was Nicholas Gayle's rather unexpected *Byron and the Sea-Green Isle*, a book-length study of *The Island* [1823], probably Byron's most neglected work of narrative verse. Gayle makes a spirited argument for the importance of *The Island*. The book has a highly wrought structure. The first two chapters provide historical context. Chapters Three and Four focus on Byron's focus lyricism and language. Chapters Five through Eight each consider one of the poem's four key symbols: the ocean, the island, the cave and the various colours Byron evokes. Chapters Nine through Twelve each consider a key episode from the poem's narrative. In the Appendix, Gayle provides a fresh transcription of the poem from Byron's holograph, which tries in particular to capture the punctuation.

The first two chapters are solid and scholarly, sketching Byron's own situation at the beginning of 1823, and filling in what Byron knew about the Pacific. Unsurprisingly, the Mutiny on the Bounty looms large in Gayle's picture of the poem's context. More interesting are Chapters Three and Four, where Gayle starts to substantiate his claims about the poem's self-refracting language and weird rhythms. He sets the bar extremely high, claiming that *The Island* is, 'ounce-for-ounce', more brilliant and witty than *Don Juan* [1819-24], and that the verbal patterns of the poem achieve a 'Shakespearean ambiguity' (41). His analysis in Chapter Three doesn't quite deliver on this promise: it is essentially a detailed recap of the poem's *syuzhet*, interspersed with glowing comments on how 'fascinating' (49), 'puzzling' (51) or 'pitch-perfect' the poem is (56). Gayle's approach of extreme detail does him better service in Chapter 4, where he successfully draws attention to Byron's surprisingly creative metaphorical language, in which stars have 'eyelids' (62), 'Youth' transforms the very 'Air' into 'Rainbow' (67), and words like 'infant' and 'echo' recur in an odd array of contexts (74-75). In Chapter 3 Gayle's tendency to great detail diluted his analysis of narrative structure, but here in Chapter 4 it allows him to reveal some genuinely paradoxical and intriguing elements of the poem's verbal tissue.

The four symbolic chapters follow much the same pattern. Gayle culls numerous details from the poem in an attempt to demonstrate its aesthetic worth, while also making a few comments on the particular meaning of each symbol. The sea symbolises the dissolution of self-identity (95). The fictional island on Toonbonai is 'a product of [European] fantasy and desire' (120). The cave represents the ineffable—'an ontological other space whose description cannot be

captured by language' (131). Finally Byron's use of colours demonstrates the generally 'polyphonic' nature of his language as a whole (141).

The book concludes with the four chapters on the poem's narrative. Again, Gayle's approach is essentially to write a detailed commentary. He plies some traditional Byronic seas, talking about the poem's themes of love (Chapter Nine), autobiographical resonances (Chapter Ten), Byronic heroism (Chapter Eleven), and Shakespearean echos (Chapter Twelve). While Gayle's passion for Byron's poetics and his commitment to close textual exegesis are to be commended, one can't help but feel that *Byron and the Sea-Green Isle* is somewhat diffuse. Neither the form of the poem nor its context is brought into sufficient relief, making it hard for Gayle to move beyond broad characterisations of Byron's poetic mastery or brilliance.

The second Byron book of 2018 is the festschrift *Essays on Byron in Honour of Dr Peter Cochran: Breaking the Mould*, edited by M. M. Kelsall. It is a generous collection of 16 essays, featuring many heavyweights of Byron Studies. It is a fitting tribute to Peter Cochran [1944-2015], whose career was meteoric in both brevity and impact.

The first section, on Poetics, features Jerome J. McGann on 'the Greater Byronic Lyric' (2-16), followed by three essays comparing Byron's poetics to those of other Romantic poets: Misolawa Modrewska compares Byron to Julius Słowacki (17-31), Maria Schoina to the poets from whom he translated (32-47), and Itsuyo Higashinaka to Wordsworth (48-63). McGann's essay is a highlight. He takes issue with the still-predominant theory of Romantic lyric propounded by M.H. Abrams. Abrams placed the meditative loco-descriptive poem at the centre of Romantic lyricism. McGann points out that it was not the loco-descriptive meditation but rather 'the poetic opportunities offered by ballad and narrative' which was Romanticism's chief legacy to the nineteenth century (3-4). In a series of brilliant readings, McGann shows how Byron's lyric verse erupts fitfully from his longer narrative works (8), and typically features a depersonalised lyric 'I' (10). The 'Greater Byronic Lyric' tells against the organic wholeness typically assigned to the Romantic lyric. Another highlight of this first section is Modrewska's essay on Słowacki. Polish Romanticism still cuts far too small a figure in Anglo-American scholarship, despite the great work of Cochran himself to rectify the situation. Modrewska's essay in this volume is a sprightly and detailed exploration of Byronism throughout Słowacki's whole *oeuvre*, and serves as a good introduction to Polish Byronism generally.

The next section of *Essays in Honour of Cochran* concerns 'Ideology'. There are seven essays in this section, covering a wide range of political, social, and ecological themes. Bernard Beatty frames the section with his essay 'Can We Rethink Lord Byron as a Whole?' (64-77) We have

reached a summit of Byron scholarship, argues Beatty, with the Complete Letters, McGann's Complete Poems and Leslie Marchand's (arguably Complete) biography: 'we have been presented anew with Byron in his entirety at exactly the time when New Critical confidence that Byron could sufficiently be present through discriminating excision ... was suddenly lost' (65). What do we see from this summit? Beatty argues that this complete Byron is a poet of 'twists and turns' (76). The fundamental problem in Byron is the stability or instability of the self, and Beatty refuses to come clearly down on one side or the other.

To give a sense of the great variety of essays in this 'ideology' section, we briefly mention the contributions of Jane Stabler and John Gardner. In her essay, 'Byron, Affect and Androgyny' (91-104), Stabler addresses the vexed issue of Byron's 'feminism'. In 'Byron, Defender of the Abused Child', Gardner considers how Byron processed the terrible abuse he suffered for two years as a child (134-148). Stabler draws on Woolf to uncover the androgynous energies of Byron's language, the 'mixing of masculine and feminine economies' in his verse (102). Gardner focuses on *The Deformed Transformed* [1822], comparing it in particular with Hogg's *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* [1824]. In Byron's chilling vision, child abuse leads to 'an inability to exist' (141). Gardner thus provides a tragic context for discussion of Byron's incomplete or unstable sense of self and poetics of escape. The other contributors to this section take the discussion into a range of equally fascinating contexts, considering refugees (Peter Graham, 78-90), architecture (Shobhana Bhattacharji, 105-118), Byron's encounter with Lucretius (Mirka Horová, 119-33) and animal studies (Christine Kenyon Jones, 149-165).

The penultimate section contains two essays on editing Byron. Andrew Stauffer provides an annotated checklist of newly discovered Byron letters (166-183). Drummond Bone contributes a wide-ranging discussion of punctuation in *Beppo* [1817] and *The Vision of Judgment* [1822] (184-190). He closely compares Cochran's editions with those of McGann, reminding us all of an important issue: the instability of the text, and the primacy of textual scholarship in interpretation. The final section of the book is three-essay tribute to Peter Cochran, whose influence on Byron Studies is so wonderfully in evidence in this very fine festschrift.

The final Byron book of 2018 is *Byron and Marginality*, edited by Norbert Lennartz. Much like Bundock and Effinger's *William Blake's Gothic Imagination*, this is a counter-intuitive book, in which an utterly central figure to Romantic studies is seen as 'marginal'. In his introduction (1-16), Lennartz argues that Byron's poetry is 'in all respects, ex-centric' (3). Byron's cynicism, his illicit desires, his scoffing attitude to his contemporaries, his class, his disability – all these, and other aspects of his character, thrust him from the centre to the margins. His masterwork, *Don Juan*, is both his 'central' work, and 'his most sustained effort to thwart all aspirations to

define, fix and categorise [his poetry]' (9). Unsurprisingly, Lennartz is forced to conclude that Byron is figuratively 'marginal', rather than literally so. Indeed, the sheer weight of work being published about him every year demonstrates that he has well and truly been brought back to the centre of Romantic Studies after his academic marginalisation of mid-twentieth century.

The first section of *Byron and Marginality* presents itself as a reflection on Byron's canonicity: 'Byron's Marginalisation in Romantic World Literature'. Nicholas Halmi offers an essay on 'Byron and *Weltliteratur*' (19-39). Rather than reflecting on Byron's place in world literature, however, the essay is really an analysis of Goethe's reception of Byron. It is a fine scholarly essay, in which Halmi uncovers relevant biographical data about Goethe's reading of Byron and subjects the 'Euphorion' episode of *Faust II* to sustained critique. He argues that what really drew Goethe to Byron was the two poets' shared value of 'cross-cultural engagement', as evidenced in *Don Juan* and *West-östlicher Divan* [1819] (31). The second and third essays in the section do address canonicity more directly. Ralf Haekel draws on media studies to try and sketch a decentered 'Romanticism' in which Byron is neither central nor marginal ('Reshaping the Romantic Canon from the Margins: The Medial Construction of "Byron" in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*', 40-56). Rolf Lessenich addresses the venerable problem of whether Byron is really 'Romantic' or 'Classic' – a topic touched upon by Halmi also ('Byron and Romantic Period Neoclassicism', 57-74). Haekel sets out to prove that Byron's anti-essentialism separates him from his Romantic contemporaries while also undermining the very concept of a canon. Lessenich takes the opposite approach, trying to prove that 'Neoclassicism' was a central trend of Romantic poetry, uniting Byron with many other poets of his age. The reader is left with a pleasantly sceptical aftertaste.

The second section of the book takes self and place as its core themes. But again it is somewhat incoherent. Friederike Wolfrum begins the section with another essay reflecting on Byron's marginality within 'Romanticism', which would have had a more natural home alongside the essays by Haekel and Lessenich in the previous section ("When a man talks of system, his case is hopeless": Byron at the Margins of Romantic Counterculture', 77-97). His essay is remarkably rigorous, drawing on Wittgenstein and prototype theory to theorise the concept of a literary period or movement, before moving on to a consideration of Romanticism as a 'counterculture' (77-79). Like Haekel, Wolfrum is interested in Byron's anti-essentialist, critical aspects, and makes the case for a sceptical Romanticism. The following essay, Stephen Minta's 'At the Margins of Europe: Byron's East Revisited and *The Giaour*' picks up on the theme of cross-cultural engagement identified by Nicholas Halmi (98-115). Jonathan Gross offers a delightful reflection on Byron's relationship with Isaac D'Israeli, considering how the D'Israeli

drew on Byron's marginal annotations to expand his ever-growing collection of literary anecdotes, *The Literary Character of Men of Genius* [1795-1822] ('Literary Forefathers: Byron's Marginalia in Isaac D'Israeli's *Literary Character of Men of Genius*', 116-40). Like the other essays in this section, this one should have been in a different one: this essay about Byron's foray into *marginalia* would have made much more sense in the following section about 'Marginal Genres'.

The third section is more coherent than the other two. The first two essays each consider a 'Marginal Genre' in Byron's *oeuvre* – Michael O'Neill focuses on the song, and Camilleri on the romance. The third essay by Josefina Tuominen-Pope has nothing to do with genre, but meshes nicely with Camilleri's discussion. In the first essay of the section, O'Neill writes of 'Byron's Marginalised Lyricism in *Hebrew Melodies*' (143-65). These songs are typically marginalised in accounts of Byron's work, argues O'Neill, but are consummate works of lyrical art, which express a deep yearning rooted in a sense of history. In the second essay, Anna Camilleri argues that really it was really the genre of romance, rather than anything in Byron himself, that led to his marginalisation in twentieth-century Romantic Studies ('Out of Romanticism: Byron and Romance', 166-85). Tuominen-Pope makes a similar argument in 'The Margins of Genius: Byron, Nationalism and the Periodical Reviews' (186-204). In the nineteenth century, as the Romantic canon was forming, it was Byron's association with the popular press, his mass appeal, that told against him. Byron's verse romances have at times been seen as airport fiction *avant la lettre*. Camilleri mounts a defence of Byron's romances as high art. Tuominen-Pope expends her energy showing how the nineteenth-century media constructed the image of Byron as a 'popular' rather than canonical author.

The fourth section of *Byron and Marginality* considers how Byron pushed the bounds of good taste, writing of death and sex in what was once often seen as a coarse or dangerous manner. Caroline Franklin writes of suicide ("Stand not on that brink!": Byron, Gender and Romantic Suicide', 207-32). She focusses on the poetry from *Manfred* [1817] on, making the strong argument that Byron 'depict[s] suicide as a feminine act' irreconcilable with 'true masculinity' (214). Tom Mole also considers death in 'Byron and the Good Death' (233-53). Mole contextualises Byron in the long tradition of the Good Death, stretching back to Latin antiquity, showing how intelligently Byron struggled with the concept throughout his particular death-filled poems. Drummond Bone draws out the link between sex and death in his reading of 'The Women of *Don Juan's* English Cantos' (254-68). The three main women of the English Cantos, Aurora, Adeline and Fitz-Fulke, all express Nature's sexual forces of creation and destruction in different ways.

The final section, 'Marginal Affairs – Visual and Paratextual Aspects in Byron', makes no claim to coherency. It contains two essays, one on the visual, and one on paratexts. But the two contributors speak to one another in a pleasant manner. Richard Lansdown raises the question, How marginal were the visual arts to Byron? ('A Marginal Interest? Byron and the Fine Arts', 271-90) Carefully sifting through the biographical letters and ekphrastic moments in the poetry, Lansdown concludes that art had a greater influence on Byron than he cared to admit. Jonathan Shears asks a similar question of Byron's letters: Was he really as careless and 'spontaneous' a letter-writer as he seems? ("I ask his pardon for a postscript": Byron's epistolary afterthoughts', 291-307). To the contrary, Shears presents considerable evidence that the ostensible carelessness of Byron's letters was actually a carefully studied pose. These two essays thus provide fresh evidence for the traditional reading of Byron as a performative individualist.

Lannartz appears to have prioritised the superficial shaplines of the collection, wedging the essays into five almost equally-sized sections rather than allowing the book to take on a more natural structure according to its contents. This poor organisation makes the book hard to grapple with, but cannot detract from the sheer quality of its constituent essays nor from the vitality of its central theme. *Byron and Marginality* is impressive. It will surely make an impact on Byron scholars in years to come.

Julia Coole continues the discussion of marginality in her essay on 'The Politics of Paratexts' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 148-57). She focuses on elements of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I and II* [1812] that are literally in the margins: the footnotes. Byron's footnotes are for her a prime example of Romantic revision. By paying careful attention to their tone and content, Coole is able to make subtle observations about Byron's self-presentation. Byron was torn between two desires, 'to present himself as a learned, trusted authority' on the one hand, and yet also to be 'a spontaneous traveller' reporting the evidence of raw personal experience on the other (152).

Ildiko Csengei focusses on a more famous aspect of the poem in her analysis of Canto III [1816] (*Romanticism* 24[2018]: 86-98). In the poem's description of Waterloo, Csengei can detect a melancholy that goes 'beyond the boundaries of the individual' (89). The poem considers the 'erasure of feeling' on the battlefield, as the blood soaks into the ground and the violence recedes into a repressed past (92). With his complex poetry of contrasts and misgivings, Byron attempts to recollect these erased emotions. Csengei demonstrates how his account of war's emotions chimed with contemporary philosophy, and with first-hand accounts of Waterloo.

Byron is not usually seen as a nature poet, as J. Andrew Hubbell rightly points out ('Figuring Nature: Tropics of Romantic Environmentalism' *SiR* 57[2018] 353-381). This makes Hubbell's

ecocritical reading of Byron all the more interesting. Where Wordsworth, John Clare or Gilbert White devoted their energies to describing particular localities, argues Hubbell, Byron restlessly expanded the horizons of nature. If Wordsworth was a lake poet, Byron was an oceanic one. Hubbell considers *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and includes an excursus on Coleridge, whose 'closed, homeostatic, hierarchical' idea of nature he contrasts with Byron's more open and rhizomatic idea.

Continuing her project to reveal the transatlantic dimension of Romantic literature, Deanna Koretsky contributes an essay on how Frederick Douglass made use of Byron's poetry in *My Bondage and My Freedom* [1855] ('Boundaries between Things Misnamed: Social Death and Radical (Non-)Existence in Frederick Douglass and Lord Byron' *ERR* 29[2018] 473–84). She shows how Douglass wove references to *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems* [1816] throughout *My Bondage and My Freedom*. The poems of *Chillon* describe vitiated individuality, selfhood that has been robbed or diseased. This poetry of vitiated selfhood resonated with Douglass, who drew on it to describe his own situation of 'social death' as a slave (477).

In a curiously related vein, Stefanie Markovits draws our attention to counting – both poetic and literal – in 'Don Juan's Numerals' (*ERR* 29[2018] 639–55), following what she terms the 'recent numerical turn' (640) in scholarship, particularly distant reading. 'Byron's numbering methods', Markovits contends, particularly in the apparently inexhaustible numbered stanzas of *Don Juan* (1819-24) 'invite us to seek meaning in counting' (641) – specifically, Byron exploits the generic affordances of his verse as "a way to manage the challenge that experiences of proliferation pose to a sympathy-based, Enlightenment ethics' (643). In an invaluable formulation, Markovits shows the way in which Byron's counting, rather than a scientific effort towards mastery, instead works 'as a gesture of defiance, a fist raised in the face of the incomprehensible' (646), and so, in yet another sense, the numerical and poetic are shown to be entwined.

2017 saw the publication of two monographs dedicated to Clare as well as several articles.

2018 was a relatively muted year in Clare studies. Aside from the 2018 edition of the *John Clare Society Journal* and a new reading edition of his poetry, we were unable to locate any new work on Clare.

Patrick Vincent kicks off the issue with a discussion of how Clare and William Cobbet responded to the passage of the 1830 Beer Act, which Vincent suggests was 'arguably more radical than the Great Reform Act of 1832' ("Common Sense and Ale": Cobbett, Clare, and the 1830 Beer Act', *JCSJ* 37[2018] 5-21). Both Cobbett and Clare published essays on the merits of the Beer Act, though Vincent argues that Clare's considered defence of free trade was more 'radically

progressive' than Cobbet's comments on domestic economy (12). Vincent then considers references to beer in Clare's poems, showing how he deftly combined domestic and socio-political themes in his beer poems (15-17).

Markus Poetzsch draws out interesting features of Clare's language in his ecocritical analysis of 'The Flitting' and 'Childish Recollections' ('John Clare's Particular Particularity and the Language of Climate' *JCSJ* 37[2018] 27-40). Poetzsch argues that ecocritics have paid insufficient attention to Clare's thematization of climate change. Drawing together ecocritical theory and structuralist accounts of language, Poetzsch demonstrates that the '*particular particularity*' of Clare's language allows him to overlay multiple temporalities in his descriptions of place (31). In this way he foreshadows the complex temporalities of our own day's climate science.

After Vincent's historicist article and Poetzsch's ecocritical one, Nancy Derbyshire offers a formalist analysis of Clare's acoustics ('John Clare and the License of Listening' *JCSJ* 37[2018] 41-61). Derbyshire moves through Clare's *oeuvre*, identifying scraps of poetry and prose where Clare describes acts of listening. Clare was a born trespasser, for whom listening to nature was an expression of freedom. He uses 'listening, imaginative projection and writing' as three entwined 'nesting behaviours' in his poetry (55). He dwells with his ears.

The academic portion of the Journal is rounded off with two interesting reports from the archive. Sarah Houghton-Walker presents the evidence surrounding the death of Mary Joyce, Clare's professed muse ('Life Stories: The Coroner's Report on the Death of Mary Joyce' *JCSJ* 37[2018] 65-77). Including copious photographs and transcriptions from the archive, Houghton-Walker's article will surely be useful to future Clare biographers. Robert Heyes contributes a short article on 'John Clare's Library' (*JCSJ* 37[2018] 79-87). Clare's library is a remarkable survival, one of the few libraries belonging to a major writer that has come down to us intact. Heyes quite rightly laments the fact that the library has been studied so little – there isn't even a catalogue of its contents (81). Heyes describes the history of the library in broad terms, but refrains from analysing its biographical or critical significance. Like Houghton-Walker's essay, Heyes's article is a generous one, inviting fellow scholars into a fresh and unanalysed portion of the ever-growing Clare archive.

To round off our discussion of Clare studies in 2018, we note the publication of *John Clare: Selected Poems*, edited by Stephen Croft [OUP, 2018]. The text of the poems is taken from Robinson and Powell's edition of the *Major Works* [OUP, 1984], and therefore hives close to Clare's manuscripts. Readers can expect only a little punctuation and a great deal of irregular orthography. The book begins with a brisk and well-written biography. The selection of poems

emphasises his nature poetry and the psychological poems of his later years. A number of his love-lyrics are included, but the satirical Clare of *The Parish* and the involuted Clare of the Byron imitations are essentially absent. The notes are printed as an appendix, along with a short general comment on each poem to guide the student. The final two sections of the book, 'Interpretations' and 'Essay Questions', provide teaching material, written by the editor. All in all, the book seems to be a good teaching resource, the unbalanced selection from Clare's poetry notwithstanding.

Theology, philosophy and biographical criticism continue to dominate Coleridge studies, as the nine articles published on the poet in 2018 demonstrate.

Denae Dyck contributes to a venerable critical tradition with her essay on 'Gathering and Scattering in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": Poetic Form, Biblical Criticism, and Coleridge's Tropes of the Imagination' (*ERR* 29[2018] 769–86). According to Dyck, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' [1798] is not only biblical in its allusions, but in the texture of its language. Throughout the poem, Coleridge 'adapt[s] the parallelism highlighted in late-eighteenth-century studies of biblical poetry: chiasmus, synesthesia, and merismus' (p. 770). Drawing on these rhetorical figures, Coleridge links his theory of the imagination to his own Biblical criticism.

'Kubla Khan' continues to fascinate critics as an early form of performance poetry. In his essay on 'The Sonic Organization of "Kubla Khan"', Ewan James Jones (*SiR* 57[2018] 243-64) claims that critics have never really analysed the 'organization of sound' in the poem – an extraordinary claim, to be sure, though he does qualify his argument a little (243). Adopting a 'conventional foot-based' approach to metre, Jones considers 'the recurrent moments at which Coleridge's poem engages critically with historical conventions' (248). He goes on to consider cognitive and political approaches to Coleridge's metre. His stress throughout is on the virtuosic variety of Coleridge's rhythms, a variety that can serve as a metaphor for a more harmonious political order, as well as explain the sheer aesthetic delight of the poem.

Aesthetic delight is also a key theme of Gavin Sourgen's essay, 'A Volatile Unity: Coleridge, Starling Murmurations, and Romantic Form', collected in *Mocking Bird Technologies: The Poetics of Parroting, Mimicry, and Other Starling Tropes*, edited by Christopher GoGwilt and Melanie D. Holm [Fordham UP, 2018]. Sourgen revisits the classic Coleridgean theme of organic form, showing how central bird analogies were to Coleridge's development of the concept. Drawing on Coleridge's description of a flock of starlings in the *Notebooks*, Sourgen offers a series of often quite dazzling reflections on parts and wholes, imaginings and perceptions, art and beauty, linking Coleridge to many other theorists of poetry along the way.

Matthew Jones offers a new glimpse into Coleridge's circle with his short piece on 'Joseph Hucks (1772-1800): Poet, Travel Writer, Coleridge's Companion in Wales' (*ANQ* 31[2018] 22-26). Jones focuses particularly on Hucks's *Poems* [1798], but turns to his *Pedestrian Tour through North Wales* [1795] to help draw out the social and political meanings of Hucks's verse. In Jones's reading, Hucks was an incorrigible pantisocrat, whose principal reason for living was liberty.

In 'Rethinking the Text of Coleridge's Dejection Ode' (*WC* 49[2018] 130-38), meanwhile, J. C. Mays takes a deep dive into the textual and editorial history of Coleridge's, arguing against the 'prevailing taste' (130) that opts for earlier manuscript versions over later. 'The problem with this state of affairs', Mays contends, is that it opts, sometimes unthinkingly, for a rawer text at the expense of 'what Coleridge achieves with style, what style enables him to say.' (130).

Rebekah Mitsein explores the variety, instability, and Gothic potential of the Romantic family in "And Wouldst Thou Wrong Thy Only Child?": The Crisis of Affective Kinship in Coleridge's "Christabel" (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 67-77). Taking to task the critical tradition of ignoring Coleridge's baffling conclusion to Part Two as merely a placeholder for the rest of the never-to-be-finished poem, Mitsein argues instead that, in it, Coleridge outlines the folly of installing 'affective bonds of kinship as a stable and orderly foundation for society at large' (70).

Seamus Perry outlines another instance of Coleridge attempting to have it both ways in 'Coleridgean Politics' (*WC* 49[2018] 123-29). Examining a specific passage in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Perry draws out the specific usage of "balance" and "reconciliation", showing via German idealism that Coleridge's ideal of balance concerned not the unification of opposing qualities, but rather their coequal maintenance, as in the "mingled measure" of 'Kubla Kahn' (1816) – a 'balance of powers', but a fundamentally 'precarious one.' (129).

Peter Vassallo reads Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in a tradition of early orientalist appetites for the arbitrary, sensational, and transgressive in 'Voyaging into the 'Vast': 'The Ancient Mariner', the *Jinni* and the Universe of *The Arabian Nights*' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 78-85) claiming the tales collected in *The Arabian Nights* as a key influence for Coleridge's great sea story. While some of the parallels uncovered are suggestive, Vassallo's reading of both texts is shallow and unambitious, and his references are notably out of date; his conclusion that, in Coleridge's poem, 'it is arbitrariness that supplies a dominating, propelling force' (83) feels like the start, rather than the end of a line of inquiry.

Finally, Jude Wright looks returns to the baffling heterodoxy of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' in "'The Penance of Life": The Testimonial Paradigm in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient

Mariner” (RoN 71[2018]), arguing that the strangeness and irresolvability of the poem is the result of a mismatch between its Catholic-Gothic confessional machinery and a new paradigm of testimony and bearing witness propounded by the Evangelical revival.

Interest in Erasmus Darwin continues to grow. He features in several of the general works considered above. Continuing on from her discussion in her *Induction* monograph, Dahlia Porter contributes an article dedicated to the scientific poet – ‘Epistemic Images and Vital Nature: Darwin’s Botanic Garden as Image Text Book (ERR 29[2018] 295-308) – which sets to work on ‘both expanding and reorienting how we understand the knowledge work of images in Romantic-era books’, taking up ‘an obvious case, Erasmus Darwin’s two-part annotated philosophical poem *The Botanic Garden*, comprised of *The Economy of Vegetation* (Part 1, 1791) and *The Loves of the Plants* (Part 2, 1789).’ (296). Reading these images and their ‘epistemic function’ (296) as crucial to resolving the jostling conflict between heroic couplets and prose notes in Darwin’s sci-poetry mashup masterwork, Porter argues ‘images visually articulate the theoretical framework of the composite text, revealing how the text–image combination is integral to Darwin’s intervention in debates over nature’s vitality and organic life more broadly at the end of the eighteenth century.’ (305-306).

It was a thin year for studies of Felicia Hemans. In his second article of 2018, Matthew Jones offers a powerful reinterpretation of the Welsh aspects of Hemans’s poetry. Hitherto, scholars who wish to assess the Welshness of Hemans’s verse have focused on a handful of poems specifically about Wales. Jones widens the net, showing how Welsh ideas, customs and landscapes pervaded Hemans’s entire *oeuvre*. Hemans was in some ways quite imperialistic, claiming to have a greater insight into the true nature of the Welsh spirit than the native Welsh themselves. She promoted an idea of Welsh nationality rooted in a mythological past, and therefore her poetry was unable to grapple with the growing force of political nationalism in Wales. This was the only scholarly work we could locate on Hemans’s verse for 2018.

In a year that saw at least five books dedicated to Wordsworth and three to Byron, it is something of a surprise to find that only one book was published on John Keats. Richard Marggraf Turley’s *Keats’s Places* [Palgrave Macmillan, 2018] pays tribute to the way ecocriticism has revived biographical approaches to literary interpretation, a trend that also inflected many of the Keats articles published in 2018.

Turley’s collection must be commended for its coverage. Essays in the *Keats’s Places* cover Keats’s time at Guy’s Hospital and the Vale of Health, the visit to Wight, the places Keats visited

on his tour of 1818, Winchester, Keats's home at Wentworth Place, Rome – and even America, which Keats of course knew through his correspondence with George.

The book begins, appropriately, in London. Hrileena Ghosh offers a broad-ranging account of Keats's student days at Guy's Hospital, arguing that his time there was a key part of his early poetic development ('Keats at Guy's Hospital: Moments, Meetings, Choices and Poems, 31-52). This is followed by three essays on Keats's first encounters in Hampstead Heath, or more precisely at the 'Vale of Health', where Leigh Hunt held court. Greg Kucich wonders 'in what ways did alternative, transitional or transformative types of "masculinity" emerge from the leafiness of the Vale of Health?' ('Keats, the Vale of Health, and the Gentle Gendering of Cockney Coteries, 53-70 [54]). Fiona Stafford shows how the vegetation around the Vale of Health entwined itself in Keats's verse ('Keats, Shoots and Leaves', 71-92). Michael O'Neill focusses on one key acquaintance Keats made on the Heath in 1816: Percy Shelly ('"The End and Aim of Poesy": Keats and Shelley in Dialogue', 93-114). Seen together, these three essays reveal the intense impact that a single place could have on the Keats's poetry and reputation. Had Keats not found his way to the Vale of Health in 1816, the myth of the effeminate youth might never have shot up, and the floral delights of 'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill' [1817] and *Endymion* [1818] might never have bloomed so gloriously.

The next four essays take in Keats's travels around the UK. Turley himself offers an unusual essay on Keats's transit to the Isle of Wight on 14-15 April 1817 ('Keats Underway', 115-34). Keats's letter detailing the rapid journey 'constitutes a playful act of countermapping', whose implications for *Endymion* Turley teases out over subsequent pages (116). The following three essays all focus on Keats's 1818 walking tour of Scotland and the North. Heidi Thompson argues that the walking tour was the 'inspiration and breeding ground' for the *Hyperion* poems ('Keats's Muses "In the Midst of Meg Merrilies' Country": Meg, Mnemosyne, Moneta and Autumn', 135-56 [136]). Of particular interest is Thompson's treatment of Walter Scott in the essay. She shows how Keats filtered his experience of Scotland through *Guy Mannering* [1815], which in turn provided many of the tropes and structures for his reworking of the Hyperion myth (esp. 146-47). Thompson's quite focussed treatment of Scottish folklore is complemented by Meiko O'Halloran's broader essay on Keats's poetic influences ('Poetic Genealogies: Keats's Northern Walking Tour', 157-80). In particular, she shows how Keats used the tour as an opportunity to wrangle with Wordsworth, Robert Burns, and James Macpherson. Alexandra Paterson rounds out this section with an essay on material things ('Keats's "Natural Sculptures": Geology, Vitality and the Scottish Walking Tour', 181-204). Keats not only read on his journey,

he also looked about him. Paterson shows how objects he saw found their way into his poetry, both when we was on tour and at home at the British Museum.

As *Keats's Places* draws to a close, it branches out to cover the diverse places of Keats's final years. Grant F. Scott shows how America figures in the 'Ode to Psyche' [1820] ('Keats's American Ode', 205-24). Nicholas Roe evokes Keats's three visits to Winchester, the sights and sounds he encountered, and tries to recover the peace and feeling of history Keats found there ('John Keats at Winchester', 225-44). The essay builds towards a reading of 'To Autumn' [1820], in which Roe is able to hear the distant echoes of King Alfred's England and the English of Chaucer (238-41). Kenneth Page offers an essay on Wentworth Place – known today as Keats House ('Wentworth PLace: "A Small Cottage, Pleasantly Situate"', 245-72). Page's interests are primarily biographical and topographical, but he does offer a tantalising hint that the house might be the place of 'drowsy noons' evoked in 'Ode on Indolence' [1820] (261). The volume ends on a mournful note, with Giuseppe Albano's essay on Keats in Rome ("Writ in Water", Etched in Stone: John Keats and the Experience of Rome', 273-92). He brilliantly evokes the vitality of the Rome that Keats encountered. Glancing back at Keats's various references to Italy in his early poems, Albano is able to give a compelling account of how the Eternal City appeared to the ailing Keats. And with that *Keats's Places* comes to an end.

It is a fine collection, and it is especially pleasing to see such fine contributions from Kenneth Page and Giuseppe Albano, respectively the Interpretation Officer at the Keats House Museum and the Curator of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome. May the borders between academia and public heritage continue to be so porous.

In two essays published elsewhere, Jane Darcy and Peter Henning take up and complete the themes raised in *Keats Places*. Darcy fills in a blank with her 'Primrose Island: Keats and the Isle of Wight' (*KSR* 32[2018] 28-46). She argues that when Keats visited the Isle of Wight in 1817, it changed the way he saw the sea. Keats was not the only writer who visited Wight for inspiration. Darcy considers Wordsworth, Thomas Pennant, William Gilpin and John Sturch, contextualising their responses to Wight as part of what Alain Corbin calls 'the discovery of the seaside' (32). She then briefly considers the rise of medicinal sea-bathing, arguing that by Keats's time, doctors had lost their grip on the practice (34-35). She concludes the essay with a long and detailed discussion of Keats's experiences on Wight, complete with several of her own photographs of Keatsian locations. This detective work enables her to flesh out little details of 'On the Sea' [1817] and *Endymion* [1818], and provides a rich sense of how Keats responded to particular aspects of his environment.

Peter Henning analyses Keats's sense of place from a different perspective in 'Keats, Ecocriticism, and the Poetics of Place' (*SiR* 57[2018] 407-427). He adopts a traditional Heideggerian framework, and considers various modes of being, dwelling and thinking in Keats's major poems. 'Ode to a Nightingale' [1819] portrays 'things as actively engaged in the world' (413), for instance, while 'Ode on Indolence' [1819] considers 'the immersive pull of artificial objects' (423). Henning moves in familiar territory, focussing on self and sensation in Keats's verse, but manages to pack in a great deal of thoughtful close reading.

2018 was a clearly good year for topographical studies of Keats.

Scholars continue to interpret Keats's work through a biographical lens. In 'Murder'd Men: "Isabella" and Goethe's *Werther*' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 53-66), Tom Baynes argues that Keats's reading directly influenced his poetry. More specifically, he argues that Keats's reading of *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers* [1774] shaped the writing of 'Isabella' [1818]. Baynes presents a range of textual evidence, demonstrating that Keats appeared to have been *Werther* on his mind during the period he wrote 'Isabella'. He then identifies a series of key textual parallels: like Goethe's Charlotte, Keats's Isabella is passionately musical (58); like Goethe's Werther, Keats's Lorenzo has a dazzling sensual life (*ibid.*). Indeed, it seems that when Keats departs from his main source, *The Decameron* [c. 1353], he seems to be adding Wertherian details.

In her essay on 'The Material Sublime and Theory of Mind in Coleridge and Keats' (*RCPS* [May 2018]), Renae Harris considers the problem of 'automaticity' in Coleridge and Keats. She situates Coleridge and Keats in the long tradition of Quixotic anxiety: absorptive reading, it was thought, 'seems to include a loss of the thinking, reasoning self'. She argues that today's cognitive science both explains and dissipates these eighteenth-century fears. Absorptive reading, we now know, can actually enhance cognitive development. Turning to Coleridge and Keats's poetry of dreams and fascinations, she finds that the two Romantic poets foreshadowed these modern cognitive theories.

Philip Lindholm continues a revisionist trend in Keats scholarship in "'At the Mere Touch of Cold Philosophy": Science, Sensation and Synaesthesia in John Keats's "Lamia"' (*EJES* 22[2018] 258-72). Like Harris, Lindholm considers Keats's understanding of the 'material sublime'. He takes 'Lamia' [1820] as his primary example. The poem appears to be anti-scientific on the surface, but is really very rich in scientific references, which Keats uses to explain the sensory dimension of human life. Lindholm does a fine job of tracking references to contemporary chemistry, psychology and biology in Keats's imagery. Lamia's phosphorescent eyes could not

have been so described before the advent of modern chemistry (267), and Lewis is right to argue that Keats was not the anti-scientific poet he was once made out to be.

Emily Rohrbach's exquisitely calibrated examination of Keats's sonnets and the qualities of the codex book, 'To "Lean upon a Closed Book": Keats's Sonnets, Formal Closure, and the Codex' (*ERR* 29[2018] 229–45), begins with a subtle but far-reaching insight:

I propose that Keats's sonnets meditate on what the sonnet form and the material book have in common. That is, the thematic resolution and formal closure traditionally associated with the sonnet form repeat, in the relation between form and theme, the ideas of opening and closing embodied by the materiality of the codex book. (229).

Shedding new light on the peculiarity of the Keatsian sonnet, with its melancholy, purity of image, and strange expansiveness of thought, Rohrbach reveals the way in which 'Keats's sonnets heighten a tension between form and theme, whereby formal closure becomes the bedfellow of thematic expansion', and how 'Keats makes that heightened tension between opening up and closing, embedded in the very sonnet form, resonate with the conceptual antithesis of opening and closing embodied by the codex book'. That 'closing and opening can be so intimately linked', Rohrbach concludes, 'ushers in, for Keats, issues of existence and subjectivity in a world of contingency, where being closed off from one possibility is to be afforded another'. (230). Carefully evidenced and expressed, this is perhaps the finest article on Keats's 'sonnet-thinking' written – the book on the subject is, as it were, shut.

R. S. White's wide-ranging, chatty essay on Keats and art in 'Gusto: Keats, Hazlitt, and Pictorial Art' (*KSR* 32[2018] 47–54), sketches out the connections between William Hazlitt's notion of gusto and Keats's broader approach to sense, affect, and response in his poetry. While no major claims are made, White lays a useful foundation for future work on the subject.

Duncan Wu gives an account of a recently acquired early manuscript of Keats's 'In Drear Nighted December' (1817) ("In Drear Nighted December": The Newly Acquired KSMA Manuscript' *KSR* 32[2018] 22–27). As well as outlining the particulars of the manuscript, Wu offers a brief reading of this extraordinary work as 'an attempt to write, in compact, lyric form, about loss of vision and its after-effects.' (27).

Carol L. Yang closes the year in Keats with an account of how 'Ode to a Nightingale' 'embodies such Buddhist principles as the dharma and the Four Noble Truths, articulated through Buddhism's focus on suffering and its possible antidote' (138) ('A Passage from Adam's Dream to the Cessation of Desire: A Buddhist Reading of John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"' *JNT*

48[2018] 137–63). While not always well-structured, this a thoughtful, original reading of a canonical poem, one that re-establishes Keats as a poet of substantial philosophical and moral scope, as well as aesthetic accomplishment.

Mary Robinson was the subject of a single essay this year. Sal Nicolazzo draws welcome attention to her lyric innovations in 'Lyric Without Subjects and Law without Persons: Vagrancy, Police Power, and The Lyrical Tales' (*Criticism* 60[2018] 149–70), particularly her engagement with vagrancy of the human and poetic kind in *Lyrical Tales* (1800). Engaging with the intersecting legal and lyric ideas of vagrancy and subjecthood, Nicolazzo argues Robinson's work pushes beyond the conventional bounds of both, stretching 'lyric to its limits' (153) by dramatising a series of dramatic refusals of subjectivity from her vagrant and impoverished interlocutors.

Compared to his fiction, Sir Walter Scott's poetry is generally understudied. It is a pleasure, therefore to note Graham Tulloch's fascinating comment Scott's war poetry in 'Walter Scott and Waterloo' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 266–77). Tulloch considers Scott's attempts 'to grapple in poetic terms with a new kind of warfare' (272) in two related texts, *The Field of Waterloo* [1816] and *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk* [1816]. Tulloch argues convincingly that depicting the increasingly modernised reality of battle strained Scott's poetry, forcing new and sometimes ungainly approaches to depicting history, and alienating his audience. The future, for Scott and Scott's work as a historical writer, Tulloch shows, lay in prose.

Anna Seward was likewise the subject of only a single essay in 2018. Francesca Blanch Serrat's essay, "'Thine Sacred Friendship": Anna Seward's "Llangollen Vale" and the Female Romantic Community', appears in *Persistence and Resistance in English Studies: New Research* [Cambridge Scholars, 2018] (69-77), a volume otherwise unconcerned with Romantic poetry. Serrat's essay is a fine work of biographical scholarship. She describes Anna Seward's relationship with the 'Ladies of Llangollen', Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby, two runaway Irish noblewomen who established a home for themselves in Wales. In 'Llangollen Vale' [1796], Seward turned these women's domestic life into an image of idealised female friendship (71). Serrat views female friendship through a primarily intellectual lens, suspending judgment on the queering aspects of the Ladies' relationship (74). Though Seward succeeds in elevating the Ladies onto a 'quasi-divine plane' in her poem, she is unable to transform them into an image of intellectual 'community', on account of their aristocratic exclusivity (76).

It was a rich year for studies in Percy Shelley. 2018 saw the publication of a major philosophy monograph that took the metaphysical reflections in Shelley's verse extremely seriously. It also

saw the publication of a raft of articles on *The Revolt of Islam* [1818] 200 years after its first publication. Apparently politics and metaphysics, Shelley's two favourite themes, remained central to scholars of his work this year.

For many critics, one of Romantic poetry's most attractive features is its philosophical sophistication. Yet professional philosophers in the English-speaking world have only rarely devoted scholarly attention to the Romantic poets as philosophers. As a result, those few who have done so, such as Bertrand Russell on Byron, or Roger Scruton on Coleridge, are quite conspicuous. In last year's edition, we had the pleasure to note Peter Cheyne's interdisciplinary collection *Coleridge and Contemplation* [OUP, 2017]. This year, it is a pleasure to note O. Bradley Bassler's metaphysical study, *Kant, Shelley and The Visionary Critique of Metaphysics*, which considers Shelley alongside Immanuel Kant as a 'guide' to 'paraphysics' (7).

Bassler's study is rooted in philosophy. He only engages a little with literary scholarship, his main purpose being to see how Shelley can help him reformulate his concept of the 'parafinite'. The parafinite is that aspect of reality which exceeds or brings into question the distinction between finitude and infinity. It does so because it is indeterminate. In a nutshell, Bassler claims that Kant's transcendental aesthetics deals with the 'relative parafinite', while Shelley's nature poetry invokes the 'absolute parafinite' (pp. 24-25). He illustrates the distinction with a discussion of the sublime. For Kant, an object is sublime because we judge it to be larger than things *of itself*. That is, it is large even without being compared to anything else—it is indeterminately large. This gives us an intimation of some great power, but this intimation is subjective because it is rooted in the transcendental structure of our own minds (33-6). In 'Mont Blanc', by contrast, Shelley claims to observe a 'Power' which objectively actually lurks behind all things (25). Bassler's main aim is to show that an objective theory like Shelley's is defensible.

After the introduction, the book proceeds through five chapters of philosophical and metamathematical discussion, drawing in a wide range of thinkers from the seventeenth century to the present. It culminates in the final chapter on Shelley, where Bassler stages a final conflict between Shelley and Kant, with some assistance from Blake. It was in the figure of Demagorgon that Shelley found the most apt poetic symbol for the parafinite. Demagorgon is unable to speak the 'deep truth', which is 'imageless' (471). This imageless truth is for Shelley 'an underlying source for poetic creation in a way that escapes figuration' (487). Reality itself is radically indefinite, and this is what gives scope for the creative act.

Inigo Bysshe Coffey considers a different side of Shelley's Kantianism in "Shelley's Kant, Wordsworth, and Peter Bell" (*WC* 49[2018] 167–76). Coffey closely analyses a reference to Kant

in *Peter Bell the Third* [1819]. In that poem, Shelley accuses Wordsworth of stodgy Kantianism (168), and draws on the popular image of Kant as ‘a placeholder for obscure German metaphysics’ (169). Nonetheless, as Coffey demonstrates, Shelley remained interested in Kant to the end of his life, and there is evidence that he read at least *some* Kant in Latin translation.

2018 marked two centuries since the first publication of one of Shelley’s major political poems, *The Revolt of Islam*. Shelley’s politics were once an embarrassment to scholars. But these days, as Pietro Deandrea demonstrates in ‘*The Revolt of Islam*, Poscolonialism and the Arab Springs’, scholars have come to value Shelley’s revolutionary theories (*KSR* 32[2018] 158-69). Deandrea argues that in the wake of the Arab Springs, Shelley’s theories of hope have gained new relevance. Shelley’s belief in political miracles may have seemed absurd to prior scholars, but ‘some recent revolutions witnessed, albeit briefly, this closeness between the miraculous and history’ (169). The angelic poet’s wings apparently did not beat in vain.

Joey S. Kim’s agrees that Shelley was a truly ‘radical visionary’ (‘Disorienting “Shapes” in Shelley’s *The Revolt of Islam*’, *KSR* 32[2018] 134-47, 135). *The Revolt of Islam* might seem a gaudy and cliché-ridden work of orientalism on the surface, but in his typical way Shelley ‘reorient[s]’ the ‘East/West binary’ and makes an ‘expressive turn’ towards ‘Orientalist plurality’ (135). Kim contextualises Shelley’s poem through a reading of William Jones’s *Poems, consisting chiefly of translations from the Asiatick languages* [1772], before turning to a close analysis of the word ‘shape’ in *Revolt*. It was Shelley’s poetics of ‘shape’, concludes Kim, that allowed Shelley to transcend the orientalist discourses on which he drew.

Alessandra Monorchio’s fascinating reading of the revolutionary potentials of sympathy, “‘My Spirit Sought/To Weave a Bondage of Such Sympathy’: Sympathy, Enthusiasm and Revolution in *Laon and Cythna*’ (*KSR* 32[2018] 123–33), picks out ‘*Laon and Cythna* as one of Shelley’s attempts to combat the Lakers’ post-revolution despondency’, and the ideal text to consider the ambivalent potential of sympathy. In the process of ‘elucidating how the poem reveals [Shelley’s] hopes and anxieties about’ (124) the potential of sympathy, Monorchio offers a usefully brief political, philosophical, and scientific history of the concept.

Diego Saglia continues a rich year for Shelley’s *Revolt of Islam*, reading the poem as a complex response to the retreat of the French Revolution, the aftermath of Napoleon, and the restoration of “Legitimacy” (‘Shelley’s Revolt in the Mediterranean: Writing Restoration’ *KSR* 32[2018] 148–57). Re-reading ‘the familiar shortcomings of Shelley’s poem—its complexities, intricacies and contradictions even’ as ‘textual mechanisms for effecting a re-engagement with revolution, as well as a rethinking of restoration’ (157) in its various connotations is productive, but more

needed to be said on Shelley's deployment of and engagement with the discourse of orientalism on the rise at this time.

Fiore Sireci, in 'Kindred Spirits in an Age of Political Censure: *The Revolt of Islam* and the Example of Mary Wollstonecraft', reads Shelley's poem in dialogue with Mary Wollstonecraft, teasing out a number of surprising similarities and sharp differences (*KSR* 32 [2018] 113–22) between the poet and his deceased mother-in-law.

Finally, Paul Whickman closed out 2018's debate over Shelley's politics with his trenchantly argued and carefully evidenced essay on Shelley's changes to *Laon and Cythna* [1817], the original version of *The Revolt of Islam* ('*Laon and Cythna* and *The Revolt of Islam*: Revisions as Transition', *KSR* 32[2018] 102–12). While these changes have been widely regarded as grudging and forced, Whickman continues to read the poem as an 'evaluative or a transitional one', but 'considers the enforced revisions Shelley made to the poem at the end of 1817 in the same light.' (103). Referring to the original text, Whickman identifies the major change in the poem is the swapping of the word "God" for the word "Power". Done to avoid blasphemy laws, this change, while blunting the specificity of Shelley's original attack on Christianity, ends up, Whickman shows, extending rather than restricting the 'notion of the collusion between religious and political authority'. (112). 'These enforced revisions', Whickman concludes, 'are therefore not only simple pragmatic acts of self-censorship but can also be seen to provide Shelley with an opportunity to rethink and to refocus an aesthetic and political philosophy.' (112). This textual scholarship has significant ramifications for Bassler's equation of 'Power' with the 'parafinite' in Shelley's metaphysics.

The remaining eight articles on Shelley from 2018 largely continued these discussions of revolutionary politics and revolutionary metaphysics. Ben Hewitt explores the competing claims of hope and despair in Shelley's verse ('Percy Shelley and the Tragedies of Lacanian Psychoanalysis' *ERR* 29[2018] 787-803). He argues that Shelley shared a tragic view of the human subject with Jacque Lacan, citing *Julian and Maddalo* [1818], "The Triumph of Life" [1822] and *Prometheus Unbound* [1820] as evidence. Both Shelley and Lacan believed that the human mind was inevitably divided and inexplicable to itself. Like Deandrea, however, Hewitt ultimately concludes that Shelley expresses a fundamentally hopeful view of life – as does Lacan, by extension. Though the truth may be 'imageless', according to Demogorgon in *Prometheus Unbound*, 'eternal love' is a guiding star that can lead the visionary mind beyond the confines of finite knowledge (799-800). In this conclusion, Hewitt provides a different interpretation of what Bassler calls the Shelleyan 'parafinite' (see above).

Greg Ellerman combines philosophy and politics in his analysis of *Queen Mab* [1813] ('A Poetics of Ether' *ERR* 29[2018] 389–98). Ellerman focuses on 'figurative transformations' in Shelley's early poem: *Queen Mab* constantly oscillates between images of matter and spirit, 'upending ... metaphorical and metaphysical hierarchies' (390). Ellerman begins by sketching contemporary science as Shelley understood it, and then goes on to show how Shelley uses the concept of 'ether' to critique prevailing scientific ideas. What makes Shelley's poem 'ethereal' is its 'suspension of oppositions', which for Ellerman has a political as well as a poetic dimension (397).

Philipp Erchinger agrees that Shelley suspends oppositions, though he has a different idea of how this suspension comes about ('Science, Footnotes and the Margins of Poetry in Percy B. Shelley's *Queen Mab* and Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head*' *EJES* 22[2018] 241–57). Where Ellerman focusses on Shelley's imagery, Erchinger on Shelley's use of annotations. Shelley's annotations blur the boundaries of text and world, and therefore confound poetry and not-poetry, imagination and reason, literature and science. Shelley is not the sole focus of Erchinger's analysis. He argues that Charlotte Smith makes a fundamentally similar use of annotations in her blank verse masterpiece, *Beachy Head* [1807]. This specific comparison is welcome in a field where male and female poets are often tacitly separated into two discrete and homogeneous groups.

Alexander Freer drops down from the lofty heights of politics, metaphysics and science to consider an altogether more quotidian aspect of Shelley's poetry: clothes ('Shelley's Vestimentary Poetics' *P&L* 42[2018] 292–310). Like Ellerman and Erchinger, he finds that Shelley is preoccupied with the union of opposites and the deconstruction of categories. He takes issue with the long line of Shelley critics who have claimed that his gaudy imagery is a 'robe' that 'distract[s] from his faulty ideas' (292). In fact, Shelley had a sophisticated understanding of how poem's obvious surface and deep ideas interact. His poems are full of clothing imagery, which symbolises the 'multiplicity of [poetry's] surfaces and shapes' (306).

Brian McGrath engages in an even more minute form of word analysis in 'Shelley, among Other Things' (*MLN* 133[2018] 1188–1205), focussing on the difference between "among" and "amongst", and arguing for the profound importance of Romantic prepositions. If his methods are slightly credulity-straining, McGrath's conclusions are nonetheless sound and illuminating.

Merrilees Roberts splits the sensitive fibre of Shelleyan sympathy into two apparently conflicting discourses in 'Psychological Limits in Percy Shelley's Prefaces' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 158–68), arguing, by way of Shelley's prefaces, that 'the notion of the poet's disinterested ability

to be hyper-sensitive to the “operations of the human mind”, and their extension to the material world, becomes associated with affective strategies for communication that more obviously bespeak morally relevant, *interested* interpersonal response’ (159). While Roberts reads this as a contradiction productive of trauma, it’s difficult to agree – rather, it seems part and parcel of the diverse practices of intersubjectivity that characterise those writers we term Romantic.

Taylor Schey’s maddeningly productive essay on Shelley, Hume, skepticism and the sufficiency of ignorance, ‘Skeptical Ignorance: Hume, Shelley, and the Mystery of “Mont Blanc”’ (*MLQ* 79[2018] 53–80) pulls up short of a solid, satisfying conclusion, shrewdly demonstrating, in its mischievous phrasing, ‘the points at which one stops and walks away, empty-handed but satisfied, thereafter ignoring the demands of metaphysical inquiry’ (62). Schey’s Shelley is a poet and thinker fundamentally uninterested in getting to the root of things – indeed, the delving, penetrative aspect of epistemological reasoning seems to be a specific point of resistance. While I could not wholly agree with Schey’s reading of Shelley as a grand practitioner of the ‘poetics of epistemic sufficiency’ (75) – Shelley seems much too restless and various a poet – the argument advanced here sheds light on a number of key mistakes in the orthodox formulation of Romanticism that continues, however covertly, to exert its sway on contemporary scholarship.

Sophie Thomas pushes Shelley into three dimensions in her fascinating essay, ‘Vital Matter(s): Shelley, Herder, and Sculpture’ (*ERR* 29[2018] 377–87). Drawing out Shelley’s time spent studying statuary in Italy, Thomas proposes, via Herder, that such statuary allowed Shelley to think in new ways about the intersection between the ideal and the real, the results of which, Thomas shows, are recorded in the unique awareness of position and figure in *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

Two articles were published on Robert Southey’s poetry in 2018, both of them by Stuart Andrews, and both published in *Wordsworth Circle*. In the first article, Andrews reveals how Southey shaped the reception of Thomas Chatterton (*WC* 49[2018] 65-71). He reveals the considerable scholarly effort Southey put into the edition, transcribing thousands of lines from Chatterton’s unpublished manuscripts (66), and defending Chatterton’s poetry stoutly in the periodical press and in his edited volumes (67). Andrews goes on to describe how Chatterton was picked up by editors and literary critics in the nineteenth century, revealing the profound influence of Southey’s work on later readers. In the second article, ‘Coleridge, Southey and Freedom of the Press: 1816-1821’ (*WC* 49[2018] 162-167), Andrews considers Southey and Coleridge’s arguments against freedom of the press in the reactionary years after Waterloo. For a magazine editor, Southey was remarkably hostile to freedom of publication. In his later

political writings, Coleridge too seemed to long for greater state control of the media, but his advocacy was 'muted' by his respect for English law and his feeling that censorship was practically unworkable (164). Southey had no such qualms.

As the lone article concerning John Thelwall and Romantic poetry, Jerome McGann's 'Romantic Subjects and Iambic Laws: Episodes in the Early History of Contract Negotiations' (*NLH* 49[2018] 597-615) is, fortunately, a good one. Drawing on the heroic efforts of Judith Thompson and others to recover Thelwall's texts and reputation, McGann gives a detailed account Thelwall's ideas of speech and performance -specifically, how Thelwall imagined a poem should be read. The social, affective, community-directed act of reading out loud is then directed towards Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others, arguing again for Thelwall's profound influence on the canon of writers from which he was removed by political persecution in the 1790s.

It is a pleasure to notice Harriet Kramer Linkin's article on the three-way relationship between Mary Tighe, George Romney and William Hayley (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 1-21), the only article dedicated to either Tighe or Hayley in 2018. Her article sheds new light on the challenges faced by women poets in a literary industry dominated by gentlemen. She reveals how Hayley tried to turn Tighe into his proxy, asking her to publish her own *Psyche* [1805] with the illustrations Romney had made for Hayley's own version of the Psyche legend. Romney's illustrations would have been comically inadequate for Tighe's poem: 'Only the first cartoon pictures a moment that appears in Tighe's *Psyche*; the rest depict episodes Tighe omits and perspectives she seeks to alter' (2). Tighe herself painted at least one image based on her poem, which as Linkin shows, is remarkably similar to two of Blake's plates for *The Book of Thel* [1789]. The essay is fine, detailed biographical study, illuminating another subgraph of Romantic poetry's wider social network.

William Wordsworth continues to be a titanic presence in studies of Romantic poetry. Three major monographs and a host of articles testify to scholars' continued fascination with Wordsworth's writings on subjectivity, religion and the natural environment.

Mark Bruhn's energetic, closely argued study for Wordsworth's beginnings, *Wordsworth before Coleridge: The Growth of the Poet's Mind, 1785-1797*, adds yet another set of philosophical influences to the ever-growing list of intellectual mentors who, apparently, helped the young Lakeland poet on his way to his mature, 'philosophical' verse. Taking issue with what he terms the 'habit of tracing the pattern of Wordsworth's thought according to the successive bents of Coleridge's', which has, Bruhn claims, 'led too many critics to neglect the original impulses behind Wordsworth's philosophy and thus, inevitably, to disregard their presence and

persistence throughout the body of his work' (3), Bruhn swaps traditional influences like Coleridge and William Godwin for Dugald Stewart, Ralph Cudworth, and Kant via Friedrich August Nischt. Bruhn's argument for Stewart in particular hinges on passages from a handful of letters Wordsworth wrote to a friend in 1794 about a proposed political periodical to be called *The Philanthropist*, and on the changes Wordsworth made to *An Evening Walk* [1793] in 1794. In these changes, Bruhn detects a celebration of the 'decidedly non-Godwinian values of domestic attachment and natural feeling' (4), signalling an apparent seachange in the young Wordsworth's philosophy. While it must be said that these few letters and some rather minor edits and rewrites to a highly conventional picturesque poem do not always bear up under the strain of carrying Bruhn's determinedly weighty argument, there is much of value in this book. While his central thesis can feel tendentious, Bruhn's examination of the poetic and philosophical traditions Wordsworth was working within and without is always lively and engaged. Chapter 2, 'Growing out of Pope', in which Bruhn outlines the ways in which the work of Alexander Pope 'reinforced in moral and poetic terms the foundational dualism to which' the very young Wordsworth, at Hawkshead, 'was already being introduced through his study of mathematics' (46) is a particular highlight. As Bruhn writes, 'I trust that readers who [...] remain skeptical of my specific attributions will nevertheless find the study valuable insofar as it complements the efforts of previous scholars' (7).

Jessica Fay's patient, thoughtful, painterly study, *Wordsworth's Monastic Inheritance: Poetry, Place, and the Sense of Community*, takes up the strangely neglected subject of 'Wordsworth's subtle, complex, and often conflicted thinking about the routines and legacies of monasticism' (2). Just how subtle and complex this thinking is quickly becomes apparent as Fay shows Wordsworth entertaining a reverence for monastic ruins as a 'deeply resonant aspect of the landscape', while also holding a 'strong antipathy towards the foundation of Roman Catholic monasteries in England' (2). This is a conflict Fay is too subtle a scholar to try and resolve, and the interests of the book are broader. As Fay writes,

This topic is not merely of interest in terms of what it suggests about religious dimensions of Wordsworth's writings or his opinions concerning Roman Catholicism; rather, Wordsworth's thinking about monasticism offers new insights into a range of important issues in his poetry and prose, including the historical resonances of the landscape, local attachment and memorialization, gardening and cultivation, Quakerism and silence, solitude and community, pastoral retreat and national identity. (2).

Key to this range is Fay's entirely convincing argument that Wordsworth viewed 'monastic sites as *loci* that draw together temporally disparate communities', rather than simply stops on a

conventional picturesque itinerary; sites enriched 'by the passage of time and the work of nature [...] palimpsests of collective identity' (2) – places through which (and at which) questions of historical inheritance and social practice could be mediated and meditated upon. This centring of monasticism offers a new vantage on Wordsworth's still oddly under-examined antiquarianism, particularly in the so-called "middle years" of his career, covering the composition of poems like *The White Doe of Rylstone* [written 1807] and parts of the *Excursion*. Perhaps the most valuable chapter is 'Quakerism, Cultivation, and the Coleorton Period', in which Fay identifies an appreciation and emulation of Quaker thought and worship running through Wordsworth's poetic project and, indeed, his move to and reverence for agrarian community, in line with Thomas Clarkson's account of Quaker worship and beliefs in *Portraiture of Quakerism* (1806). With their connection of spiritual and material gardening, and their reverence for silence and natural communion, Clarkson's Quakers chime with 'Wordsworth's own habits and experiences' to a remarkable degree (68).

In less skilled hands this material might appear dense or obscure, but Fay's lucid prose and careful research make for a remarkably accessible and thoroughly evidenced argument. While some of Fay's conclusions, particularly in regards to the political ramifications of Wordsworth's taking up a kind of sublimated monasticism, might have been pushed further, this book makes a valuable and startlingly original contribution to Wordsworth studies.

Similarly original but entirely different in its aerial approach, Thomas H. Ford's *Wordsworth and the Poetics of Air: Atmospheric Romanticism in a Time of Climate Change* takes as its subject that most subtle of Romantic fluids, air – or, more properly, atmosphere. Practicing what he terms 'ecophilology' (1), Ford takes the reader on an inspired tour of the Romantic [in]firmament, a transhistorical journey made possible by the unique qualities of atmosphere as both material and metaphor, a fundamentally unstable, shifting figure that never quite settles itself as literal or figurative, but hovers, breathes, and gusts between these two poles. As Ford writes, this 'book describes the historical emergence of these semantic paradoxes of atmosphere', tracing particularly the ways in which the 'conceptual recursivity' of atmosphere – its function as both that which constitutes, and that which is *constituted by*, mood, event, history – provides the model and the medium for Romanticism's 'new and self-defining atmospheric sense of history', as a distinct historical period and also a historically mobile style or mode. (2-3). Drawing on etymologies and histories of usage to show the manner in which atmosphere continues its work as a subtle medium into the present, via works of philosophy, natural history,

and medical science by writers like Humphry Davy, Thomas Beddoes, and John Thelwall, all of whom are arranged around the apparently central figure of William Wordsworth, Ford argues that, in Wordsworth's lyric poetry, 'atmospherics and language were brought together into a new configuration that was seen as capable of communicating the otherwise indescribably unique feeling of a delimited historical moment to other worlds and other times' (3).

Key to this communication is a certain airy permeability, one Ford detects specifically in Wordsworth's most anthologised piece of blank verse, 'Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey', a title shortened to 'Lines Written a Few Miles Above' to 'position this poem as a kind of sky-writing, an inscription set aloft in an aerial zone' (156). Ford's close reading of this specific, load-bearing text does not arrive until the book's final chapter, the previous four operating as both fascinating explorations of atmospheric science and thought, and as so many alternate introductions to a thoroughly canonical Romantic text. While these chapters are mesmerising in their own right, an almost inevitable sense of anticlimax hovers over the final chapter, a chapter to which I arrived slightly out of breath, having traversed the length of the book. While his theoretical and historical frames are endlessly suggestive and remarkably confident, Ford's reading of 'Tintern Abbey', by contrast, is partial, convenient, and not wholly convincing – prone to a certain breathlessness. Arguing that 'Wordsworth pushed the respiratory patterns of classical rhetoric to the limit can be shown empirically: try reading out aloud the second verse-paragraph of 'Lines' with just two breaths, pausing to inhale only after the full stop in line 36' (165-166), for example, Ford, in his haste to provide solid evidence for an airy architecture, floats over commas, semi-colons, colons, and other text marks that might invite a reader to stop for breath. His subsequent formulation, that '[y]ou do not see into the life of things until breath is almost suspended, and until the metabolic interchange required by any act of reading is reduced below the threshold of atmospheric comfort' (168), seems, as a result, somewhat laboured. This is, however, a minor gripe with a dazzling study, one that rides the still-raging Romantic wind from the 1790s to the present with breathtaking ease, even if it does sometimes sink and touch the ground.

Sanford Budick offers a sophisticated reading of 'The Ruined Cottage' (*MLQ* 79[2018] 145-71). He revisits the classic themes of cognition, happiness, temporality and the sublime in the poem, situating Wordsworth in a philosophical dialogue with Coleridge, John Milton and Immanuel Kant. Though he makes scarcely creditable claims about Kant's direct influence on Wordsworth, it must be said that Budick's philosophical framework does give great clarity to his argument. He

concludes that Armytage is able to achieve a problematic happiness by entering 'a dimension that escapes linear time' (157). In a meditative state, Armytage is able to recognise aspects of consciousness that precede all actual experience.

Piotr Kałowski views 'The Ruined Cottage' through a medical frame in his essay "'Vain Dalliance with Misery": Moral Therapy in William Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage"' (*Anglica* 27:i[2018] 21–33). Kałowski argues that the male characters in the poem treat the female characters like psychiatric patients. He historicises psychiatry, reconstructing the Romantic-era notion of 'moral therapy'. Moral therapy was a kind of talking cure, where the counsellor tried to be sympathetic while persuading the patient to conform to society's norms (22). This mixture of sympathy and moral authoritarianism is what characterises the behaviour of the male characters in the poem. As a result, the poem 'treats Margaret's traumatic experiences as a thought exercise' and 'ignor[es] her individuality' (31).

James Chandler's 'The Question of Sensibility' is a wide-ranging account of the problem of 'sensibility' in literary history (*NLH* 49[2018] 467-92), but it culminates in a reading of 'Tintern Abbey' that will doubtless be of great interest to scholars of Romantic poetry. He begins by demonstrating how relevant the old concept of 'sensibility' remains to contemporary defences of the Humanities. There is a growing tradition of university teachers who are convinced 'that sensibility formation is richest when literary education remains open to the past' (481). In 'Tintern Abbey', argues Chandler, Wordsworth shows us how such 'sensibility formation can be achieved. The poem charts a series of moments in which Wordsworth moves from the perception of smaller realities to larger ones, and the poem as a whole can be seen as an 'effort to serialize achieved sensibility' (487).

Wordsworth studies has always been dominated by work on Wordsworth's philosophy and poetics. It is a pleasure therefore to turn to an innovative work on the poet's reception: 'The Power of the Weak Signifier: Wordsworth's Lucy in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*', by Nicole Gervasio (*MLS* 47[2018] 36-57). Gervasio reads Wordsworth's Lucy as 'an archetype for the precarity associated with women of her time' (38). Wordsworth's portrayal of the mysterious Lucy is so 'amorphous' she becomes 'ontologically impossible'; in this way, Wordsworth's 'Lucy' poems are '*unconscious[ly]*' misogynistic (40). It is this very 'flatness' that has allowed Lucy to be appropriated in so many different cultural contexts (41), argues Gervasio, including in J.M. Coetzee's South Africa and Jamaica Kincaid's Antigua.

In 'Wordsworth's Dropsy: Flux and Figure in *The Excursion*' (*Romanticism* 24[2018] 36-52), Arden Hegele draws attention to Wordsworth's most maligned work of poetry. Her essay is a

study of the 'hydraulics' of the 'embodied mind' in *The Excursion* (36) – to make sense of the mind's embodiment, Wordsworth imagines it as a liquid. Her key examples come from Book 2 of the excursion, where the poet and the Wanderer encounter a waterlogged copy of *Candide* [1759] on the ground, and realise that it belongs to the Solitary. The book is a symbol of the Solitary's 'inflamed, unbalanced, and over-saturated emotional state' (38). Hegele is a scholar of medical humanities, and ably situates Wordsworth's hydraulic image of mind in eighteenth-century psychology. Her essay is a useful counterweight to the 'pneumatic' approaches to Romantic psychology that have predominated in recent decades.

John Hughes pays welcome attention to an early Wordsworth poem in his 'Towards a Reading of Wordsworth's "Now Ye Meet in the Cave"' (*RoN* 71[2018]). 'Now Ye Meet in the Cave' [c. 1788] is an 'abandoned, fractured, and irreducibly puzzling poem', but Hughes finds himself 'intrigued by the unbridled intensity of [its] imploring voice', its 'mystery' and its 'haunted, haunting scenario'. Hughes carefully considers a range of Wordsworth's very early works to build up a context for this weird gothic fragment. Many of Wordsworth's early poems centre 'on a self who is constrained and impaired by a mysterious, shadowy muse associated with the world of death'. In this context, Hughes reads 'Now Ye Meet in the Cave' as a reflection on the instability of subjectivity, uncovering deep philosophical resonances in the incomplete text.

Jamison Kantor begins his essay on 'Ode. Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood' [1804] with a somewhat amusing episode in the poem's reception: its appropriation in the order of service at Margaret Thatcher's funeral ('Immortality, Romanticism, and the Limit of the Liberal Imagination', *PMLA* 133[2018] 508-25). Thatcher's funeral leads him to a question: 'Why do liberals love the Immortality Ode?' (512) His story begins with John Stuart Mill, who 'project[ed] his own crisis onto Wordsworth' in order to 'reaffirm the universality of utilitarian liberalism' (514). The apparently healthful and hopeful message of the poem made it easy to appropriate as a text promoting sound middle-class values—despite the poem's own radical critique of bourgeois economic values. Kantor continues his story into the twentieth century, showing how the Ode was appropriated by mid-century liberals like Lionel Trilling, and how it has been used to justify neoliberal projects like Margaret Thatcher's. Kantor's essay is all-in-all a fine piece of reception analysis.

In a note for the *Wordsworth Circle*, David Lewis reveals an amusing inconsistency in Wordsworth's behaviour ('Wordsworth's Iron Works' *WC* 49[2018] 93). It turns out that one of the pre-eminent anti-industrial poets was a shareholder in an ironworks! According to a document from c. 1843, the elder Wordsworth was a shareholder in The Cambrian Iron and Smelter Company, an 'enterprise dedicated to the creation of the blast furnaces, the coke ovens

and the slag heaps that would soon disfigure a largely unspoilt valley' (93). Words and deeds, Mr. Wordsworth. Words and deeds.

In the vein of getting and spending, Tianyu Ma returns to an old Wordsworthian favourite in 'Boons, Authority, and Imagination: A Reading of "The World Is Too Much with Us"' (ANQ 31[2018] 82–87), investigating the usage and evolution of the word "boon" as a means of exploring what Ma terms the poem's call to 'activity and authority' (82). The poem, Ma concludes, calls for its readers to exert their imaginations to engage with nature.

Alan Richardson dispenses woodsy wisdom in 'Lucy on the Trail with Violets' (WC 49[2018] 108–10), claiming 'the crucial role played by common knowledge in reading and appreciating poetry has rarely been remarked upon and remains relatively unstudied even as of this writing' (108). Richardson goes on to express his belief that poetry is easier to read when you have some knowledge of the world, a sentiment he briefly links to Wordsworth's remarkable 'She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways' (1798). While Richardson's argument is either absent or commonplace, it did helpfully remind me of the sheer complexity of affect in Wordsworth's "simple" lyrics.

Clifford Siskin, meanwhile, returns with gusto to the question of Wordsworthian "system" in 'Renewing Wordsworth' (WC 49[2018] 113–22). For a number of critics, including, most famously, Matthew Arnold, the trick to appreciating Wordsworth was to rescue him from his system – the historically inflected but unique models of poet and reader that Wordsworth expounded on across his career, one that helped found and spread the "system" of culture and aesthetics we still live under. Uncovering this system at its instigation, Siskin characterises Wordsworth as 'the Enlightenment Poet of system' (121). But while Siskin's argument is never less than compelling, it relies heavily upon canonical works of blank verse, a reliance that creates a false sense of uniformity. For Siskin's argument to carry through, Wordsworth's errancies and divergences, the extraordinary multiplicity since disciplined by two centuries of critical and editorial work, also need to be grappled with.

David Stewart does just that in his quest to uncover that most subtle and retiring of creatures, the Wordsworthian sense of humour, in 'Wordsworth, Parody, Print, and Posterity, 1814–1822' (ERR 29[2018] 601–18). Expanding on work done on parody and reception by scholars like Brian R. Bates, Stewart surveys the extraordinary number of parodies made of Wordsworth and Wordsworth's poetry in the early nineteenth century, marking a substantial change in Wordsworth's public visibility. He also argues persuasively for the extent to which, in the

complexity and instability of his irony and authorial persona, Wordsworth foresaw and pre-empted the 'range of doubles whose existence he seemed to have anticipated.' (613).

Joanna Taylor maps the consequences of sound and listening for Romanticism in her examination of Lakeland soundscapes, 'Echoes in the Mountains: The Romantic Lake District's Soundscape' (*SiR* 57[2018] 383-406). Considering the unique environmental and geographical features of the Lakes, Taylor re-reads Wordsworth's poetry as uniquely sensitive to the aural, and stresses the primacy of 'echo's role in the development of what I have called the acoustic sublime.' (394).

In her novel and far-reaching essay on siblings and the 'inter-subjectivity that underpins Wordsworth's poetic self-imagining' (621), 'Wordsworth's Sibling Logic: "We Are Seven" and "Tintern Abbey"' (*ERR* 29[2018] 619-37) Talia M. Vestri poses a major challenge to the still-kicking conception of Wordsworth (and, therefore, Romanticism) as consumed with the solitary and the egotistical sublime. Instead, Vestri proposes we focus instead on the many webs of interrelation and community that characterise Wordsworth's poetry, even at the level of the text – Vestri is particularly shrewd in noting the way in which Wordsworth's poems 'have been orphaned from one another' (621), removed from their volume-siblings in the process of being anthologised. The ramifications of this focus on lateral relations are manifold – most excitingly, Vestri offers a method of reading Wordsworth's relationship to his siblings, specifically Dorothy, that diverts sharply from the sometimes scabrous biographical readings that have come before. Siblings, rather than proxies to dominate or engage in incest with, become a network of other minds and bodies to think, sense, and live with.

The final three poets we consider are Helen Maria Williams, Anne Yearsley and Lady Nairne. Continuing a trend for 2018, each of these female poets was the subject of a single article only. In a piece for the *European Romantic Review* (29[2018] 141-59), John Bugg offers a fresh interpretation of Helen Maria Williams' 'Ode on the Peace' [1783]. Williams's poem is a sustained meditation on the challenges of peacetime, in which she crystallises the public mood in Britain in the wake of the American Revolution. Bugg provides a rich context for the poem, considering articles, poetry and bumptious songs from the period. Williams transcends this context, writing a poem that is 'an anthology of this fraught archive' of postwar literature (150). For her, representing peace poetically is a professional challenge. According to Bugg, it is a challenge Williams rises triumphantly to meet.

In an essay on Anne Yearsley, Matthew Leoparti offers a new take on the revival of epic poetry in Romantic Britain ('Ann Yearsley's "Brutus" and the Evangelical Epic Poem' *SiR* [2018]57

265-300). Like other epic poets of the period, Yearsley's key themes were nation and empire. While she certainly expressed imperialist ideas in 'Brutus', her fragmentary epic of 1796, she also used the poem 'to subvert imperialist discourse' (265). Leoparti considers 'Brutus' as an 'evangelical epic', comparing it with a range of missionary epics by Thomas Beck, Thomas Williams, Helen Maria Williams and Southey. Compared to these other poets, Yearsley is characteristically uncertain. Leoparti links her uncertainty over the distinction between the 'civilised' and the 'savage' to her own uncertainty about her place as a working-class poet in a genteel industry, and her own complex relationship with her Anglican faith.

In his essay, 'Gendering the Scottish Nation: Rereading the Songs of Lady Nairne', George Christian makes an original contribution to the emergent field of Scottish Romanticism (*ERR* 29[2018] 681-709). He counters the common sentimental readings of Nairne's patriotic songs, revealing that her poetry is really full of ambivalent political messages. In her poetry, she 'continually resists the forces of Anglicization' (690), and calls for a return to traditional Scottish values of 'truth' and 'conscience' (692). The aesthetic and political aspects of Nairne's poetry are in harmony with one another; Christian makes a strong argument for paying greater attention to her.

Despite media hype to the contrary, the academic study of Romantic poetry remains rooted in the traditional canon, and scholarship continues to be dominated by a sane and careful historicism. Interest in female poets continues to grow, and it is now clearly the norm for a multi-author study to take in at least one or two female writers alongside the more familiar men. It remains to be seen whether the floodgates will finally open, releasing a steady flow of articles and monographs dedicated to individual female poets. Likewise, it remains to be seen whether studies of Romantic poetry will shuffle off its Englandism, and start to take in a wider range of contexts. The increasing tendency of ecocriticism to place poems in a global climatic context is one step in this direction.

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