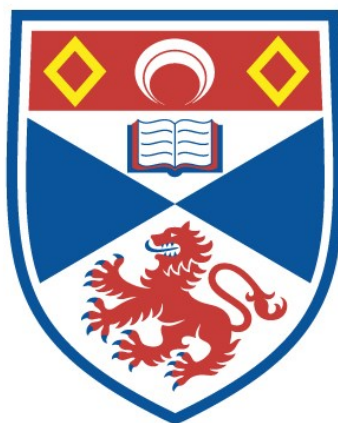


WANDERERS, DWELLERS, EXILES:
READING WORDSWORTHIAN SPATIAL POETICS IN THE
POETRY OF LORD BYRON AND JOHN KEATS

Hannah Rose Britton

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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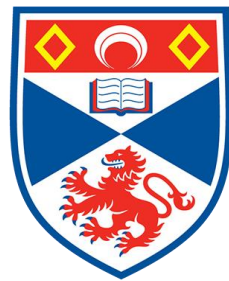
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Hannah Rose Britton



University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with Wordsworth's spatial poetics, with the formation and articulation of spatial identities and poetic geographies in his verse, and with the informing influence of those spatial poetics on the poetry of John Keats and Lord Byron. This thesis contends that Keats's and Byron's reception of Wordsworth's poetry was intimately entwined with their understanding of the poet's place: his geographical location in the Lake District and his place amongst the poets to whom they were heir. My research suggests that attending to the moments in Byron's and Keats's verse in which Wordsworthian spatial poetics emerge, are contested, and are reformed or absorbed, enables a deeper understanding of the poetic relationships between the poets and draws out strands of influence that have hitherto been overlooked. This thesis uncovers new areas of complex textual engagement between the Romantic poets by refocusing the discussion on the second-generation poets' allusions to Wordsworth. Although Wordsworthian echoes and borrowings have been well traced in biographical and editorial work on Byron and Keats, there have been no extended critical studies. While building on the work of formal inheritance, this thesis also suggests a modification of the critical approach to the poetics of the nineteenth century that is implicitly, and often explicitly, framed as a question of Wordsworth *or* Byron. By uncovering complex intertextualities, this thesis suggests that there is more to be said on the moments in which the Romantic poets coalesce. The discussion is structured around an exploratory engagement with Wordsworth's poetics in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), which then informs readings of Byron and Keats. Through a selective engagement with their intertextual dialogue

with Wordsworth, the thesis complicates previous studies of Romantic allusion by considering the experience of bodies in space and how those bodies are rendered textually.

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Acknowledgements

I owe a great debt of thanks to a great many people, without whom this research would not have been possible. Many of their voices have long echoed in the textual and geographic spaces of my work and each of them have, in different ways, given me space in which to find my own voice.

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Lastly, my thanks go to my father, my biggest champion, and the one to whom my thesis is dedicated. This work was begun with his strength and finished in the memory of his faith.

Alone I tread this path;—for aught I know,

Timing my steps to thine

— William Wordsworth, ‘When to the attractions of the busy world’

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Abbreviations

- BCPW* *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*. Jerome McGann (ed.). 7 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980-1993.
- BLJ* *Byron's Letters and Journals*. Leslie A. Marchand (ed.). 13 vols. London: Murray, 1973-1994.
- HCRBW* *Henry Crabbe Robinson on Books and their Writers*. Edith J. Morley (ed.). 3 vols. London: J. M. Dent, 1938.
- LBOP* *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*. James Butler and Karen Green (eds.). The Cornell Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- LJK* *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*. Hyder E. Rollins (ed.). 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- LLWMW* *The Love Letters of William and Mary Wordsworth*. Beth Darlington (ed.). London: Chatto and Windus, 1981.
- LWDW: MY, II* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, Part II, 1812-1820*. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (eds.). 2nd ed. Vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

- LWDW: LY, I* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years, Part I, 1821-1828.* Alan G. Hill (ed.). 2nd ed. Vol. 4. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978.
- LWDW: Supplement* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: A Supplement of New Letters.* Alan G. Hill (ed.). Vol. 8. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- PJK* *The Poems of John Keats.* Jack Stillinger (ed.). London: Heinemann, 1978.
- PTV* *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807.* Jared Curtis (ed.). The Cornell Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- SP* *Shorter Poems, 1807-1820.* Carl H. Ketcham (ed.). The Cornell Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- SSIP* *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820-1845.* Geoffrey Jackson (ed.). The Cornell Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- TE* *The Excursion.* Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (eds.). The Cornell Wordsworth. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

All quotations of poetry in this thesis are referenced by line number in the text. For the poetry of Byron, Keats, and Wordsworth, I take as my reading texts the editions included above, with the exception of the poetry published in Wordsworth's *Poems* (1815), where I take as my reading text the first edition of this work.

INTRODUCTION

I saw by their utilitarian garb, as well as by the blisters and blotches on their cheeks, lips, and noses, that they were pedestrian tourists, fresh from the snow-covered mountains, the blazing sun and frosty air having acted on their unseasoned skins as boiling water does on the lobster, by dyeing his dark coat scarlet. The man was evidently a denizen of the north, his accent harsh, skin white, of an angular and bony build, and self-confident and dogmatic in his opinions. The precision and quaintness of his language, as well as his eccentric remarks on common things, stimulated my mind. [. . .]

On their leaving the room to get ready for their journey, my friend Roberts told me the strangers were the poet Wordsworth, his wife, and sister.¹

Travelling through the Swiss Alps in 1820, midway through their continental tour, William, Mary, and Dorothy Wordsworth encountered a young Edward John Trelawny, breakfasting at a hotel in Lausanne.² This unexpected meeting is recollected by Trelawny in the opening chapter of his *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author* (1878), a crafted anecdote that withholds the identity of ‘the poet Wordsworth’ to engender in the reader the same incredulous sense of revelation. The satirical sketch offers more than just Trelawny’s amusing impression of the travellers, influenced as it is throughout by questions of spatial identity. Trelawny reads in the Wordsworths’ physical appearance their identification as ‘pedestrian tourists’, a reading made possible by virtue of his own familiarity with the region and with its native inhabitants, and one that thus obscures his own complicated position as both tourist and dweller in Switzerland. The Wordsworth party’s mode of travel is imaged in physical marks, which have, as Carl Thompson suggests in his account of misadventurous travel in the Romantic era, ‘almost a rhetorical

¹ Edward John Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, vol. I (London: Basil Montagu, 1878), pp. 4-6.

² This thesis from here on will use Wordsworth to refer to William Wordsworth.

function’, as both a record of the strenuous journeys they have performed and as a means to ‘display the performance of such journeys to their fellow-travellers.’³

Wordsworth is as concerned as Trelawny with the articulation of his pedestrian identity, a position that is reinforced in Trelawny’s record of the poet’s vehemently expressed opinions on the introduction of carriages in the mountains, in which Wordsworth is reported to have said:

“at the break of day, I scaled the most rugged height within my reach; it looked inaccessible; this pleasant delusion was quickly dispelled; I was rudely startled out of a deep reverie by the accursed jarring jingling and rumbling of a calèche and harsh voices that drowned the torrent’s fall.”⁴

This is the same Wordsworth who would campaign in 1844 against the construction of the Kendal and Windermere railway on account of its disruption of the landscape and of the poet’s own ‘Schemes of retirement’ (‘Suggested by the Proposed Kendal and Windermere Railway’ 2), which exemplify Wordsworth’s sense of a right engagement with the environment of the Lakes. It is also an instantly recognisable portrait of the solitary poet on the mountain-top, communing with nature.

In the anecdote, Trelawny’s concern for the Wordsworths’ ‘out-of-placeness’ in the Alpine region gives way to questions of home and inhabiting. Wordsworth is identified as ‘a denizen of the north’, not only through the reading of his ‘white’, ‘angular’ physique, but here also through the signifier of language, the peculiarities of his accent and opinions. The use of the term ‘denizen’ offers a somewhat shadowed suggestion of belonging to a place. From the Latin root, *dēintus*, meaning ‘within’, a denizen is an inhabitant, an indweller as opposed to a foreigner who dwells ‘without’. Yet, in legal terms, the denizen is ‘one who lives

³ Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), p. 187.

⁴ Trelawny, *Records*, p. 6.

habitually in a country but is not a native-born citizen . . . an alien admitted to citizenship'.⁵ Enclosed within such inhabiting is an unrootedness, the memory of alienation, of non-belonging. Trelawny writes to defamiliarize the reader's portrait of Wordsworth even as he simultaneously infuses his sketch with linguistic indicators that point to specific facets of the poet's identity; the 'north' is at once northern Europe, the British Isles in particular, and a space within these isles, the north of England, to which Wordsworth was inseparably attached in the cultural imagination of the nineteenth century, and indeed where he has remained ever since. The precise and quaint speech is suggestive of craft and coupled with the phrase 'common things'—distinctly Wordsworthian in register—reads almost as a condensed expression of Wordsworth's own poetic manifesto. Trelawny's sketch articulates a tension between 'here' and 'there', as Wordsworth is rooted in his native region even amidst the very 'snow-covered mountains' of Switzerland.

Trelawny's account of Wordsworth is a reminder that he, along with the second-generation Romantic poets, inherited a sense of Wordsworth's spatial identity and, often with different effect, promoted one. The competing discourses of the dweller and the traveller, the stranger and the native, inflect Wordsworth's identity in the *Records*. Trelawny suggests an element of disguise in the poet's pedestrian image—'I could see no trace, in the hard features and weather-stained brow of the outer man, of the divinity within him'—yet, his caricature of the poet also turns on spatial tropes.⁶ Placing Wordsworth in the 'north', he layers an imaginative, poetic geography over a physical one, one that is received by the poets of the second generation in different ways. This thesis is concerned with

⁵ See OED, 'denizens', entries 1 and 2.

⁶ Trelawny, *Records*, p. 6-7.

Wordsworth's spatial poetics, with the formation and articulation of spatial identities and poetic geographies in his verse. It is also concerned with the informing influence of those spatial poetics on the poetry of John Keats and Lord Byron. As with Trelawny, Keats's and Byron's reception of Wordsworth's poetry was intimately entwined with their understanding of the poet's place, his geographical location in the Lake District and his place amongst the poets to whom they were heir. This thesis consequently suggests that attending to the moments in Byron's and Keats's verse in which Wordsworthian spatial poetics emerge, are contested, and are reformed or absorbed, enables a deeper understanding of the poetic relationships between the poets and draws out strands of influence that have hitherto been given less attention.

Following Lucy Newlyn's specialist studies of intertextuality and poetic interaction in *Coleridge, Wordsworth and the Language of Allusion* and *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader*, this thesis aims to uncover new areas of complex textual engagement between the Romantic poets by refocusing the discussion on the second-generation poets' allusions to Wordsworth. Although Wordsworthian echoes and borrowings have been well traced in biographical and editorial work on Byron and Keats, there have been no extended critical studies.⁷ In the numerous

⁷ This is especially true for work on Keats: annotated editions of Keats's poetry by Miriam Allott, John Barnard, and Douglas Bush have noted many Wordsworthian echoes and borrowings, while biographies by Walter Jackson Bate, Robert Gittings, and more recently Nicholas Roe have offered detailed commentary on the Keats-Wordsworth relationship. See Allott (ed.), *The Poems of John Keats* (London: Longman, 1970); Barnard (ed.), *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, 3rd edn., rpt. (London: Penguin, 2006); Bush (ed.), *John Keats: Selected Poems and Letters* (Boston: Houghton, 1959); Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); Gittings, *John Keats*, rpt. (London: Penguin, 2001); Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). While new biographical work has been undertaken since Beth Lau's account of Keats's reading of Wordsworth, her history of the poet's reading and her extensive collection of the echoes and allusions noted by critics and biographers remains the most comprehensive and useful study on Wordsworthian echoes and has been an invaluable resource for this thesis. See 'Keats's Reading of Wordsworth: An Essay and Checklist', *Studies in Romanticism* 26.1 (1987), 105-150. Thora Balslev's *Keats and Wordsworth: A Comparative Study*

essays and articles on the topic of influence, Byron's reception of Wordsworth has most commonly been considered through ideas of opposition, in part led by Byron's own vocal criticisms of the elder poet. In a paper given at the Wordsworth Summer Conference (2009), Richard Cronin observed that '[i]t seems that Byron, after being dosed by Shelley with Wordsworth all through the summer of 1816, found that he could best develop his new poetic manner by understanding it through its difference from Wordsworth's.'⁸ Cronin's earlier essay, 'Words and the Word: The Diction of *Don Juan*', is an excellent example of how attention to such difference can produce insightful readings of Byron's poetry, yet it also points to a gap in studies of Wordsworth and Byron.⁹ As in Jerome J. McGann's essay, 'Byron and Wordsworth', Byron's response to Wordsworth has most often been framed through the concept of rejection, an intentional turning away from the elder poet.¹⁰ Nevertheless, recent work by Philip Shaw, Gavin Hopps, and Jane Stabler has

(Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962) is the only book-length study on the two poets, but as it is primarily an uncritical survey of verbal similarities it is closer to an editorial work than a study of influence. The only extended discussion of Wordsworth's influence on second-generation Romantic poets is G. Kim Blank's examination of Wordsworth and Shelley in *Wordsworth's Influence on Shelley: A Study of Poetic Authority* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

⁸ Richard Cronin, 'Wordsworth and the Current Press', in Richard Gravil (ed.), *Grasmere, 2009: Selected Papers from the Wordsworth Summer Conference* (Penrith: HEB, 2009), pp. 28-44, p. 33.

⁹ Richard Cronin, 'Words and the Word: The Diction of *Don Juan*', in Gavin Hopps and Jane Stabler (eds.), *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 137-154.

¹⁰ Jerome J. McGann, 'Byron and Wordsworth', in James Soderholm (ed.), *Byron and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 173-200. See also James L. Hill, 'Experiments in the Narrative of Consciousness: Byron, Wordsworth, and *Childe Harold*, Cantos 3 and 4', *ELH* 53.1 (1986), 121-140, in which Hill considers the differing psychological processes of Wordsworth's and Byron's poetry; Alan Rawes, 'Visionary Moments and the March of Time: The Influence of Wordsworth in *Childe Harold* I and II', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 48 (1999), 129-137, in which Rawes argues for Byron's rejection of Wordsworth's visionary consolation by fixing Wordsworthian 'spots of time' in the march of time; Peter T. Murphy, 'Glory and Nothing: Byron Remembers Wordsworth', *Studies in Romanticism* 50.4 (2011), 661-683, in which Murphy argues for Byron's denial of Wordsworth's poetics of influence. Michael G. Cooke earlier traces both similarities and differences in 'Byron and Wordsworth: The Complementary of a Rock and the Sea', *The Wordsworth Circle* 11.1 (1980), 10-18. For readings which, like McGann's, stress ideological differences alongside aesthetic ones, see Josh Gidding, "'The Thorn' in Byron's Side: Wordsworth and the "Preface" to *Don Juan*', *The Byron Journal* 24 (1996), 52-58; James Soderholm, 'A Tale of Two Citizens: Byron, Wordsworth and Political Idealism', *The Byron Journal* 29 (2001), 72-78.

suggested ways in which a re-reading of Wordsworthian influence in Byron may be productive.¹¹ Both Shaw and Hopps complicate readings of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, while Stabler recovers a later phase of Byron and Wordsworth's relationship by addressing Byron's response to *The Excursion*. Stabler's reading draws out the poetics of correction that each poet directed at the other, but she also highlights moments of ambivalence in both poets' verse. There is room then to explore the quieter Wordsworthian resonances that emerge in Byron's poetry, which disclose more complicated intertextualities, alongside the performative divergences.

In studies of Keats and Wordsworth, the emphasis has fallen on the other side of the debate. Early work by Clarence D. Thorpe on the biographical relationship between the two poets and by John Middleton Murray on Wordsworthian thought across Keats's career, suggested a consideration of the poetic relationship in terms of kinship and affinity, an idea which has been explored with most depth by Leon Waldoff in 'Keats's Identification with Wordsworth: Selective Affinities'.¹² In the 1970s, Miriam Allott briefly surveyed Wordsworth's influence on Keats's style as well as his ideas, while Jack Stillinger discussed the two poets' theories of imagination, and Mario L. D'Avanzo explored the poetic

¹¹ Philip Shaw, 'Wordsworth or Byron?', *The Byron Journal* 31 (2003), 38-50; Gavin Hopps, 'Shades of Being: Byron and the Trespassing of Ontology', in Gavin Hopps (ed.), *Byron's Ghosts: The Spectral, the Spiritual and the Supernatural* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 48-82; Jane Stabler, 'Byron and *The Excursion*', *The Wordsworth Circle* 45.2 (2014), 137-147. Robert R. Harson considers the more creative side of influence in 'Byron's "Tintern Abbey"', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 20 (1971), 113-121, in which he reads 'Epistle to Augusta' as a response to 'Tintern Abbey'.

¹² Clarence Dewitt Thorpe, 'Wordsworth and Keats—A Study in Personal and Critical Impression', *PMLA* 42.4 (1927), 1010-1026; John Middleton Murray, *Keats* (New York: Farrar, 1955); Leon Waldoff, 'Keats's Identification with Wordsworth: Selective Affinities', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 38 (1989), 47-65.

influence of *The Excursion* on ‘Ode to a Grecian Urn’.¹³ More recently, Derek Lowe has reconsidered the influence of *The Excursion* on Keats’s ideas of the poetic imagination by reading it alongside and against Keats’s early long poem, ‘I stood tip-toe upon a little hill’.¹⁴ Both Stillinger and Susan Wolfson have continued the discussions on where Wordsworth’s influence is felt across forms, themes, and ideas in Keats’s verse, and this thesis seeks to build on their work by drawing out new aspects of formal and thematic influence.¹⁵ There are two specialist formal studies that are also important precursors to this project: in her account of the development of the sonnet form through the nineteenth century, Jennifer Ann Wagner traces Keats’s inheritance of Wordsworth’s experimentation in the sonnet form, while Peter McDonald suggestively discusses Wordsworth’s influence on Keats’s use of rhyme and repetition.¹⁶ Rhyme, as McDonald well observes, is a particular form of echo, and his suggestion that, during Keats’s career, the poet increasingly ‘came to adopt Wordsworth’s techniques for texturing sound’, bears upon the discussions here.¹⁷ Both Wagner and McDonald trace lines of influence that move from Wordsworth through Keats to later nineteenth-century poets, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Wagner), Christina Rossetti (McDonald), and

¹³ Miriam Allot, ‘Keats and Wordsworth’, *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin* 22 (1971), 28-43; Jack Stillinger, *The Hoodwinking of Madeline and other Essays on Keats’s Poems* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), especially the essay ‘Keats, Wordsworth, and “Romanticism”’, pp. 120-149; Mario L. D’Avanzo, “‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ and “The Excursion””, *Keats-Shelley Journal* 23 (1974), 95-105.

¹⁴ Derek Lowe, ‘Wordsworth’s “Unenlightened Swain”: Keats and Greek Myth in “I Stood Tip-Toe upon a Little Hill”’, *Keats-Shelley Journal* 57 (2008), 138-156.

¹⁵ Jack Stillinger, *Romantic Complexity: Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), especially the chapter ‘Keats and Wordsworth’, pp. 20-40; Susan Wolfson, *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

¹⁶ Jennifer Ann Wagner, *A Moment’s Monument: Revisionary Poetics and the Nineteenth-Century English Sonnet* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1996); Peter McDonald, *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ McDonald, *Sound Intentions*, p. 130.

Gerard Manley Hopkins. While I build on the work of formal inheritance, this thesis also suggests a modification of the critical approach to the poetics of the nineteenth century that is implicitly, and often explicitly, framed as a question of Wordsworth *or* Byron. By uncovering complex intertextualities, this thesis suggests that there is more to be said on the moments in which the Romantic poets coalesce.

My critical approach to influence is informed by Michael O'Neill's post-Bloomian position, articulated in his insightful study, *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900*, which productively traces Romantic influences and inheritances in the work of twentieth- and twenty-first century writers.¹⁸ O'Neill conceives of influence, 'not as a quasi-Freudian struggle between male egos, but as involving an interplay between indebtedness and individuation'.¹⁹ In *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom argues that '[t]he *clinamen* or swerve . . . is necessarily the central working concept of the theory of Poetic Influence'.²⁰ The act, or event, of swerving is, for Bloom, a poet's deliberate misreading or misinterpretation of a precursor poem or poetry in general, a form of misprision that is the counter-movement to influence. In the more creative account of influence that I engage with in this thesis, I find that Bloom's 'swerving' may be usefully reconceived as 'straying', a term which

¹⁸ Michael O'Neill, *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). O'Neill's study is part of a recent resurgence of interest in Romantic legacies that has produced a number of edited collections, including Mark Sandy (ed.), *Romantic Presences in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012); Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy (eds.), *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Carmen Casaliggi and Paul March-Russell (eds.), *Legacies of Romanticism: Literature, Culture, Aesthetics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Damian Walford Davies and Richard Marggraf Turley (eds.), *The Monstrous Debt: Modalities of Romantic Influence in Twentieth-Century Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006).

¹⁹ O'Neill, *All-Sustaining Air*, p. 11.

²⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 42.

similarly has a spatial as well as a theoretical or philosophical dimension, which is imaginatively of the feet, as well as of the mind or the page. Rather than simply intimating a movement away from the precursor poet and his work, ‘straying’ invites the possibility of movement over or across that work, and is a form of wandering that leads back to Wordsworth as often as it departs from him. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau offers an interesting spatialised conception of the reader that deepens this sense of errant movement:

Far from being writers—founders of their own place, heirs of the peasants of earlier ages now working on the soil of language, diggers of walls and builders of houses—readers are travellers: they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write . . .²¹

De Certeau’s idea of reading-as-poaching is suggestive of a mode of allusion; as I will discuss below, it is one that Wordsworth himself famously adopted to describe his sense of Byron’s indebtedness to ‘Tintern Abbey’ in the third canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Byron, he claimed, had been ‘poaching on [his] Manor’, where ‘manor’ implies style (‘manner’) as well as land.²² Byron and Keats are wanderers in Wordsworth’s poetry, and the record of their wandering emerges in echoes, borrowings, and creative responses and revisionings.

The thesis is itself indebted to the important studies of allusion by Christopher Ricks and John Hollander, which set out deep and insightful

²¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 174. In her discussion of the ‘performative philosophy’ of *The Excursion*, Sally Bushell suggests that Wordsworth’s portrait of the Poet may be read through de Certeau’s image of the reader: the Poet on an ‘excursion’ is placed in a position of equality with the reader rather than authority, both parties travelling through the landscape of the text and having to ‘learn *how* to wander in order to respond fully to what the text presents’. See Bushell, *Re-Reading The Excursion: Narrative, Response and the Wordsworthian Dramatic Voice* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 109, and pp. 109-116 in particular.

²² *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 394.

considerations of intertextuality and the poetic practice of alluding.²³ The mode of allusion that this thesis engages in is, however, closer to Hollander's figuration than to Ricks's, as I am as concerned with the unconscious resonances of Wordsworth's poetry in the verse of Byron and Keats as with intentional echoing. As Hollander states—and shows—in *The Figure of Echo*, '[i]n contrast with literary allusion, echo is a metaphor of, and for, alluding, and does not depend on conscious intention.'²⁴ The language of echoes and echoing is consequently the one I have most recourse to in this thesis, including the terms *reverberation* and *resonance*, which, following Hollander, I use figuratively and often interchangeably. Yet, as with Hollander, 'the acoustic phenomena of echo—caves and mountains and halls of origin, delays in return, scattering and proliferation' are 'implicitly and explicitly invoked' in the discussions below.²⁵ Indeed, perhaps because this is a project on influence, the geographic landscapes that I attend to are often those that invite an awareness of acoustic echoes: the forest of Ravenna for Byron, and the mountains of Scotland and the Lake District for Keats, are resonant spaces in more than one way. The recurring site of the graveyard reminds us that the figure of echo might also be spectral, a form of haunting that is equally suggestive of the intersection of geographic and imaginative space.

This thesis is particularly interested in Byron's and Keats's less articulated encounters with Wordsworth. Following the meeting between Byron and Wordsworth that took place on 18 June 1815, at Samuel Rogers' house, the younger

²³ See Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

²⁴ Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, p. 64.

²⁵ Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, p. 3.

poet is reported to have spoken about the elder ‘with great respect, even reverence’.²⁶ This is, as it were, the anomaly rather than the pattern for Byron’s direct approach to Wordsworth in his verse, which is recurrently framed through parody or satire. In a different way, for Keats, whose reverence is more well-documented, formal contact with Wordsworth is often shadowed with embarrassment, awkwardness, or disappointment. This thesis attends, consequently, to echoes that emerge in the poetic hinterland, a space beyond direct engagement, where Wordsworth’s voice, or presence, is felt inwardly. For Byron, the most creative and constructive intertextualities are formed when Wordsworthian echoes are subsumed within his verse. For Keats, the most complex engagement with Wordsworth occurs when he is encountered under the soles, rather than face-to-face: when the poet walks over Wordsworth’s physical and poetic geographies.

As Stephen Cheeke observes in his study of geo-historical place in Byron, ‘a Wordsworthianism inevitably preconditions our thinking about Romanticism and place’.²⁷ Whether conceived in terms of nature, environment, or locality, Wordsworth has been the primary figure considered in discussions of Romantic place, from the early seminal work of Geoffrey Hartman to the recent spatial turn in late twentieth- and early twenty-first century criticism. In *Wordsworth’s Poetry: 1787-1814* (1964), Hartman traced a transcendental movement in Wordsworth’s approach to nature, in which ‘nature itself led him beyond nature’, and elucidated a

²⁶ As reported by Henry Crabbe Robinson in a letter to Mary Wordsworth of 26 February 1854, following a conversation with Lady Byron. See Robert Woof (ed.), *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage, 1793-1820*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 896 and Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Middle Years, 1800-1815* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 498-499.

²⁷ Stephen Cheeke, *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 9.

tension in the poet's thought between the impossibility of an encounter with the visionary imagination independent from nature, and the unsustainable marriage of the two.²⁸ M. H. Abrams's concern for the interaction of human consciousness and the natural world in *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, which followed in 1971, similarly privileged the poet who wrote 'On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life'—as Wordsworth conceived it in the opening line of the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*.²⁹ Abrams had earlier foregrounded the significance of the 'particularized, and usually a localized, outdoor setting' in Romantic poetry, in his conception of the greater Romantic lyric, in which the site of the lyric speaker's meditation is integral to the processes of consciousness that take place in the poem and engender insight or resolution.³⁰ Hartman extended Abrams's thought by considering Wordsworth's specific role in Romantic lyric writing, and identified the nature-inscription as an independent and principal form of Romantic lyric poetry that had its genesis in Wordsworth.³¹ Taking such works as 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree', 'Michael', and the Lucy poems, Hartman observed that what was distinctive in Wordsworth was his greater understanding of the setting that is to be incorporated into his poetry, evoked rather than pointed to, in order to make the nature lyric fullbodied: '[t]he setting is

²⁸ Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 33, see especially pp. 33-75.

²⁹ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

³⁰ M. H. Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1984), p. 76. See the essay 'Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric', pp. 76-108, which was first published in 1965.

³¹ See Geoffrey Hartman, 'Inscriptions and Romantic Nature Poetry' in *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 31-46.

understood to contain the writer in the act of writing: the poet in the grip of what he feels and sees, primitively inspired to carve it in the living rock.’³²

In the 1980s, the New Historicist criticism of Jerome J. McGann, Alan Liu, and Marjorie Levinson continued to situate Wordsworth as a particular kind of nature writer but one who was, as they saw it, implicated in, and the chief exemplar of, ‘Romantic Ideology’, which privileged nature and the imagination at the expense of historical and political realities and displaced social conditions in the quest for transcendence.³³ The foundational environmental criticism of the 1990s responded to the historicist critique by reclaiming the ‘poet of nature’ through the affirmation of a continuity between Wordsworth’s poetics of nature and his revolutionary politics. Jonathan Bate’s *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) suggested that Wordsworth did not abandon his politics but rather brought them into a new domain, that of the visionary republic of Grasmere vale, a ‘*working* paradise’ in which ‘[t]he pastoral is removed from its traditional *locus amoenus* to a landscape such as men do live in.’³⁴ Engaging with a similar nexus of politics, nature, and the imagination in *The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (1992), Nicholas Roe, like Bate, responded to historicist readings of Wordsworth, which, he argued, had obscured the

³² Geoffrey Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, p. 40. Jacqueline Labbe has complicated the privileged position that Hartman affords Wordsworth by arguing for Wordsworth’s indebtedness to the construction of temporal geographies in the poetry of Charlotte Smith. See *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

³³ Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth’s Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

³⁴ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 22, 28. At the same time, Bruce Graver considered Wordsworth’s account of rural life and the genre of the georgic in ‘Wordsworth’s Georgic Beginnings’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33.2 (1991), 137-159.

‘imaginative commitment to humanity’ of the writers of the 1790s, ‘by dwelling exclusively in the possible contingency of displaced contexts.’³⁵ *The Politics of Nature* addressed such issues of historical ‘displacement’ and ‘denial’, not at a remove from history, but by considering in depth ‘the positive historical contingency of nature for the Romantics, as author and arbiter of a revolution which had exhibited the best and worst of human potential.’³⁶ Roe argued for Wordsworth’s understanding of nature as a benevolent force in political and social life, and suggested that ‘[i]n “Tintern Abbey”, Wordsworth “sees into the life of things” in order to discover “an active role” for imagination in mediating nature and “moral being” for the post-revolutionary world.’³⁷

Bates’s early environmental thought paved the way for an overtly ecological criticism, advanced by Karl Kroeber in *Ecological Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (1994), and James C. McKusick’s *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (2000), which explored the ways in which Romantic writers had contributed to the fundamental ideas of the modern environmental movement. Bate developed the ecological project begun in *Romantic Ecology* in *The Song of the Earth* (2001), which offered a literary ecocriticism augmented by the voices of other poets, both Romantic and twentieth-century.³⁸ His principal argument was that writers in the Romantic tradition are especially concerned with the severance of humankind from nature, and that Romanticism, as an ‘ecopoetic’,

³⁵ Nicholas Roe, *The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 153.

³⁶ Roe, *Politics of Nature*, p. 9.

³⁷ Roe, *Politics of Nature*, p. 9. Roe’s reading of ‘Tintern Abbey’ is distinguished from Marjorie Levinson’s reading of the poem in *Wordsworth’s Great Period Poems*, in which Levinson identifies an idealised pastoral prospect characterised by the evasion and erasure of socio-political contexts and the realities of poverty and suffering.

³⁸ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000).

‘regards poetic language as a special kind of expression which may effect an imaginative reunification of mind and nature’, though it is not without a melancholy awareness of the fragility and illusory nature of its own utopian vision.³⁹ As in his earlier study, Wordsworth is Bate’s ‘ecopoet’, coming as close as is possible to speaking ‘the silence of the place’, attained through the poet’s responsiveness to place not as an observer, but as one who dwells.⁴⁰ Bate stresses the phenomenological nature of his ecopoetics by reading Heidegger alongside the Romantic and post-Romantic poets of his study, and suggests that the questions of place and belonging that emerge in the poetry of Wordsworth, John Clare, and Edward Thomas, echo in Heidegger’s expression of ontological dwelling.⁴¹

Although Bate’s reading of Wordsworth was presented as a new way forward for Romantic studies, a phenomenology of Wordsworthian dwelling found much earlier expression in a 1985 essay by John Kerrigan, ‘Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking’.⁴² Kerrigan argued that in Wordsworth’s early work and predominantly in the writing of the great decade, 1797-1807, we find the poet seeking security in rural dwelling: he writes of cottages, granges, places set apart for living, in such a way that dwelling is emphatically ontological. Reading Wordsworth alongside Heidegger’s essay ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, Kerrigan suggested that the absolute sense of rootedness that Wordsworth attempts to express in his poems, the sublime mundaneness of dwelling that he achieves most

³⁹ Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 245.

⁴⁰ Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 151. See also pp. 119-152.

⁴¹ The key essays of Heidegger that Bate considers are ‘What Are Poets For?’, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, and ‘. . . poetically man dwells . . .’, which appear in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), and also ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, which is in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper, 1977).

⁴² John Kerrigan, ‘Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, *Essays in Criticism* 35.1 (1985), pp. 45-75.

strongly in 'Home at Grasmere', 'compellingly anticipates the second stage of Heidegger's argument, or myth, where he insists that Dwelling is Sparing, a state of living in accommodation with the earth, the sky and the immortal powers.'⁴³ As Bate later found, both Wordsworth and Heidegger celebrate the habitual quality of dwelling, one attuned to nature and to the need of man that gives rise to unity and connectedness.

In *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (2004), Kate Rigby developed Bate's concern with a Romantic ecopoetics of place and continued the ecocritical focus on the means by which literature inducts us into dwelling.⁴⁴ Rigby's approach held in tension the dual perspective of deep ecology and ecosocialism, a post-Heideggerian phenomenology that also recognized the ways in which 'the literary articulation of such embodied experiences of the givenness of the natural world are inflected by cultural memory and social ideology.'⁴⁵ Rigby complicated the impulse to focus ecocritical discussion on Wordsworth by reading a 'recovery of the sense of the power of place' across borders, in the work of Wordsworth's German contemporaries.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, as with Bate and McKusick, Rigby's poetics of reinhabitation found their fullest expression in the local concerns of Wordsworth and the other famously regional poet, John Clare.

⁴³ Kerrigan, 'Wordsworth and the Sonnet', pp. 53-54.

⁴⁴ Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2004).

⁴⁵ Rigby, *Topographies*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Rigby, *Topographies*, p. 12.

The terms of the recovery of an ecological Wordsworth were disputed in different ways by Onno Oerlemans, Paul H. Fry, Timothy Morton, and Scott Hess.⁴⁷ In *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (2002), Oerlemans responded both to the New Historicist criticism of the 1980s and to what he saw as the ‘environmentalist ideology’ of Bate and Kroeber. He foregrounded the concern in Romantic writing for representations of the physical presence of the natural world, and argued for a ‘green particularity’ which ‘attempts to stress the non-human physical world that romantic writers encountered, and to show their concern for its detail and its reality.’⁴⁸ Oerlemans’s interest in a Romantic openness to the material, to seeing the natural environment ‘as it is’, was drawn out differently in Fry’s consideration of Wordsworth’s poetic promotion of ‘ontic equality’, which emerges from the poet’s acute observation of the point of intersection between human and nonhuman being.⁴⁹ For Fry, Wordsworth is decidedly ontological not political: in *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (2008), he built on the ideas articulated in his earlier essay, ‘Green to the Very Door?: The Natural Wordsworth’, to argue for Wordsworth’s ontological levelling: ‘[e]quality for Wordsworth (oneness, unity) was never a political idea. Fostered amid rocks and stones and trees, he saw equality in this largely mineral world as the ontic unity of all things, including

⁴⁷ Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Paul H. Fry, ‘Green to the Very Door?: The Natural Wordsworth’, in Helen Regueiro Elam and Frances Ferguson (eds.), *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment: Romantic Poetry and the Ecology of Reading* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 97-111; Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007); Scott Hess, *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

⁴⁸ Oerlemans, *Materiality of Nature*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Fry, ‘Green to the Very Door?’. p. 110.

human things.’⁵⁰ A concern for the material and the mineral also found expression in Noah Heringman’s *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geography* (2004), in which he examined the varied cultural practices that fundamentally shaped Romantic literary culture at the same time as forming geology as a science, and argued for the ‘persistent geographic sense of “romantic”’.⁵¹

In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (2007), Morton challenged understandings of ‘nature’ by reconsidering its slipperiness, the way in which it ‘flickers between things . . . is both/and or neither/nor’; in literary writing about nature, what Morton calls *ecomimesis*, he argued that nature is revealed as ungraspable ‘in the very act of grasping it.’⁵² Morton questioned the predominant view of ecocriticism that takes ‘the *oikos* of ecology in the sense of home or dwelling as its center’, arguing that the rise of environmental art in the Romantic period instead owes more to capitalism and consumerism.⁵³ Romantic poetry, Morton suggested, is caught up in global commerce, imperial geography, and the representation of the commodity, the very form of alienation that first intimated a global environmental awareness in a mode he has elsewhere termed ‘the poetics of spice’.⁵⁴ More recently, Hess has continued to critique the idea of a universalized Wordsworthian or Romantic ‘nature’ offered by the ecological criticism of the 1990s by rehistoricizing nature as ‘multiple, socially constructed and contested “natures,” each operating from within different, historically specific

⁵⁰ Paul H. Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 6.

⁵¹ Noah Heringman, *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 20.

⁵² Morton, *Ecology Without Nature*, p. 18-19.

⁵³ Morton, *Ecology Without Nature*, p. 92.

⁵⁴ See Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

constellations of social, discursive, and material practices.’⁵⁵ In *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2012), he reads Wordsworth through the more socially attuned frameworks of ecofeminism, social ecology, and environmental justice in order to reveal Wordsworth’s ‘historical and cultural strangeness from contemporary ecology.’⁵⁶

Byron and Keats have remained, for the most part, at the edges of ecocritical discussion. J. A. Hubbell has recently sought to remedy Byron’s marginal position by considering how Byron’s ‘bioregional ecosystems thinking complements Romanticism’s more typical ecolocalism, organicism, and the natural sublime’, in the first book-length study on Byron’s ecological thought.⁵⁷ In *Byron’s Nature: A Romantic Vision of Cultural Ecology* (2018), Hubbell observes that the bias towards Wordsworth in ecocritical scholarship has emerged in part due to the polemical construction of the Romantic canon in the twentieth century, in which Byron and Wordsworth represent a binary opposition:

Byron stood for a Romanticism of comparative social and cultural history, irony and comedy, cosmopolitanism, and satire, ottava rima and Spenserian romance; this was the antithesis of Wordsworth, the poet of natural supernaturalism, sincerity and pathos, provincialism and British nationalism, and Miltonic prophesy in blank verse.⁵⁸

Iterations of this dialectic have continued to emerge in ecocritical thought, as in Bate’s conception, in *The Song of the Earth*, of a Byronic ‘community of species’

⁵⁵ Scott Hess, *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), p. 5.

⁵⁶ Hess, *Ecology of Authorship*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ J. A. Hubbell, *Byron’s Nature: A Romantic Vision of Cultural Ecology* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Hubbell, *Byron’s Nature*, p. 2.

that is ‘a necessary antidote to the Wordsworthian solitary.’⁵⁹ Although Bate’s consideration of Byron’s sense of the commonality between man and animal is an important addition to readings of Byron’s cosmopolitanism, framed as a dichotomy, it risks obscuring the moments in which Byron and Wordsworth come together on the theme of solitude. Solitariness is part of both poets’ mythos of poethood, and consequently figures in Byron’s as well as Wordsworth’s poetics of space. Hubbell’s project offers a view of Byronic nature which, as a cosmopolitan perception of cultural ecosystems, is different to Wordsworth’s, but is importantly not seen as dialectically opposed. *Byron’s Nature* enriches the account of the poet’s response to environment, and Hubbell speaks into the critical gap that I approach through different means.

The ‘spatial turn’ in critical practice that paved the way for ecocritical thinking also opened up discussions of Romantic representations of geo-specific space. Although Wordsworth remains the most prominent poet—as in Michael Wiley’s study, *Romantic Geography: Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces* (1998)—there has been a notable widening of scope in discussions of Romantic place and space, as evinced by a number of edited collections that read locality beyond the parameters of the Lake District, such as Roe’s *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* (2010) and Christoph Bode and Jacqueline Labbe’s *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place* (2010), as well as collections that have complicated readings of place through questions of displacement, borderlines, and marginal spaces, as in Peter J. Kitson’s *Placing and Displacing Romanticism* (2001) and Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington’s *Romanticism’s Debatable Lands*

⁵⁹ Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 205.

(2007).⁶⁰ Like Bate and Roe, in *Romantic Geography*, Wiley articulates a response to New Critical and New Historicist perspectives by recovering political and social discourses in Wordsworth's writing about place. His concern is for the intersection of real and imagined geographies in what he conceives as Wordsworth's 'utopian imagination', in which the poet's writing operates 'on the hope that his imaginative landscapes will influence real perceptions and practices'.⁶¹ Wiley argues that the poet did not abandon his early Revolutionary hopes in his turn towards nature, solitude, and the imagination, for these are 'material concerns for Wordsworth, grounded in the land he lived in and walked upon, inseparable from physical, social and political place.'⁶²

Wiley's concern for Wordsworth's complex geographies looks towards the cultural-geographic approach to place as palimpsestic locales, what Diego Saglia describes as 'sites of an infiltration of historical and cultural intimations into a specific geographic terrain'.⁶³ Byron has emerged as an important figure in geospecific accounts of place following Cheeke's *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia*, in which he suggests that there is a 'foundational struggle over the meaning of place' in Romanticism, 'in that Wordsworth's claims to have experienced the transcendent and the universal amid the scenes of "local" Cumbria

⁶⁰ Michael Wiley, *Romantic Geography: Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Nicholas Roe (ed.), *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Christoph Bode and Jacqueline Labbe (eds.), *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010); Peter J. Kitson (ed.), *Placing and Displacing Romanticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington (eds.), *Romanticism's Debatable Lands* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). See also work on Romanticism and place in the field of travel-writing and post-colonial studies, as in Amanda Gilroy's edited collection, *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁶¹ Wiley, *Romantic Geography*, p. 3.

⁶² Wiley, *Romantic Geography*, p. 3.

⁶³ Diego Saglia, 'Introduction: Cultural Geography and the Romantic Vision', *EJES* 6.2 (2002), 123-129, p. 125.

are passionately contested by a counter-vision of cosmopolitan experience, developed by Byron.’⁶⁴ Cheeke articulates a central concern in Byron’s thought and writing for historically-layered sites that offer to the poet ‘authentic’ experience gained by being ‘on the spot’, and suggests a radically different kind of localism and place-attachment to the one traced in studies of Wordsworth, in which the trajectory of Byron’s writing life may be conceived through the interrelated ideas of ‘[b]eing there, being-in-between, having been there’.⁶⁵ Cheeke’s consideration of geo-historical place in Byron has raised important questions of identity that have crystallised in some ways around Byron’s relationship to the cultural, political, and physical ground of Italy, as has been explored in Alan Rawes and Diego Saglia’s recent collection of essays *Byron and Italy* (2017), and Maria Schoina’s earlier *Romantic ‘Anglo-Italians’: Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and the Pisan Circle* (2009).⁶⁶ Cheeke writes that geography is ‘over-written and written-through with lived experience, with memory and subjectivity, with human inscription—in short, with history.’⁶⁷ It is also over-written and written-through with imagined experience, with language, and with alternative subjectivities—in short, with poetry. In this thesis I aim to build on Cheeke’s work by inviting Wordsworth back into the narrative, not only as a point of departure, but as a point of intersection.

Perhaps because Keats has often been approached as a ‘rootless’ poet, whose life, as in Fiona Stafford’s description, ‘was a succession of temporary

⁶⁴ Cheeke, *Byron and Place*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ Cheeke, *Byron and Place*, p. 14.

⁶⁶ Alan Rawes and Diego Saglia (eds.), *Byron and Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Maria Schoina, *Romantic ‘Anglo-Italians’: Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and the Pisan Circle* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁶⁷ Cheeke, *Byron and Place*, p. 8.

lodgings’, and whose poetry ‘seemed to inhabit a world largely free of specific place names, regional manners, or historical records’, there have been few sustained discussions of Keatsian spatiality.⁶⁸ The ode ‘To Autumn’ has offered suggestive ground for an ecocritical engagement with environment, the weather, and climate change, as for an enquiry into submerged political topographies.⁶⁹ Like Byron, however, questions of Keats and place have more usually turned on ideas of identity, as it is expressed politically, socially, and culturally, which has led to a focus on the suburban landscapes of Keats’s life. As Elizabeth Jones argues, ‘[w]hat we now refer to as Keats’s marginality, a concept that has been applied to his social class, lack of education, ambiguity of gender, and economic insecurity, may also be applied geographically and culturally.’⁷⁰ Jones approaches Keats as a poet of suburbia, engaging with the formation of a ‘suburban aesthetics’ that emerges in line with his membership of the ‘Cockney School’, the ‘neither/nor’ nature of which has been well discussed by Richard Cronin, Roe, and Jeffrey N. Cox.⁷¹ Jones

⁶⁸ Fiona Stafford, *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 227.

⁶⁹ See Bate’s chapter ‘Major Weather’ in *Song of the Earth*, pp. 94–118, and Richard Marggraf Turley, Jayne Elizabeth Archer, and Howard Thomas, ‘Keats, “to Autumn”, and the New Men of Winchester’, *The Review of English Studies* 63.262 (2012), 797–817.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Jones, ‘Keats in the Suburbs’, *Keats-Shelley Journal* 45 (1996), 23–43, pp. 26–27.

⁷¹ Richard Cronin, ‘Keats and the Politics of Cockney Style’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 36.4 (1996), 785–806; Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Ayumi Mizukoshi has approached Keats’s suburban status from a different angle in *Keats, Hunt, and the Aesthetics of Pleasure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), by relocating the poet in the historical context of the bourgeois aesthetics of pleasure and offering a re-evaluation of the Cockney School as ‘a peculiarly “middle-class” phenomenon’, as opposed to the radical community perceived by Roe and Cox. All four critics respond in some way to Marjorie Levinson’s study *Keats’s Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), the first to reassess the poet by placing him in the external, material, and social sphere. In his recent perceptive account of Keats’s life and writing, Roe has drawn attention to a poet of crossing-points and boundaries, for whom ‘the liminal suburban landscape—part city, part open fields—encouraged . . . imaginative stationings on darkling thresholds and elusive borderlines’, which offers a different way of conceiving Keats’s marginality. See Nicholas Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. xix.

constructs something of a dichotomy between Keats and Wordsworth, arguing that, in the poet's life and early verse,

[t]he nature of Wordsworth, of high morality and sublime mystery, did not speak to Keats; he often heard a nature that was indistinguishable from its suburban location. For Keats, nature, like poetry, is an experience to be cultivated in the evenings, after working hours, when urban pressures are lifted.⁷²

I depart from Jones's argument in the discussion of Keats below, suggesting that in Keats's early poetry, Wordsworthian 'nature' and geography plays a significant formative role.

In *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (2010), Stafford traces a line of influence from Wordsworth to Keats. She considers the Romantic period as the defining moment in which 'local detail ceased to be regarded as transient, irrelevant, or restrictive, and began to seem essential to art with any aspiration to permanence', and takes Wordsworth as a foundational figure within this moment: 'the earliest writer to understand fully the necessary connections between the poet and his "first place"', in which the 'first place' is not simply the earliest, but the place in which the poet is grounded.⁷³ Stafford traces the shift in the literary and cultural mindset of the late eighteenth-century towards a greater recognition of regional value and an expression of regional distinction, one that crystallises, as it were, around Wordsworth. She records the poet's debt to his Scottish contemporaries, Burns and Scott, whose work 'seemed inseparable from their origins'.⁷⁴ Yet, it is Wordsworth, she suggests, who treats localised subjects most seriously, and who recognises in local attachment 'the foundation for fully adequate

⁷² Jones, 'Keats in the Suburbs', p. 35.

⁷³ Stafford, *Local Attachments*, p. 30, 38.

⁷⁴ Stafford, *Local Attachments*, p. 134.

poetry’, a concept that she derives from Seamus Heaney, in which poetry ‘recognizes the world as it is, but still responds with the promise of something better’.⁷⁵ In her discussion of Keats, Stafford examines the physical and geographical outworking of the younger poet’s suggestion—with Wordsworth in mind—that we do not feel to the full what we have read ‘until we have gone the same steps as the Author’.⁷⁶ She draws out the tensions between written place and physical place as they are experienced by Keats, particularly during his Northern tour, and suggests that Keats returned from Scotland with the understanding that true poetry did not depend on particular landscapes alone.

The first chapter of this thesis offers an exploration of Wordsworth’s spatial poetics as expressed in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), as a foundation for the following two chapters in which I present case studies of Wordsworth’s spatial influence in the poetry of Byron and Keats. Both the Byron and Keats chapters are structured chronologically, in order to trace the development of Wordsworth’s influence, and are linked by biographical encounter. I have been necessarily selective in the texts I have discussed in each chapter such that the thesis might offer detailed close readings without covering well-trodden ground. I have chosen to use *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) as my foundational text, as it is this collection, I suggest, that most clearly articulates the shift in Wordsworth’s spatial poetics from an overarching concern with states of exile, wandering, and homelessness to a deep investment in a poetics of dwelling. The 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* sets the pattern for each of the poems or collections with which Byron and Keats would have been familiar, including *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807), *The Excursion* (1814), *Poems* (1815),

⁷⁵ Stafford, *Local Attachments*, p. 96, 14.

⁷⁶ *LJK*, I, p. 279.

and the earlier written, though later published, *Peter Bell* (1819) and *The Waggoner* (1819), and as such is a useful touchstone for the spatial poetics that are explored throughout the thesis. The thesis does not only attend to allusions from *Lyrical Ballads*, however, and discussions of the later texts are drawn within the close readings of chapters 2 and 3. As it remained unpublished during the lifetimes of the second-generation Romantic poets, *The Prelude* naturally finds no place in this study.

The chapter on Byron begins with a detailed exploration of the events of spring 1812, in which both Byron and Wordsworth were in London, in order to shed light on Wordsworth's insistent claim of Byron's indebtedness to him, and to provide a framework for the echoes that are attended to later in the chapter. This is followed by a brief discussion of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto III and 'Churchill's Grave' before I turn to *Don Juan* for the remainder of the chapter. I have given most space to Byron's longest work, as the poetry of the summer of 1816 has been well covered elsewhere and I have sought to bring out a new aspect of the poetic relationship. The chapter contends that the mixed creativity and satire that is modelled in *Childe Harold* and 'Churchill's Grave' may be traced in the responsive spatial poetics of *Don Juan*.

The chapter on Keats is similarly weighted towards the poet's later work, as it is here that Wordsworth's poetic geographies find their deepest reimagination. I do not cover the odes in this chapter, apart from a brief discussion of 'Ode to a Nightingale' in Chapter 1, as there is much excellent scholarship on Wordsworthian phrasings in these poems and, in giving my attention to the intersection between Wordsworth's and Keats's physical and imaginative geographies, I have traced a

different path of influence from the hilltops and mountains of Keats's early verse, to the mountainous landscape of the Hyperion project.

There are a couple of terms that I use throughout the thesis which require a brief explanation. I use the term 'emplacement' as a useful descriptor of the poet's experience of pause, rest, or dwelling within a place. It evokes an intentional situatedness, one in which the poet is made aware of his environment; for Wordsworth especially, this is where the habitual becomes inhabiting. In chapter 3, I use the phrase 'poetics of the feet' as a means to articulate the intersection of physical and textual footsteps, in which feet step, tread, and clamber on and over geographic ground and into poetic verse. These terms share a phenomenological inflection, as this thesis considers the experience of bodies in spaces and how those bodies are rendered textually.

CHAPTER I.

SPATIAL PATTERNING IN *LYRICAL BALLADS*

Lyrical Ballads offers particularly fertile ground for a discussion of Wordsworthian spatial poetics. Written in three very different regions—Somersetshire, Germany, and the Lake District—the poetry of *Lyrical Ballads* is bound up in Wordsworth's evolving response to place. From Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's joint revolutionary endeavour nurtured in Alfoxden, Somersetshire, the collection grew into two volumes shaped by Wordsworth alone. Coleridge's contributions to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) remained in each of the subsequent editions of 1800, 1802, and 1805, but were marginalised by each successive reordering, and only Wordsworth's name found a place on the title page. This chapter will focus on the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, which contains all the spatial themes important to Wordsworth's successors, those of dwelling, wandering, and exile.¹

¹ It is impossible to be certain which edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, 1800, 1802, 1805) Byron or Keats owned or had access to. In his discussion of the younger Romantics' response to *Lyrical Ballads*, Timothy Webb observes the fluidity of the text itself, which was reworked over four editions and then gradually disassembled, with the component parts dispersed among the categories of the 1815 *Poems*. He describes the 'potent yet curiously intangible' identity of the book, 'which had gradually ceased substantially to exist as a publication to be acquired with ease from any sublunary bookseller'; see Webb, 'The Stiff Collar and the Mysteries of the Human Heart: The Younger Romantics and the Problem of *Lyrical Ballads*' in 'A Natural Delineation of Human Passions': *The Historic Moment of 'Lyrical Ballads'*, ed. C. C. Barfoot (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 209-248, p. 211. Nevertheless, Byron certainly owned a copy of *Lyrical Ballads* in two volumes, which he sold along with much of his library in 1816, though the catalogue of sale does not denote a specific edition; see Andrew Nicholson (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 231-245. Keats too most likely owned or read from a second or later edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Beth Lau observes the impossibility of ascertaining which edition of Wordsworth Keats owned, as the two-volume octavo copy of Wordsworth's poems that Charles Brown records in his 'List of Keats's Books', drawn up after the poet's death, might refer equally to a second or later edition of *Lyrical Ballads* or to the 1815 *Poems*, or, as has more commonly been accepted, as a misnote for the duodecimo 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*. Nevertheless, it is likely that Keats read from a second or later edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, alongside *Poems, in Two Volumes* and *The Excursion*, during his stay with Benjamin Bailey at Oxford in September 1817. See Lau, 'Keats's Reading of Wordsworth: An Essay and Checklist', *Studies in Romanticism* 26.1 (1987), 105-150. As Byron and Keats may

Between the 1798 and 1800 editions, Wordsworth's poetics of space shifted. The additional second volume is intimately connected to the poet's geographical relocations. From the isolated winter spent in the small provincial town of Goslar, Germany, with only Dorothy for company, came a poetry concerned with exile, with death, and with loss.² The poems take marginal or spectral figures for subjects, what Geoffrey Hartman has called 'boundary beings', and range from London to Scotland to the remembered places of the poet's lost Lakeland home.³ Some, like the haunting 'Lucy' poems, remain unlocated; only one declares its location in Germany. The following winter, Wordsworth and Dorothy's resettlement in the Lake District at Grasmere would provide them with their first secure home since their father's death in 1784.⁴ Having remained all but rootless in the interim period, the poet's homecoming would inspire a poetry emphatically grounded in the local landscape. The spatial categories that had been laid out in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* are widened in the second as Wordsworth sounds out his poetics of dwelling.

The 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* displays an extensive geographic reach. The poetry of the first edition is set in locations across the breadth of England and Wales, and spans oceans and continents in the sea voyage of the 'Ancient Marinere' and

have encountered the poems of *Lyrical Ballads* across several editions and in the 1815 *Poems*, it seems reasonable to take as my reading text the edition in which the most significant changes occurred. The 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* introduced the second volume of poetry and with it Wordsworth's radical shift in spatial poetics, and it is from this edition onwards that Wordsworth becomes permanently identified with the Lake District.

² For an account of this troubled period see Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 156-166; and Lucy Newlyn, *William and Dorothy Wordsworth: 'All in Each Other'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 82-101.

³ See Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 158.

⁴ The emotional and poetic significance of this resettlement is explored by Newlyn, 'All in Each Other', pp. 102-119.

the transatlantic crossings of Wordsworth's 'The Female Vagrant' and Coleridge's 'The Foster-Mother's Tale'. From the moment of entry into the wide uncertain world of the 'Ancient Mariner', we encounter a poetry that unsettles. It is a collection of rapid transitions and charged blank spaces, formal symmetries and oppositions, which constitute what Stuart Curran has described as its 'complex interior balancing'.⁵ Much of the power of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) is generated through juxtaposition, as both James H. Averill and Neil Fraistat have shown, not least in the volume's dialectical themes of 'alienation and communion, mystery and understanding, misery and joy, motion and stillness, homelessness and home.'⁶ The characters of this collection are recurrently familiar with exile, alienated from the land, the community, even from the self. From the involuntary wandering of the 'Ancient Mariner' to the obsessive fixity of 'The Thorn', much of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* explores the extremes of movement and stasis as a response to the trauma of alienation.

The reordering of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) in the first volume of the two volume 1800 edition anticipates the revised spatial poetics under which the second volume takes shape. Having relegated Coleridge's amended 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' to the rear of the volume, Wordsworth's decision to open *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) with the partner poems 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned'

⁵ Stuart Curran, 'Multum in Parvo: Wordsworth's *Poems, in Two Volumes*', in Neil Fraistat (ed.), *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 234-253, p. 234.

⁶ Neil Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 55; see especially pp. 47-94. James H. Averill, 'The Shape of *Lyrical Ballads*', *Philological Quarterly* 60.3 (1981), pp. 387-407. See James Scoggins, *Imagination and Fancy: Complementary Modes in the Poetry of Wordsworth* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 25-38 for a brief discussion of the reordering of the first volume of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*.

formally enacts the thematic shift towards the local that emerges in Volume II.⁷ The collection opens not with the figure of the Wedding Guest ‘sate on a stone’ (21), held against his will by the Mariner’s otherworldly tale, but with the receptive pause of the poet on an ‘old grey stone’ (‘Expostulation and Reply’ 1), immersed in the world around him.⁸ In place of an ocean, Wordsworth begins with a lake, Esthwaite, the only Lake District location to occur in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, though it appears twice: here, and as the setting for the ‘Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite’. Both are poems of seclusion and intentional pause, where the lakeside location amplifies the quality of stillness contained within the verse, although, as will be discussed below, in the Yew-tree ‘Lines’ such inactivity becomes problematic when unaccompanied by the restorative impulse of communion with the natural world. The poetry of *Lyrical Ballads* explores the gradient of experience, encountering in stillness both the potential for rest and for stagnation. It is a dynamic not always perceived by the second-generation poets, especially where Wordsworth’s local lakes were concerned. As evinced by his famously cutting remarks about the intellectual and geographical ‘narrowness’ of the Lake Poets in the Dedication to *Don Juan*, Byron received as parochial that which Wordsworth esteemed as local.⁹

⁷ Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter include a useful series of maps in their joint edition of the 1798 and 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* that visually charts the localising impulse of the second volume. See Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter, (eds.), *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2008), pp. 540-545.

⁸ Fraistat adopts Hartman’s term of the ‘omphalos’ to describe the stone of the ‘Ancient Mariner’, which, he suggests, functions as ‘a solid centre of reality that remains reassuringly firm’. The stone of ‘Expostulation and Reply’ has a similar omphalos quality; it appears in a particularly concentrated way as what Hartman describes as a ‘navel-point’, a ‘place of places [which] is at once breach and nexus, a breach in nature and a nexus for it and a different world’. With the reordering of the volume, Wordsworth marks an imaginative shift towards the Lake District (and Grasmere especially) as the ‘place of places’ to which the collection tends. See Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book*, p. 60, and Hartman, *Wordsworth’s Poetry*, p. 122 and more generally pp. 118-140.

⁹ See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of Byron’s response to Wordsworth in the Dedication to *Don Juan*.

The situated self-portrait of 'Expostulation and Reply' looks towards Wordsworth's focused articulation of the self in relation to place in the poetry of the second volume. More than half the poems in this volume are explicitly located in the Lake District, amongst them inscriptions and loco-descriptive verses inspired by the poet's immediate surroundings. The collection leads to the encompassing vale of Grasmere; *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) closes with the sequence of five 'Poems on the Naming of Places' and with the memorialising pastoral narrative of 'Michael', all poems which are involved in the topography of the Grasmere landscape. In the 'Poems on the Naming of Places', Wordsworth expresses an attunement to place; they are poems that, as Lucy Newlyn writes, 'carry conviction as authentic celebrations of the Wordsworths' settlement in Grasmere, and of their identification with the vale itself as home.'¹⁰ As readers of the poems of place, Wordsworth most often identifies us as strangers, those unfamiliar with the landscape with which he claims a particular knowledge. The poet calls the reader to turn from the public way and become intimate with this place, initiated into a living landscape of shared histories and experiences. The didactic vein of Wordsworth's poetry swells in a number of these verses, an early taste of the poetic moralising that so dismayed the younger generation. In the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth makes his connection to place explicit; the topography of the Lake District is known and explored in his verses, its vales, dells, and islands approached recurrently through the language of dwelling. In this volume, we encounter a grounded poet who wants to make his place known.

¹⁰ Newlyn, 'All in Each Other', p. 121.

Nevertheless, the Lakeland poems of the collection remain shadowed by the themes of exile and death that run through the Goslar poetry and the unsettled poems of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. Resettlement in the region of their childhood did not occur overnight for the Wordsworths; as Newlyn writes, '[c]lass-consciousness, education, and the experience of exile set them apart from the "untutored Shepherds" whose families were long established in the vale', leaving William and Dorothy 'neither insiders nor quite outsiders in Grasmere.'¹¹ The collection registers the uncertainty of their position; the two longest poems of the second volume—'Michael' and 'The Brothers'—record failed home-comings to Lakeland locales. Together, the two 'Pastorals' span the first year of the poet's residence in Grasmere and the greater compositional period of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). Wordsworth began composing 'The Brothers' in December 1799, shortly after arriving at Town End and 'Michael' was completed in December 1800, just before the publication of the second edition. Dwelling in *Lyrical Ballads* cohabits with death, where death is at once complete union with a place, a final grounding, and the last passing from it. The possibility of the poet's own departure remains present in his effusive paeans to particular locales.¹² The verse in which the speaker is stilled or settled in place is disturbed throughout the collection by instances of exile and moments in which a place is experienced as a site of suffocating stasis. Intertwined with Wordsworth's autobiographical verse on his Lake District home, these narratives shade the poet's own with the awareness that he may yet experience the same fate.

¹¹ Newlyn, 'All in Each Other', p. 120.

¹² The concluding lines of 'It is an April Morning' and 'To M.H.' of the 'Poems on the Naming of Places' display this concern.

In the verse that explores this vexed category of dwelling we see a deepening of Wordsworth's spatial poetics. In *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) dwelling is often ghostly, haunted by other modes of being or layered with conflicting experience. In the reading that follows, I wish to suggest that *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) lays out a spatial pattern for the rest of Wordsworth's oeuvre, a pattern to which Byron and Keats respond with varying degrees of conviction. In this collection, Wordsworth moves to resolve dislocation and exile with attunement to place and the practice of steady dwelling, the kind of dwelling he encounters in the rural communities of his Lakeland home. Nevertheless, such a steadiness is unsettled in his poetry as in his life by the shadow of renewed exile. Paradoxically, as Wordsworth enlarged his spatial categories, the younger Romantics perceived his poetry to grow narrower. His commitment to the local, his very rootedness, for them was symptomatic of a closed mind. In *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth makes a claim to belonging in the Lake District, the landscape in which he has remained in the cultural imagination of each generation since, beginning with his earliest heirs. This chapter is mindful of Wordsworth's reception as it maps the nuances of his unfolding sense of emplacement. The first section explores Wordsworth's spatial poetics as they appear in Volume I of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). The second section investigates the importance of Wordsworth's spatial poetics for the second generation, as they are revised and reified in the poetry of Volume II.

Volume I

Towards Dwelling:

As I have suggested, the opening poems of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), ‘Expostulation and Reply’ and ‘The Tables Turned’, together offer a connection to place that Wordsworth establishes as the foundation for a poetry of dwelling. The two poems articulate a balance between venturing forth into the space of nature and remaining still, a moment of emplaced being that foreshadows the pattern of Wordsworth’s later work. ‘Expostulation and Reply’ opens and closes with the poet’s position ‘on that old grey stone’ (1); the particularity of the object grounds the poet in (or perhaps better, *on*) a specific site. The stillness of the inanimate object generates a corresponding pause in the poet, offering an ontological oneness of subject and object. Wordsworth’s personal geo-ontology finds its fullest expression in ‘There is an Eminence’ in the second volume; nevertheless, ‘Expostulation and Reply’ presents the first of a series of steady centres to which the figure of the poet will return, spaces characterised by quietness and frequently a sense of loss.¹³ The ‘old grey stone’ of the opening poem recurs most frequently across the collection as a form of memorial and perhaps in its most poignant form as the unobtrusive ‘stragging heap’ (17) of the concluding poem, ‘Michael’.¹⁴ As elsewhere in *Lyrical*

¹³ Mark Hewson identifies in Wordsworth’s narrative poems the recurrent presence of a ‘scene of meditation’, a spatio-temporal site that ‘marks an interruption: it arrests the poet in the course of his travels, fixes and detains the free movement of the gaze upon the natural world.’ Hewson connects these scenes to memorial objects such as tombs, graves, and heaps of stone, which, he suggests, serve ‘to inscribe the past into the landscape, and thus give a spatial fixture to the narrative’. I would suggest that such sites of arrest and interruption may be found in Wordsworth’s lyric poetry also, and similarly perform the dual of act of localisation and contemplation. See Mark Hewson, ‘The Scene of Meditation in Wordsworth’, *The Modern Language Review* 106.4 (2011), 954-967.

¹⁴ In ‘Sacrificial Sites, Place-Keeping, and “Pre-History” in Wordsworth’s “Michael”’, *European Romantic Review* 15.2 (2004), 205-213, Charles J. Rezpka observes that ‘[a]t some point between

Ballads, Wordsworth initiates the reader into an awareness of his circumambient environment. He is not just stone-seated, but situated ‘*mid* all this mighty sum/ Of things for ever speaking’ (25-26 emphasis added), rendering him a listener within—and a translator of—an articulate world. The poet’s response to his interlocutor is to draw attention to the receptive sensory faculties of ear, eye, and flesh. His stillness heightens his awareness of the animation of the phenomenal world and brings him into conversation with it; when, in the final stanza, Wordsworth couples ‘here, alone’ (29) with ‘Conversing as I may’ (30), he does not expect us to imagine him talking to himself.

‘The Tables Turned’ retains the same pull towards receptivity as its partner poem; the addressee who is called to come outside must bring with him ‘a heart/ That watches and receives’ (32), a phrase that elides the distinction between seeing and feeling. As in the earlier poem, the natural world is presented as one of sensory wealth; the sun’s synaesthetic ‘sweet evening yellow’ (8) irradiates the open fields while the songs of linnet and throstle pervade the air. In the 1800 edition, ‘hear’ becomes ‘here’ (‘Come, here the woodland linnet’ (10)) in a delightful printing error that speaks to the poem’s insistence on a change of place.¹⁵ Wordsworth compels the reader into movement by the forceful repetition of ‘Up! Up!’ (1, 3) and ‘Come forth’ (15, 31), an impatient invitation to change one’s place which is echoed

1793, the year of his first encounter with Stonehenge, and 1800, the publication date of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth became very interested in stones, which seem to litter the *Ballads* like glacial erratics’ (p. 205). For a discussion of the importance of the word ‘stone’ as a place-marker in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), see Brian R. Bates, *Wordsworth’s Poetic Collections, Supplementary Writing and Parodic Reception* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), pp. 49-56. Bates argues that from the opening stone of ‘Expostulation and Reply’, stones in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* ‘serve as symbolic place-markers that challenge and expand the capacity readers have to record, recollect and consider how their emotional responses have shifted during their journey towards the unfinished sheepfold in “Michael!”’ (p. 50).

¹⁵ This error was corrected in the 1802 edition.

ten poems later in ‘Lines Written at a small distance from my House, and sent by my little boy to the person to whom they are addressed’. The poet’s concern to locate the reader of the ‘Lines’, in this case both Dorothy and us, temporally as well as spatially (‘It is the first mild day of March’ (1), ‘It is the hour of feeling’ (24)) lends urgency to his summons and the anticipation of his sister’s company; the lines create an illusion of the immediacy of composition. Nevertheless, for all its urgency, the proposed outdoor meeting with Dorothy is couched in terms of idleness. The same paradox is at the heart of the exchange between ‘Expostulation and Reply’ and ‘The Tables Turned’: the resting poet of the first poem is the animator of the second. Yet, there is only imagined tension here; the poet’s response to the external world is in all three cases the same: immersive. As before in ‘Expostulation and Reply’, idleness in the ‘Lines’ is not inertia, but what Wordsworth calls ‘a wise passiveness’ (‘Expostulation and Reply’ 24), a receptivity or attunement to the natural world.

The ‘Lines’ are formally experiential; written in the present tense, the poem invites the reader to step into the very moment it documents, and to step out of conventional patterns of human existence. The poet claims a ‘living Calendar’ (18) from his surroundings, one which supplants the traditional reckoning of time and allows him to reorder the year: ‘We from to-day, my friend, will date/ The opening of the year’ (19-20). ‘Opening’ here suggests as much an unfolding and a widening as a beginning, and chimes with the tone of delighted expectation that suffuses the poem. The ‘Lines’ are of the threshold; not only is the verse temporally liminal, as the poem-as-letter falls between the moment of the poet’s written desire and his sister’s active response, it is also a transitional space, a space of being in-between.

The title of the poem is peculiarly specific *and* ambiguous as it locates the scene of writing ‘at a small distance’ from the poet’s house. It does not fix Wordsworth to a particular spot, but rather hints at a connectedness between the compact world of his abode and the world of trees and mountains with which it is surrounded. The poem’s opening stanza reifies this connection in the image of the ‘red-breast’ that ‘sings from the tall larch/ That stands beside our door’ (3-4). The song of the bird mediates between the dual spaces of domestic interior and external woodland, as much as the letter carried by the young Edward; the poet employs both missives to draw Dorothy outside.

Although Wordsworth remains outside the house, the poem retains a sense of rootedness, of being within a home domain.¹⁶ Wordsworth’s expression of the interconnectivity of subject and place is much deeper than that offered by the opening partner poems. Indeed, it anticipates what Martin Heidegger will term, in his philosophical thinking about dwelling, *das Geviert*, that is, ‘the fourfold’.¹⁷ For

¹⁶ This will become an increasingly important idea for the poet following his settlement in Grasmere, where the space of the garden takes on this same resonance. In a letter to Coleridge written only days after their arrival at Town End, Wordsworth writes: ‘We mean also to enclose two or three yards of ground between us and the road, this for the sake of a few flowers, and because it will make it more our own. Besides, am I fanciful when I would extend the obligation of gratitude to insensate things? May not a man have a salutary pleasure in doing something gratuitously for the sake of his house, as for an individual to which he owes so much[.]’ *LWDW: EY*, p. 275.

¹⁷ See Martin Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 243-255. I bring Heidegger in here not to offer a conclusive portrait of a proto-Heideggerian Wordsworth—although, as several critics have shown, this can be a compelling connection—but to suggest that Heidegger’s concept of the fourfold and Wordsworth’s poem share common ground and, as such, that the one may helpfully illuminate the other. For a particularly thorough reading of Wordsworth alongside Heidegger see John Kerrigan, ‘Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, *Essays in Criticism* 35.1 (1985), 45-75. For an ecocritical approach to Wordsworth and Heidegger see Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), and Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2004). My reading of Heidegger and dwelling has been informed by Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) and Julian Young, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Heidegger, the essence of dwelling consists in the safe-guarding, or ‘sparing’, of the fourfold world. Dwelling is not simply ‘the stay of mortals on the earth’:

“on the earth” already means “under the sky.” Both of these also mean “remaining before the divinities” and include a “belonging to men’s being with one another.” By a primal oneness the four—earth and sky, divinities and mortals—belong together in one.¹⁸

The fourfold is, as Julian Young argues, ‘Heidegger’s account of what makes a place or space a dwelling-space. One’s place is a dwelling-place . . . to, and only to, the extent it shows up as a *Geviert*.’¹⁹ The fourfold, for Heidegger as for Wordsworth, is to be understood and experienced poetically rather than scientifically; Heidegger writes:

Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal. . . . The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year’s seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether.²⁰

When one encounters the earth and receives the sky in such a way, one inhabits the ‘poetic’; ‘poetically man dwells’, as Heidegger puts it elsewhere.²¹ Or as Young glosses this passage, ‘[o]ne dwells when one’s world shows up poetically, “radiantly”, when it shows up as the “holy” place it is.’²² Poetry then may be a ‘*revelation* of dwelling’, to use a phrase of Jonathan Bate, who reminds us that ‘[f]or Heidegger, poetry is the original admission of dwelling because it is a

¹⁸ Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, p. 246.

¹⁹ Julian Young, ‘The Fourfold’, in Charles B. Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 373-392, p. 373.

²⁰ Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, p. 246.

²¹ See Martin Heidegger, ‘. . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .’, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), pp. 209-227.

²² Young, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy*, p. 99. Young notes that the ‘radiance’ of poetry in Heidegger’s account comes from the multi-faceted nature of the poetic word, which, unlike the prosaic word, is ‘possessed of many meanings’.

presencing not a representation, a form of being not of mapping'.²³ Wordsworth's lyric might be described as such a revelation, as it brings to presence a fourfold world.

The 'Lines Written at a small distance from my House' gather earth and sky, space and time, in a profoundly promise-filled manner. Wordsworth's description of sweetening minutes invites the reader to partake of the fullness of a spring day moments after he has established the date as 1 March, just as the simple greenness of the fields expectantly re-clothes 'the bare trees, and mountains bare' (7) in our imaginations. Wordsworth calls attention to the presence of the human in this burgeoning space, inviting us to see a unity of place and person, a unity that unfolds between the community of dwellers (Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Edward/Basil) in their place of habitation. More than this, the 'Lines' display Wordsworth's impression of a fourfold unity, for his encounter with earth and sky takes place in the presence of both 'mortals' and 'divinities'. The sense of the numinous that suffuses the poem, and indeed much of Wordsworth's poetry, is certainly different in character to Heidegger's 'divinities', 'the beckoning messengers of the godhead'.²⁴ Like many of the philosophical poems of the late 1790s, the 'Lines' suggestively evoke Wordsworth's idea of the 'one life'; the 'blessed power that rolls/ About, below, above' (33-34) that is present in this lyric is drawn from Wordsworth's sense of divine immanence, and clearly anticipates the 'motion' and 'spirit' (101) that 'rolls through all things' (103) in 'Tintern Abbey'. William A. Ulmer argues that 'Wordsworth used the One Life notion for visionary scenes which, in their experiential immediacies and natural settings, dramatize discoveries

²³ Bate, *Song of the Earth*, p. 262.

²⁴ Heidegger, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', p. 246.

of spirit *in* nature.’²⁵ Although, in the ‘Lines’, the poem-as-letter delays the experiential immediacy of William and Dorothy’s encounter with the divine in the natural world, it nevertheless forecasts this discovery. The divine presence at the centre of the poem is indivisible from the sky and the earth with which the ‘Lines’ open and close: its directional movement (about, below, above) is through, and in, mortals, earth, and sky.

From the sense of a rather nebulous ‘blessing in the air’ (5) and a pervasive mood of joy, the ‘Lines’ display a burgeoning awareness of a divine spirit around whom/which the poet might orient himself in an expressly covenantal way: he foresees the ‘silent laws’ (29) that he and Dorothy might make in their hearts, ‘Which they shall long obey’ (30). It is here that Wordsworth comes closest to a Heideggerian sense of ‘divinities’. Heidegger’s divinities embody the heritage or values of a community (they are heroic role-models in the sense of the gods of the Greek pantheon); they make possible ‘the common “*ethos*” that is the being of such community.’²⁶ As Young puts it, Heidegger’s divinities ‘give voice to that which is most sacred to us’, and whether we regard them or not, as members of a given community we live ‘before’ them in the same way that we live ‘on’ the earth and ‘under’ the sky.²⁷ The spirit that is present in Wordsworth’s lyric is more than

²⁵ William A. Ulmer, *The Christian Wordsworth, 1798-1805: New Perspectives in Critical Thinking* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 45. See Ulmer’s chapter ‘Vain Belief: Wordsworth and the One Life’, pp. 35-72, for a detailed discussion of the complexities in Wordsworth’s articulation of the ‘one life’ philosophy. Ulmer questions whether the ‘Lines’ might simply be ‘stylistic overspill’ from the poet’s work on the ‘Ruined Cottage’, but my point here is not to suggest that Wordsworth espouses a theory of the ‘one life’ in this poem, rather that the ideas and motifs of the ‘one life’ inform the poet’s presentation of the numinous, as they do elsewhere.

²⁶ Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology*, p. 275. See also Young, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy*, pp. 94-98.

²⁷ Young, ‘The Fourfold’, p. 375.

simply the spirit of place in the sense of *genius loci*, it reveals the ethos of this small community of dwellers.²⁸ The poet's summons to Dorothy frames five hymn-like stanzas: the verse form shifts in the fifth stanza from three lines of iambic tetrameter and a concluding line of iambic trimeter to common metre, the metre of both the ballad and the hymn, before returning to the initial verse form in the final stanza. In these five stanzas Wordsworth comes to the heart of the experience he would share with Dorothy, and it is a profoundly religious one; in this internal song, the poet offers an encounter with the holy:

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above;
We'll frame the measure of our souls,
They shall be tuned to love. (33-36)

The 'Lines' are an invitation to be in accord with the fourfold world, to enter into a place and to see it as it is, to allow it to show up radiantly. Young writes that '[t]o dwell is to be disposed to epiphanies of dwelling' where such an epiphany is 'a profound sense of being in place, being in the right place, of belonging to a unique and indissoluble unity of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals'.²⁹ 'Lines Written at a small distance from my House' is a record of such an epiphany and the idleness that Wordsworth speaks of is not that of inactivity, but of dwelling. This state of being will later inspire Keats's poetry of place; yet where Wordsworth's idleness retains a sense of vigour, idleness in Keats will most often be drowsy, a heaviness figured within his more sensuous poetics.

²⁸ Adam Potkay suggestively connects Wordsworth's sense of the 'one life' with the ecological ethics that he finds in the poet's work. See Potkay, 'Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things', *PMLA* 132.2 (2008), 390-404.

²⁹ Young, 'The Fourfold', p. 386.

In ‘Expostulation and Reply’, ‘The Tables Turned’, and ‘Lines Written at a small distance from my House’, Wordsworth begins to articulate the sense of attunement to place that enables the cultivation of his poetics of dwelling. Nevertheless, in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), it is not attunement but dislocation that we encounter most frequently. Many of the local tales in this collection consider the difficulties that preclude dwelling: the miseries of poverty and old age, as well as physical and mental infirmity. The wanderers and exiles of the poet’s verse are juxtaposed with figures that remain fixed in place: the forsaken Indian woman, Martha Ray of ‘The Thorn’, and the melancholy youth of ‘Lines left upon a seat in a Yew-Tree’. The poet’s opening account of receptive idleness in nature is challenged by these figures for whom a sense of home or an attunement to place has been lost, and by those whose obsession with a single place has diminished their ability to dwell.

Static Exiles:

When Heidegger draws on the Gothic *wunian* in ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, he does so in order to find language that comes closest to expressing the essence of dwelling. More than simply meaning ‘to remain, to stay in a place’, *wunian* conveys the way in which this remaining is experienced: ‘*Wunian* means to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace.’³⁰ In *Lyrical Ballads*, ‘The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman’, the ‘Lines left upon a seat in a Yew-Tree’, and most

³⁰ Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, p. 246.

especially ‘The Thorn’, are characterised by a lack of this sense of repose. They are poems of static unrest; homelessness and alienation here lead not to vagrancy, as they will elsewhere in Wordsworth’s poetry, but to a harrowing near-paralysis. The emplaced beings in these poems are fragile, permanently outside the preserve of peace, permanently on the cusp of death, where, grave-like, deathliness is experienced as an inexorable constriction of space. Byron has few characters in his poetry that might be said to experience this kind of paralysis—alienation in his verse leads more often than not to a restless motion—but the theme finds fresh articulation in Keats’s work. Keats does not locate his discussion of emplaced unrest in the geographical or political landscape of Britain as Wordsworth does, but in the landscapes of romance and myth, as in the Hyperion poems or ‘Isabella; or The Pot of Basil’, a poem which bears striking resemblances to ‘The Thorn’. This engagement with a fixed unrest is part of Keats’s wider imaginative commitment to the instability of place; the narrative poems in particular figure breaches of place, boundaries that are transgressed or assaulted.

In *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth is recurrently concerned with the relation of the atmosphere and the weather to the earth-bound figures of his verse. The sky is a polarised space; often Wordsworth presents quiet, open skies, a harmony of earth and heaven like the ‘steep and lofty cliffs’ of the Wye Valley that ‘connect/ The landscape with the quiet of the sky’ (‘Tintern Abbey’ 5, 7-8), or the islands that lie ‘As quietly as spots of sky/ Among the evening clouds’ (65-66) in the paradisaical description of the New World in ‘Ruth’. Such gentle skies accentuate the harshness of opposite experiences. The sky of ‘The Complaint’ bears down upon the body of the woman. The dying woman’s lament is structured around her inescapable

surroundings; the Northern Lights of the night sky that haunt her dreams press upon her waking eyes also. The alternate rhymes at the centre of the stanza—‘skies’, ‘drive’, ‘eyes’, ‘alive’—circle around each other as half rhymes also, a noose tightened by repetition: ‘And yet they are upon my eyes,/ And yet I am alive.’ (7-8). As in ‘The Thorn’, where Martha climbs the mountain ‘In rain, in tempest, and in snow’ (79), exposed Lear-like to the elements, this is a sky that reminds us of the fragility of the human body in open space. The isolated figures of these verses are unsheltered, in the dual sense of being exposed to a bleak landscape and in being located outside the bounds of their respective communities. The recurring image of the burnt-out fire in the ‘Complaint’ emblemizes the woman’s double lack of physical and emotional warmth, being without home or kinship.

In ‘The Thorn’, the location of the titular object is one of utter isolation: ‘High on a mountain’s highest ridge’ (23). Here ‘the stormy winter gale/ Cuts like a scythe’ (24-25), the violence of the elements made more devastating when we are introduced to the desolate woman who must endure them. For Martha is ‘known to every star,/ And every wind that blows’ (69-70); her compulsive revisiting of the mountain-top ‘At all times of the day and night’ (67), and in all weathers, renders this space one of perpetual torment. Martha is what Toby R. Benis terms a ‘quasi-vagrant’: she ‘repeats the same journey, over and over, through a familiar landscape for a highly ritualized purpose.’³¹ She remains permanently unsheltered, even her

³¹ Toby R. Benis, *Romanticism on the Road: The Marginal Gains of Wordsworth’s Homeless* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 95. Benis explores the impact of the altered political climate of the late 1790s on Wordsworth’s changing representation of homelessness in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). He argues that in the plight of Martha in ‘The Thorn’ we see an important depiction of the British provincial milieu of this period in which growing popular support for the war with France, national fear of an invasion, and the government’s increasingly aggressive attitude toward dissenters led to increasing intolerance in small communities of ‘anyone and anything resisting easy social or political classification’ (p. 97). See pp. 94-139.

hut door is ‘seldom shut’ (95), at the mercy of the elements and the prying eyes of local and stranger alike, including the reader who, although an outsider, is drawn within the community from which Martha is exiled through the hearing of the tale. Martha is a figure of ‘unaccommodated humanity’, as Fraistat so aptly terms her, her desperate situation engendering fear without compassion from the community she is spatially and socially removed from.³² This is nowhere more acutely displayed than in the storm episode in which, obscured by the rain, she is mistaken for a ‘jutting crag’ (193) by the narrator who is seeking shelter. The encounter is suffused with gothic terror as the narrator flees from the presence of the rain-shrouded wailing woman, an act that foregrounds Martha’s desperate experience of abandonment.³³

The mountain top is not a space of prospect, nor visionary insight, as it will be in *The Excursion*, but one resolutely unknown and unknowable. The narrator’s and the reader’s journey is a distorted pilgrimage, one seeking spectacle as much as truth, and one with no secure resolution. Wordsworth forces us to take the perspective of the unknowing spectator, a stranger to this uncertain place, like the narrator himself, whose first trip up the mountain becomes a map for our own. Approaching the mountain top with a telescope, an object of far-reaching vision, the narrator instead finds his sight clouded and his person oppressed by a devastating storm. Atop the mountain he is confronted by the figure of Martha, by

³² Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book*, p. 79.

³³ Of this episode, Benis observes that ‘Martha Ray says nothing when first confronted with the narrator. It is only when he turns from her that she cries out in despair. This brief encounter implies that the real source of her misery might not be Stephen Hill or a regretted murder, but neighbours that shun her as her fiancé did in the past.’ See *Romanticism on the Road*, p. 111. Benis notably also traces the way in which the narrator’s response to Martha enables him, the true stranger of the poem, to become incorporated into the community, while reinforcing Martha’s permanent status as an outcast. See pp. 108-111.

her resolute fixity that defies verifiable explanation. Martha, like the thorn itself, obtrudes into the landscape; she refuses assimilation. It is her presence that endows the objects of the landscape with significance, yet that same presence which occludes their meaning.

The poem becomes an experience of pure repetition—for Martha, for the narrator, and so for the reader, who finds that by the poem's close we have come no further in understanding than the poem's opening line, 'There is a thorn', able to locate the objects in space and being, but little else.³⁴ The poem eddies around the locus of the mountain; the same questions are asked and those same questions remain unanswered for the length of the poem. The narrator is consistently drawn to the geographical elements of this place, the location and distance of objects (including Martha herself) that allow the mountain top to be mapped but not inhabited.

The exchange that occurs in 'We are Seven', the poem that follows 'The Thorn' in the 1800 edition, makes clear the difference between a phenomenal and a geographic experience of space. Although an awareness of distance and the specific location of relatable objects characterises the little maid's discourse with

³⁴ The repetitious nature of the poem is registered in a different way in the *Biographia Literaria*, in which Coleridge criticised the poem for the 'unmeaning repetitions, habitual phrases and other blank counters' it contained, which added no 'assistance to the poet, or ornament to the poem'. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Adam Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 245. For a discussion of Coleridge's critique of 'The Thorn' and of the meaning of the 'unmeaning repetitions' in the poem see Jerome Christensen, 'Wordsworth's Misery, Coleridge's Woe: Reading "The Thorn"', *Papers on Language and Literature* 16.3 (1980), 268-286, in which he argues that '[r]epetition carries the narrator to the luxury of a language which successfully communicates its own passionate insufficiency, which exults in its own flux, and which recognises its return to "misery" as the condition of its freedom and power' (pp. 284-285). Coleridge's critique is primarily of Wordsworth's 'garrulous' narrator and the fear that in this poem the poet had come to resemble his character, a criticism echoed by Byron in his discarded prose Preface to *Don Juan*. See Chapter 2, pp. 148-157 for a discussion of Byron's satire.

the questioning stranger, ultimately, she is less concerned with mapping her locale than with living in it. The act of numeration that occurs alongside the contested counting of the siblings is the counting of steps: the little maid locates the graves of her departed siblings ‘Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door’ (39). Placed in close proximity to ‘The Thorn’, Wordsworth perhaps expects us to recall the verbose narrator of the earlier poem who presumably also engages in an act of pacing out when he claims of the pond: ‘I’ve measured it from side to side:/ ’Tis three feet long, and two feet wide’ (32-33). If so, it is recollection in aid of contrast for the act of measuring, or mapping a space, is profoundly different in ‘We are Seven’. More than simply offering an easy rhyme to satisfy the verse constraints, ‘or more’ introduces subjectivity: it matters who is doing the counting, how old or young they are, what their pace is. It certainly matters that here it is the little maid who walks, runs, and plays in the space between the cottage door and the grave-site. The spatiality of the church-yard is imprinted with her actions. It is by the graves of her siblings that the girl knits, eats, and sings, in a dynamic interplay of place and person. The conversation allows for a split perspective, in which both characters read the space of the church-yard in different ways; the narrator reads only its function as a site of death, the little maid unveils her being in being situated.³⁵ Hers is a dwelling in proximity to death that speaks of vital interchange and not the paralysis that afflicts Martha’s existence.

³⁵ I follow Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological account of space here, where spatiality is defined in terms of experience, in terms of the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the subject and the world in which the subject inheres: ‘[b]esides the physical and geometrical distance which stands between myself and all things, a “lived” distance binds me to things which count and exist for me, and links them to each other. This distance measures the “scope” of my life at every moment.’ See *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 286 and the chapter entitled ‘Space’. My reading is informed by Sally Bushell’s work on textual and geographic space and place in ‘The Mapping of Meaning in Wordsworth’s “Michael”’: (Textual Place, Textual Space and Spatialized Speech Acts), *Studies in Romanticism* 49.1 (2010),

The little maid of ‘We are Seven’ is rhythmically as well as spatially attuned to the natural world, the diurnal and the seasonal carry her steady account of life after death, life in the midst of death. The active patterns of her day anchor her in the place of her departed siblings’ rest and so to them, in something more than a living memorial. Martha’s painful and obsessive attachment to the objects that mark her loss in ‘The Thorn’ renders her impotent; the mountain-top is a prison from which there is no release. In ‘We are Seven’ Wordsworth articulates a shift from the modes and sites of being of ‘The Thorn’. Rather than stagnant space, we encounter a space of dwelling that accommodates; the little maid’s abode is one that encompasses the living and the dead, the inanimate and the animate. The pairing of these poems draws attention to the enduring tension between home and homelessness, dweller and exile that underpins *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth is concerned for the gradient of experience that connects stillness with wandering. In his tales of static exiles, he confronts the uncomfortable in place, its unhomeliness, and the reciprocity of unsettled space and unsettling experience.

The deathly stasis that pervades the landscape of the ‘Lines left upon a seat in a Yew-Tree, which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, yet commanding a beautiful prospect’ is much subtler. The opening invitation is to ‘rest’ (1), and the ‘seat’ to which we are directed is reminiscent of the stone that bears up the body of the poet in ‘Expostulation and Reply’, not least in its proximity to Esthwaite Water. Nevertheless, this marker of human activity exists in a profoundly desolate landscape: the yew-tree is described as ‘lonely’ (1) and ‘Far from all human dwelling’ (2), and, as Wordsworth will make clear, these

43-78 and *Text as Process: Creative Composition in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Dickinson* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

lines double as a description of the isolated youth who (perhaps) inscribed them.³⁶ The youth is a ghostly presence in the poem, and the reader his eerie double; arrested by the opening invocation and the emphatically repeated ‘Stranger!’ (27, 53), we are held in the place of the young man, viewing the landscape as if through his eyes. Indeed, the title ‘stranger’ is equally befitting to the young man, whose solipsism has made him strange to this place. He is a ‘lost man’ (47) in the full breadth of that phrase, the sting of his self-exile is in the separation it begets between himself and Nature, an estrangement implicated in his death.

In ‘Lines left upon a seat’, the subject’s paralysis is counterbalanced by the reader’s potential to experience this place as passage; the poet’s rehearsal of the history of the young man and the attendant moral are designed to not only move the reader, but to move him/her on. Although the poem’s opening beguiles us with its lovely desolation, the pull towards a space of solitude is unsettled by a narrative that compels the reader to self-examination, to take leave of this residually unhomely place. Wordsworth is, as ever, overtly concerned with our (in)ability to read a place (and a poem) well. Unlike the other ‘Lines’ of Volume I, which all contain ‘written’ in the title and therefore place a certain emphasis on the activity of the writer, the lines here are ‘left’. Disconnected from their implied author, yet taken up by Wordsworth, these lines are simultaneously relinquished to the wandering stranger in the Lake District and decisively placed before us in *Lyrical Ballads*. Such a play of places is caught up in the form of the inscription poem

³⁶ On the problem of identifying the speaker and/or writer of the poem see Andrew Bennett, *Wordsworth Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 89 and Jacqueline Labbe, *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 100.

which always already purports to be in another place, an illusory original place doubled by the place of the page.³⁷

Throughout *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth is concerned with the relationship of his characters to their environment or of the poet to his. In the ‘Lines’, Wordsworth is concerned also for the reader; to read the poem is to be intentionally placed within the landscape of the verse. It is, as Andrew Bennett observes, an ‘impossible presencing’; the reader of *Lyrical Ballads* cannot be the addressee of the Yew-Tree ‘Lines’ for ‘the specificity of inscriptional location explicitly excludes readers who are not positioned in front of the one, the unique instance of inscription’.³⁸ And yet, Wordsworth insists on the possibility that we might be. The locational specificity of the title creates the spot as one that is revisitable, one that may be traversed by the reader who has already encountered this place in the printed pages of the book, indeed, who is already involved in its geography. Jacqueline Labbe argues that in inscription poetry, ‘[t]he “written” gestures toward the plottable: a real space, a real place, an actual date, a mapped experience.’³⁹ The

³⁷ Andrew Bennett observes in *Wordsworth Writing* that ‘[w]hat seems particularly powerful and particularly strange about [landscape] inscriptions is the question of their placement, their fiction of immovability, on the one hand, and the contrary fact that they are movable, that we *can* read them, in a book, on the other’ (p. 85). Of this paradox in the Yew-Tree poem, he writes: ‘[s]ince the poem is “left” on the seat, there is a sense in which our reading, our reading from a book, transgresses topographical propriety: our reading can only be a substitute reading, a supplement for a full and proper experience of the poem’ (p. 86). The tension between the place of the page and the place of nature resurfaces across the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, almost from the moment of opening the collection. In ‘The Tables Turned’, the newly second poem of the revised second edition, the poem presents itself as a poor substitute for its own subject, nature. It asks the reader to ‘Close up these barren leaves’ (30), to stop reading and step out into nature, a quiet joke of the 1798 collection become more serious by its shift in place. In her edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Fiona Stafford comments that ‘the extensive—and evidently serious—new Preface provided a considerable counterweight to the quiet wit of the poems themselves. In the original 1798 volume, the joke in “The Tables Turned” seemed lighter and, since the short lyric was positioned towards the end of the collection, remained imperceptible until readers had been very persistent.’ Fiona Stafford (ed.), *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1802* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. xiv.

³⁸ Bennett, *Wordsworth Writing*, pp. 86-87.

³⁹ Labbe, *Writing Romanticism*, p. 84.

‘left’ of the title of these lines gestures toward a slightly different act of plotting; distanced from the authorial moment of inscription, the relic nature of the lines instead anticipates the moment in which they are found and (re)read. The lines themselves lack concrete form in the poem; it is unclear if they are carved onto the tree itself or were just placed there, perhaps inscribed on a scrap of paper, or within a book. That they might be removable troubles the certainty that the reader-as-traveller will stumble upon the tree of the poem, yet it also opens the possibility that the ‘Lines’ may be transplanted from the page back onto the place in which they were first found. More so than in any of Wordsworth’s other inscriptions, here the act of reading rather than writing plots the space. This embodied act of reading looks towards the Grasmere poetry of the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800); the inscription poems and ‘Michael’ are predicated on the illusion of the reader and/or auditor being present in the landscape in which the poem is located. Much more than this, in the later poetry, Wordsworth is concerned that the reader not only is present, but specifically following in his footsteps. Only in the Yew-Tree ‘Lines’ do we discover poetry that is simply ‘left’.

Wordsworth will return to the cluster of images contained within the Yew-Tree ‘Lines’ in a later expression of melancholic rural seclusion. By the time he had written ‘Michael’, two years later, Wordsworth had widened the landscape of grief and sorrow and developed his narrative of a compulsive return to an object emblematic of one’s loss or isolation. A man of completely different character to the figure of ‘Lines Left upon a seat in a Yew-Tree’, the shepherd Michael’s forlorn return to the gathered stones of the sheep-fold, there to sit alone and unmoving, is nevertheless reminiscent of the Yew-Tree figure ‘Fixing his downcast eye’ (33)

while sat ‘on these barren rocks’ (31), ‘His only visitants a stragglings sheep,/ The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper’ (30). ‘Michael’, like the Yew-Tree ‘Lines’, is a memorial narrative that is fixed to place, the poem a guide to the objects of landscape that keep a silent record of human passing.

Wandering Exiles:

To be separated or expelled from one’s home place, to be un-settled, is to experience exile. The static exiles of Wordsworth’s verse are brought into relief by the eternal wanderers, those for whom exile is permanent, who stand, like the Female Vagrant, ‘homeless near a thousand homes’ (‘The Female Vagrant’ 179).⁴⁰ This state of wandering, its unsteadiness or irresolution, troubles the positive account of wandering that we find across Wordsworth’s oeuvre, from *An Evening Walk* to *The Excursion*. Wordsworth engages with this tension in ‘The Mad Mother’, a poem that is by turns an encounter with spatial freedom and with the dangers (unacknowledged by the mother herself) of homelessness. In the woman’s clear connection to the natural landscape, her reliance on it for shelter and food, indeed her agency within it, Wordsworth challenges the boundaries of the category of dwelling: she is a precursor to the ‘vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods’ (21)

⁴⁰ See Stuart Curran, ‘Romanticism Displaced and Placeless’, *European Romantic Review* 20.5 (2009), 637-650 for a discussion of displacement in the Romantic era as ‘a transcontinental European phenomenon’ (p. 640). He argues that displacement as an abiding notion of Romanticism derived mainly from the circumstances of war in this period, but was given expression in many forms across European literature. Curran observes that Wordsworth’s early poetry is recurrently concerned with the historical circumstance of British military deployment and its effects: ‘[o]f the major poets the one who most frequently reminds us of the cost of that deployment is Wordsworth’ (p. 641).

of 'Tintern Abbey'. Nevertheless, dwelling here is fleeting, if gained at all; the rapid tonal shifts of the poem reflect a constant shift in direction or place. Wordsworth's initial portrait of the woman is expressed via her connection to a multiplicity of places: she has come 'far from over the main' (4), yet she speaks the English language, and she is to be found 'underneath the hay-stack warm,/ And on the green-wood stone' (7-8) as well as among the woods. She may be located in many places, but she is fixed to none. The underlying narrative of abandonment and of psychological trauma intentionally troubles the mirthful perspective of the mother and the metrical 'song-like' aspect of the verse, just as it remains a disturbing undercurrent to the picturesque serenity of the later 'vagrant dwellers'.⁴¹

Each stanza of 'The Mad Mother' is constructed of three couplets and a rhyming quatrain, which, along with the internal rhyme in the penultimate line of each stanza, creates an impression of closure at odds with the woman's tale. The recurrent rhymes offer a formal return unexperienced by the mother who has no place to come back to. The final couplet registers this unease with particular force; the penultimate line of the poem contains a shift in metre from the regular iambic tetrameter used throughout the mother's song to a line of tetrameter consisting of one iambic foot, two anapaestic feet, and a final iambic foot. The rhythmic shift creates a sudden propulsion to the verse that formally anticipates the mother and child's flight to the woods: 'Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!/ And there, my babe; we'll live for aye' (99-100). The poem rushes to its conclusion, the chiming internal rhyme (gay/away) is picked up by the assonantal 'babe', before

⁴¹ See Nicholas Roe, *The Politics of Nature: William Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 170-171, in which Roe hears echoes in 'Tintern Abbey' of the attack on social injustice in *King Lear* (III.iii.28-33) and argues that the poem 'is not an escapist refuge but a hard-won acceptance of the worst in human nature'.

reaching its full completion in the final ‘aye’. Yet this rhyme registers as uncomfortably superficial; the poet and the reader, if not the woman, recognise the desperate naivety of the suggestion that she will be able to live anywhere, let alone in the woods, ‘forever’.

The complicated portrait of dislocated location in ‘The Mad Mother’ gives voice to a lived experience of abandonment and dispossession.⁴² As in ‘The Female Vagrant’, Wordsworth tells a common tale through the voice of one woman; unlike the Ancient Mariner whose supernatural wanderings displace him from a specific time, the Female Vagrant and the Mad Mother are of the political moment; the reader who encountered them in the pages of *Lyrical Ballads* at the turn of the nineteenth century had, most likely, already encountered their like in the byways and highways of the British Isles.⁴³ ‘The Female Vagrant’ is extracted from Wordsworth’s long poem ‘Salisbury Plain’, which was begun in 1793, in the midst of his nomadic years. Inspired by his crossing of a stormy Salisbury Plain, alone and on foot, Wordsworth doubtless felt a keen kinship to the woman of the poem. Having been deprived of a secure home after the death of his father in 1784, the poet had personal experience of an uprooted transitory existence.⁴⁴ It is an experience shared to varying degrees by the second-generation poets: like

⁴² According to the Fenwick Note on this poem, the subject was reported to Wordsworth ‘by a lady of Bristol who had seen the poor creature’. *LBOP*, p. 353.

⁴³ Richard Gravil observes the power of the voice of the distressed in Wordsworth’s poems of human suffering: ‘[t]o be addressed so directly, so eloquently, and so illuminatingly, by social outcasts, was not within the experience of the average reader in 1798.’ He argues that rather than offering a distancing observation of the afflicted, as in the majority of the sentimental and sensationalist ballads of the time, ‘Wordsworth’s poems engage—and this is why the experimental diction does matter—to let the reader glimpse the world through the eyes of the powerless.’ See *Wordsworth’s Bardic Vocation, 1787-1842* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 101-103.

⁴⁴ Stephen Gill writes of Wordsworth’s deprivation of a home on the death of his father: ‘Wordsworth’s sympathy for vagrants, the feeling informing the line “And homeless near a thousand homes I stood”, above all the strength of his later reverence for the values of rootedness, continuity, and sustained love, all originate now.’ See *William Wordsworth: A Life*, p. 35.

Wordsworth, Keats had lost both his parents by the time he was fourteen, his troubled financial situation left him permanently without a secure home, and he was often forced to rely on the generosity of his friends. Byron was orphaned in his early twenties and his relocations across Scotland and England as a child anticipate his adult life of wandering. Nevertheless, where Wordsworth's long experience of an unsettled life caused him to cleave to a place of dwelling in his native Lakes, neither Byron nor Keats shared in the elder poet's personal narrative of return.

'The Female Vagrant' opens, unexpectedly, with settledness. In the poem's opening stanzas, the woman is rooted in her place of dwelling; living in community with the human and the non-human, the swans that draw near to her at the edge of Derwentwater or 'The red-breast known for years' (36) that frequents her window appear as neighbourly as the inmates of the nearby homes. The harmony of her environment, an idyll of pastoral husbandry and ease, remains untroubled for four stanzas; akin to the 'hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied' (24), this is a cloistered space of safety. 'The Female Vagrant' follows 'Lines Written at a short distance from my House' and the central image of the opening stanza, a lightness of being and days that 'in transport roll'd' (5), recalls the rolling of the 'blessed power' in the previous poem and Wordsworth's rhapsodic connection to the rhythms of the natural world.⁴⁵ The echo reinforces the sense of delighted communion with the rural environment, which draws attention to the figurative shift

⁴⁵ 'Rolling' has a particularly powerful resonance in the first volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*, used varyingly here and in the later 'Tintern Abbey' to denote the passage of waters, the passage of time, and the spiritual or metaphysical interconnection of things. It is a word that will be picked up in various ways by the second-generation poets. In Keats it recurs most often in relation to planetary motion, while in Byron, 'roll' and 'rolling' are connected predominantly to oceans and to tempests, though they also appear in relation to time; one hears a slight echo of the opening of 'Tintern Abbey' in these lines of Byron's early poem 'Lachin Y Gair', a poem also about a landscape invested with memory and the poet's sense of personal history and identity: 'Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,/ Years must elapse, e're I tread you again' (33-34).

when ‘rolled’ recurs in the fifth stanza: ‘The suns of twenty summers danced along,—/ Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away’ (37-38). The interjection retrospectively recasts the woman’s experience of time: no longer a flow that carries her along in delight, a passage through the space in which she dwells, time passes away from her, introducing the sense of loss that will dominate the remainder of the poem. Wordsworth so lightly frames this narrative that we experience the moment of dislocation as the woman herself does. There is no introductory encounter to locate the speaker in time or place; we can only orient the narrative, like the Female Vagrant herself, around the lost locale of Derwentwater.

‘The Female Vagrant’ maps the speaker’s dislocation from her place of belonging as she is dispossessed of her father’s ‘old hereditary nook’ (44). ‘Nook’ is a prevalent word in Wordsworth’s poetry, used almost solely to denote an enclosed or secluded exterior place, as defined by the OED, ‘a place or spot having the character of a recess shut in by rocks, trees, etc.’⁴⁶ It is a favoured term in the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’ in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, where it denotes a nest-like sense of shelter—but one that is gained, not, as here, lost. ‘The Female Vagrant’ is a vivid rendering of the suffering endured by the nation’s poorest as a result of the enclosure of land, the collapse of the cottage industries, and the advent of a war that swept up those whose poverty gave them no alternative.⁴⁷ The tale Wordsworth tells marks this suffering through a series of wrenching displacements that lengthen into permanency; from a ‘distant town’, to the sea-coast, and then across the sea itself, each dislocation puts greater physical

⁴⁶ See OED, ‘nook, n.’, entry 3.d.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of Wordsworth’s political and social critique in ‘The Female Vagrant’ see Gary Lee Harrison, *Wordsworth’s Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), pp. 92-112.

and psychological distance between the woman and her sense of home. Wordsworth pins his most striking image of suffering onto the land itself:

Green fields before us and our native shore,
By fever, from polluted air incurred,
Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard. (102-104)

Here, the ravaging of the land doubles the suffering of the people, both consumed by the sickness of fever and of war. It is an image of concentrated spatial upheaval, both materially in ground turned over for graves, and as the image of green fields recalls the woman's rural upbringing and serves to mark her separation from this place of sanctuary.

The ocean forms a similar site of spatial and temporal distancing in the poem, even though its calm surfaces initially offer respite to the desperate woman. As a liminal space, it suspends the Female Vagrant between east and west, past destitution and poverty to come, marking the utter transformation of her world, her ties to the land broken by war, suffering, and the death of all her family. The ocean is a visual counterpart to the 'mighty gulph of separation' (163) that the Female Vagrant experiences, a phrase that encapsulates, as Curran suggests, 'the psychological impact of displacement that in the poem's final line is described as "that perpetual weight that on her spirit lay"'.⁴⁸ The act of 'Roaming the illimitable waters round' (175) wills a 'resting-place' (173) out of sheer circularity, arresting the woman's awareness of her homelessness. Yet it is an existence that is always on the cusp of the grave: the 'ocean-flood' is a 'ready tomb' (177). The sense of the woman's proximity to death is augmented when her return to land is imaged as a

⁴⁸ Curran, 'Romanticism Displaced and Placeless', p. 641.

shipwreck—she is ‘Helpless as sailor cast on desert rock’ (182). This is not a homecoming to safe harbour.

The final section of the poem charts the woman’s withdrawal from society into the lanes and high-ways of marginal existence.⁴⁹ Far from signalling direction, the space of the road heightens our apprehension of the woman’s lostness; the road bears silent witness to her paralysing grief as she loses ‘Whole hours’ (252) sat by the wayside, a precursor to the image of Michael motionless at the sheepfold. A brief encounter with a band of gypsies offers her what Gary Lee Harrison describes as ‘a kind of liminal community’, an alternative to the cold assistance of the hospital and the utter lack of relief from relatives and the parish, but the gypsies, like the ship, can only provide a transient resting place.⁵⁰ The vagrant economy of the ‘wild brood’ (215) remains irreparably at odds with the woman’s upbringing, a poor substitute for ‘the home delight of constant truth,/ And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth’ (260-261), where ‘home’ bears the full weight of what she has lost.⁵¹ In post-1800 editions of this poem, Wordsworth revised his description of the gypsies, creating a subtle shift of emphasis towards motion and a more unambiguous sense of homelessness: the ‘wild brood’ is replaced with the title

⁴⁹ The roads are noticeably unconnected to specific towns or villages; only the woman’s original Lakeland home is afforded a precise location.

⁵⁰ Harrison, *Wordsworth’s Vagrant Muse*, p. 102. For a discussion of the problematic figure of the gypsy in Wordsworth’s poetry see Sarah Houghton-Walker, *Representations of the Gypsy in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 126-154.

⁵¹ Houghton-Walker observes the important distinction in Wordsworth’s poetry between gypsies and other types of vagrant; she argues that ‘Wordsworth’s vagrants are usually solitary and sympathetic figures, who form . . . a part of the natural landscape’, while gypsies engender unease for the poet, they represent not liberty, but licentiousness. She considers the different types of wandering presented by the figure of the woman and the gypsies in ‘The Female Vagrant’, and suggests that ‘Wordsworth can articulate the bitterly poignant and profound through [the Female Vagrant] because of the suggestive opportunities to do so presented by the ambiguous connotations of wandering. The careless revelry of the gypsies encountered remains less meaningful, and less valuable, than the wandering of [the woman], and they thus throw one another into relief’. See *Representations of the Gypsy*, pp. 146-147.

‘Travellers’ and the description of ‘The rude earth’s tenants’ is discarded in favour of the less homely ‘Wild houseless Wanderers’.⁵² An aural echo of this liminal community is heard in the woman’s description of her wandering life in the concluding stanzas of the poem—‘Three years thus wandering’—yet it registers as a sound of loss, a remembrance that the Female Vagrant is self-exiled even from this marginal community.

Although she returns to the fields for her sustenance, she is not restored to the busy industry of the poem’s opening. A picture of dispossession, the land does not belong to her, nor she to it. Like the Ancient Mariner, the Female Vagrant is a permanent exile, unable to be at home anywhere, as is attested by her unanswered final words:

And now across this moor my steps I bend—
 Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
 Have I.—She ceased, and weeping turned away,
 As if because her tale was at an end
 She wept;—because she had no more to say
 Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay. (265-270)

Of all the poems of the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth’s portrait of exile is felt most deeply here. Interestingly, the term ‘exile’ and its related forms occur with remarkable infrequency in Wordsworth’s poetry and nowhere in *Lyrical Ballads*. Instead, Wordsworth approaches this theme through the language of vagrancy or wandering. The wanderers of the first volume in particular are errant, they stray aimlessly beyond the bounds of dwelling-places, and are dislocated by force from the environs of a community. In the second volume, the sense of exile will become a counter-song to the melody of dwelling. In ‘Ruth’, Wordsworth will

⁵² See *LBOP*, p. 57-58.

partially re-write the story of the Female Vagrant and the Mad Mother, drawing vagrancy within the bounds of community, as he does with ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’.⁵³ But in doing so, the sense of estrangement will become metaphorically and physically closer to home. In the second volume, the poet’s own sense of exile is drawn within the compass of the poetry. Of all the Romantic poets—not just those under discussion here—Byron is most closely associated with a poetics of exile. The exiles of Byron’s verse are not like the figures of vagrant poverty and enforced displacement that we are confronted with in Wordsworth’s poetry: they are heroic wanderers, inflected with the Byronic sense of self-exile. Byron’s poetics of wandering is energised by its opposition to Wordsworth, and to the circuitous rambling of *The Excursion* in particular; yet, in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* amongst other poems, Byron’s debt to the wayfaring poet of ‘Tintern Abbey’ is still felt. As in Wordsworth’s poetry, the language of exile rarely appears in Keats’s verse, but wandering does. Keats’s wandering is much closer to Wordsworth’s portraits of the poet straying in the landscape, but where the elder poet’s wandering becomes circumscribed, Keats strays beyond boundaries. His mode of wandering, like Wordsworth’s homeless, is errant.

⁵³ See David Bromwich’s discussion of ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’ in *Disowned by Memory: Wordsworth’s Poetry of the 1790s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 23-43 and Toby R. Benis’s in *Romanticism on the Road*, pp. 113-125, in which they both consider ideas of belonging and alienation and the beggar’s role in the creation of the community or neighbourhood he circumnavigates.

Interlude: The Wandering Poet

Many of the poems in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) record encounters between the poet, or a surrogate poet-figure, and one of the many characters of ‘[l]ow and rustic life’ that are assembled in the collection.⁵⁴ The encounters occur consistently in exterior settings; indeed, all but three poems in the collection take place entirely or predominantly in the open air or in threshold spaces such as the doorway, bower, or outhouse.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the poems of encounter retain more than a passing awareness of the ongoing movement of either or both individuals and of the transient nature of their interaction, as epitomised by ‘The Last of the Flock’, a poem that details a chance meeting between the poet and a shepherd ‘in the broad high-way’ (6). Like ‘The Female Vagrant’ and ‘Animal Tranquillity and Decay’, the figure of the poet has a quiet but tangible presence in the scene of the encounter, and the poem records an exchange rather than simply telling a tale.

The opening stanza is particularly interesting in terms of its spatial dynamics; the first line identifies the poet as a traveller, one who has been ‘In distant countries’ (1), only to immediately subvert the expectations of the reader and tell a tale that emerges ‘on English ground’ (5). This suggestion that the speaker has

⁵⁴ *LBOP*, p. 743.

⁵⁵ Even in what we might call the interior poetry of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) we are never far from the external world. Coleridge’s ‘The Dungeon’ explicitly contrasts the confines of the prison house to the restoration of the natural world, much as Wordsworth’s ‘Written in Germany’ weighs the feeling of constraint within a foreign house in the depths of winter with the reassurance that by the warmth of his ‘Love’ he might be transported emotionally and physically:

As blest and as glad in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above. (33-35)

The only other poem that is set entirely within doors is the first of Wordsworth’s elegies for Matthew. ‘If Nature, for a favorite Child’ is supposedly inscribed on a tablet in a school-house, within which the fiction of the poem places both writer and reader, though at different times. Nevertheless, the following two elegies in the trilogy will place Matthew firmly in the exterior world.

travelled far, has walked many ‘public roads’ (4) and ‘broad high-way[s]’, gives voice to an identity that is implicit but not often articulated in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*. If many of the characters of the collection traverse roads and countryside, the poet is one among them, the hidden traveller of *Lyrical Ballads*, moving across the country and coming into view at rest in the Lake District, by the Thames, and travelling through Wales. The poet’s walking has, of course, a different inflection to those he meets along the way; the encounter in ‘The Last of the Flock’ is between one who has the freedom of the road (the poet-as-traveller), and one who is forced into it (the impoverished shepherd taking his last lamb to market). Indeed, at the heart of the shepherd’s tale is a sense of helpless homelessness reminiscent of ‘The Thorn’ or ‘The Female Vagrant’:

No peace, no comfort could I find,
 No ease, within doors or without,
 And crazily, and wearily
 I went my work about.
 Oft-times I thought to run away;
 For me it was a woeful day. (75-80)⁵⁶

The shepherd is removed from the preserve of peace. Wordsworth’s comment in this poem is political: the man is dis-located from his home and from the land by a lack of parish relief; it is necessity, not autonomy, that leads to movement. In the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, the perilous mobility of Wordsworth’s characters shadows his own movement, yet, however rootless the poet is, he is never as vulnerable as his truly homeless subjects.

⁵⁶ In all three poems, being unsettled in mind is connected to the experience of being unsettled in place.

Wanderers, Exiles, and Dwellers of this Spot: 'Tintern Abbey' and the Legacy of Wordsworth's Poem Upon the Wye

The first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) opens and closes with two precisely located self-portraits of the poet. In 'Expostulation and Reply' he is situated in a space of rest: seated on a stone, by a lake. In the closing poem, 'Lines Written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a Tour', the poet is located in a space of passage, travelling by a river during a tour. Much has been written about the political ramifications of the subtitled date of the poem—'July 13, 1798'—and the numerous public and personal anniversaries this tour of the Wye coincided with, not least the poet's first visit to the Wye in 1793, a recollection of which forms the poem's opening lines.⁵⁷ Moreover, Roe reminds us that 'in the revolutionary decade a walking tour was in itself a political event', for in the 1790s walking might be identified 'as an expression of democratic mobility, a levelling identification with the poor "on the road".'⁵⁸ This definition comes close to describing *Lyrical Ballads* as a whole, which, with its record of encounters on the road, functions as a radical form of walking tour, one that invites us to identify with the poor that we are introduced to along the way. Nevertheless, that Wordsworth chooses to foreground his identity as a walker in this concluding poem is of interest to this thesis less as a political act than as a poetic one, not least because

⁵⁷ See J. R. Watson, 'A Note on the Date in the Title of "Tintern Abbey"', *Wordsworth Circle* 10.4 (1979), 379-380. See also Kenneth R. Johnston, 'The Politics of "Tintern Abbey"', *Wordsworth Circle* 14.1 (1983), 6-14, and Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 268-275 on the significance of the date and the politics of the poem.

⁵⁸ Roe, *The Politics of Nature*, p. 171. See also, Jeffrey C. Robinson, *The Walk: Notes on a Romantic Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), pp. 51-52, and Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 23-24.

the poem itself is equally, if not more, concerned with the act of standing still, alone, or nearly alone.

The poetics that emerge from this spatial dynamic had a significant influence on the next generation. For both Byron and Keats, ‘Tintern Abbey’ cast a compelling creative shadow: except for *The Excursion*, critics have identified more echoes of ‘Tintern Abbey’ in Keats’s work than any other Wordsworth poem, and, as has been oft noted, the influence of the poem is felt so strongly in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* that Wordsworth could accuse the younger poet more than once of plagiarism.⁵⁹ After an exploration of the spatial poetics of ‘Tintern Abbey’, I will conclude this section by suggesting some of the ways in which Byron and Keats revisit Wordsworth’s poem, considering Keats’s response in his early long poems and the later ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and Byron’s in the third canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. This comparative approach to the reception of ‘Tintern Abbey’ will prepare the way for more detailed readings of Keats’s and Byron’s mature work in the second section of the thesis.

‘Tintern Abbey’ opens with a sense of the passage of time, weighted and enlarged by repetition, and with the passage of waters, which bears a correspondent sense of time as motion:

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs[.] (1-3)

The repetition and the alliterative pulse of the opening lines, in which ‘length’ leads on to ‘long’ and both are picked up by ‘rolling’, initiates the rhythmic grounding

⁵⁹ See Beth Lau, ‘Keats’s Reading of Wordsworth: An Essay and a Checklist’, *Studies in Romanticism* 26.1 (1987), 105-150. For a full discussion of Wordsworth’s complaint against Byron, see Chapter 2.

that characterises the poem. In ‘Tintern Abbey’, a sense of passage, or of motion, recurrently gives way to pause. In the opening verse paragraph, the poet’s return to this landscape is steadied as he appears in ‘repose/ Here, under this dark sycamore’ (9-10), where the fall of the stress on the opening word of the new line emphasizes the particularity of this spot and anchors the perspective. Wordsworth presents the reader with a curiously blended vista; this is an environment without distinct edges, where the ‘steep and lofty cliffs . . . connect/ The landscape with the quiet of the sky’ (5-8), and orchard trees ‘Among the woods and copses lose themselves,/ Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb/ The wild green landscape’ (13-15). A sense of otherness, of an agency in the landscape that remains separate to the poet, burgeons in the image of orchards that ‘lose themselves’ and ‘hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows’ (16) that ‘run wild’ (17). The cultivated environment is absorbed into a larger whole, the harmonious unity of which looks towards the later passage of the poem in which Wordsworth will give voice to the ‘deeply interfused’ (97) ‘sense sublime’ (96). The landscape of this opening verse paragraph is linguistically woven together through repetition: in the space of thirteen lines, ‘wild’ and ‘green’ each appear three times. These points of formal return mirror Wordsworth’s repetition of ‘again’ in relation to his own sensory experience of this place (again I hear, I behold, I repose, I see) and deepen the steady rhythmic grounding of the poem: in its reiteration of words, ‘Tintern Abbey’ enacts the poet’s own return to this spot of the Wye Valley.

The imagined figures at the close of the first verse paragraph are born out of Wordsworth’s sense of a blended landscape; the vagrants and the hermit are embedded within their environment, hidden from sight, as intangible as the smoke

which gives ‘uncertain notice’ (20) of their presence. Yet they are also embodiments of the feeling of seclusion that invests the landscape and, like their ‘wild’ surroundings, suggest endurance, or survival, rather than cultivation. If the image of the hermit reflects something of the poet’s own presence in the landscape, as one who would find on this riverbank a permanent spiritual home, the poet is still closer to the oxymoronic ‘vagrant dwellers’, in whom wandering and abiding meet; as Alan Rawes has argued, ‘the idea of vagrancy is not “displaced” by the idea of hermitage: the smoke gives “uncertain” notice, the word keeping both vagrants and hermits in view as possibilities’.⁶⁰ In the figures of hermit and vagrant, the poem’s formal impulses of stasis and flux meet: the rhythmic grounding of the opening verse paragraph of ‘Tintern Abbey’ is disturbed at its close by the renewed possibility of unrest, which initiates the first of the verse transitions in a poem animated by turn and counterturn. Although Wordsworth writes in his 1800 note to ‘Tintern Abbey’ that he has not ‘ventured to call this poem an Ode’, it has been written, he says, ‘with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition.’⁶¹ These are transitions that at times strain the verse, sharp rhetorical turns that give motion to the feelings of doubt and anguish that disturb even as they impel Wordsworth’s passionate declarations of faith in nature and in the enduring

⁶⁰ Alan Rawes, ‘Romantic Form and New Historicism: Wordsworth’s “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey”’ in Alan Rawes (ed.), *Romanticism and Form* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 95-115, p. 106.

⁶¹ *LBOP*, p. 357. For a discussion of Wordsworth’s use of the odal form in ‘Tintern Abbey’ see Alan Rawes, ‘Romantic Form and New Historicism’ and Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 76-78. See also Susan J. Wolfson, ‘Poem Upon the Wye’, in Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 186-203, in which she suggests that ‘[t]his Wordsworthian species of composition subverts even as it evokes the conventional Odal orchestration of turn, counterturn, stand’ (p. 192).

recompense of memory—his own, and that shared with his sister. This is a poem, as Susan Wolfson puts it, in which ‘every flux in thought bears a reflux, every movement an undertow.’⁶² The introduction of the hermit and the vagrants into the scene—no matter how present (or not) they really are—results in a striking emotional and spatial shift; the ‘figures of isolation’ as Wolfson terms them, ‘yield the transition to the next verse paragraph in which Wordsworth remembers himself withdrawn from the world, remembering Tintern Abbey in London’s “lonely rooms.”’⁶³

Wolfson and Rawes have written insightfully on the turns and counterturns of ‘Tintern Abbey’ and their formal accounts usefully challenge the New Historicist readings of the poem, by McGann and others, which overstate Wordsworth’s attainment of an ‘abundant recompense’ and underplay the dialectical tensions of ‘Tintern Abbey’.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, their emphasis on the stresses that beset both poet and poem elides the moments in which the turns of ‘Tintern Abbey’ tend towards stability. Curran observes that ‘[a]ll the verse paragraphs of “Tintern Abbey” begin with a recognition of shifting ground, either of time or mental stability’, to which we might also add place, for the poet seems to feel his absence from the riverbank at the beginning of the second verse paragraph as much as he reasserts his presence in the fourth.⁶⁵ The transition from the third verse paragraph—one of the most emotionally charged passages of the poem—to the fourth is an act of reorientation.

⁶² Wolfson, ‘Poem Upon the Wye’, p. 200.

⁶³ Susan J. Wolfson, *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 66.

⁶⁴ See Wolfson, *Questioning Presence* and ‘Poem Upon the Wye’, and Rawes, ‘Romantic Form and New Historicism’. Peter Simonsen makes a similar challenge in ‘Reading Wordsworth after McGann: Moments of Negativity in “Tintern Abbey” and the Immortality Ode’, *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 4.1 (2005), 79-99, although his focus is on Wordsworth’s use of language rather than transitions.

⁶⁵ Curran, *Poetic Form*, p. 77.

The poet contends with sudden doubt over the power of the remembered scenes of the Wye to lighten ‘the burthen of the mystery’ (39) or to create for him ‘that serene and blessed mood’ (42) that gives rise to his meditative ontological vision. The moment of uncertainty provokes Wordsworth’s impassioned affirmation of the release felt in turning to the absent river:

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee! (56-58)

Here, as elsewhere in Wordsworth’s poetry, the act of turning bears considerable emotional weight; as Jane Stabler observes in her thoughtful examination of transitions in Wordsworth and Byron, ‘[w]hen Wordsworth “turns” to things or people in his poems, it is often because they are no longer there.’⁶⁶ Wordsworth feels keenly his long absence from the river; such a turn reaches out, as Stabler writes, ‘for connection across the void’.⁶⁷ Yet, unlike so often in Wordsworth’s poetry, this void is crossed, as the opening of the fourth verse paragraph resolves the turn into relocation.

The verse performs an act of reorientation that affords stability: the ‘And now’ bridges the temporal distance between Wordsworth’s memory of separation and the present moment on the riverbank.⁶⁸ It is not without qualification, as the poet’s physical return to the Wye is accompanied by an altered vision, one that seemingly ‘revives’ (62) imperfectly, ‘with gleams of half-extinguished thought,/

⁶⁶ Jane Stabler, ‘Transition in Byron and Wordsworth’, *Essays in Criticism* 50.4 (2000), 306-328, p. 313.

⁶⁷ Stabler, ‘Transition in Byron and Wordsworth’, p. 313. Stabler discusses, in particular, Wordsworth’s revisions to the sonnet ‘Surprised by Joy’.

⁶⁸ Michael O’Neill observes that the side of ‘Tintern Abbey’ that ‘searches for continuities between past, present, and future, depends for its convincingness on our involvement in the insisted-upon present of the poem’. See *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. xix.

With many recognitions dim and faint,/ And somewhat of a sad perplexity' (59-61). Nevertheless, the poet's repeated verse act of self-location is a steadying manoeuvre, the countermovement to the destabilising memory of his younger self and the elegiac sense of loss that shadows the passing of 'aching joys' (85). Wordsworth anchors himself four times on the riverbank in the space of the poem, and each of his returns to this spot is accompanied by a resurgence not only of pleasure, but of a sense of the futurity of such pleasure, no matter how tentative.⁶⁹ The 'hope' (66) that rises 'While here [Wordsworth] stand[s]' (63) reasserts itself in the central lyric credo and is carried into the address to his sister that follows.

The rhythmic grounding that anchors the poet in place in 'Tintern Abbey' finds similitude in the alliterative pulse of Byron's Spenserian stanzas and in Keats's use of the heroic couplet in the long poems of 1816 and in *Endymion*. Byron lingers over alliterative language in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as the young protagonist, and indeed the poet-narrator, linger over the scenes of nature. The lingering stranger is a trope of the poem, which burgeons in the second canto and is drawn more deeply within the shared identity of the solitary, self-exiled poet and his wandering pilgrim in the third. Indeed, it is a recurrent theme across the poetry of the summer of 1816; the final scene of *Manfred* opens with a moment of pausing in place, the emphatic 'I linger yet with Nature' (III.iv.3) is a more complex iteration of the trope as Manfred's turn to nature is also a withholding of the moment of death. The portrait in *Childe Harold* (as in *Manfred*) owes something to Byron's sense of a Wordsworthian, meditative response to nature, though his wish to 'let his

⁶⁹ Certainly the continuance of the poet's 'former pleasures' (119) seen in Dorothy's 'wild eyes' (120) is markedly less secure than the confident assertion of the 'pleasing thoughts/ That in this moment there is life and food/ For future years' (64-66).

length the loitering pilgrim lay,/ And gaze, untir'd, the morn, the noon, the eve away' (II.449-450), is a characteristically Byronic experience, with none of the industry nor repose of Wordsworth's wanderers. As in his earlier image of the mountain solitary who 'Will wistful linger on that hallow'd spot' (II.240), Byron's euphonic alliteration evokes the physical act of lingering, a pausing in place that checks the rapid pace of Harold, and later the poet-narrator, through the landscape of the poem.

At times in *Childe Harold*, the alliterative pulse and the formal rhymes of the Spenserian stanzas achieve for Byron a rhythmic grounding akin to that which Wordsworth creates through repetition and fluid iambic pentameter in the opening paragraph of 'Tintern Abbey'. This formal influence is felt, perhaps most strongly, in the Lake Lemane passage of *Childe Harold* Canto III, a section replete with audible allusions to Wordsworth's poetry—particularly those of *Lyrical Ballads*—and surely a part of the poem foremost in Thomas Moore's mind when he describes 'the tinge, if not something deeper, of the manner and cast of thinking of Mr Wordsworth, which is traceable through so many of [Byron's] most beautiful stanzas.'⁷⁰ Byron's verse reaches for a Wordsworthian connection to nature that not only soothes and restores but leads on to sublimity, the central movement of 'Tintern Abbey'. The poet's address to Lake Lemane marks a return to the present moment and to an awareness of his surroundings; stanza 86 is a composite of sense impressions that suggests a blended scene:

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear

⁷⁰ Thomas Moore, *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: with Notices of his Life* (London: Murray, 1873), p. 317.

Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more[.] (III.806-814)⁷¹

The sustained alliteration and the rhymes that seem themselves to mingle, as ‘shore’ falls to ‘oar’ via the half-rhyme ‘ear’, rhythmically steady the poet in this place. As in the heightened sensory experience that occurs in the opening paragraph of ‘Tintern Abbey’, the movement away from visual definition to olfactory and auditory pulses invites a sense of the poet as being embedded within, rather than a spectator of, his surroundings.

In Keats’s long poems of late 1816, the closed rhymes of the heroic couplets engender a like sense of being anchored within an environment. Both ‘I stood tip-toe upon a little hill’ and ‘Sleep and Poetry’ were composed, in part or full, during the autumn in which Keats first met Leigh Hunt and Benjamin Robert Haydon, both admirers of Wordsworth—Haydon a particular admirer of ‘Tintern Abbey’—and almost certainly the earliest of Keats’s acquaintance to direct him to the elder poet’s work. As the title suggests, ‘I stood tip-toe’ negotiates the space between the hill-top and the sky beyond, for Keats, a sublime space symbolic of the imagination and the heights of poetry. The poet’s desire for an expansive vision is checked, however, by the couplets that insist on a circular return and turn the movement of the verse into an embowering. The poem lingers over the minutiae of nature; like the loitering

⁷¹ This stanza may be read alongside Mary Shelley’s description of boating on Lake Geneva in her letter of 17 May 1816 in *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour* (London: T. Hookham, 1817), in which she describes returning to the shore where ‘we are saluted by the delightful scent of flowers and new mown grass, and the chirp of the grasshoppers, and the song of the evening birds’ (p. 96). It is striking that Byron weaves into his poetic description an allusion to Wordsworth’s ‘Lines Written near Richmond upon the Thames’, in which Wordsworth writes ‘the only sound,/ The dripping of the oar suspended!’ (21-22). That Byron’s stanza is in conversation both with Mary’s letter and with Wordsworth’s poetry sharpens the sense that Wordsworth was at the forefront of Byron’s mind as a result of the Shelleys’ influence.

figures of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Keats finds himself recurrently absorbed by the landscape. The lines that detail the flowers at the poet's feet are illustrative of the rhythmic grounding that accompanies Keats's use of rhyme:

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight:
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white;
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings. (57-60)

The rhymes evoke the 'tiny rings' that secure the sweet pea to its surroundings, a circularity that arrests the impulse, as in the opening line, to move upwards. The charge to 'Linger awhile' (61) that immediately follows, to 'watch intently Nature's gentle doings' (63), flows out of this sense of suspended movement; the poet who looks to the sky finds his gaze, as his feet, recurrently drawn back to the ground.

The heroic couplet form is used to the same effect in 'Sleep and Poetry', a poem begun after, though finished before, 'I stood tip-toe'. The poem has a visionary ebb and flow that is mirrored in the movement of return that the rhymes offer, a pulling back from the edge of poetic vision to a space of safety. It is not until *Endymion* that Keats achieves in couplet form a sense of passage, of movement unchecked by rhyme or youthful inexperience. Michael O'Neill observes the marrying of forms in the opening verse paragraph, in which 'Keats achieves something of the continuous flow of blank verse while retaining the ear-soothing consistency of rhyme associated with the couplet.'⁷² A full stop does not coincide with the close of a couplet until the conclusion of the opening verse paragraph at line 24, an eschewal of the closed couplet that creates, as O'Neill suggests, 'a mood

⁷² Michael O'Neill, "'Conscript Fathers and Suffering Recruits": Formal Self-awareness in Romantic Poetry', in Alan Rawes (ed.), *Romanticism and Form* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 23-39, p. 28.

of escape from oppression'.⁷³ The verse paragraph moves in fluid lists away from the poet's sense of 'despondence' (I.8) towards 'Some shape of beauty' (I.12), which appears first as a variety of objects of nature—that together form the environs of a natural sanctuary—and then as poetry, or the poetic imagination. The passage deploys the movement of 'Tintern Abbey'; Keats's turn to a restorative natural world, from a despair of 'the inhuman dearth/ Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,/ Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways/ Made for our searching' (I.8-11), is Wordsworthian.

Keats's image of dark ways that must be searched in 'Sleep and Poetry' anticipates the letter to J. H. Reynolds of 3 May 1818, in which the poet famously compares life to a 'Mansion of Many Apartments'.⁷⁴ Keats twice recalls in this letter Wordsworth's description of the 'burthen of the mystery', and the allusion evokes the undersong of human suffering, of weariness, fever and fret, that swells and falls in 'Tintern Abbey'. Keats architecturally imagines a growing awareness that 'the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression':

—whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the ballance of good and evil. We are in a Mist—*We* are now in that state—We feel the "burden of the Mystery," To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote 'Tintern Abbey' and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages.⁷⁵

Keats shared with Wordsworth a need to think through the dark passages; he found in the elder poet, as has been often discussed, someone who had not only heard but given voice to 'the still sad music of humanity', and who thus could school him in

⁷³ O'Neill, "Conscript Fathers", p. 28.

⁷⁴ *LJK*, I, 275-283.

⁷⁵ *LJK*, I, 281.

the poetic expression of suffering. Wolfson rightly suggests that in the letter Keats takes the measure of Wordsworth's 'double-ledger of light and burdens' as it is expressed in 'Tintern Abbey'; Wordsworth's poem is, as Wolfson argues, 'a venture of relief perplexed by verse that feels the burdens'.⁷⁶ For a student of 'Tintern Abbey', these burdens are felt through form, and Keats's poetry rehearses this knowledge. In 'Sleep and Poetry', although Keats had yet to explore fully the dark passages and ways of *Endymion* and those of the letter to Reynolds, his verse thinks through an expression of doubt. On the edge of 'nothingness', as the poet's vision is tested, his avowal to 'strive/ Against all doubtings' (159-160) invites the verse to feel the pull of such doubt. The turns and counterturns of the verse paragraphs owe something to the odal stress of 'Tintern Abbey' as Keats moves from questioning to invocation and back again, from struggle to relief, from the present moment, not to individual memory like Wordsworth, but to myth. It is a pattern that will find greater expression in Keats's own odes, and perhaps its greatest expression in the ode that owes most to 'Tintern Abbey': 'Ode to a Nightingale'.

The Nightingale Ode is another poem of dark passages, yet its 'verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways' (40) lead, not through, but into darker bowers. Verdant interior spaces form the landscape of the poem, into which the poet moves ever deeper; the imagined 'melodious plot/ Of beechen green, and shadows numberless' (8-9) in which the nightingale sings in the opening stanza and which inspires the poet's wish to 'fade away into the forest dim' (20), becomes the more potent 'embalmed darkness' (43) that surrounds the poet at the centre of the poem.

⁷⁶ Wolfson, 'Poem upon the Wye', p. 195.

Part of the countermovement of the ode, the nightingale and its song are associated with passage. Like the River Wye in 'Tintern Abbey', the bird is a 'wanderer through the woods', and one whose presence is evocative of release, of the freedom of the sylvan landscape. Keats's turn to the nightingale takes its cue from Wordsworth's feeling of oppression and heartsickness in 'Tintern Abbey'; his articulation of 'The weariness, the fever, and the fret' (23) is an allusion to Wordsworth's 'hours of weariness' (28) and 'the fretful stir/ Unprofitable, and the fever of the world' (53-54) that impel the poet's mental excursions to the river. Keats draws the emotive power of Wordsworth's expression within his condensed line, he shares in Wordsworth's world-weariness as he shares too in the poet's act of reorientation towards a sylvan touchstone.

Yet, where Wordsworth's act of reorientation is also an act of reconciliation, one which binds memory to the present moment on the riverbank, Keats reaches for forgetfulness. It is a forgetting that is always beyond the poem: the turns and counterturns of the ode move between different states of consciousness, the dreamlike worlds of myth and the imagination give way to moments of striking corporeality, where, to borrow a line from 'Sleep and Poetry', 'A sense of real things comes doubly strong' (157).⁷⁷ The poet cannot help but remember the present moment and its pains and sorrows; tracing the temporal movement of the nightingale's ecstatic song, he butts up against human suffering once more as he imagines the bird finding 'a path/ Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,/ She stood in tears amid the alien corn' (65-67). These beautiful lines make of Ruth's heart what O'Neill describes as 'an aching penetrable space', a

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the poem's multiple states of consciousness, see Wolfson's brief comparison of 'Tintern Abbey' and 'Ode to a Nightingale' in 'Poem upon the Wye', pp. 193-194.

description suggestive at once of the passageway found by the nightingale and of an enclosed bower-like space, one in which the poet is liable to get lost.⁷⁸ The sounding of Ruth's sad heart makes room for the word 'forlorn' (70), which both closes the seventh stanza and opens the eighth, 'tolling' the poet back to his 'sole self' (72) and to a pervasive sense of loss.

The use of repetition in 'Ode to a Nightingale' marks the transitions of the verse, as Keats revisits a word only to invest it with a different emphasis.⁷⁹ Like the chime of 'forlorn', the image of fading away echoes through the ode. The passivity of the poet's desire with the nightingale to 'fade away . . . / Fade far away' (20-21) is transformed into active pursuit—'Away! away! for I will fly to thee' (31)—before thoughts of dissolution are darkly renewed as the 'Fast fading violets' (47) of the shadowy bower in which the poet finds himself lead to a meditation on his own death. The final stanzas of the ode move from the imagined death of the poet to the loss of the nightingale's song; both passings are marked by an amplified awareness of, or return to, the present moment, in the twice repeated 'now'. The verse turns between these two moments; the passionate 'Now more than ever seems it rich to die' (55) is heard as a displaced echo in the final stanza as the newly 'plaintive anthem' of the bird 'fades' (75),

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades[.] (76-78)

⁷⁸ Michael O'Neill, *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 188.

⁷⁹ See Peter McDonald's excellent analysis of the final stanzas of 'Ode to a Nightingale' in *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 116 and pp. 161-166, in which he suggests that 'forlorn' 'feels almost a different word in its second occurrence' (p. 116) and argues that '[t]his is poetry of a voice listening to a voice fading away; and the poem is itself making—and prolonging—an end in which the absence of the bird's song figures as a deep uncertainty at the core of memory and experience' (p. 161).

Ecstasy gives way to sorrow, fullness to fading once more, as the temporal passage of the nightingale through an imagined past becomes the diminishing of sound through space in the present moment. Keats's 'and now' contains an echo of Wordsworth, on the banks of the Wye, as his vision is restored. Yet, here the 'and now' makes, rather than bridges, a temporal distance; the poet lingers, dazed, as both song and poetic vision are buried: 'Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/ Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?' (79-80). Having carried us through his own 'picture of the mind', Keats refuses the security of 'Tintern Abbey', the Wordsworthian recompense of memory and revival.

The odal turns and counterturns that animate Wordsworth's and Keats's verse also impel Byron's Spenserian stanzas. The mercurial transitions that characterise *Don Juan* are anticipated in the shifting ground of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as first the protagonist and then the poet fly between scenes and across the landscapes of the verse. As with 'Tintern Abbey', the formal interplay of rhythmic grounding and sharp transitions evokes a verse beset by internal tensions. The steady stress of place that emerges in Byron's 'spots' is disturbed by the motion of the wandering exile who must ever be resuming '[t]he march of our existence' (III.919). Philip Shaw observes the 'insistent present tense' in the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron's perpetual return to the 'immediate', which contrasts with the 'teleological threading of natural and mental events' that is emphasised in 'Tintern Abbey', and indeed in much of Wordsworth's writing.⁸⁰ In Wordsworth, Shaw argues, 'selfhood spans the purposeful interactions of past, present and future events, in Byron an insistent present tense ("even as I do now"

⁸⁰ Philip Shaw, 'Wordsworth or Byron?', *The Byron Journal* 31 (2003), 38-50, p. 42.

(6, 49)) seems to prevent the “I” from anchoring itself in a past or projecting itself into a future.’⁸¹ Wordsworth’s turn to the present moment in ‘Tintern Abbey’ is ever accompanied by a remembrance of his past or the anticipation of remembering the present moment in the future: his vision on the banks of the Wye revives ‘not only with the sense/ Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts/ That in this moment there is life and food/ For future years’ (63-66), just as his turn to Dorothy, in the concluding passage, imagines a time when she will remember their shared experience by the river. Wordsworth’s transitions are steadied by his physical and imagined returns to the same spot of ground, Byron’s tend to be an unmooring.

The dropped line of the opening stanza, and the dash that extends into the blank space of the page, spatially mark the first of the poet’s sharp transitions into the present moment: ‘Awaking with a start,/ The waters heave around me’ (III.5-6). It is a moment of sudden reorientation as the poet’s meditation on separation gives way, with a jolt, to the physicality of his present departure, the emotional weight of which is disarmed by the élan of the traveller who revels in the motion of the waters. If Wordsworth can only recall his youthful wanderings in ‘Tintern Abbey’, Byron yet lives them. The third canto of *Childe Harold*, like the infamous fourth canto, is one of abrupt shifts in tone and theme: the poet’s sense of self or an awareness of his personal circumstances bubbles up in the verse only to be deliberately cast aside, as in the opening line of the eighth stanza, ‘Something too much of this:—but now ’tis past’ (III.64), where ‘past’ registers as both something ended or concluded and as history, the poet’s own past.⁸² Like the evocative dash

⁸¹ Shaw, ‘Wordsworth or Byron?’, p. 42.

⁸² See William Hazlitt’s review of *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, published 2 May 1818, in which he considers the ‘disturbed’ and ‘disjointed’ nature of the poem, in Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 131-136.

that here precedes it, ‘but’ is used throughout the canto to initiate Byron’s sudden transitions. The concluding passage of the poem, in which Byron addresses his daughter, is prefaced by a characteristic turn and counterturn; stanza 109 rehearses in condensed space the recurrent movement of the poem from history to nature to the self:

But let me quit man’s works, again to read
 His Maker’s, spread around me, and suspend
 This page, which from my reveries I feed,
 Until it seems prolonging without end.
 The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
 And I must pierce them, and survey whate’er
 May be permitted, as my steps I bend
 To their most great and growing region, where
 The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air. (III.1013-1021)

The turn from the geographical place of past writers—Rousseau in Clarens, Gibbon in Lausanne, and Voltaire in Ferney—to the present geography of the landscape is layered with Byron’s poetic ambition. The mountain fascination that rises and falls in the poem is here, as elsewhere, a symbol of both physical and poetic endeavour. Stanza 109 recalls Byron’s earlier passage on the Rhine, in which he mirrors the ascent of the mountain and the rise of fame or glory:

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
 The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
 He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
 Must look down on the hate of those below. (III.397-400)

In this passage, Byron moves away from the turmoil of both heights to the blended beauties of ‘Maternal Nature’ on the banks of the river; nevertheless, the lofty mountain-top resurfaces almost immediately in the description of ruins that stand ‘as stands a lofty mind’ (III.415), and the turn and counterturn of the poem is from a landscape that leaves no memorial to forgotten fame to a poet who is captivated by it.

Childe Harold is characterised by moments of diversion from a poet who is unable to remain in one place—either in the physical landscape through which he travels or in the geography of the verse. In the midst of his meditation by the side of Lake Lemman, Byron breaks the progress of the verse with an interruption that epitomises his transitions: ‘But this is not my theme; and I return/ To that which is immediate’ (III.716-717). The turn of the verse is toward Rousseau and away from what critics have debated as a failed reaching after Wordsworth.⁸³ Byron’s attraction to the mountain feels more authentic when he is grappling with poetic ambition than when he writes:

I live not in myself, but I become
 Portion of that around me; and to me,
 High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
 Of human cities torture[.] (III.680-683)

The echo of Wordsworthian sensibility in the mode of ‘Tintern Abbey’ is audible, perhaps too audible in the dialectic of nature and the city, and perhaps not audible enough in the ‘sense sublime’ that shadows the opening two lines. Nevertheless, it is in moments of solitude and sublimity that the poet’s reaching for Wordsworth surfaces with potency, in *Childe Harold* and later in *Don Juan*. The sharp transition to a new theme resolves, unexpectedly, into a return to the one just past, as Byron draws back to ‘Clear, placid Lemman!’ (III.797) and to a moment of more complex

⁸³ See Jerome J. McGann, ‘Byron and Wordsworth’, in James Soderholm (ed.), *Byron and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 173-200; Philip W. Martin, *Byron: A Poet Before His Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 64ff.; James L. Hill, ‘Experiments in the Narrative of Consciousness: Byron, Wordsworth, and *Childe Harold*, Cantos 3 and 4’, *ELH* 53.1 (1986), 121-140; Philip Shaw, ‘Wordsworth or Byron?’, *The Byron Journal* 31 (2003), 38-50. Shaw complicates McGann’s argument that the third canto of *Childe Harold* is ‘an undertaking and rejection of the Wordsworthian ethos’ and reads ‘Tintern Abbey’ as animating Byron’s re-engagement with the role of nature worshipper. Vincent Newey, in contrast, suggests Byron’s ‘trial of the role of worshipper of Nature’ is prompted by Rousseau. See ‘Authoring the Self: *Childe Harold* III and IV’, in Bernard Beatty and Vincent Newey (eds.), *Byron and the Limits of Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), pp. 148-190, and pp. 157-165 in particular.

communion with the landscape. As discussed briefly above, this passage is richer in audible allusions to Wordsworth's poetry and invites within it a Wordsworthian sense of stillness or rootedness. If Byron insists on the transitory nature of both poem and pilgrimage—as he does in stanza 112, in which he writes of scenes that 'fleet along' and may be seized 'in passing, to beguile/ My breast, or that of others, for a while' (III.1042-1044)—he lingers at Leman.

The impulse to return to this place is more Wordsworthian than the earlier posturing, and the verse shares with 'Tintern Abbey' an elaboration of the single spot into sublime space. Wordsworth enlarges the compass of his vision from the spot of the Wye Valley to a universal whole, expressed in spaces that tend towards the vast and the eternal: 'the round ocean', 'the living air' (99), 'the blue sky' (100). The poet's act of enumeration and the chant-like repetition of 'all' ('impels/ All thinking things, all objects of all thought,/ And rolls through all things'(101-103)) formally evokes the interconnectedness that resides in his image of 'a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused' (96-97). Stanza 89 of *Childe Harold* Canto III recalls this interplay of form and feeling:

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
 All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
 Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
 All is concentrated in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence. (III.833-841)

Although line 835 is clearly reminiscent of Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality', the opening lines of the stanza also draw on the suspension or quieting that Wordsworth suggests leads on to seeing 'into the life of things' earlier in

‘Tintern Abbey’. Here, ‘all’ echoes again in ‘still’ and ‘lull’d’, which carry too the prior ‘stillness’ of the lake and the ‘still’ bird, and aurally suggest the centering, or gathering of things, that is at the heart of the stanza. Byron comes closest to a Wordsworthian sense of weighted tranquillity in which the sacredness of place is tangible.⁸⁴ As in the canto as a whole, however, it is the turn away from stillness that ultimately animates the passage and the poet’s place within the scene. Wordsworthian harmony gives way to Byronic motion as the poet yields to the revelry of the stormful night: ‘let me be/ A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—/ A portion of the tempest and of thee!’ (III.870-872). As Matthew Ward writes, ‘[w]hilst the wish evoked is that of being subsumed within the cadence of the storm, Byron will not be annihilated by it.’⁸⁵ Yet, Ward’s suggestion that the poet ‘hopes to be a joyous party to its rhythms’ underplays the strife that also exists in the movement of the storm, a restlessness that sounds a note of anguish within the exuberance and is a self-conscious reminder of the poet’s state of exile. Though Byron shares in the intensity of the storm—his, after all, is the ‘soul’ to make the environs of the tempest ‘felt and feeling’ (III.897-898)—he cannot turn that energy into like expression. With a characteristic shift, the line ‘But as it is, I live and die

⁸⁴ Of this passage, Gavin Hopps writes ‘[a]t the centre of the poem’s sacramental vision is a sense of repose, which widens out from “the hush of night” and the “lulled lake” to encompass “All heaven and earth”, which are brought into continuity by their coordinated stillness.’ See Hopps, ‘Shades of Being: Byron and the Trespassing of Ontology’, in Gavin Hopps (ed.), *Byron’s Ghosts: The Spectral, the Spiritual and the Supernatural* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 48-82, p. 60. In his consideration of the religious character of Byron’s vision of nature in the third canto of *Childe Harold*, Hopps sensitively argues for a reconsideration of Byron’s ‘anti-Romanticism’, which is ‘conventionally seen as a matter of irony, nihilism and a worldliness or materialism that contrasts with the visionary supernaturalism of Wordsworth and Coleridge’. Although, Hopps contends, Byron’s depiction of ‘sacramental or engraced nature’ is informed by a Wordsworthian vision, he forgoes the epiphanic repose of ‘Tintern Abbey’ in favour of a more orthodox transcendental moment of vision. Hence, ‘Byron’s anti-Romanticism may in part, paradoxically in spite of his scepticism, be a matter of his more orthodox religious inclinations.’ See pp. 55-65.

⁸⁵ Matthew Ward, ‘Byron at Play in the Alps’, *The Keats-Shelley Review* 30.2 (2016), 155-167, p. 165.

unheard' (III.912) marks a sharp withdrawal from the communal rhythms of the poet and his environment.

The turn and counterturn of *Childe Harold* Canto III is ever between motion and stillness; the transition away from the storm sequence enables a return to a different kind of vitality, but one that remains embedded within a particular place. The sublimity of the scene at Lemn and the charged cadences of the tempest give way to companionable solitude as Byron turns to Rousseau to re-engage with the ideas of place and the poet. The landscape remains 'hallowed' but now with a 'loveliness' (III.973) that stems from sociability: 'Love's recess' (III.962) is a 'populous solitude of birds and bees' (III.950), one that Rousseau has 'peopl[ed . . .] with affections' (III.969). As noted above, the final passage of the canto responds to Byron's sense of the place of the poet, and takes up again the themes of fame and memory that are woven through the poem. Byron might turn to Rousseau as a way out of the complex spatial dynamics beside the lake, but it is Wordsworth who is called upon for the act of remembering. The concluding line of stanza 112 layers the poet's experience of physical solitude—the separation from England and his daughter with which the canto opens—and his sense of poetic independence: 'I stood and stand alone,—remembered or forgot' (III.1048). The line sounds a note of cool indifference that is belied in the following stanzas as Byron's address to Ada details his desire for a communal, or perhaps more accurately, monumental, memory. Byron recasts Wordsworth's address to Dorothy, sharing the wish for a mind, external to his own, that will remember him.

In the concluding verse paragraph of 'Tintern Abbey', Wordsworth turns to his sister, as earlier he had turned to the river, and draws her into his process of

reorientation. In the poet's final act of self-location, the paradoxical solitude of the opening verse paragraph is resolved into a shared solitude: 'For thou art with me, here, upon the banks/ Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,/ My dear, dear Friend' (115-117). The rhythmic grounding of the poem resurfaces in the compulsive repetition in these lines and in the way 'here' is picked up by 'dear' and the half-rhyme 'fair'; the poem's steady stress is no longer just of place but of a particular person. The wildness of the opening scene is felt again in Wordsworth's description of his sister's 'wild eyes', which connects Dorothy to this place through more than just circumstance. The insistent chime of 'dear' ('My dear, dear Sister!') in the closing verse paragraph brings the poet's close relationship with his sister and with the landscape into alignment: she is to remember

That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake! (157-160)

The 'many wanderings' that Wordsworth recalls at the close of the poem pull the verse in two directions: they recall the other named wanderer of 'Tintern Abbey', the 'sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods', which is the agent of Wordsworth's restorative vision, yet they also connect the poet to the hidden wanderers of the poem's opening, the 'vagrant dwellers' whose troubled isolation inspires the poet's memory of his 'many years of absence'. Heidi Thomson hears a 'biblical echo' in the image of wandering, which suggests 'the punishing restlessness of exile, physical and mental, which the experience of France and its aftermath had installed in the speaker's mind.'⁸⁶ Indeed, the final verse paragraph

⁸⁶ Heidi Thomson, 'The Importance of Other People and the Transmission of Affect in Wordsworth's Lyric Poetry', *The Modern Language Review* 110.4 (2015), 969-991, p. 990.

is haunted by a sense of exile: the possibility that the poet might be ‘where [he] can no more hear/ [Dorothy’s] voice’ (148-149) not only looks towards a future time when the siblings shall be parted, it also resurrects the long separation they have already experienced.⁸⁷

Dorothy’s position in the poem has been much disputed, with some critics disposed to see her as a phantom figure, one who functions only to legitimate the vision and identity of her brother.⁸⁸ I am inclined, however, to agree with Thomson’s assessment of Dorothy as more than ‘a sounding board or a repository’:

[Dorothy] is part of a lasting community which constitutes the “we are two” (as in “we are seven”) against “evil tongues,” “rash judgments,” “the sneers of selfish men,” “greetings where no kindness is” and “the dreary intercourse of daily life” (128-31).⁸⁹

Wordsworth’s final act of relocation at the close of the poem is undertaken not only for the preservation of nature’s recompense, the ‘sober pleasure’ (140) won by time and change, but for the safeguarding of the community of two. The poet transfers the site that he has returned to throughout the poem, ‘the banks of this delightful stream’ (151), into his and Dorothy’s communal memory, establishing it as a

⁸⁷ Wolfson makes an important point when she suggests that “[t]he spiritual anchor of that “wanderer through the woods” (57), the sylvan Wye, was less a mirror of assurance than an extravagance of fancy – one haunted, moreover, by the flow of vagrants across the preceding pages of *Lyrical Ballads*.’ ‘Poem Upon the Wye’, p. 190.

⁸⁸ For negative readings of Dorothy’s role in ‘Tintern Abbey’ see Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth’s Great Period Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); John Barrell, ‘The Uses of Dorothy: “The Language of Sense” in “Tintern Abbey”’, *Poetry, Language, and Politics* (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), pp. 137-167; and David Bromwich’s chapter, ‘The French Revolution and “Tintern Abbey”’ in *Disowned by Memory*, pp. 69-91. See Helen Vendler for a rebuttal of the arguments of Levinson and Barrell, in “‘Tintern Abbey’: Two Assaults”, *The Bucknall Review* 36.1 (1992), 173-190. See James Soderholm for a discussion of the major poles of critical opinion on the presence of Dorothy, in ‘Dorothy Wordsworth’s Return to Tintern Abbey’, *New Literary History* 26.2 (1995), 309-322. Soderholm convincingly argues for the authenticity of William’s turn to Dorothy at the poem’s close and foregrounds the relational and open-ended nature of the apostrophic address that leaves room for Dorothy’s own turn (or return) to her brother and the Wye Valley in her late poem ‘Thoughts on my sick bed’, what Soderholm calls her ‘companion piece’ to ‘Tintern Abbey’ (p. 316).

⁸⁹ Heidi Thomson, “‘We Are Two’: The Address to Dorothy in “Tintern Abbey””, *Studies in Romanticism* 40.4 (2001), 531-546, p. 544.

permanent point of return. The riverbank retains an imprint of community, of experience shared; Dorothy is to remember that here ‘We stood together’ (152). The poet’s assertion, ‘Nor wilt thou then forget’ is both a declaration and a hope, reinforced by repetition, in the unifying act of memory. The address to Dorothy constitutes a mutual grounding, one that balances the poet’s past troubled wanderings and the uncertainties of both siblings’ futures. The landscape of the mind, the ‘mansion for all lovely forms’ (141), does not supplant the physical landscape of the river at the poem’s close, for ‘Tintern Abbey’ feels through, not around, the fragility of dwelling. William and Dorothy conclude the poem like the ‘vagrant dwellers of the houseless woods’, halfway between wandering and abiding. It is here that the tentative joy and assurance gained by the poem’s close is found, in the simple act of standing still, together.

Byron’s address to Ada, which concludes the third canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, revisits Wordsworth’s words to Dorothy: ‘My dearest friend . . . My dear, dear friend’ becomes the emphatically repeated ‘My daughter!’ (III.1067, 1068). The relationship that Byron posits between himself and Ada performs the same function as that of Dorothy and William: she is to bear him in her memory. Like Dorothy, who reflects back to William ‘the language of [his] former heart’ and whose future years will be guided by the poet’s ‘exhortations’, Byron imagines how

My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
 And reach into thy heart,—when mine is cold,—
 A token and a tone, even from thy father’s mould. (III.1073-1075)

Byron plays with ‘mould’, making it bear the sense of earth and the grave as well as the idea that Ada will bear an imprint or likeness of her father. Nevertheless, such reciprocity is not assured in *Childe Harold*. Byron’s simple ‘I see thee not,—

I hear thee not' renders Wordsworth's 'if I should be where I can no more hear/ Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams/ Of past existence' in the present tense: the separation Wordsworth projects into a future moment is one that Byron is, inescapably, already living. His 'I stood and stand alone' sounds a more tragic note when heard with the resonance of Wordsworth's 'We stood together'. Wordsworth's communion with Dorothy enables the poet's pause in place to take on the ethos of dwelling, the address to his sister is the matured articulation of the 'Lines written at a small distance'. Byron reaches for a Wordsworthian resilience in Canto III, for the consolations of memory and of a communion with the natural world; nevertheless, the firm grounding that he comes close to at points within the poem is continually disturbed by internal strife. Yet Byron does not reject the credo of 'Tintern Abbey' so much as amplify the doubt that animates Wordsworth's verse. 'Tintern Abbey' is the linchpin of the *Lyrical Ballads*, looking backwards to states of exile and rootlessness and forwards into the secure state of embedded belonging, which is the imaginary destination of the second volume.

Volume II

Towards Dwelling: 'Hart-Leap Well'

In the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth builds on the work of 'Tintern Abbey' to establish a poetics of dwelling. It is interesting then that the volume opens with a transitional poem, for 'Hart-Leap Well' immediately presents itself as a poem of the road: the loco-specific introductory note locates the title

object of the poem ‘about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road which leads from Richmond to Askrigg.’⁹⁰ The note anticipates the image of the poet in motion, encountering the well and its attendant tale-teller, the Shepherd, while he ‘from Hawes to Richmond did repair’ (101). The antiquarian tone of the note is suggestive of the poet as a fashionable traveller, an identity that surfaces in the second volume and is drawn within the dominant identity of the dweller. In one of the rare instances of Wordsworth’s verse, he appears on horseback, though the reader might be forgiven for missing this reference as the second half of the poem articulates as full a reflective pause as any of Wordsworth’s landscape lyric poetry. Like ‘Tintern Abbey’ before it, this is a travel poem that is engaged in other modes of being. Much as in the opening poem of the first volume, ‘Expostulation and Reply’, Wordsworth offers the reader a poetic self-portrait. In the first stanza of ‘Part Second’ of ‘Hart-Leap Well’ he again fashions himself as a poet of solitude, declaring:

The moving accident is not my trade.
 To curl the blood I have no ready arts;
 ’Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
 To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts. (97-100)

It is, of course, something of a paradoxical solitude, in which the poet is able to be ‘alone’ and to have auditors to his song, a song which is suggestively pastoral in mode and not a little at odds with the tale of a medieval hunt that has just been rehearsed.⁹¹ If Part I of ‘Hart-Leap Well’ follows the triumphant acts of the knight,

⁹⁰ *LBOP*, p. 133.

⁹¹ The pastoral images of the ‘pipe’ and the secluded ‘summer shade’ are placed against the gothic, sensational, and sentimental modes suggested by the opening two lines, which hark back to the Preface and the ‘frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse’ from which the poet would distinguish his own tales of ‘[l]ow and rustic life’. *LYOP*, p. 747, 743. On the Gothic nature of Part I and the question of who tells this tale, see Don Bialostosky, ‘Wordsworth’s Communicative Strategies in his Experimental Poems’, in Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*

Sir Walter, and situates itself firmly in the tradition of gothic romance, Part II is oriented around the poet's encounter with a shepherd and offers a tale of common life that, as Jason N. Goldsmith suggests, 'replaces supernatural effect with lyric meditation'.⁹² Likewise, while the introductory note prepares the reader for the poet in motion, the opening stanza of Part II is the countermovement to this impulse and directs us to the poet paused. 'Hart-Leap Well' is a poem of two parts in more than one way, of different modes of being and of writing, and of contrasting spatial dynamics.

'Hart-Leap Well' engages in the question of the poet's identity. As so often in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in 'Hart-Leap Well' Wordsworth is both tale-teller (writer of the verse before us) and the one to whom a tale is told, though in a remarkably different way to the earlier encounter poetry. The poet is not arrested by a figure of affliction but by the traces of past humanity, the 'hand of man' (112) still visible in the objects of landscape, whose significance may be disclosed by one familiar with this region. The Shepherd's story is one that makes sense of place and enables the poet to read the objects of landscape as if he were an inhabitant of this spot. Indeed, Wordsworth assumes the authority of the Shepherd in telling this tale, to such an extent that he poetically takes the Shepherd's place: the poet is the tale teller (Part I) before he reveals himself as the one to whom the tale was told (Part II). The ending of the poem reveals the means by which

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 547-560. For a discussion of the pastoral mode in Wordsworth, see Bruce E. Graver, 'Wordsworth's Georgic Pastoral *otium* and *labor* in "Michael"', *European Romantic Review* 1.2 (1991), 119-134; Fiona Stafford, 'Plain Living and Ungarnish'd Stories: Wordsworth and the Survival of Pastoral', *The Review of English Studies* 59.238 (2008), 118-133; Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form*, pp. 99-107.

⁹² Jason N. Goldsmith, 'Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800', in Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 204-220, p. 206.

Wordsworth claims this authority: more than simply hearing the story and rehearsing it, the poet aligns himself to the Shepherd through the suggestion that they share the same ‘creed’ (162) and might therefore ‘divide’ between them ‘one lesson’ (177). Both creed and lesson transcend the local: the religious vision of the lone hart ‘mourn’d by sympathy divine’ (164) is broadened into the pervasive ‘reverential care’ (167) afforded to ‘quiet creatures’ (168) by ‘The Being that is in the clouds and air’ (165), and widened further in the shared lesson that hallows even ‘the meanest thing that feels’ (180). Nevertheless, both creed and lesson are made manifest in this locale; the tale is fixed to this uncommon ‘waste’ (170), the ‘here’ where Nature will again ‘put on her beauty and her bloom’ (172). The religious vision of the poem develops Wordsworth’s earlier Heideggerian sense of ‘divinities’ in the ‘Lines written at a small distance from my House’; yet here the moral imperative that comes to the fore in Wordsworth’s later work is felt with more force: the ethos of the ‘Lines’ becomes ethics.

The poet’s close identification with the figure of the Shepherd initiates an important pattern of the second volume. If the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) is preoccupied with vagrants and exiles, in the second volume the figure who appears most often (aside, perhaps, from the poet) is the shepherd. Of the five poems labelled ‘Pastoral’ in this collection, four involve a shepherd and one a young shepherdess figure, while two of the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’ include shepherds, one in the guise of a ‘Herdsman’ with his flock. These poems were all written during the first year of the Wordsworths’ residence at Grasmere, and in important ways connect the figure of the shepherd with that of the poet, most significantly through the speech acts of naming and storytelling. The shepherd is

not a simple figure, as will be made apparent in Wordsworth's great 'Pastorals', 'The Brothers' and 'Michael', but he is, most importantly, invested with a sense of place: he is one who intimately knows the locale in which he both works and dwells. The last poem of the collection, 'Michael', returns us in thought to the opening poem. Where 'Heart-Leap Well' is a tale told by a shepherd, 'Michael' is a tale told of shepherds, though it is again a re-telling, and a re-telling of particular importance:

It was the first,
The earliest of those tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men
Whom I already lov'd, not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode. (21-26)

This is a tale that gives a body to the feeling of love of place; Wordsworth's love of the shepherds is preceded by his love of the place in which they abide, a place in which he also seeks to belong. It is a poem invested with the idea of heirs, of being heir to place and to poetry. As Fiona Stafford argues, '[t]he story is not an invention, but an inheritance – it belongs to the place and is now being recreated in language fit for the task.'⁹³ If Wordsworth is heir to the shepherds, he is at pains to remind us that he forms but one link in a chain; this vale is populated not only by hill farmers and herdsmen but by 'youthful Poets' (38) who he claims 'among these Hills/ Will be my second self when I am gone' (38-39). The poem itself forms an inheritance.

Like 'Hart-Leap Well', 'Michael' is a poem of stories, stones, and shepherds. The history of the titular shepherd is rehearsed only after we have encountered the landscape objects on which the poet figuratively writes his

⁹³ Fiona Stafford, 'Plain Living and Ungarnish'd Stories', p. 124.

memorial; these are ‘unhewn stones’ (17) that seemingly have not seen the ‘hand of man’ at work, and which we ‘Might see and notice not’ (16), were it not for the poet’s directing eye. Wordsworth justifies the telling of this tale through a further act of localisation: although the story is ‘ungarnish’d with events’, it is ‘not unfit’, he suggests, ‘for the fire-side,/ Or for the summer shade’ (20-21). It is a gesture of intimacy—though one perhaps shaded with Wordsworth’s concerns over his poetic reception—that draws the reader/hearer within the bounds of the poet’s community. Wordsworth uses ‘fire-side’ synecdochically to represent a household; the image recalls the final lines of ‘To Joanna’, from the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’—the sequence that directly precedes ‘Michael’—in which an act of naming is linked specifically to the poet’s home: ‘And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side/ Have call’d the lovely rock, Joanna’s Rock’ (84-85). So too does the fire-side of ‘Michael’ recall the opening of ‘The Oak and the Broom’, another ‘pastoral’ tale, told by the shepherd Andrew to his family, a ‘ruddy quire/ . . . seated round their blazing fire’ (9). In the shared language of the poems Wordsworth reinforces the connection he makes between himself and those he dwells alongside. It is not just the ‘fire-side’ that resonates in the collection but the space of the ‘summer shade’ also, which echoes the opening of Part II of ‘Hart-Leap Well’ and the image of the piping poet, ‘alone in summer shade’. Likewise, the ‘natural hearts’ (36) to whom the poet would relate the history of Michael retain a clear affinity to the ‘thinking hearts’ that hear the tale of ‘Hart-Leap Well’, Wordsworth’s ideal readers. ‘Hart-Leap Well’ prepares the reader for a particular portrait of the poet in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). Although in this first poem of the second volume Wordsworth does not present the poet as a dweller, he is concerned with questions

of identity and in particular with the shared identity of poet and shepherd. This poem, as indeed the second volume, is guided not by the figure of the wanderer or exile, but by the figure of the native.

Strangers and Natives: Lyrical Ballads Volume II

Wordsworth's image of the straying poet that appears in 'The Idle-Shepherd Boys, or Dungeon-Gill Force, A Pastoral' is a useful way of thinking about his presentation of the poet-as-native throughout the volume. No longer identified with the wandering of Volume I, here, the poet's straying is across a circumscribed landscape. Wordsworth makes a claim to belonging to this landscape in the note he appends to the poem's title, which reads almost as a guide book entry: 'Gill in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland is a short and for the most part a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. Force is the word universally employed in these dialects for Waterfall.'⁹⁴ As with all the supplementary notes in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth's concern is with the particular language of a place. When Wordsworth names places in the 'Poems on the Naming of Places' he does so within and for a select community, those who reside in his household. When he names places that have a cartographic existence, he does so with a concern to remind the reader that he can speak the regional language. In 'Michael', this impulse is extended to objects of the landscape as Wordsworth describes an oak tree which 'in our rustic dialect was call'd/ The CLIPPING TREE, a

⁹⁴ *LBOP*, p. 172.

name which yet it bears' (178-179). The use of the possessive pronoun involves Wordsworth in a collective language, while the note, which informs the reader that 'Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing', places us as an outsider, a stranger who must learn the language of this place.⁹⁵

As with much of the Grasmere poetry, the verse is locational and vocational; Wordsworth maps the geography of the Lake District in the poetry of the second volume such that the reader might follow in his footsteps. In 'The Idle Shepherd-Boys', the 'spot' in which the drama of the poem takes place is described as one that the reader 'may see/ If ever you to Langdale go' (49-50).⁹⁶ The supposition anticipates the opening lines of 'Michael', in which the poet proclaims:

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for beside that boisterous Brook
The mountains have all open'd out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own. (1-8)

Wordsworth draws the reader into the landscape, away from the paths of the tourist and along routes of his own personal geography of the Lakes. Although there is no 'I' in 'The Idle Shepherd-Boys', when the 'Poet' is introduced, as 'one who loves the brooks/ Far better than the sages' books' (84-85) and who 'By chance had thither stray'd' (86), we are expected to associate this figure with Wordsworth

⁹⁵ *LBOP*, p. 258.

⁹⁶ Wordsworth's invitation to the reader to experience the locale as the poet does is interestingly qualified in his comment on the waterfall in his *Guide to the Lakes*, in which he writes that it 'cannot be found without a guide, who may be taken up at one of the Cottages at the foot of the Mountain', reinforcing the poet's privileged position as a native. Ernest de Selincourt (ed.), *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*, 5th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 169. For a thoughtful discussion of Wordsworth's anxieties over his return to the Lake District and his negotiation of the tension between the conflicting identities of the tourist and the home-coming native son, of which he might at points be either, see James A. Butler, 'Tourist or Native Son: Wordsworth's Homecomings of 1799-1800', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51.1 (1996), 1-15.

himself, not least because the language Wordsworth uses echoes that of his earlier self-portrait in 'The Tables Turned'.

The 'Poems on the Naming of Places' share in this portrait of the wandering poet; each of the five poems involves walking and three of them are structured around a discovery made on foot, which, like 'The Idle Shepherd-Boys', prepares the way for the opening passage of 'Michael'. Unlike in the first volume, where straying is most commonly associated with vagrancy, here Wordsworth's articulation of wandering is drawn within the mode of dwelling. In 'It was an April morning', the restlessness of the poet who 'roam'd in the confusion of [his] heart' (18) is tempered by habit. His arrested movement on first discovering what he will name in the final line as 'Emma's dell' (47) becomes a steady inhabiting: '—Soon did the spot become my other home,/ My dwelling and my out-of-doors abode' (40-41).⁹⁷ The dell exists as the poet's ideal fusion of secluded nature and rural community; the blended noise of waterfall and 'beast and bird, the lamb,/ The Shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush' (25-26), anticipates the closing lines of the poem in which the poet shares space with the community of Shepherds, who, as in 'Michael', become the means to a kind of endurance in the landscape through the inheritance of language.

In 'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags', the poet's leisurely walk with his companions becomes a record of errancy, in which his relationship to place is troubled and redeemed through the act of naming. The poem is admonitory; the sauntering group, who have the economic freedom of the landscape, pass hasty

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the significance of Wordsworth's acts of naming, see Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), Chapter 4, in which he argues that '[i]n the act of naming, [Wordsworth] ceases to be an observer and becomes a dweller' (100).

judgement on a figure who is not idle, as they at first perceive him to be, but too ill to be harvesting in the fields for his maintenance. The account of naming that takes place at the poem's close is interesting for Wordsworth's use of the language of exploration:

My Friend, Myself, and She who then receiv'd
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by Mariner was giv'n to Bay
Or Foreland on a new-discover'd coast,
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears. (80-86)

The image of the mariner suggests in a number of ways Wordsworth's reconfigured identity and experience of place: it is shadowed by the idea of the foreigner, the person who does not belong to a place, and articulates the distance felt in the poet's misinterpretation of the scene between the one who dwells, and therefore knows the place, and the one who is only a visitor. Nevertheless, through the act of naming, Wordsworth transforms the temporal social revelation into a permanent geographical point of return that creates a shared identity and fosters the possibility of dwelling; as with all the 'Poems on the Naming of Places', Wordsworth's act of naming occurs in, and for, community.

If 'A narrow girdle' briefly identifies the poet as a stranger, the closing poem of the sequence, 'To M.H.', reorients the sense of discovery within the enclosed, domestic wildness of the Grasmere landscape. The poet's errant wandering of the preceding poem is reformulated and redeemed as his and his companion's walk is 'far among the antient trees' (1), where 'There was no road nor any wood-man's path' (2). The pathless ways lead to a 'calm recess' (13), evocative of shelter, which Wordsworth describes as 'made by Nature for herself:/ The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain/ Unknown to them' (15-17). Knowing and naming induct the poet

into dwelling; Wordsworth aligns himself to Nature as he dedicates the ‘still Nook’ (24) to Mary, and distinguishes himself from those who are transient within the landscape. The poet’s straying is given boundaries in a known and named place.

Of the four inscription poems that are included in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, three are intimately involved in Wordsworth’s project of Lake District dwelling.⁹⁸ All three inscriptions are located on islands, enhancing both the sense of seclusion and of circular or bounded space that appears in much of the poet’s Grasmere poetry and which augments the impression of insularity that Byron found so problematic. The inscriptions are amongst the most locatable poems of the collection; more so than the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’, which offer a personal history of places known to and named by the select community at Town End, the inscription poetry connects Wordsworth to the history of the Lakeland landscape itself and to the stories that inhere to particular spots.⁹⁹ All three contain a central image of a building (one still standing, the others gone or in ruins) that provokes the poet’s meditations on his own experience of dwelling. The form of the inscription, which always invites or imagines the reader to be situated on the spot in which the poem is inscribed, prepares us to be inducted into the landscape with which the poem engages. While ‘Inscription for the House (an Out-house) on the Island at Grasmere’ expresses the experience of being an inmate of place

⁹⁸ The fourth, ‘Lines written on a Tablet in a School’, is part of the elegiac ‘Matthew’ sequence and appears as an epitaphic inscription.

⁹⁹ Butler argues that the very genre of the Inscriptions and the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’ ‘set[s] the superior local knowledge of a resident against the ignorance of a tourist . . . The Inscriptions and the Poems on the Naming of Places emphasize who really belongs—and exclude those who do not. One of Wordsworth’s difficulties, of course, is that he was not, in fact, native to Grasmere and did not actually possess this local lore. In these poems, therefore, he self-consciously creates his own place names, inscriptions, and interpretations in order to separate his poetic persona from that of someone seeing the Lakes on what Coleridge had called a “pikteresk Toor.”’ See ‘Tourist or Native Son’, p. 12.

through the poet's habitual retreat to the title spot, 'Lines Written with a Slate-pencil upon a Stone, the largest of a heap lying near a deserted Quarry, upon one of the Islands at Rydale' takes a moralistic approach, as Wordsworth addresses the question of right dwelling through the dialectic of the stranger and the native.

Wordsworth's ideal reader in this poem is not just the 'Stranger' (1) of the opening line, but the newcomer seeking to be an inhabitant of this place, a denizen as opposed to a native dweller. Of course, written as such, this could be a description of the poet himself—a newly made 'Inmate of these mountains' (27)—and Wordsworth's shadowy sense of being an outsider, of being one who might disturb the peace of this place, is present in this poem as it is elsewhere in the poetry of the second volume.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the inscription works to enforce his position as a native. The 'mishapen stones' (1) of the abandoned pleasure house, 'monuments' of the knight's 'unfinish'd task' (13) look forwards to the 'unhewn stones' of 'Michael' and back to the scene of decay in 'Hart-Leap Well', a reminder of the poet's role as tale-teller, as one who interprets objects and a landscape that would otherwise remain meaningless to the reader following in his footsteps. Like Sir William, the reader is addressed as one who would disturb the harmony of the Lakeland landscape. The use of 'quiet' as an epithet of the rock out of which the visitor to the Lakes might imaginatively hew 'thy trim mansion' (30) echoes the 'quiet being' of the 'shady nook' and 'mossy bower' that the poet recalls devastating as a child in 'Nutting'. The concluding lines of 'Nutting' share the tenor of the address in the inscription, as they solicit an alternative way of being, one that

¹⁰⁰ Hugh Sykes Davies deftly traces Wordsworth's use of the word 'inmate', particularly as it relates to Mary, and suggests it forms part of the ecolect of the poet and his household. See *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words*, (eds.) John Kerrigan and Jonathan Wordsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 261-307.

prompts awareness of the sacredness of place. The poem shifts from individual memory to shared experience:

Then, dearest Maiden! move along these shades
In gentleness of heart with gentle hand
Touch,—— for there is a Spirit in the woods. (51-53)

The final line lingers on sensory experience as the enjambement resolves in the stressed beat of 'Touch' and the elongated dash invites a pause that lends weight to this haptic sensibility that redeems the poet's earlier act of violent destruction.

The idea of the recompense of place that Wordsworth invests in much of the Grasmere poetry is felt with particular force in the inscriptions. Not only do these poems enrich the second volume's sense that the Lake District is a harmonizing place of retreat, the inscriptions respond to the poems of exile and dislocation that precede them. In the 'Inscription for the Spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-Water', Wordsworth finds in local folklore, and in the spot to which the legend appertains, a means of recovery or restoration from the fear of separation from a loved companion. The 'quiet spot' on which St. Herbert lived and died is endowed with a potent geo-spiritual nature through the poem's rehearsal of the local legend of the saint, in which the distance between him who 'dwelt in solitude' (8) and his 'Fellow-labourer' (11), St. Cuthbert, is compressed at the moment of death: 'Those holy men both died in the same hour' (21). The opening lines of the inscription make it clear that Wordsworth has in mind a reader who already shares a certain embodied experience with the poet and may encounter this spot in the same reverent attitude:

If thou in the dear love of some one friend
Hast been so happy, that thou know'st what thoughts
Will, sometimes, in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence

This quiet spot.— (1-5)

‘Quiet’ here, as in the ‘Lines Written with a Slate-pencil’, is suggestive of the enduring peace of this place; as in many of the Grasmere poems of the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, this is one of Wordsworth’s spots of solitary refuge.

The second inscription enacts the poet’s own retreat to a place of solitude. ‘Inscription For the House (an Outhouse) on the Island at Grasmere’ extends the poet’s sense of dwelling to spots that are external to the physical structure of his home at Town End. The description that Wordsworth gives to the ‘wild nook’ (38) in ‘It was an April Morning’, resonates with the island’s ‘homely pile’ (13): ‘Soon did the spot become my other home,/ My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode’ (40-41). The slippage between indoors and out that is present in the title’s clarification of the house as ‘an Outhouse’ is carried into the verse, in which the roughhewn edifice harbours the local animals alongside the poet:

It is a homely pile, yet to these walls
 The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
 The new-dropp’d lamb finds shelter from the wind.
 And hither does one Poet sometimes row
 His pinnacle, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
 With plenteous store of heath and wither’d fern,
 A lading which he with his sickle cuts
 Among the mountains, and beneath this roof
 He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
 Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the sheep
 Panting beneath the burthen of their wool
 Lie round him, even as if they were a part
 Of his own household[.] (13-25)

Wordsworth’s description of the boat as a ‘vagrant barge’ is here suggestive not of homelessness but of a kind of straying that connects the poet to the movement of the pastoral scene. Like the sheep and the cows, the poet makes himself at home throughout Grasmere; the ‘store of heath and whither’d fern’ he carries with him is

reminiscent of a nest.¹⁰¹ The language of chivalry and romance that the description of the boat as a ‘pinnacle’ evokes also works to transform the image of vagrancy, situating it within the second volume’s revised poetics of wandering.

In several ways, the settledness of the poem responds to the scene of exile in ‘Poor Susan’, the poem that immediately precedes the two ‘Inscriptions’ in the volume. In ‘Poor Susan’, the sound of a thrush, heard on a street in London, provokes in the title character a vision of her lost rural home. Although the poem offers a precise geography of London, Susan herself appears particularly unrooted. The ‘only one dwelling’ (12) that is registered in the poem is the one to which Susan cannot return. Composed during the Wordsworths’ short residence in Germany, ‘Poor Susan’ anticipates moments of Wordsworth’s two great Grasmere ‘Pastorals’. Susan is a precursor to Luke, the prodigal son of ‘Michael’ whose dissolution in the city renders him unable to return home to his own ‘single small cottage’ (‘Poor Susan’ 11), and to Leonard, the living brother of ‘The Brothers’, whose longing to return home finds expression in the delirious vision of his native landscape that he experiences while homesick at sea:

And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
Flash’d round him images and hues, that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,

¹⁰¹ In his phenomenological account of the nest, Gaston Bachelard connects the experience of ‘well-being’ to ‘the primitiveness of the refuge’. See *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), pp. 90-104, p. 91. He suggests that the nest is an image of security, one that expresses security as it ‘participates in the peace of the vegetable world’ (p. 103), what Wordsworth describes as ‘the silence and the calm/ Of mute insensate things’ (‘Three years she grew’, 17-18). The image of the nest in Wordsworth recurs in the poetry written after his return to Grasmere and expresses this idea of protected and primitive dwelling. It is part of Wordsworth’s affective geography; he writes to Sir George Beaumont on 25 December 1804 of having ‘lately built in our little rocky orchard a little circular Hut, lined with moss, like a wren’s nest’, *LWDW:EY*, p. 518. For a discussion of nests in Wordsworth see John Beer, *Wordsworth and the Human Heart* (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 201-208, who considers the correspondence of the nest and the work of the human heart, and Kerrigan, ‘Wordsworth and the Sonnet’, pp. 48-51.

Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
 Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that graz'd
 On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,
 And Shepherds clad in the same country grey
 Which he himself had worn. (53-62)

Although Wordsworth's blank verse offers a more sophisticated reverie than is found in 'Poor Susan', the content of the vision is strikingly similar: Susan sees 'A mountain ascending, a vision of trees' (6) and the 'Green pastures' (9) that she had 'tripp'd' (10) down in her youth. Nevertheless, like the poem's 'Wood Street' (1) location, which, as David Simpson astutely observes, can only signify the country in a parodic or negating manner, the vision cannot be transformed into a reality.¹⁰² Just as Susan has 'pass'd by the spot' (3) that initiated the vision of home, in a poignant echo, the colours of this insubstantial landscape 'have all pass'd away from her eyes' (16). The 'Inscription for the House (an Outhouse)' responds to this experience of exile with a secure vision of Lakeland dwelling. Wordsworth takes pains to disassociate the 'Rude' (1) building from the urban landscape—it was built by one who 'had no help/ From the great city' (7-8)—but in the provision of shelter, this 'homely pile' is reflective of Susan's 'small cottage, a nest like a dove's' (11). In the proximity of these two poems on the page, it is hard not to hear an echo of Susan's 'vision' in the 'Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy' (29) with which the inscription concludes. The contrast is stark, as Susan's unsustainable vision is succeeded by the enduring visions of the poet in a landscape that speaks to him of secure dwelling.

In the correspondences between the poems of the second volume the tensions and nuances in Wordsworth's engagement with his own narrative of

¹⁰² See David Simpson, 'What Bothered Charles Lamb about Poor Susan?', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 26.4 (1986), 589-612, p. 598.

homecoming emerge. The unsettled figures of the first volume find counterparts in the second volume's liminal, ghostly figures of Lucy Gray, the Wandering Jew, and the Danish Boy, and those, like Leonard of 'The Brothers' and Luke of 'Michael', who choose exile over homecoming and consequently form the counter-narrative to, and complicate, the poet's sense of a return to his native landscape. Nevertheless, the tone of the volume shifts towards a harmony of man and environment, and the steadying impulse that burgeons in the Grasmere poetry of the early 1800s, and comes to a head in *The Excursion*, becomes a defining characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry. The homeward trajectory of 'Ruth' plays an important role in this tonal alteration. Ruth's narrative shares a number of themes and linguistic tropes with the poetry of the first volume: like Martha of 'The Thorn', the Mad Mother, and the Female Vagrant, Ruth is an abandoned woman, a state that leads directly to her experience of destitution and madness. Yet, where Wordsworth dwells on the plight of these desolate women in Volume I, in 'Ruth', the poet passes over the tale of her desertion and its attendant mania in only three stanzas. Recovering from her madness, Ruth's escape to the Quantock Hills is presented as a realisation of freedom, as she becomes like the river to which she repairs:

Among the fields she breath'd again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free,
And to the pleasant Banks of Tone
She took her way, to dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree. (187-192)

In contrast to 'The Female Vagrant', Ruth's return to the land is restorative; she neither experiences the keenness of the Female Vagrant's wants, nor her desolation at the mercy of unkind fields. Wordsworth instead presents a young woman assimilated to the rhythms of the natural world:

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies,
 But till the warmth of summer skies
 And summer days is gone,
 (And in this tale we all agree)
 She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
 And other home hath none. (199-204)

The recurring image of the greenwood tree returns us in thought to the opening of the poem in which Ruth is introduced as a child who seems ‘As if she from her birth had been/ An Infant of the woods’ (10-11). Ruth’s woodland home is, accordingly, something of a homecoming, and her later vagrancy is softened by its echo of her early ‘wandering over dale and hill/ In thoughtless freedom bold’ (5-6). The echo of Shakespeare’s greenwood tree from *As You Like It* draws an English mythical resonance within Wordsworth’s poem; the allusion associates Ruth’s woodland abode with the Forest of Arden, an ambiguous space of dwelling and exile.

There is a pervasive sense of unreality about Ruth as a character; however, she must appear as a genial spirit of the wood rather than a phantom or a truly desolate outcast for the poet to escape complicity in her alienation. For the poet is not simply an auditor to this woman’s tale as in the earlier poems, nor does he encounter her by the roadside, but within his own community. Like the title character of ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’, whose vagrancy takes place within the tight geographical limits of a particular community, Ruth’s woodland abode places her within a neighbourhood of rural dwellers, if precariously on its edge; that the Quantock woodmen who hear the sound of her flute do so only while on their ‘homeward walk’ (215), both draws Ruth within a sense of home and leaves her firmly in the outdoor world that the woodmen leave behind. The poet figures himself within the poem alongside the woodmen when he suggests that ‘I, too have pass’d her on the hills’ (217) and in his claim to a familiarity with the landscape,

which is reinforced by the note on the River Tone in which he appraises the landscape for its productivity as well as its picturesque beauty.¹⁰³ As in ‘Hart-Leap Well’, the note risks identifying the poet as an educated traveller rather than a dweller, so the poem works to situate Wordsworth within the local community. In an aside that bears an uncomfortable resonance to ‘The Thorn’—‘And in this tale we all agree’—the use of the plural pronoun makes the poet a party to the shared story. Yet, with its echo of ‘The Thorn’, the line casts a shade of doubt over the poet’s tale, disturbing the narrative like the detail of the ‘hemlock stalk’ (214) that replaces Ruth’s youthful ‘oaten pipe’ (211). The poisonous hemlock speaks of suicide or a carelessness of life that troubles the idyllic scene but which is elided by the concluding stanza that draws Ruth within the community through the very event of her death:

For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.— (226-228)

Although Ruth was most likely composed in Germany and takes as its setting the geographical region of the poet’s residence at Alfoxden, it resonates with Wordsworth’s project of dwelling in the later Grasmere poetry. It is not an unproblematic poem, yet it shows a clear shift in the centre of gravity in *Lyrical Ballads*, from the homeless to a deep investment in home.

Wordsworth’s sense of the moral force of homecoming and residence becomes the master narrative of the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, from the pastorals and inscriptions to his personal account of renewed dwelling in the

¹⁰³ *LBOP*, p. 198. The note reads: ‘The Tone is a River of Somersetshire at no great distance from the Quantock Hills. These Hills, which are alluded to a few stanzas below, are extremely beautiful, and in most places richly covered with Coppice woods.’

‘Poems on the Naming of Places’. Volume II seems to set Wordsworth’s poetics for the second generation, such that everything that follows, from *The Excursion* to *Peter Bell*, conforms to the idea of a moralised rooted identity, the Wordsworth who is the Sage of Rydal. Byron and Keats receive this portrait of Wordsworth differently. For Byron, Wordsworth’s commitment to place is tantamount to complacency. Yet the satire with which Byron responds to this portrait of the poet is complicated by the emergence of a Wordsworthian undersong in Byron’s verse, which registers a turn to place and to questions of belonging. For Keats, Rydal and its environs appear as an English Parnassus, a place in which Wordsworth’s personal geographies are also traceable poetic ones, and which suggestively offer the possibility of shared ground. The following two chapters will be given to the exploration of these departures, dualities, and coalescences.

CHAPTER II.

‘IN AND OUT OF PLACE’: BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

1812: London

Wordsworth travelled to London in the spring of 1812, intent on confronting Coleridge and Basil Montagu about the exchange that had caused an almost irreparable breach between the two poets; while there, Wordsworth would encounter—in only slightly less dramatic fashion—another poet, the young and newly-famous author of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Wordsworth and Byron met for the first time at Samuel Rogers’s house, on the evening of 11 May 11, where Byron passed on what Stephen Gill describes as the ‘electrifying message’ that the Prime Minister, Spencer Percival, had just been assassinated.¹ Little else is recorded of the meeting between the two poets, which may have lasted no more than a few minutes, but it was enough to make them sufficiently acquainted that Byron would frank no fewer than three letters for Wordsworth, to be sent to his wife, Mary.² Five

¹ See Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 293.

² See Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Middle Years, 1800-1815* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 498-499. For Henry Crabb Robinson’s record of the meeting, as recollected by Samuel Rogers in 1834, see *HCRBW*, I, p. 436. Wordsworth’s letters of this period reveal both his eagerness to hear from his sister and his wife while he is in London and his anxiety about the cost of sending and receiving letters from them both. He includes in his letter to Mary of 9-13 May and to Dorothy of 15 May the request that each would address her letters alternately to Charles Lamb and Richard Sharp, and a few days later in a letter of 17-18 May he writes again to Mary, ‘Lamb tells me that his Sister is well and that you may address to him as many Letters as you like; therefore let there be at least two to him for one to Sharp’. Alongside this, Wordsworth writes frequently about the franks that he has or has not procured for his letters. Sharp again is the person who most often assists Wordsworth with his free franking privilege as a Member of Parliament, but Wordsworth also receives franks from General Edmund Phipps and William Sturges-Bourne, as well as the three from Byron; Wordsworth writes in a letter to Mary on 2 May, ‘I breakfasted with Sharp on Thursday, he will supply me plenteously with Franks, and has kindly allowed me to have my Letters directed to him, which he will forward by the Penny Post.’ Nevertheless, a week later on 9 May, Wordsworth will write to Mary, ‘I should have sent

days later, at the London residence of the Beaumonts, with whom Wordsworth was staying, the poet dined alone with Lady Beaumont and together they read the freshly published first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. At the end of that same month, far away from London, Wordsworth's wife arranged to take a tour of the Wye Valley. This tour, inseparable in Wordsworth's thinking from his own journey along the River Wye, fourteen years previously, would have a profound impact on the elder poet's response to Byron and to *Childe Harold*. The first section of this chapter explores, in detail, the events of May and early June 1812 that would go on to shape the private and professional relationship between the two poets in important ways, including Byron's literary debt to Wordsworthian spatial poetics. The rest of the chapter will be split into three sections, each of which will deal with part of the development of Byron's creative engagement with Wordsworth. I will begin with the Summer of 1816, the period of Byron's life in which critics most often locate Wordsworth's defining influence on the younger poet, considering both Byron's parodic response in 'Churchill's Grave' and his allusive debt in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III. The final section of the chapter will trace these parodic and allusive strands through Byron's longest work, *Don Juan*, the poem

you off a short Letter before—but I do not find it easy to procure Franks.—It seems to be looked on in London as a considerable favour.' This comment is particularly interesting in light of its proximity in date to Wordsworth and Byron's meeting on 11 May, where, presumably, Wordsworth requested that Byron frank his letter and Byron obliged, and when one considers Wordsworth's explanation in the first letter franked by Byron that he would write 'oftener' to Grasmere if it were not that he can 'only procure franks by chance'. We cannot be certain if Byron provided all three franks to Wordsworth's letters to Mary (of 13 May, 30 May, and 6 June) at the same time, though it is possible that he did so. Wordsworth writes to Mary on 30 May of having organised franks for certain dates—'I had provided a frank [Byron's] for to day calculating that it would reach Hindwell on Monday . . . I had provided another frank for Monday, to be received by my Darling on Wednesday'—and we can also be sure that the poet was in possession of the frank for 6 June in advance of the date, as he writes to Mary on 1 June, 'I have another frank for the sixth of this month, i.e. next Saturday'. There is no record of Byron and Wordsworth having met at any other time during Wordsworth's stay in London, thus it seems likely that Wordsworth received the franks all at once or that he received them individually at later dates via Rogers. See *LWDW: Supplement*, pp. 53, 58-59, 61-67, 71, 77-78, 80, 93-94, 106, 117.

that best displays how Byron's dual response to Wordsworth turns on questions of place, spatiality, and the location of the poet.

In the first of the three letters franked by Byron, Wordsworth briefly records having met the poet: 'This letter will be franked by Lord Byron,' he writes,

a Man who is now the rage in London, in consequence of his Late Poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. He wrote a satire some time since in which Coleridge and I were abused, but these are little thought of; and the other day I met him here and indeed it was from his mouth that Rogers first heard, and in his presence told us, the murder of Perceval.³

The account is sparse in detail, touching ambivalently on the literary reputation of both poets in the description of Byron as the current London literary fashion, and in the remembrance of his earlier attack on Wordsworth in *English Bards*. Wordsworth is keen to note the transient nature of public or critical opinion relating to Byron's satire, which is now 'little thought of', and therefore less damaging to Wordsworth's own reception, yet his designation of Byron as 'the rage' is also inseparable from ideas of the ephemerality of fame: Wordsworth expects that Byron's popularity, though current, will not last.⁴ This depiction of fame is geographically spatial: Wordsworth limits the enthusiasm for Byron to the capital—a topographical boundary reinforced by his assumption that Mary will have no knowledge of Lord Byron, or will know him only in relation to Wordsworth himself.⁵ In its concern with the passing of fame or censure, it speaks also to the ideas of shifting poetic place and position that preoccupy Byron in his own writings on fame. One of Byron's most forceful expressions of fame's transitory nature is found in *Don Juan*, in which the poet reflects on his own career through an

³ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 65.

⁴ See *OED*, 'rage', entry 5.g.

⁵ What Wordsworth attempts to do with London and Lord Byron, Byron will more successfully achieve with Wordsworth and the Lake District.

identification with Napoleon and the Napoleonic empire: ‘Even I . . . / Was reckoned, a considerable time, / The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme’ (XI.437-440). Writing in 1823, Byron encompasses the rise and fall of that empire within his metaphor, and gives the ephemerality of fame spatial dynamics; the image turns on the idea of displacement, or perhaps replacement, the knowledge that someone or something else will take (or has already taken) his place.

Wordsworth’s writing about Byron in this letter evinces a quiet concern with his own poetic place. The assertion that Byron’s satire is ‘little thought of’—a statement that reveals as much Wordsworth’s desire for this to be the case as his assurance of it—leads into the revelation that the two poets have met in person. The possibility of shared poetic ground is opened up by the sharing of physical ground. Byron’s place is in London, but so too, the letter suggests, might be Wordsworth’s. With Rogers as a mutual friend, Wordsworth’s and Byron’s social circles intersect on common ground. Indeed, Gill reminds us that, in 1812, Wordsworth was neither a newcomer to London nor ‘regarded simply as the Beaumonts’ protégé’:

He met again Rogers, Constable, Wilkie, Uvedale Price, Davy, lawyers, politicians, fringe literary figures, painters, possibly Haydon, certainly Washington Allston, some of Crabbe Robinson’s acquaintance, aristocrats and gentry, and, at the top of the tree, Lord Lonsdale . . . and even Princess Caroline, wife of the Prince Regent.⁶

Wordsworth’s letters of this period provide minute accounts of where he has been and with whom, who he has called on and who dined with; they attest to the gusto with which he entered London life, from the theatre, to Parliament, to the seemingly endless social engagements at the houses of friends and acquaintances. It is clear also from the letters that as Wordsworth spent time in the capital, his own poetry

⁶ Gill, *Wordsworth: A Life*, p. 293.

and plans for publication were brought, increasingly, to the forefront of his mind. Though the trip had first offered the chance to make amends with Coleridge, it also afforded opportunities to discuss his poetic endeavours with London friends, and to test the reception of *Peter Bell* and *The Waggoner* outside of the Grasmere coterie. Wordsworth read *The Waggoner* aloud on at least two occasions, once at Lamb's (22 May) and once at William Rough's (3 June), a lawyer friend of the poet's brother, Christopher Wordsworth, who was present, along with Henry Crabb Robinson and Richard Cargill. Perhaps on this same evening, Wordsworth lent manuscript copies of both poems to Crabb Robinson, who made detailed notes on them in his diary and loaned *Peter Bell* to Lamb, who did not receive it with quite the same enthusiasm.⁷

Crabb Robinson's diary entries in particular reveal Wordsworth's sense of himself as a poet; Crabb Robinson records arriving at Elton Hamond's house in Hampstead and finding Wordsworth there, demonstrating 'some of the points of his philosophical theory', before going on to describe the value of his poems as '*a new power in the literary world*'.⁸ In the same conversation, Wordsworth laid out plans for reprinting his published work in a new arrangement, 'with some reference either to the fancy, imagination, reflection, or mere feeling contained in them', what would later become the 1815 *Poems*.⁹ In Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth found a sympathetic companion with whom to discuss the poets and writers of the day: the diaries record Wordsworth's censure of Campbell, his praise of Blake and Burns, and his mixed sentiments on Byron, Scott, and Southey. On May 24, Wordsworth

⁷ See Reed, *Middle Years*, pp. 502-503; *LWDW: Supplement*, pp. 95, 112; and *HCRBW*, I, p. 93-103.

⁸ *HCRBW*, I, p. 89.

⁹ *HCRBW*, I, p. 89.

and Crabb Robinson walked to Hampstead and discussed Lord Byron, moving between the poetic and the personal: ‘Wordsworth allowed him power, but denied his style to be English. Of his moral qualities we think the same. He adds that there is insanity in Lord Byron’s family and that he believes Lord Byron to be somewhat cracked.’¹⁰ Wordsworth’s censure performs a double act of dislocation; Byron is poetically exiled from the ‘English’ poets (and thereby Wordsworth), and mentally ‘othered’. On 3 June, Crabb Robinson heard Wordsworth read *The Waggoner* at Rough’s, and recorded twice that Wordsworth ‘talked much of poetry’, and of his own poems in particular.¹¹ From the end of May to the beginning of June, Wordsworth, it is clear, was intensely engaged in thinking about his own poetic practice and of himself, in opposition to Byron, as a poet of the age.

Another strand of feeling emerges in the letters of this period, as Wordsworth records a mingled delight and despair of living in ‘such a bustle and hurry’ in the city; he flits between topics, gets confused over which events happened on which days, and forgets if he has told a story to Mary and Dorothy separately, or to one of them twice.¹² In the long letter of 9-13 May, Wordsworth twice wrestles with his pleasure at being in London, experiencing news and events first hand, and his distaste of the metropolitan *beau monde*:

The life which is led by the fashionable world of this great city is miserable; there is neither dignity nor content nor love nor quiet to be found in it. If it was not [for] the pleasure I find under this roof, and that I am collecting something to think about; I should be unable to resist my inclination to set off to morrow, to walk with thee by the woody side of that quiet pool, near which thy days and nights are passed.¹³

¹⁰ *HCRBW*, I, p. 85.

¹¹ *HCRBW*, I, p. 93.

¹² *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 75.

¹³ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 62. Later in the letter Wordsworth writes, ‘I am glad that I am in London at this crisis, I shall see and hear all I can; but I am melancholy in finding how one’s time slips away in going after people who one cannot find’, p. 66.

Wordsworth is drawn to physical communion with Mary—the letters of this period may accurately be described as love letters—but he is also drawn to the tranquillity of the farm in Wales, to its closeness to the natural world, and to his memory of a place that invites a sense of belonging. A few days later, when Wordsworth again writes to Mary of his tiredness with London society, he transforms the city into the likeness of home: lamenting a party of the night before, Wordsworth writes, ‘I have already neglected several invitations of this kind, and shall in future attend to still fewer, so that I believe I should soon slip into as deep a solitude in London as in Grasmere.’¹⁴

In the city, Wordsworth delighted in his time spent at its edges. He went often to Hampstead, still a village at this point of the nineteenth century, and a place that recalled the Lakeland landscape to him; on visiting the home of Thomas William Carr, Wordsworth describes the ‘scenicly rich woody Country’ over which it looks, as ‘like one of our uncut forests’, and he will designate the place, in language that is most closely associated with Grasmere and the Lakes, as ‘a sweet Spot’.¹⁵ Both this house and Hamond’s nearby, at which Wordsworth and Crabb Robinson dined after their visit to Carr’s, were particularly attractive to the poet on account of their situation in the landscape. Close at hand was a reminder of rural wildness, the ‘uncut forests’ that come into view at Carr’s or the ‘little wild slack or dell’ that may be seen from the back windows of Hamond’s cottage.¹⁶ In the distance Wordsworth viewed a horizon that stretched beyond the city; from the

¹⁴ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 80.

¹⁵ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 97. For the imaginative connection between ‘sweet’ and ‘spot’ see, for example, ‘Departure from the Vale of Grasmere. August, 1803’ and ‘A Farewell’.

¹⁶ See *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 97. ‘Slack’ is a Northern dialect word for a small, shallow valley or hollow.

‘woody Country’, the poet’s eyes are directed ‘towards the smoke of London and upon the Kentish and Surrey hills far beyond’, while the view of the dell leads again ‘towards and far beyond the Metropolis.’¹⁷ There is undoubtedly an element of picturesque framing here, yet the repetition of ‘far beyond’, with its sense of an imagined ‘elsewhere’, chimes with the feeling apparent in the earlier letters of a longing to be unconfined by the city.¹⁸

The other event of particular importance to Wordsworth and Byron’s poetic and personal relationship in 1812 draws these acts of imagined relocation into sharper relief. It occurred away from London, and, though it at first glance seems unconnected to Wordsworth’s meeting with Byron and to his reading of *Childe Harold*, it had an important effect on the latter. In mid-April, having set off together from Grasmere, Wordsworth and Mary parted ways at Chester, the poet bound for London and Mary for her brother’s farm at Hindwell, on the Welsh border. In late May, together with one each of her brothers and sisters, Tom and Joanna Hutchinson, Mary embarked on a tour of the Wye Valley. The letters between the couple relating to this excursion are, unsurprisingly, replete with references to another tour, now fourteen years passed, and to its creative outcome, ‘Tintern Abbey’. If Wordsworth had written movingly to Mary of his desire to be reunited with her in Wales, the letters that reflect on her tour of the Wye only intensify the poet’s longing to be not only on shared ground, but on ground that was already

¹⁷ *LWDW Supplement*, p. 97.

¹⁸ See also Wordsworth’s repetition of this phrase in Book XIII of the 1805 version of *The Prelude*, during the account of the poet’s ascent of Snowdon:

A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still Ocean, and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes
Into the Sea[.] (XIII.45-49)

saturated with meaning. Both Wordsworth and Mary are concerned with the physical ground of the Wye Valley as a space of lived, and now shared, experience. Writing before the tour, Mary anticipates the emotional response she will have in this landscape; it is not simply that the river will remind her of Wordsworth but that this place invites a sympathetic mode of being: ‘O how I shall think of thee and *feel* for thee—when I am tracing this blessed river’.¹⁹ Wordsworth’s response evinces a reciprocal burden of affect: ‘O Sylvan Wye thou Wanderer through the Woods how often has my Spirit turned to thee!—I shall now have a thousand added reasons to think of this Stream with tenderness when I know you are pacing its banks.’²⁰ The shared location, and Mary’s physical act of following in Wordsworth’s footsteps, achieves for the couple a communion-in-separation, mediated by the textual ground of ‘Tintern Abbey’ and the letters. Mary’s emphatic ‘O’ is echoed by Wordsworth in his self-citation of the poem, a citation that calls to mind the poet’s present location ‘mid the din/ Of towns and cities’ and with perhaps no small amount of ‘the fretful stir/ Unprofitable, and the fever of the world’ pressing upon his heart.²¹ Both Wordsworth and Mary continually refer to the language of the poem in the letters that are sent during the tour, as a means of professing, and even creating, shared experience.²² Mary finds in the final lines of ‘Tintern Abbey’ a pattern for

¹⁹ For Mary’s letter see *LLMMW*, p. 169.

²⁰ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 88.

²¹ ‘Tintern Abbey’, ll. 26-27, 53-54. Following these lines in the letter Wordsworth will give Mary an account of his health and suggest that his ‘Style of living’ in London has not much improved it: ‘above all too much talking fatigues me, something I suffer too from hurrying about the Streets’. *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 89.

²² In particular, Wordsworth and Mary pass line 57 (‘O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods’) between each other in the letters; Mary takes it up in her letter of 29-31 May to express her passionate first encounter with the river and Wordsworth again quotes this line in his letter of 3-4 June, where it becomes a point of connectivity between himself, Dorothy, and Mary: ‘I had been reading at Lamb’s the Tintern abbey, and repeated 100 times to my self the passage O Sylvan Wye thou Wanderer through the woods,’ thinking of past times, & Dorothy, dear Dorothy, and you my Darling.’ *LLMMW*, pp. 197, 227.

her own encounter with the Wye; she speaks the poet's own words back to him in her declaration that Wordsworth 'wilt not doubt' that 'every object which I see that gives me pleasure will be ten thousand times *more dear to me for thy sake*'.²³ The earlier community of two becomes a triad as Mary participates in the acts of relocation and recompense that the poem performs, gaining a place within a community that is established on shared ground and maintained through the memory of this ground.

'Tintern Abbey', it is evident, was at the forefront of Wordsworth's mind during the final weeks of May and early June. In a letter of 3-4 June, Wordsworth wrote to Mary of having read the poem at Lamb's (on 2 June) and how he 'repeated 100 times to my self the passage O Sylvan Wye thou Wanderer through the woods'.²⁴ In the same letter, Wordsworth recounted his reading of *The Waggoner* at Rough's (3 June), and how he had stayed out too late that same evening, walking the London streets with Crabb Robinson. He kept this account firmly in the region of his health, telling Mary that he 'was not sensible how tired and heated [he] was' and offering no indication of what he and Crabb Robinson 'got to talking' about.²⁵ Crabb Robinson's diary provides the missing details of the conversation that kept Wordsworth street-walking into the night: it was on account of poetry—his own, and Byron's also. When Wordsworth read *Childe Harold* with Lady Beaumont on 16 May, he wrote sparingly to his wife of 'Lord Byrons new poem which is not

²³ *LLWMW*, p. 197, added emphasis. The final lines of 'Tintern Abbey' are as follows:

Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake. (156-160)

²⁴ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 108.

²⁵ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 112.

destitute of merit; though ill-planned, and often unpleasing in the sentiments, and almost always perplexed in the construction.’²⁶ On 3 June, having deeply revisited ‘Tintern Abbey’, Wordsworth returned to *Childe Harold*, this time with a much sharper criticism. Crabb Robinson records that they spoke of the ‘*intense* poetical feeling’ apparent in Wordsworth’s poetry:

He [Wordsworth] contrasted some fine lines from his verses on the Wye, with a popular passage from Lord Byron on solitude. Lord Byron’s is a coarse but palpable assertion of the nature of solitude, with an epigrammatic conclusion. In Wordsworth the feeling is involved and the thought clothed in poetic shapes. It is, therefore, no wonder that Wordsworth’s description should be forgotten, and Lord Byron’s in general circulation.²⁷

Wordsworth could not relinquish this comparison of the two poems. He returned to the two poems five years later, in a letter to Robert Gillies of 9 June 1817, where he again critiqued Byron’s handling of feeling and form in the ‘famous passage on Solitude’ with the suggestion that ‘the sentiment by being expressed in an antithetical manner, is taken out of the Region of high and imaginative feeling, to be place[d] in that of point and epigram.’²⁸ Wordsworth directs his correspondent to ‘Tintern Abbey’, ‘where you will find the same sentiment not formally put as it is here, but ejaculated as it were [fortuit]ously in the musical succession [of preconceiv]ed feeling’.²⁹ Wordsworth is concerned for the immediacy of expression and the authenticity of experience as it is recorded in his poetry, in opposition to what he sees as Byron’s abstract, formal sentiment. It is a point of

²⁶ *LWDW: Supplement*, p. 80.

²⁷ *HCRBW*, I, p. 93.

²⁸ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 385.

²⁹ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 385.

criticism that is, ironically, shared with Byron, who will accuse other poets, including Wordsworth, of inauthenticity with regard to place.³⁰

It is clear that Wordsworth dwelt on the connection between one of his most prized poems and *Childe Harold*. Just a few weeks after the letter to Gillies, on 24 June, he relayed to Crabb Robinson the now infamous accusation that Byron had been ‘poaching on [his] Manor’ in the latest canto of this poem.³¹ Both June letters are concerned implicitly with the poet’s reputation. In the letter to Gillies, Wordsworth stresses that he does not offer the comparison ‘from so disgusting a motive as self commendation at the expense of a man of Genius’, but ‘for the sake of truth’; nevertheless, this ‘truth’ is inescapably involved in the respective merits of the two poems—and by extension their authors—and Wordsworth’s ongoing sense that he is not as well thought of as he should be.³² In the letter to Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth’s comment about Byron reads almost as a side note to his greater concern of a negative review in *Blackwood’s Magazine*:

I have not seen Southey’s article in the last Q.R. nor Mr Moore’s ugly named Poem, nor Lord Bys– Tragedy, nor his last Canto of Child Harold where I

³⁰ See, for example, Byron’s letter to Leigh Hunt of 30 October 1815, in which he criticises Wordsworth’s descriptions of Greek landscape and the imagined seclusion of a remote Turkish cemetery as ‘pure stuff’; he will go on in the letter to privilege his own experience of being ‘on the spot’ in Greece and to be, in consequence, a better judge of poetic description. See *BLJ*, IV, pp. 324-326.

³¹ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 394. Wordsworth was not the only one to be voicing the suggestion that Byron owed him a literary debt in the third canto of *Childe Harold*. In an unsigned review in the *Edinburgh Review*, dated December 1816 but issued February 1817, Francis Jeffrey made a much more public suggestion that in *Childe Harold*, Byron had ‘seemed to lean rather too kindly to the peculiarities of the Lake school’ and offered a number of stanzas to ‘justify that observation’, including the lines that would resonate for Thomas Medwin:

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me,
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture[.] (III.680-683)

See Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 98-109, p. 108, and Ernest J. Lovell (ed.), *Medwin’s Conversations of Lord Byron* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 194-195.

³² *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 385.

am told he has been poaching on my Manor, nor any one new thing whatever – except abuse of myself and sometimes praise[.]³³

This image of an attack to the poet's literary estate is not, however, separate from his concern for his reputation. Both involve an emphasis on the gains and losses of material property, though in distinct ways: as Wordsworth acknowledges, even a bad review would be cause for thanks ' [i]f it tends to make my Publication enquired after'.³⁴

The class inversion in the metaphor of the literary estate, in which the 'plain gentleman' and professional Wordsworth can level against the aristocratic Byron a charge of trespass and appropriation is, as has been well noted, striking.³⁵ Tilar J. Mazzeo situates Wordsworth's metaphor both within the wider rhetoric of nineteenth-century discussions of literary plagiarism that connected intellectual property with real property and within Wordsworth's own understanding of his literary productions 'in terms of comparisons to working the land and to the landscape', both as tillage or labour and as land ownership.³⁶ According to Mazzeo, the poet's repeated use of class and landscape metaphors was more than simply a reflection of a wider cultural attitude that emerged with the coincidence of active public discussions of enclosures and copyright reform, it was a much more personal affair:

Throughout his career, [Wordsworth] came to understand his poetry as both a gentleman's occupation and as a literary estate, and he perceived plagiarism from his work as a form of disinheritance—from the landscape,

³³ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 394.

³⁴ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 393.

³⁵ See Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 166 on this term 'plain gentleman', which Dorothy Wordsworth had applied to Walter Scott in 1826, when the poet was suffering financial disaster. For a discussion of Wordsworth's delicate position within the landless professional classes see Mark Schoenfield, *The Professional Wordsworth: Law, Labour, and the Poet's Contract* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

³⁶ Mazzeo, *Plagiarism*, p. 146.

from property, and, through its associations with class privilege, even from literature itself.³⁷

Perhaps more than any other writer of the Romantic age, certainly more than the aristocratic Byron, Wordsworth was invested in the idea of his poetry as property, even as inheritance.

Mazzeo suggests that in Romantic attitudes towards plagiarism, the appropriation of another writer's tone, sentiment, style, or 'spirit', was just as likely, if not more likely, to lead to an accusation of plagiarism as taking words verbatim. If Wordsworth was concerned that Byron had pilfered his sentiments in the second canto of *Childe Harold*, he was yet more vexed that the younger poet had trespassed on his style in the third. Thomas Moore records in his journal an encounter with Wordsworth in October 1820 in which the poet once more raises this issue:

[Wordsworth] Spoke of Byron's plagiarisms from him—the whole third Canto of Childe Harold's founded on his style & sentiments—the feeling of natural objects, which is there expressed not caught by B. from Nature herself but from him, Wordsworth, and spoiled in the transmission—Tintern Abbey the source of it all—from which same poem too the celebrated passage about Solitude in the First Canto of C. H. is (he said) taken, with this difference that what is naturally expressed by him has been worked by Byron into a laboured & antithetical sort of declamation[.]³⁸

Though at an interval of eight years, Wordsworth's conversation with Moore is a reprisal of his first expression of Byron's debt to him given to Crabb Robinson. The frequency with which Wordsworth returned to this topic suggests not only the depth of his feeling that Byron was obligated to 'Tintern Abbey', but the strength of his desire to make it known. When Henry Taylor wrote to Wordsworth in November 1823 to apprise him of an article he was contributing to the *London Magazine* on

³⁷ Mazzeo, *Plagiarism*, p. 173.

³⁸ Wilfred S. Dowden, (ed.), *The Journal of Thomas Moore*, vol. 1 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), p. 355.

‘Recent Poetic Plagiarisms’, and to ask him about Byron’s borrowings, Wordsworth, as expected, pointed him to the third canto of *Childe Harold*. In his reply to Taylor, Wordsworth lays out three branches of the subject of obligation: ‘accidental coincidences without any communication of the subsequent Author; unconscious imitations; and deliberate conscious obligations’.³⁹ The letter is designed to make it clear that Byron is culpable of the final strand, yet the passage reads as much as a description of allusion as it does of plagiarism. In the overlap between the two, the transgressive element of allusion is made apparent. As already noted in the introduction, de Certeau’s image of the reader as poacher is a particularly apposite one where Wordsworth and Byron are concerned.

Deliberate allusions and unconscious echoes share space in this chapter, as in this thesis, which is concerned with Wordsworth’s accusation of obligation primarily as a marker of influence. Wordsworth’s complaint of plagiarism draws out in important ways the dynamic of revisitation in which both he and Byron are engaged. Wordsworth’s compulsive return to his own poems and places of personal importance—his self-citation in the letters to Mary is part of his practice of revisiting—is connected to his powerful sense of poetry as place, as his own place, that is, as land over which he had ownership.⁴⁰ His preoccupation with the shared ground of ‘Tintern Abbey’ and *Childe Harold* is the other side of the coin to his creative returns, one that is closer to the Byronic sense of circularity, of a poet who

³⁹ *LWDW: LY, I*, p. 238.

⁴⁰ Stephen Gill has done most to draw attention to the act of revisiting that sits at the heart of Wordsworth’s creativity. His study, *Wordsworth’s Revisitations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), is textually based, and explores ‘the poet’s continual return not to his past but to his past in his past writing’. Textual revisiting cohabits with the poet’s literal returns; Gill writes that ‘Wordsworth could not bear to think that he had seen a place for the last time . . . Repeatedly Wordsworth went back to places that had mattered to him as man and as poet and tested his sense of the present and intervening years in fresh acts of creation’, pp. 9-10.

is stuck in one place. In *Childe Harold*, Byron transgressively goes over Wordsworth's ground, but his revisiting is deeper and more complex than Wordsworth allows. In the opening chapter I began to draw out the formal influence of 'Tintern Abbey' on *Childe Harold*; this chapter continues to trace the lines of influence that may be found in Byron's work, and will make clear that the reach of 'Tintern Abbey' extends into *Don Juan*. This chapter begins with the knowledge that Wordsworth heard himself in *Childe Harold*, as did his contemporaries, and that what he heard was a reformation of his own poetics of solitude. Consequently, this chapter will explore themes of seclusion and solitary place, as I consider Wordsworth's claim that Byron's expressions of solitude are not wholly his own.

1816: From England to Exile

On the evening of 25 April 1816, the night before Byron left England for good—though he, of course, was not to know it at the time—the poet and John Cam Hobhouse visited the grave of the satirist Charles Churchill. Hobhouse records how, while there, 'Byron lay down on [Churchill's] grave and gave the man a crown to fresh turf it', in an act that reveals the potency of the poet's response to being physically on the spot, or at the site, of the grave.⁴¹ Byron did not render his experience in poetry, however, until later in the summer when he was with Percy Bysshe Shelley at Geneva, reading Wordsworth—or rather, being 'dosed' with him—and composing the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.⁴² 'Churchill's

⁴¹ Quoted by McGann, *BCPW*, IV, p. 447.

⁴² See Lovell (ed.), *Medwin's Conversations*, p. 194.

Grave' emerges as a part-parodic, part-serious response to Wordsworth's poetry of encounter. Byron's preoccupation with spaces of death in *Childe Harold* Canto III has been well observed, from the battlefield of Waterloo that breaks the self-reflexive meditation on Harold's tortured wandering with dramatic force—'Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!' (III.145)—to the 'bony heap' (III.605) of the '[un]sepulchred' (III.607) French soldiers who died in the 1476 battle of Morat, and are 'through ages to remain,/ Themselves their monument' (III.605-606). Yet, the similar concerns that afflict the poet on confrontation with the grave in both poems have been less attended to, as has the poet's engagement with Wordsworth over acts of memory and memorialising. Rather than returning to the contested numinous spaces of *Childe Harold* III, which I have explored in relation to 'Tintern Abbey', I locate in this alternative sense of hallowed ground a quieter resonance with Wordsworth's poetry, and suggest that Byron's explicit engagement with Wordsworth in 'Churchill's Grave' is informed by and informs his response to the space of the grave in third canto of *Childe Harold*.⁴³

When Byron published 'Churchill's Grave' in *The Prisoner of Chillon and other poems* (1816), he left out an accompanying note. The note, like the

⁴³ In doing so, I follow Jane Stabler's suggestion, in her nuanced discussion of Byron's response to *The Excursion*, that '[a]lthough "High mountains are a feeling" was the site of perceived overlap between Wordsworth and Byron, the two poets' fiercest struggle over the field of English poetry takes place, not in the mountains, but in a graveyard, taking their debate about poetic identity and independence into the company of Shakespeare's Hamlet and the "storied urn or animated dust" of Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard".' See 'Byron and *The Excursion*', *The Wordsworth Circle* 45.2 (2014), 137-147, p. 138. My reading adds a new dimension to Stabler's by attending to moments of coalescence at the grave-side, rather than contest. In *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), Stephen Cheeke suggests a fundamental difference between Byron's concern for 'the materialism of souvenir collecting and lapidary inscription . . . [and] the inscripted landscapes of human history', and a contrary impulse 'to discover a freedom in wandering over "Eternity", or belonging nowhere', which he locates in the 'pseudo-Wordsworthianism for which the canto is famous'. See p. 75. I depart from Cheeke by identifying a genuine engagement with Wordsworth in both aspects of the poem.

unpublished prose Preface to *Don Juan*, is in its very form a parody of Wordsworth's predilection to offer explanations or justifications for his poetry, and in its content provided a glance at Byron's relationship to Wordsworth as one of mixed reverence and aversion:

The following poem (as most that I have endeavoured to write) is founded on a fact; and this detail is an attempt at a serious imitation of the style of a great poet—its beauties and its defects; I say, the *style* for <to> the thoughts I claim as my own. In this, if there be anything ridiculous, let it be attributed to me <and not> at least as much as to Mr. Wordsworth, of whom there can exist few greater admirers or deplorers than myself [. . .]⁴⁴

In a poem that is pre-eminently about fame and memory—'The Glory and the Nothing of a Name' (43), as Byron has it in the poem's final line—the poet's choice to erase Wordsworth's name in the published text is, perhaps, a mark of the anxiety over remembering that emerges in the poem. Wordsworth's style, as one of 'beauties' and 'defects', renders 'glory' and 'nothing' on the material of the page, as of the gravestone. Moreover, invoking Wordsworth's style invokes the poet himself and layers 'Churchill's Grave' with competing names, which beg questions of Byron's own fame and of his physical and figurative closeness to both Churchill and to Wordsworth.

The note suggests a level of imitation that is missing from the poem itself. The Wordsworthian subtitle—'Churchill's Grave, A Fact Literally Rendered'—recalls 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill, A True Story' or 'Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman, With an incident in which he was concerned'; however, as Peter Murphy suggests, 'it is not exactly like either', and Byron's claim to be 'literally rendering a fact recalls Wordsworth's methods in a broad way' without precisely fitting the

⁴⁴ BCPW, IV, p. 447.

poem, which does not seem to offer something onto which to pin ‘fact’.⁴⁵ Like many of the poems of *Lyrical Ballads*, ‘Churchill’s Grave’ is a tale of an encounter that is intentionally humble or humbling to the poet, and which concludes with an admonishing address to the reader. Nevertheless, the lesson is aggressively asserted in a manner at odds with Wordsworth’s. As Stabler has observed, in this poem Byron ‘fail[s] to catch Wordsworth’s voice’: the poet reproduces such Wordsworthian-sounding expressions as ‘neglected turf and quiet stone’ (5), ‘homely phrase’ (38), and ‘deep thought, and . . . soften’d eye’ (40); yet, as in the poem’s subtitle, these words only vaguely evoke Wordsworth’s linguistic register.⁴⁶ Imitation successfully gives way to the parodic at points in the poem, as in Byron’s perversion of the Wordsworthian ‘nook’, a word which he removes from the sense of a protected idyll to be reemployed as the ‘avaricious’ (33) space of his pocket. Byron’s ‘nook’ is ghosted by the greedy despoliation of the ‘shady nook’ of ‘Nutting’; where Wordsworth shook trees, Byron shakes coins, and the moralising experience is intentionally travestied as a monetary transaction. Nevertheless, the following aside—‘Ye smile,/ I see ye, ye profane ones!’ (36-37)—is as unskilfully Wordsworthian as any of the attempts to render Wordsworth’s rustic diction.

Murphy argues that ‘Wordsworth is produced as the subject of the poem and then simply pushed aside with a snort, pushed aside by a recognizably Byronic reflection on fame, and on the general inadequacy of being remembered.’⁴⁷ He suggests that ‘[t]he Sexton, in this respect, is a representative recollector, and the

⁴⁵ Peter T. Murphy, ‘Glory and Nothing: Byron Remembers Wordsworth’, *Studies in Romanticism* 50.4 (2011), 661-683, p. 674.

⁴⁶ Stabler, ‘Byron and *The Excursion*’, p. 141.

⁴⁷ Murphy, ‘Byron Remembers Wordsworth’, p. 677.

little story of Byron's interaction with the Sexton is a drama of remembering.'⁴⁸ That the interaction is a drama of remembering is surely true, yet the Sexton is not representative so much as a figure deeply inflected with Byron's response to Wordsworthian thought. The figure of the sexton appears only three times in Wordsworth's verse, though the poet spends ample enough time in churchyards and contemplating graves.⁴⁹ The figure of the pastor is more often to be found alongside the poet in the graveyard, an encounter portrayed nowhere more fully than in *The Excursion*. Indeed, when we meet the Pastor in Book V of *The Excursion*, his presence as a figure of interment has been quietly prefigured and passed over in the brief appearance of the Sexton, who enters the church 'With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung;/ To be deposited, for future need,/ In their appointed place' (V.220-222). While the character of the Poet is undisturbed by this figure of thoughtless and dutiful industry, for the Solitary, the Sexton's very thoughtlessness, encapsulated in his careless humming, makes him an agent of uncomfortable disruption. He is a 'self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,/ Death's Hireling', one 'who scoops out his Neighbour's grave,/ Or wraps an old Acquaintance up in clay,/ As unconcerned as when he plants a tree' (V.232-235).

The connection between grave-digging and gardening is made in Wordsworth's earlier poem, 'To a Sexton', which was first published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). The sexton, described as 'the warden/ Of a far superior garden' (23-24), is directed to take heed of the 'gardener's pride' (17) in grouping flowers by family. As in the later passage of *The Excursion*, the sexton here is a figure of

⁴⁸ Murphy, 'Byron Remembers Wordsworth', p. 677.

⁴⁹ The figure is the addressee in the poem 'To a Sexton', first published in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, he makes a brief appearance in *The Excursion*, and 'the lonely sexton's spade' is movingly evoked in one of the sonnets of the 1822 *Ecclesiastical Sketches*.

carelessness, taken to task by the poet for separating the bones of family members after death, instead of letting them ‘all in quiet lie’ (26). The poet instructs the sexton to ‘Mark the spot to which I point!’ (9), where ‘mark’ is used as ‘observe’, ‘pay attention to’; yet, in a poem that is concerned with a grave-yard, the alternative sense of mark-making closely shadows this line. Indeed, the poet’s authority to chastise comes from his ability to ‘Mark the spot’ with his words, a living epitaph.

Byron adopts the image of the sexton as a ‘Gardener’ (8) of the graveyard, and with it Wordsworth’s unsettling sense of carelessness. Gazing upon the ‘neglected turf and quiet stone,/ With name no clearer than the names unknown,/ Which lay unread around it’ (5-7), the poet asks the sexton to confirm that this is the grave ‘of him who blazed/ The comet of a season’ (1-2). The main crux of ‘Churchill’s Grave’ is that the sexton cannot give a satisfactory answer, for he ‘had not the digging of this grave’ (14), and Byron, unlike Wordsworth, is unable to independently mark the spot. The undercurrent of anxiety in the poem lies in the pervasive sense of dislocation and indistinction—the possibility that it might not be the exact grave, and the fear that the dead cannot be successfully exhumed by memory. Byron’s choice of language suggests the difficulty of the sexton’s attempt to ‘extricate remembrance from the clay’ (22), from an earth that erases its record.

Byron seems to respond to two images in Book VII of *The Excursion*, which epitomise much of Wordsworth’s approach to death in the poem. As part of the figural exhumations that take place in the graveyard, Wordsworth imagines the interring of a Dalesman not yet dead:

An unelaborate Stone
 May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
 A century shall hear his name pronounced,
 With images attendant on the sound;

Then shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night[.] (VII.371-376)

This ‘unelaborate’ memorial anticipates the next one we are presented with, a ‘monumental Stone’ that ‘preserves’ the ‘name’ of the dead man, and ‘unambitiously relates’ his history (VII.489-490). Byron catches at Wordsworth’s ‘un-’ prefixes in the ‘unknown’ and ‘unread’ names of the ‘quiet stone[s]’, but cannot find Wordsworth’s simple confidence. Notably, neither dalesmen are given names in *The Excursion*, for it is, as both Wordsworth and Byron recognise, the act of naming that is important here. Esther Schor has suggestively explored the processes of interment and disinterment in *The Excursion*, in which the ‘baring’ and ‘bearing’ of the dead reveals their value and conceptually affords them imaginative life.⁵⁰ The graveside exhumations of the poem hold open channels of communication between the living and the dead in an ongoing process of knowing and naming that maintains the bonds of community and memory. Wordsworth is not perturbed by the gathering twilight in the way that Byron is; Byron’s image of the blazing comet and his suggestion that the sexton catches ‘As ’twere the twilight of a former sun’ (26) attempt to go beyond the ‘utter night’ that Wordsworth suggests is inevitable. Nevertheless, they are disrupted in ‘Churchill’s Grave’ by their shadowy opposites. The drama of remembering in the poem is that the memory of the sexton may be false, prompted by money as opposed to reverence. Within the sexton’s ‘natural homily,/ In which there was Obscurity and Fame,/ The Glory and the Nothing of a Name’ (41-43) is the possibility that there may, in fact, be only obscurity and nothing.

⁵⁰ See Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially pp. 151-195.

In *The Excursion*, Book V, the Solitary is disturbed by the ‘subterraneous magazine of bones’ (V.341) on which he stands. Byron shares in this unsettledness in the stanzas on Morat in *Childe Harold*, Canto III, at which field of battle the poet discovers a ‘tombless host’,

A bony heap, through ages to remain,
 Themselves their monument;—the Stygian coast
 Unsepulchered they roam’d, and shriek’d each wandering ghost.
 (III.604-607)

Philip Shaw observes that this charnel ground is a familiar *topos* of the poem: ‘From the desecrated mounds of Marathon to the shallow graves of Waterloo, the grounds that Byron writes of are alike in their propensity to disinter the matter that ought properly to remain buried.’⁵¹ In the note to stanza 63, Byron tempers the gothic character of the poetry with the material, the matter-of-fact, observing how the bones of the soldiers have ‘diminished’ through being carried away by the Burgundians and the less noble Swiss.⁵² As in ‘Churchill’s Grave’, Byron is concerned with indistinction and dislocation, the possibility that things might be lost and records effaced, which forms the justification for his own act of erasure:

Of these relics I ventured to bring away as much as may have made a quarter of a hero, for which sole excuse is, that if I had not, the next passer by might have perverted them to worse uses than the careful preservation which I intend for them.⁵³

In Wordsworth, entropy is held at bay through continual reinterment; in Byron entropy is ever encroaching.

⁵¹ Philip Shaw, *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 185. Shaw reads the third canto of *Childe Harold* as engaged in the act of questioning the politics of burial and commemoration. See pp. 178-191.

⁵² *BCPW*, II, p. 307.

⁵³ *BCPW*, II, p. 307.

At the edges of the verse in *Childe Harold III*, Byron returns to (and turns over) his encounters with sites of death and the space of the grave. The note on the death of Byron's cousin, Major Howard, at the battle of Waterloo, restlessly traverses the field of battle, which forms the first geo-specific site of the third canto. The verse shifts from a dramatic present-tense portrait of Harold standing 'upon this place of skulls' (III.154), where no 'colossal bust' (III.147) or 'column trophied for triumphal show' (III.148) marks the scene of bloodshed, to a remembrance of the poet, 'stood beneath the fresh green tree' (III.264), which 'living waves' (III.265) above the spot where Major Howard fell. Even as it holds the poet in a reflexive posture of mourning, the verse troubles this posture. The imagined grief of the forest of Ardennes that 'waves' (III.235) proleptically over the 'unreturning brave' (III.238) as they head into battle in stanza 27, 'Dewy with nature's tear-drops' (III.236), cannot be revived a few stanzas later in the face of nature's seemingly unfeeling fecundity. The field of battle becomes, under the feet of the poet, only a field:

But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring. (III.264-270)

The breathless alexandrine works against the image of fertility and abundance, extending in a gesture of loss, not fullness. The poet strives to bridge the gap in the repetition of 'I turn'd' that begins the next stanza, yet this too points to absence, as the poet turns 'to thee, to thousands, of whom each/ And one as all a ghastly gap did make/ In his own kind and kindred' (III.271-273); the chasm widens.

In the space between these two stanzas falls Byron's loco-specific note, which does more than offer a supplementary, tour-like account of the poet's visit to the battlefield. The note bears repeating in full:

My guide from Mont St. Jean over the field seemed intelligent and accurate. The place where Major Howard fell was not far from two tall and solitary trees (there was a third cut down, or shivered in the battle) which stand a few yards from each other at a pathway's side.—Beneath these he died and was buried. The body has since been removed to England. A small hollow for the present marks where it lay, but will probably soon be effaced; the plough has been upon it, and the grain is.

After pointing out the different spots where Picton and other gallant men had perished; the guide said, "here Major Howard lay; I was near him when wounded." I told him my relationship, and he seemed then still more anxious to point out the particular spot and circumstances. The place is one of the most marked in the field from the peculiarity of the two trees abovementioned.

I went on horseback twice over the field, comparing it with my recollection of similar scenes. As a plain, Waterloo seems marked but for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination: I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Mantinea, Leuctra, Chæronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St. Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little but a better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except perhaps the last mentioned.⁵⁴

Byron is preoccupied with the precise location of Major Howard's now absent body, turning over in these lines 'the place', 'the particular spot' in which it once lay. The tree that causes Byron such consternation in the poem appears in the note as a geospatial marker (or two such markers) on the map of the landscape, that may be translated from the earth back onto the page. The note is eminently Wordsworthian in its impulse to create objects of landscape as bearers of memory, record-holders of the past and personal loss. Byron is concerned, like Wordsworth is in 'Michael', to recover a personal history, one which, through the interlinking of place and memory, might endure beyond the devastating experience of death.

⁵⁴ *BCPW*, II, pp. 302-303.

Indeed, perhaps through an accident of place, Byron seems to hear and to rehearse the conclusion of ‘Michael’; the final lines of Wordsworth’s poem record the changing landscape, the slow erasure of the visible markers of the story the poet has told:

The Cottage which was nam’d The Evening Star
Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left
That grew beside their Door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Gill. (485-491)

As in Wordsworth’s poem, Byron’s description of the spot moves between what remains behind and what is being, or has been, effaced by the march of time. Yet, where Wordsworth is unperturbed by the alteration of the landscape—the image of the ploughshare turning over the ground is a continuation of the rural industry that the poem celebrates—Byron is much less secure. As in ‘Churchill’s Grave’, there is a pervasive anxiety about the enduring connection of memory and place. The sense of encroaching entropy, which is present in ‘Churchill’s Grave’ in the pervasive concern that the mound is not well enough marked, that it might in fact not be the grave that the poet thinks it is, is present in the note in Byron’s uneasy treading of the same ground. The note is peculiarly repetitive: it is not just the guide who seems ‘still more anxious to point out the particular spot’, but the poet too. Yet the ‘spot’ is, in fact, a physical rendering of absence—a ‘small hollow’—and therefore particularly vulnerable to the turning over of the ground. The absent body is replaced by the memory of that body in the guide’s account, which tends toward the epitaphic: ‘here Major Howard lay’ is shadowed by the traditional gravestone

inscription ‘Here lies...’. Like the hollow in the ground that will soon be effaced, the guide functions as a transient marker in this landscape.

Byron attempts to read the field, to interpret its marks and to record them meaningfully on the page, but the language of the note troubles this record-making. Where Wordsworth is recurrently concerned to reassert his identity as a native, one to whom the landscape is familiar—and therefore readable—Byron is only too aware that he is a stranger here. This is made apparent in the opening line of the note, which seeks to confer authority and trustworthiness on the guide but gets caught up in the ambiguity of ‘seemed’, and in the concluding paragraph, in which Byron seeks to confer a corresponding authority on himself. Here again his practiced eye is made uncertain in this landscape that only ‘*seems* marked out for the scene of some great action’. Byron’s reading of the field of battle bears upon his reading of the ‘particular spot’: in both cases there is the possibility that what seems ‘marked’ is ‘mere imagination’. Byron responds to the landscape in flux; the poet riding across the field on horseback does not restore the ground as Wordsworth does, but churns it up.⁵⁵ Byron’s record is of the things that pass, not of those that remain; though placed within parentheses, his observation that there was a third tree, ‘cut down, or shivered in the battle’, is a paradoxically absent but indelible sign that this is a landscape in which things might be lost.

The epitaphic memory of place and the place of memory, of remembering, is foregrounded in the notes not just at the moments in which Byron contemplates an engraved monument—as in the memorials for Marceau and Hoche at Coblenz

⁵⁵ In a peculiar doubling the note recalls Byron’s meditation on the battlefield of Marathon in Canto II: ‘What sacred trophy marks the hallow’d ground,/ Recording Freedom’s smile and Asia’s tear?/ The rifled urn, the violated mound,/ The dust thy courser’s hoof, rude stranger! spurns around’ (II.851-854).

and in the epitaph for Julia Apinula—or the lack thereof, but also when he is confronted by the verbal inscription of place.⁵⁶ The passage of the poem that is centred on Lake Geneva, and which contains Byron’s meditations on Rousseau, is one such place where the act of naming and the importance of a name comes under consideration. Although Byron claims that had Rousseau ‘never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes’, the note is nevertheless concerned with the lasting impression Rousseau has made on this place, what the poet describes as the “local habitations” he has given to “airy nothings.”⁵⁷ Byron’s allusion to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is tinged with a certain sense of irony; it is not the ‘airy nothings’ that have become insubstantial, that are passing away, but the landscape to which they have been coupled. It is a different kind of loss than is felt at the erasure of the site of death, the un-memorialising of the dead, but it bears a connected sense of the vulnerability of place and memory, even of poetry. The indignation that Byron expresses against the larcenous Swiss post-boys who carry off the bones of the Burgundians ‘to sell for knife handles’ is felt here also, in Byron’s suggestion that the loss of Rousseau’s landscape is a form of despoliation: ‘[t]he Prior of Great St. Bernard has cut down some of his [Rousseau’s] woods for the sake of a few casks of wine’.⁵⁸ Indeed, the accusation is made more explicit in the paragraph immediately preceding it, in which Byron lambasts the ‘brutal selfishness’ of the monks who have cut down the trees ‘that the ground might be inclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition.’⁵⁹ Buonaparte receives less of Byron’s ire for his act of

⁵⁶ For the notes on these memorials, see *BCPW*, II, p. 305 and p. 308.

⁵⁷ *BCPW*, II, pp. 312-313.

⁵⁸ *BCPW*, II, p. 307, 313.

⁵⁹ *BCPW*, II, p. 313.

levelling ‘part of the rocks of Meillerie in improving the road to Simplon’—the traveller in Byron cannot help but concede that ‘[t]he road is an excellent one’—yet, Buonoparte’s act remains coupled to that of the plundering monks.⁶⁰ The suggestion that ‘[l]a route vaut mieux que les souvenirs’ (‘the road is worth more than the memories’) cannot be upheld by the poet who is invested in the reciprocal correspondence of place and text, in the way in which places are inscribed into a text and, in turn, in the way in which such text becomes a marker for place—an idea which is reinforced in Byron’s layering of a particular textual journey and his own memory of crossing Lake Geneva from Meillerie to St. Gingo in the midst of a lake storm: ‘[b]y a coincidence which I could not regret, it was over this very part of the lake that Rousseau has driven the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar to Meillerie for shelter during a tempest.’⁶¹

As in Byron’s note on the field of Waterloo, a Wordsworthian sense of memory and place surfaces in the account of his journey across Lake Geneva and its surrounding landscape. Byron draws to our attention the absent ‘Bosquet de Julie’, or ‘Julie’s Grove’—the wood ‘long ago cut down’ by the local monks—on account of the survival of its name: ‘it is remarkable that . . . the inhabitants of Clarens still point out the spot where its trees stood, calling it by the name which consecrated and survived them.’⁶² Like Wordsworth in the ‘Poems on the Naming of Places’—in which a connection to place is forged and maintained through acts of naming—or in other poems of the *Lyrical Ballads* like ‘Michael’ or ‘Hart-Leap Well’ in which the names endowed to landscape markers are passed down from

⁶⁰ *BCPW*, II, p. 313.

⁶¹ *BCPW*, II, p. 312.

⁶² *BCPW*, II, p. 313.

generation to generation, here the community bears the name of the wood. Nevertheless, there is an important difference to be noted between Wordsworth's and Byron's celebrations of place-names. Wordsworth hears a local voice and identifies himself as sharing a local language—in 'Michael', for example, the ideological impetus behind the poet's description of the oak tree, which 'Thence in our rustic dialect was call'd/ The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears' (178-179), is founded in the mythos he creates of his own belonging within a community that shares a past and a future, and which continues to bear both the names and (his)stories which bind the members of the community to each other. For Byron, however, the voices he hears are those of other writers and the place names he is at pains to sustain are literary ones. In the note as in the poem, Byron endows the landscape of Clarens with a transcendental impulse—'a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity'—that, he asserts, would 'not the less have belonged to such scenes' had Rousseau neither written, nor indeed lived; yet, this only serves to create a keener sense of that which is temporal, which is at risk of erasure.⁶³ Retracing the Rousseauian scenes in the note becomes a form of preservation, both of the 'local habitations' and the 'airy nothings' that come together in the utterance or inscription of the name. After all, for Byron, Julie's Grove is not worthiest of preservation because of its beauty, but because of its consecrating name; Julie, and indeed Rousseau, make this particular spot of earth sacred.

The potency of naming places is felt again, six stanzas on, when Byron addresses 'Lausanne! and Ferney!' as 'the abodes/ Of names which unto you

⁶³ *BCPW*, II, p. 312.

bequeath'd a name' (III.977-978). The locales bear the weight of the fame and recognition bequeathed to them by the writers whose names are present only in the notes to the poem: Gibbon and Voltaire. It is a participatory gesture as Byron claims a familiarity with person and place: he is part of a particular community of readers, but so too has he stood on a particular spot, in a particular landscape. It is also a gesture of preservation. When the poet addresses Lausanne and Ferney, (as he does earlier with 'Clarens! sweet Clarens!' (III.923)), he has a particular understanding of the name and its associations in mind: they are brought within the realms of the verse not primarily as geographical places, but as literary locales. A similar impulse stands behind the poet's naming of the forest of Ardennes when on the field of Waterloo. In a note he explains:

[t]he wood of Soignies is supposed to be a remnant of the "forest of Ardennes," famous in Boiardo's Orlando, and immortal in Shakespeare's "As you like it." It is also celebrated in Tacitus as being the spot of successful defence by the Germans against the Roman encroachments.—I have ventured to adopt the name connected with nobler associations than those of mere slaughter.⁶⁴

The geographical locality of Soignies is displaced by the imagined, literary locale of the Ardennes forest, as the trees are transplanted onto the page. Byron deliberately regrows the remnant forest in his verse, turning away from the historical to the literary and the 'immortal'. It is a precarious naming, however, as the last line of the note turns less to Tacitus than it does to the field of Waterloo itself. This note comes immediately above that on Major Howard, where the idea of an immortalised remnant is made fragile again.

⁶⁴ *BCPW*, II, p. 302.

The same impulse to preserve that is displayed in Byron's meditations on monuments emerges in the concluding passage of the poem, in the concern for remembered names, and the acts of naming that the poet participates in. As already discussed in relation to 'Tintern Abbey', in the final stanzas of the canto, Byron engages in a last act of naming, by invoking his daughter: 'My daughter! with thy name this song begun—/ My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end—' (III.1067-1068). Ada is to be the poet's living memorial, a figure who resists the entropy of the grave by exhuming the poet's voice rather than his body. That the aerial voice, rather than the material body, is presented as the enduring monument is important for more than poetic reasons. For the final stanzas are a reminder of Byron's dislocation from Ada, of the knowledge that they do not share the same ground. Significantly, Ada's name does not actually materialise; she is the absent presence of the canto's final stanzas. In the concluding lines of the canto, Byron reveals the fantasy and fragility of the epitaphic memory he has proposed:

O'er the sea,
 And from the mountains where I now respire,
 Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
 As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me! (III.1099-1102)

The lines reduce Byron's voice to breath or breeze and, rendered in the conditional, suggest only an imagined reality. For Byron, as for Wordsworth, it matters where and when naming takes place, and it matters with whom.

1818: *Don Juan*

If Byron's parody of Wordsworth in 'Churchill's Grave' blends comic satire with a sense of reverence, in *Don Juan*, Wordsworth is introduced, it would seem, only as a target to be lampooned. Stabler reminds us that

[i]t is important not to lose sight of the extent to which Byron expressed high regard for Wordsworth before 1818, when his attitude hardened, probably under the influence of Shelley's news from Peacock in July about the extent of Wordsworth's campaigning with Lord Lonsdale against Brougham.⁶⁵

The mix of praise and censure that marks Byron's personal remarks on Wordsworth before 1818, his review of the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*, and even 'Churchill's Grave', has, by the composition of *Don Juan*, flattened into outright hostility. The shift in tone and intention emerges in Byron's re-engagement with Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge during the Pope-Bowles controversy, in which Byron takes aim at the 'Naturals' and their poetical systems.⁶⁶ Although Bowles is the primary target in the *Letter to John Murray*, the 'Lakers' come under closer scrutiny in an addendum to the letter, written shortly after though not published until 1832. Notably, Byron's arraignment of the 'Lake School' is tempered by his greater censure of the 'Cockney School'. Byron condemns the 'suburban' poets' lack of personal experience of the places and objects that are the subjects of their verses; as with the Lake poets, it is their geographical limitations that Byron finds so problematic. He allows that 'Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge have rambled over half Europe, and seen Nature in most of her varieties'—although he cannot

⁶⁵ Stabler, 'Byron and *The Excursion*', p. 139.

⁶⁶ See *Letter to John Murray Esq^{re}* in Andrew Nicholson (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 120-160.

help but add in an aside the disclaimer that he thinks ‘they have occasionally not used her very well’—and therefore may write with an authority that the London poets lack.⁶⁷ While the designation of the mode of travel as ‘rambling’ serves to limit the sense of travel that ‘over half Europe’ seems to imply, this is a depiction of movement that Byron resolutely refuses in *Don Juan*. The earlier suggestion that the Lakers ‘whine about nature because they live in Cumberland’, with its marriage of place and bad poetry, is closer to the criticism that forms the top note of Byron’s satire in *Don Juan: the Lake Poets’* complacent provinciality.⁶⁸

As Peter W. Graham has well observed, ‘insularity in all its protean shapes’ is a key theme of *Don Juan*.⁶⁹ Wordsworth forms one of those shapes, as a figure who is recurrently held up by Byron as the embodiment of insularity, and so the very opposite of the poet and a poetics that resist closure, narrowness, and fixity. In Canto III of *Don Juan*, which will form part of the discussion below, Byron decries Wordsworth’s ‘drowzy frowzy poem’, *The Excursion*, for being ‘Writ in a manner which is my aversion’ (III.847-848); the satirical thrust of the couplet rhyme, which encompasses the whole of *The Excursion*, not just its style, is followed, a stanza later, by a reminder of Byron’s counter-poetics: ‘But let me to my Story: I must own/ If I have any fault, it is digression—’ (III.857-858). Byron’s ‘aversion’ is significant, as Stabler remarks because ‘it signals a “turning away” or a counter-response to Wordsworth’s and the Lake School’s “conversion”’, as Byron describes

⁶⁷ *Byron: Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 156.

⁶⁸ *Byron: Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 156.

⁶⁹ Peter W. Graham, *‘Don Juan’ and Regency England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p. 12.

it in the sixth stanza of the Dedication; this ideological divergence plays out as a textual turning away in the geography of the page.⁷⁰

Attention to the satire against Wordsworth reveals how contest or enmity animate the spatial poetics in Byron's verse. In critical discussions, there is a long history of considering this later phase of Byron and Wordsworth's relationship in terms of opposition, the antithesis between the cosmopolitan poet and the parochial one, yet there is another strand of engagement in *Don Juan* that has been less attended to.⁷¹ In a poem saturated with historical, cultural, and literary echoes and allusions, Byron's allusive practice regarding Wordsworth, unsurprisingly, goes beyond satirical ripostes. Attention to the quieter echoes of Wordsworth's poetry that swell and fall in the narrative, and in moments of digression that intentionally divert us to the poet behind the verse, deepens our understanding of Wordsworth's creative influence on Byron—one that extends beyond the summer of 1816. A Wordsworthian undersong is often audible when Byron approaches the theme of solitude, and I will turn to these echoes in the final section of the chapter, having first explored the satire, in order to draw out the subtle ways in which a strand of Wordsworthian spatial poetics not only animates Byron's verse through antagonism, but is woven within the texture of the verse itself.

⁷⁰ Stabler, 'Byron and *The Excursion*', p. 144.

⁷¹ Josh Gidding repeats this general distinction in "'The Thorn' in Byron's Side: Wordsworth and the 'Preface' to *Don Juan*", *The Byron Journal* 24 (1996), 52-58, in which he writes that Byron registered Wordsworth's formative effect on his poetic development 'by responding to Wordsworth's poetry in two different ways, corresponding to two different phases of his poetic engagement with Wordsworth: experimentation (most notably in the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*) and opposition (in *Don Juan*)', p. 52.

Pond Poets: The Space of Satire in Don Juan

Although addressed to Robert Southey, the Dedication to *Don Juan* is a study in satire not only of the Poet Laureate of the time but of the ‘School’ of poets he was deemed to belong to and from whom Byron most sought to distinguish himself. As in *The Letter to John Murray*, Southey is introduced to us in the first stanza as one of ‘the Lakers’ (6), a collective term for the famous poet-residents of the Lake District that situates Byron’s critique firmly in the vein of early nineteenth-century Whig satiric criticism, and particularly that—as has been oft noted—of Francis Jeffrey’s pejorative assessments in the *Edinburgh Review*.⁷² As in Byron’s earlier *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, ‘gentle Coleridge’ receives the lightest critique in the Dedication and indeed in the poem as a whole, while Wordsworth perhaps comes second only to Southey and the English Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh, in the strength of the younger poet’s censure.

Byron is concerned to locate the Lake Poets in a number of layered ways.⁷³ The collective term, ‘Lakers’, signifies for Byron a moral and poetic position as well as a geographical location. The younger poet metaphorically assumes the moral high-ground in his critique of what he perceives to be the insular, inward-looking nature of the three poets connected with the Lakes, the ‘provincial gang of

⁷² For a history of the use and coinage of the terms ‘Lake School’, ‘Lake Poets’ and ‘Lakers’ in contemporary reviews of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, see Peter A. Cook, ‘Chronology of the “Lake School” Argument: Some Revisions’, *Review of English Studies* 28.110 (1977), 175–81. For an important discussion of Jeffrey’s response to Wordsworth and his influence on the Dedication and first canto of *Don Juan* see Paul H. Fry, ‘Jeffreyism, Byron’s Wordsworth, and the Nonhuman in Nature’, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 42-59, and pp. 56-59 in particular.

⁷³ See Paul Magnuson’s discussion of location in the Dedication in *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 122-166. Magnuson is primarily concerned with Byron’s opposition to Southey.

scribblers' as he terms them in the discarded prose Preface to *Don Juan*, who 'by dint of long seclusion/ From better company have kept [their] own/ At Keswick' (33-35).⁷⁴ The unsignalled pause in the enjambement lingers on the state of 'seclusion', keeping the reader from the 'better company' that Byron caustically suggests the Lake Poets lack. Although, in fact, only Southey was living at Keswick at the time of Byron's writing the first canto of *Don Juan* in 1818, the younger poet's decision singly to name this town serves to reinforce the sense of locational limitation that he attacks. For Byron, the Lakers' political and poetical shortcomings inhere in their geographical location, which provides the grounds for the spatial antithesis that impels much of the subsequent satire and is expressed in the Dedication as the famous wish that Wordsworth and company might 'change [their] lakes for ocean' (40). Byron locates himself in spatial opposition to the 'Lakers'; if they are provincial in place and attitude, Byron reminds the reader, in stanza 16, of his own cosmopolitanism, his identity as a traveller, and his geographical location in the politically and poetically alternative space of Italy.

From the opening stanza of the Dedication, Byron is concerned with various constructions of place. When he questions what Southey, the 'epic renegade!' (5), is doing 'With all the Lakers in and out of place' (6), he is critiquing the Lake Poets' political position in a particularly rich spatial manner. Byron draws on the meaning of 'place' as office, or official position, especially that, as the OED informs us, of a government minister, directing attention to Southey's Laureateship, just as he will

⁷⁴ *BCPW*, V, p. 85. Graham observes the oblique accusation of intellectual (and perhaps other) incest in this stanza, which, he suggests, may be considered as 'a particular variety of provinciality'. 'Don Juan' and *Regency England*, p. 22.

pick up on Wordsworth's 'place in the Excise' (46) a few stanzas later.⁷⁵ Taken as part of the phrase 'in and out of place', Byron foregrounds the shifting political allegiance of the Lake Poets from their early radicalism to regrettable conservatism: the Lakers are both 'in place', by virtue of the political party in power, and 'out of place' in that they do not, at least in Byron's eyes, belong there. The phrase also deepens the perceived inconstancy of the Lake Poets, suggesting as it does erratic shifts in position and a certain laughable inability to make up one's mind: for Byron, the very slipperiness of the political turncoat defines precisely the wrong sort of mobility.⁷⁶ Following immediately from the locationally specific 'Lakers', the idea that the older poets are 'out of place' is also associated with a geographical region; in Byron's lines the Lake District is an unsuitable place in which to be a poet. Byron plays with the multiplicity of meanings inherent in the term 'place'; in the Dedication it is a physical location and a figurative one, both political and importantly poetic. If Wordsworth as a political renegade has 'a place in the Excise', as a poet, he is still begrudgingly afforded a place 'on the immortal hill' (48), Parnassus. In the Dedication, Byron cannot quite displace Wordsworth altogether.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ See OED, 'Place', entry 14, which contains itself a quotation from Canto XVI of *Don Juan*, stanza 72, line 620.

⁷⁶ See Jerome J. McGann, 'Byron, Mobility, and the Poetics of Historical Ventriloquism' in James Soderholm (ed.), *Byron and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 36-52 for an account of Byron's conflicted presentation of poetic mobility. McGann argues that, as the artist of mobility, Southey appears as Byron's 'dark double' (p. 42). He suggests that, for Byron, Southey embodies the negative dimension of mobility, the insincerity or artfulness of the poet who courts literary fashions (like political power) for poetic advancement. Yet, although Byron resolutely affirms that he has never lost his 'bluff and blue' like the political apostates he reviles, his portrait of Southey's changeability, especially in *Don Juan*, in important ways reflects back his own features.

⁷⁷ In a journal entry of November 24, 1813, Byron draws a triangle representing the hierarchy of contemporary poets: Walter Scott is held up as 'undoubtedly the Monarch of Parnassus', while Rogers, Moore and Campbell, and Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge, consecutively compose the layers between Scott and 'The Many'. *BLJ*, III, p. 219-220. This pictorial rendering is repeated in verse a decade later when Byron wrote Canto XI, stanzas 57-62 of *Don Juan*. Although the

The mountain Parnassus does not recur in *Don Juan*, as it does in *Childe Harold*, where, as Cheeke has shown, it appears as both ‘an historically significant place, and as the sign for historical and literary significance’, and discloses its authenticity through the poet’s experience of being ‘on the spot’.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, in Canto XI, Byron returns to the image of the mountain as a way of figuring the hierarchical place of the poets. He suggests that ‘Sion’s hill’ (XI.451) has replaced the mountain Parnassus as the home of poets and muses at this particular moment of literary history, following a profusion of religious and Biblical epics and dramas written by ‘poets almost clergymen, or wholly’ (XI.452). Both poets and muses are characterised by the pedestrian, able only to ‘ramble’ (XI.451) on this hill in a manner that removes all sense of a vertical quest for renewed or expansive vision. The Rev. George Croly is singled out amongst the poet-clergy as one who has encumbered Pegasus with stilts, a ridiculous grounding of the winged steed who appears in the poem most often during moments of digression that deliberately foreground the poem’s mode of operation and associate Pegasus with both the poet-narrator and with Byron himself.⁷⁹

verse form allows for a less rigid structure, it is, in essence, the same. Byron qualifies this representation in a letter to John Murray of 15 September 1817, in which he levels the poets into one ‘lower Empire’, including himself, above which only Crabbe and Rogers are raised; he writes: ‘I am convinced the more I think of it—that he [Moore] and *all* of us—Scott—Southey—Wordsworth—Moore—Campbell—I—are all in the wrong—one as much as another—that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system—or systems.’ *BLJ*, V, p. 265. He will reinforce a sense of the community of poets in a letter to Thomas Moore of February 2, 1818, in which he reassures Moore that if ‘*all* of “*us youth*” are on ‘a wrong tack’, they do still ‘sail well’. Byron makes a point of not separating Wordsworth and company from the other poets—‘When I say *our*, I mean *all* (Lakers included), except the postscript of the Augustans’—an admittance that he will not allow in the public verse of *Don Juan*. *BLJ*, VI, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Cheeke, *Byron and Place*, p. 54; see pp. 42-56.

⁷⁹ See for example Canto XII, Stanza 39. Consider also Byron’s ironic comment in the Dedication that he wanders ‘with pedestrian Muses’ (57) and ‘Contend[s] not with you on the winged steed’ (58), where the ‘you’ refers to the Lake Poets. The declaration serves to position *Don Juan* in a mode of writing that is intentionally at odds with the style and subject of the Lake Poets’ verse, even as the irony reminds the reader that it is Byron, and not Wordsworth, who is writing the epic

Byron's critique of the field of poetry in the early decades of the nineteenth century is further invested with the spatio-political through the language of empire. Byron mocks the idea of 'the "greatest living poet"' (XI.433)—or all 'eighty' of them according to 'every paltry magazine' (XI.431-432)—with the simultaneously serious and self-satiric suggestion that he was once considered 'The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme' (440). Even coupled as it is with perceived loss, the sense of vastness inherent in 'realms' forms an implicit opposition to the narrow lakes and ponds that form the whole of Wordsworth's estate in Byron's estimation. In important ways this is a comment on Byron's own changing reception and the fickle nature of the English reading public, yet it also offers another opportunity for the poet to locate himself spatially in relation to his contemporaries. Scott, Moore, and Campbell appear as poets who reigned 'Before and after' (XI.450) Byron, while Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and Keats, are relegated with the Rev. Croly to the 'literary *lower* Empire' (XI.489). The term '*lower*' is richly inflected; used classically to signify the post-Augustan 'silver age' of literature, it also serves Byron's sense of speaking from both a moral high-ground and the poetic heights of the 'immortal hill'. Although Byron creates a mirroring of his literary career with Napoleon's rise and fall, in one important way he rewrites this narrative: the poet

of the age. In *Don Juan*, as elsewhere, Byron's repeated reminder that he is an accomplished horseman implicitly connects him to the Pegasus of his verse:

Juan retired,—and so will I, until
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.
We have just lit on a 'Heaven-kissing hill,'
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
To take a quiet ride in some green lane. (IX.674-680)

Byron's playful burlesque knowingly mocks his poem's epic pretensions along with sentimental modes of writing, yet the last line—of the canto as well as the stanza—artfully suggests the ease at which the poet-narrator and his Pegasus blend with the physical poet on horseback.

is not sent to some ‘lonely isle’ as the outlawed Emperor but might ‘go’ there (XI.447), a subtle reminder of his self-exile, though here it remains bitterly akin to a form of imprisonment. Byron’s presentation of self-exile throughout *Don Juan* is multi-faceted, at turns offering an enlarged capacity for poetry—he, after all, is able to write the ‘oceans’ to the home-bound poets’ ‘lakes’—and, elsewhere, undeniably troubled: though he claims that ‘were [he] once at home’ he would show the poet-pretenders ‘*what* an intellectual war is’ (XI.494-496), this brazen declaration is underwritten by the knowledge that he is far from home. To not be ‘at home’ is in a distinctive way to be ‘out of place’.

Byron’s conflicted experience of separation from his homeland is expressed with particular force in the early stanzas of the second canto, as Juan’s experience of leaving home is mediated through the poet’s personal recollection of quitting the English coast. Byron claims the identity of the expert seaman rather than the first-time traveller, declaring his familiarity with the sea that Juan will set sail on:

A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
 As I, who’ve crossed it oft, know well enough
 And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
 Flies in one’s face, and makes it weather-tough[.] (II.83-86)

It is a vital encounter with the ocean, evoking the counterpoised sense of mastery and a willing abandonment to the power of the water that Byron conveys earlier in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* Cantos III and VI. Nevertheless, the following stanza unsettles the image of the storm-weathering poet with troubled recollection:

I can’t but say it is an awkward sight
 To see one’s native land receding through
 The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
 Especially when life is rather new:
 I recollect Great Britain’s coast looks white,
 But almost every other country’s blue,
 When gazing on them, mystified by distance,

We enter on our nautical existence. (II.89-96)

The lines emphasise the poet's internal state; the fluid enjambement formally images the spreading expanse of water beheld by the retrospective gaze of the poet, which becomes for him a gulf of separation. The sudden break of the caesura heightens this growing sense of rupture and ushers in a powerful apprehension of loss. The poet is destabilised by the separation from his homeland. His 'nautical existence' is not here characterised by the heroic but by a sense of bewilderment, a momentary unravelling of identity felt in the instant of being 'unmanned' as his experience of a home place becomes 'mystified by distance'. 'Mystified' traverses the space between poet and landscape; at once a description of the poet's own feeling of perplexity, the other sense of the word as imbuing with mystery, or making obscure, is present also, and heightened by the aural echo of 'mist'. Here Byron evokes the image of an indistinct coastline, one that cannot be long held in sight, however desirous.

The poet and Juan's experience of setting sail from their homeland blend in this passage of the poem. Juan, who stands 'bewilder'd, on the deck' (II.97) beholding 'his native Spain receding far' (II.106), mirrors the lone poet taking farewell of the English coast. Of course, Byron was not actually alone, his companions included his servants William Fletcher and Robert Rushton, both of whom had been with him on his last voyage, as well as his newly acquired physician, John Polidori. Nevertheless, here, as in so many other places, the poet courts the image of the solitary traveller. Byron movingly evokes a shared experience of distress; his articulation of Juan's grief is born of the recollection of his own. Of particular force is Byron's description of leaving a homeland for the

first time as ‘A kind of shock that sets one’s heart ajar’ (II.110). In ‘ajar’ Byron masterfully holds in tension conflicting emotions. Conjuring the image of a partially open door or window, Byron suggests the heart’s receptiveness to new experience, a feeling of anticipation. Yet, by the same word, he also signifies the state of being jarred, at odds, out of harmony. To leave home then is to experience internal discord, to be, at one’s core, for better or for worse, destabilised. Byron deliberately undercuts the moment of unsettled contemplation, however, with levity and comic self-deprecation:

I’d weep, but mine is not a weeping Muse,
 And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
 Young men should travel, if but to amuse
 Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
 Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
 Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto. (II.123-128)

Byron’s gesture toward the sportiveness of travel—which forms a recurrent note in the poem—is, nonetheless, not quite so successful here, coupled as it is with the possibility that the poet himself might be engaged in a very different form of ‘travel’ if he receives a poor poetic reception at home. The lines belie their indifferent tone and Byron’s light-hearted attitude cannot quite dispel the prevailing sense of internal conflict. This moment of vulnerability is a reminder that from April 1816, Byron was no longer just a grand tourist but a self-exile from his native land, an identity that accordingly shapes his troubled expression of home and of the poets who remained there.

Although the Dedication was suppressed by Byron when the first two cantos of *Don Juan* went to press anonymously, for the reader of the poem in 1832, in John Murray’s *The Works of Lord Byron*, the newly published Dedication sets out the nexus of politics, poetry, and place that forms the keynote of Byron’s satirical

critique of the ‘Lakers’, and of Wordsworth in particular, in the body of the poem. In the third canto, stanzas 93-100, Byron renews his attack on the Lakers in the manner of the Dedication. Indeed, stanza 95 on *The Excursion* was originally intended for the earlier piece, and like that composition, Byron chose to erase this section in the proofs, although it was restored before publication. Southey and Wordsworth are again condemned as political turncoats in a damning spatio-political metaphor that turns on an allusion to Southey’s radical *Botany-Bay Eclogues*, written when the poet was nineteen: ‘Such names at present cut a convict figure,/ The very Botany Bay in moral geography’ (III.841-842). Byron’s reminder of Southey’s early radicalism serves to reinforce his critique of the Lake Poets’ conservatism, yet this metaphor also cuts much deeper. As Byron plays with the slippage between the space of the page and the geographical location of Botany Bay, he maps this exilic space onto the Lakers, imaginatively displacing the penal colony from the Australian coast in order to relocate it amongst the English poets.

The negative spatial dynamics at work in Byron’s critique of the Lake Poets as a group are concentrated in his portrait of Wordsworth, which plays with ideas of stagnation; *The Excursion* is characterised by Byron as a ‘drowsy frowzy poem’ (III.847), figuratively dull and fusty, where ‘drowsy’ is certainly meant to suggest ‘sleep-inducing’ as well as ‘lethargic in character’. Byron suggests that in this poem Wordsworth ‘builds up a formidable dyke/ Between his own and other’s intellect’ (III.849-850) in an image that works to reinforce both the sense of stagnation and separation. Overlaying the image of a dyke as an embankment built in defence of floods, whether of rivers or seas, is that of a wall, built to divide or enclose, and alongside both is the related sense of a ditch. With satirical flair Byron goes on to

declare *The Excursion* to be a dropsy, that is, swelling caused by the abnormal retention of water. The connection of Wordsworth to the religious fanatic, Joanna Southcott, who died of a dropsy she believed to be a divine pregnancy, reifies Byron's sense that Wordsworth and his poem are not only stagnant but absurd.⁸⁰ Alongside *The Excursion*, Wordsworth is critiqued for the sluggishness and imaginative absurdities of his more recently published, though much earlier written, *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell*:

We learn from Horace, Homer sometimes sleeps;
 We feel without him: Wordsworth sometimes wakes,
 To show with what complacency he creeps,
 With his dear 'Waggoners,' around his lakes;
 He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps—
 Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes
 Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
 And drivels seas to set it well afloat. (III.873-880)

Byron again creates a spatial antithesis between the Lake District and the ocean, between Wordsworth's fixedness and his own inferred mobility. For Byron, Wordsworth's residence in the Lakes engenders a physical and imaginative deterioration; the stanza contains a barely concealed charge of senility. The lines hark back to Byron's earlier, and longstanding, critique of Wordsworth's insularity in the suggestion that the only 'sea' the poet is familiar with is one of his own making—either of his nonsensical poetical ramblings, or, as the vituperative pun on 'drivel' insinuates, of his saliva.

⁸⁰ See also the prose Preface, ll. 23-37. For the earlier connection Byron makes between Wordsworth, water, infertility, and Joanna Southcott see his letter to Hunt of 30 October 1815, where he claims the 'natural talent spilt over "the Excursion"' to be 'rain upon rocks where it stands & stagnates—or rain upon sands where it falls without fertilizing' and declares that 'Jacob Behman—Swedenborg—& Joanna Southcote are mere types of this Arch-Apostle of mystery and mysticism'. *BLJ*, IV, p. 324.

The unsuitableness of Wordsworth's location, its narrowness and fixity, which forms a keynote in this passage of Canto III, is anticipated in both the Dedication and the discarded prose Preface to *Don Juan*. Though undated, the prose Preface was most likely written during or immediately after the composition of the first canto of the poem and is closely related to the Dedication in theme and content, although here, Wordsworth, rather than Southey, is Byron's primary target amongst the Lakers.⁸¹ The Preface may be usefully separated into three parts: an opening satire against Wordsworth, an imaginative Spanish scene that parodies Wordsworth's note to 'The Thorn', and a critique of Southey that breaks off as Byron introduces Coleridge to his censure. One can only guess why Byron left the Preface unfinished, but it is certainly a possibility that matters of form and style played a part in the decision. The satire in the prose Preface is some of Byron's most caustic, presenting Wordsworth as a deluded mystic and writer of 'insanities'; yet, the prose does not produce the same sharp humour as the verse form, the satire is biting without the mobile wit that we come to expect in the poem itself.⁸² The draft manuscript of the prose Preface presents a fascinating visual account of Byron's struggle to articulate his scorn of Wordsworth and Southey; both personal critiques are considerably re-worked, sentences are scored through and new ones crammed between existing lines of the draft.⁸³ The attack against Wordsworth is, to quote Graham, 'dauntingly dense'; the paragraph is an extensive list of allusions that the reader must identify if he or she is to follow the line of censure that Byron directs at Wordsworth's bad poetics and worse politics.⁸⁴ The double nature of the

⁸¹ See *BCPW*, V, p. 663 for McGann's notes on the dating of the Preface.

⁸² *BCPW*, V, p. 82.

⁸³ See NLS MS 43332, ff.9-10.

⁸⁴ Graham, 'Don Juan' and *Regency England*, p. 18.

attack is given voice in the doublings of the prose, as Byron layers pairings: Wordsworth is ‘half Enthusiast and half Imposter’, a ‘rustic Gongora and {vulgar} Marini’, in the line of both Count Cagliostro and Baroness de Krüdener, as well as equally Thraso and Gnatho from Terence’s *Eunuchus*.⁸⁵ Byron’s satire here is one of paradoxically narrow excess; it is not enough to liken Wordsworth to one dubious religious fanatic in the form of Joanna Southcott, he must also be ‘a kind of poetical Emanuel Swedenborg.—or Richard Brothers—or Parson Tozer’.⁸⁶ For all the variety of Byron’s allusions, they distil the same portrait and the figure of Wordsworth is made rather obscure in the process. The satire extends Byron’s opening critique of ‘The Thorn’ as a poem of questionable value, one that only has a subject ‘as far as it is intelligible’, and ‘sense—as far [as] there is Sense’, and in fact, may not even be a poem, ‘as far as it is a poem’, but a mere ‘production’.⁸⁷ What is said of ‘The Thorn’, Byron implies of Wordsworth: he is a poet only as far as he is a good poet, which is to say, not very far at all.

The opening satire of the prose Preface culminates with Byron’s biting remarks on where Wordsworth may be ‘met’. Having reduced the reasons for Wordsworth’s success down to his ‘absurdity’ and to the unmerited rewards bestowed upon even ‘the meanest of advocates’ of the Tory party, Byron writes: ‘Amongst these last in self-degradation, this Thraso of poetry has long been a Gnatho in politics, and may be met in print at some booksellers and several trunkmakers, and in person at dinner at Lord Lonsdale’s.’⁸⁸ This pointedly precise location of Wordsworth comes immediately before the Spanish vignette, in which

⁸⁵ *BCPW*, V, p. 82.

⁸⁶ *BCPW*, V, p. 82.

⁸⁷ *BCPW*, V, p. 81.

⁸⁸ *BCPW*, V, p. 82.

Byron will offer a parodic form of the Wordsworthian roadside encounter, and again presents us with a poet who is fixed in place. Byron disturbs Wordsworth's personal narrative of encounter, in which he is to be found in the Lakeland landscape, by confining him to a single, highly politicised spot: Lord Lonsdale's dining room. Byron's allusion to Terence's *Eunuchus* identifies Wordsworth as a braggart and a parasite, as Byron yokes the two most comic and despicable characters of the *Eunuchus* together, not as unequal comrades as in the play, but as twin halves of Wordsworth's nature. Byron reworks the remark as a note to the Dedication, on the line that is concerned with Wordsworth's place in 'the Excise', in Byron's eyes the place of a political turncoat:

Wordsworth's place may be in the Customs: it is, I think, in that or the Excise; besides another at Lord Lonsdale's table, where this poetical charlatan and political parasite licks up the crumbs [*sic*] with a hardened alacrity, the converted Jacobin having long subsided into the clownish sycophant of the worst prejudices of aristocracy.⁸⁹

Byron erases the reference to Terence in the note, though the doubling of poetry and politics remains present. The note deepens the rancour of the earlier lines not only in its portrayal of Wordsworth's self-seeking political apostasy but in its suggestion of the poet's self-aggrandisement: Wordsworth is here not just a braggart, as in the allusion to Thraso, but a charlatan, wilfully defrauding his readership. In both the Preface and the note, Byron distorts the idea of patronage through the image of the parasite; it is a picture of great diminishment, as the poet of the Dedication—who is still afforded a place on the 'immortal hill'—is here reduced to the level of a dog, licking up the fallen crumbs, or made a mindless flatterer.

⁸⁹ *BCPW*, V, p. 671.

The doubling of Wordsworth as a poetic ‘Thraso’ and a political ‘Gnatho’ is extended in the locations in which the poet may be encountered. The readers of Wordsworth’s poetry, according to Byron, are just as likely to have met his verse in the lining of their trunks as in a bookshop. The jibe is particularly favoured by Byron in response to bad poetry, and is here distilled from an initial draft of the Preface, a short fragment that introduces the reader to ‘The Thorn’ via Byron’s portmanteau, where Wordsworth is stuck in place in an amusingly literal way, his poem pasted with such pertinacity to the trunk that Byron ‘tore away the page in attempting to turn it’.⁹⁰ If Wordsworth is to be found at the trunkmakers, he is at least allowed to be found ‘at some booksellers’ too. This remark on Wordsworth’s location is one of the most interesting sentences in the draft manuscript of the Preface for what it reveals about the development of Byron’s thought and craft. The poet both increases his censure and tempers his judgement. The ‘booksellers’ are an addition to the line, one that offers a modicum of respect to Wordsworth even as it simultaneously acts as an ironic foil to the trunkmakers with which it is paired. If Wordsworth is allowed to be met ‘at some booksellers’, he is also allowed to be

⁹⁰ *BCPW*, V, p. 683. See also *Hints from Horace*, ll. 617-622 and notes, and *The Blues. A Literary Eclogue*, ll. 1.17-21. See also *Don Juan*, II.126-128, IV.861-862, and XIV.111-112. What is interesting to note, however, is that when Byron uses this joke in the verse of *Don Juan* it does not appear in relation to Wordsworth, or indeed to any of Byron’s rivals, but as a repeated half-comic, half-serious remark on the fate of the very pages we are reading. Indeed, Byron emends a line in the fourth canto so that it no longer contains an attack on Wordsworth. In place of: ‘What, must I go with Wordy to the cooks?’, the published poem reads ‘What, must I go to the oblivious cooks?/ Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?’ (IV.861-862), the recipient of failed poetry being, as Byron tells us, either the trunkmaker or the pastry-cook, and here specifically, the maker of Cornish pasties. Of course, the alteration is hardly made in order to spare Wordsworth censure; Byron writes in the very next stanza that, ‘Because the world won’t read him’, Wordsworth is ‘always snarling’ (IV.870). Nevertheless, I think the choice to rethink his reference to Wordsworth is an important marker of the kind of satire Byron is engaged with in this passage of Canto IV. This is self-aware satire, satire that claims, even as its irony refutes, a literary inheritance or partnership with Wordsworth. If it is the satirical riposte of the poet who knows the measure of his popularity, it is also the remark of one reconciled to his own courtship of the fickle world of literary commerce.

met at fewer trunkmakers, as Byron moderates ‘at most’ to ‘at several’.⁹¹ In what is surely as much—if not more—a question of style as of critique, Byron also erases an additional and rather unwieldy slur on the friendship and patronage Wordsworth received from Sir George Beaumont, which formed the original conclusion to the sentence. Although the tone remains firmly one of scorn, this act of location is delivered with a rhetorical neatness and a sense of balance that is decidedly absent from its more emotionally driven reworking in the note to the Dedication.

Having thoroughly abused Wordsworth, Byron returns to ‘The Thorn’ in order to continue his opening critique of the ‘unintelligibility’ of the ‘note or preface’ to this poem, which contains Wordsworth’s apology for the poem’s garrulous narrator.⁹² Byron parodies the note by requesting his reader to engage in a like act of imagining:

The Reader who has acquiesced in Mr. W. Wordsworth’s supposition that his ‘Misery oh Misery’ is related by the ‘Captain of a small &c.’ is requested to suppose by a like exertion of Imagination that the following epic Narrative is told by a Spanish Gentleman in a village in the Sierra Morena on the road between Monasterio & Seville—sitting at the door of a posada with the curate of the hamlet on his right hand a segar in his mouth, a jug of Malaga or perhaps ‘right Sherris’ before him on a small table containing the relics of an olla podrida—the time sunset;—[. . .] The reader is further requested to suppose him (to account for his knowledge of English) either an Englishman settled in Spain—or a Spaniard who had travelled in England—perhaps one of the Liberals who have subsequently been so liberally rewarded by Ferdinand of grateful memory—for his restoration.—

Having supposed as much of this as the utter impossibility of such a supposition will admit, the reader is requested to extend his supposed power of supposing so far as to conceive that the Dedication to Mr. Southey, and several stanzas of the poem itself, are interpolated by the English editor.⁹³

The parody takes aim at Wordsworth’s portrayal, in his note to ‘The Thorn’, of the manner of ‘cleav[ing] to the same ideas’, not only as Byron reduces the poem to its

⁹¹ *BCPW*, V, p. 82.

⁹² *BCPW*, V, p. 81.

⁹³ *BCPW*, V, p. 82-84.

most repetitive line—‘Oh misery! oh misery!’—but as he undercuts, almost immediately, the narrative frame he has created.⁹⁴ Where Wordsworth insists that the reader join him in his supposition, Byron frees us from its constraints. Josh Gidding suggests that the open-endedness of the narrative frame is a marker of its deliberate artificiality, as Byron offers an alternative to Wordsworth’s poetics of plausibility; Byron, in the Preface, he argues, is ‘waggishly ironic about the obvious fictionality of his chosen tale-teller’, just as the narrator of *Don Juan* is ‘knowingly self-conscious about the “ontological status” of the tale he tells’: ‘He knows it’s a fiction, and he revels in the knowledge, which frees him from the constraints of narrative verisimilitude and plausibility that seem to hamper Wordsworth in the “Note” to “The Thorn.”’⁹⁵ The doubled and mutually exclusive identities of the narrator—who is either a non-native inhabitant or a returning traveller—forms another playful paradox in the Preface; like the ‘impossible’ supposition that is dismissed only once it has been painstakingly supposed, Byron invites the reader to experience both at the same time.

As in ‘Churchill’s Grave’, where Byron’s parody also engenders a creative response, in the centre of Byron’s ‘supposition’, a lyric passage ensues that lays out Byron’s counter spatial poetics in a different form. The passage proceeds from the introduction of twilight and moves away from the presence of the story-teller, towards a vibrant scene of music and dancing:

{at some distance} a groupe of {black eyed} peasantry {are} dancing to the sound of the flute of a {Portugese} Servant belonging to two {foreign} travellers who have {an hour ago dismounted from their horses} to spend the night on their way to the Capital of Andalusia——of these one is attending to the story—and the other {having sauntered further is} watching the beautiful movements of a {tall} peasant Girl whose whole Soul is in her

⁹⁴ *LBOP*, p. 351.

⁹⁵ Gidding, “The Thorn” in Byron’s Side’, p. 55.

eyes & her heart in the dance of which she is the Magnet {to ten thousand feelings that vibrate} {with her Own}.——⁹⁶

The vignette is the most fluid section of the prose Preface; unlike the surrounding satire, the emendations Byron makes in this paragraph consist primarily of additional details that thicken the texture of the scene and bring it into sharper focus. Only in this scene does Byron attain the same formal energy that he will in the rapid meter and comic rhymes of the *ottava rima* of the poem itself. Both Steven Bruhm and Paul M. Curtis see in the performance of the dance a prefiguring of the poetics of digression that Byron develops throughout *Don Juan*.⁹⁷ Curtis argues that ‘[a]lthough the dance is peripheral to the narrative mandate of the preface, or perhaps *because* it is peripheral, the dance pulls the Byronic traveller in.’⁹⁸ It is a purposeful shift away from the central scene of the narrator and his audience, augmented by the introduction of a ‘knot of French prisoners’, who, like the errant traveller, are drawn to the sensuous movement of the girl. Byron directs the reader to both the vitality and the transience of the moment, made manifest in the dance and in the blood-stained prisoner whose ‘eyes sparkle in unison and his fingers beat time against the bars of his prison to the sound of the Fandango which is fleeting before him.’⁹⁹ The charge of affect displayed by the French prisoner is given spatial dimensions in the errant traveller: he is moved, not only emotionally, but physically towards the scene of the dance.

⁹⁶ *BCPW*, V, p. 83. See also NLS 43332, v.9. I have distinguished in the text above the words that Byron added to the draft Preface.

⁹⁷ See Stephen Bruhm’s chapter, ‘Byron and the Choreography of Queer Desire’, and Paul M. Curtis’s chapter, ‘Byron and Digression’, in Jane Stabler (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 16-33 and 60-80 respectively. Bruhm argues that dance in *Don Juan* functions as an eloquent performance of erotics that is explicitly at odds with narrative utterance, while Curtis suggests that the dancer of the prose Preface, and the dance itself, may be seen as ‘allegorical pre-figures of the poem’s digressions’, p. 63.

⁹⁸ Curtis, ‘Byron and Digression’, p. 63

⁹⁹ *Don Juan*, p. 83.

The polarised spaces of the scene suggest alternative poetics that both parody Wordsworth's and offer a response to them. Byron turns from his lyric digression back to 'Our friend the Story-teller', who 'at some distance with a small {elderly} audience is supposed to tell his story without being much moved by the musical hilarity at the other end of the village Green.'¹⁰⁰ The blackly comic addition of 'elderly' deepens the sense that the story-teller and his audience are distanced from the moment of vitality. Bruhm argues that '[b]y casting his narrator outside the erotic action of the poem, Byron both establishes a solitary, aggressively self-contained speaker and aligns that speaker with Wordsworth and Southey'.¹⁰¹ Wordsworth offers 'the paradigm for an imagined narrator', as Bruhm suggests, but also for the type of narrator that Byron presents in the Preface—a narrator, it should be noted, who bears little resemblance to the one we are presented with in the poem itself.¹⁰² Although Byron sets the scene outside an inn, the initial characters he presents us with are Wordsworthian: the story-teller and the curate are common partners in Wordsworth's poetry, in the type of the Wanderer and the Pastor of *The Excursion*.¹⁰³ The separation that Byron creates between the clustered groups of the vignette follows the line of his critique of Wordsworth's insular poetics, and the accusation that he is complacent about his place, closed-off from new and varied experience.

Byron privileges movement and transience in the vignette. This is a space to be passed through: the location of the story-teller at 'the door of a posada', or

¹⁰⁰ *Don Juan*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰¹ Bruhm, 'Byron and the Choreography of Queer Desire', p. 18.

¹⁰² Bruhm, 'Byron and the Choreography of Queer Desire', p. 18.

¹⁰³ Fry makes this observation in *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are*, where he notes that the most telling affinity between the narrator and the Wanderer is 'their lack of family ties', p. 57.

inn, anticipates the entrance of the foreign travellers onto the scene, whose mobility is brought into relief by the presence of incarcerated French soldiers as the poetic meets the political.¹⁰⁴ The level of detail combined with the cosmopolitanism of the scene suggests a specific cultural and historical moment as opposed to the generic rural scene of Wordsworth's 'The Thorn', with its 'sufficiently common character', of which the reader will have 'a general notion', and its geographically unspecific 'village or country town'.¹⁰⁵ In his notes to the Preface, McGann observes that the Spanish scene is a memory-picture based on the poet's personal experience in 1809, and it is not hard to see in the image of the travellers a self-portrait of Byron, Hobhouse, and their Portuguese servant, Sanguinetti, on their way to Seville, nor to imagine which of the travellers Byron saw himself in.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Byron has a shadowy presence in more than just the errant traveller. Graham suggests that the 'supposition' Byron has the reader engage in presents several key features of the poem that follows:

its conversational, improvisational, and dramatic qualities, its location in the real world, and its distribution of "Byron" throughout the poem, just as here we glimpse him—without identifying him as—a foreign traveler, the storyteller, the English editor who appears in the next paragraph, and the composing voice behind them all.¹⁰⁷

The narrative frame and the isolated narrator are not just parodies of Wordsworth and the note to 'The Thorn', they also elicit the articulation of spatial poetics that will play out in *Don Juan*. The doubleness of the story-teller's identity and the duality between this character and the Byronic traveller prompt questions of

¹⁰⁴ *Don Juan*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ *LBOP*, p. 350.

¹⁰⁶ *Don Juan*, pp. 684-685. See also, Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. I (London: Murray, 1957), pp. 185-189.

¹⁰⁷ Graham, 'Don Juan' and *Regency England*, p. 20.

belonging that the poem also poses, and engage in the kind of spatial slippage that both the narrator and his protagonist will encounter in the verse. As one whose journeys occur most often as a result of chance or accident, Juan is an unconventional traveller, while the cosmopolitan identity of the more knowing poet-narrator is shadowed by the experience of exile.

Dwelling in Exile: Don Juan Canto III

Writing of the discarded prose Preface's Spanish vignette, Curtis observes that '[t]he paragraph begins with Wordsworth and concludes with a lyrical moment the singularity of which is consistent with many of Byron's poetical digressions, especially in the early cantos of *Don Juan*.'¹⁰⁸ The Ravenna stanzas of the third canto of *Don Juan* fit this pattern particularly well, not only as they form a singular lyric digression, but as they follow from a satirical passage that has Wordsworth at its heart. Having tried once to return to the narrative ('But let me to my Story' (III.857)), and then digressed for another four stanzas, the first of which arraigns Southey for his 'epic' tediousness, and the following three the absurdities of Wordsworth's 'Peter Bell', Byron again suggests the reappearance of Juan and Haidee: 'T' our Tale. The feast was over, the Slaves gone,/[. . .] The Lady and her Lover, left alone' (III.897-901). Nevertheless, rather than the expected resumption of the narrative, Byron lingers in a lyric interlude on the hour of twilight. The experience of dusk is endowed with unexpected intensity through the act of

¹⁰⁸ Curtis, 'Byron and Digression', p. 63.

recollection. Anticipating a return to a Greek island and a pair of lovers, Byron relocates us instead in ‘the solitude/ Of the pine forest, and the silent shore/ Which bounds Ravenna’s immemorial wood’ (III.929-931), and in his own memory of twilight there. Byron spent two months in Ravenna in the summer of 1819, having followed the young, married, Countess Teresa Guiccioli there in June and returned with her to Venice, via Bologna, in August. The poet was called back to Ravenna in December 1819, on account of Teresa’s ill health, and remained there for almost two years. Although completed in the early months of Byron’s second sojourn in Ravenna, the third canto of *Don Juan* remembers his first, much shorter, summer stay. The verse registers the tension between the brevity of the moment and a sense of place infused with the weight of time. The ‘immemorial’ forest, ‘Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow’d o’er,/ To where the last Cesarean fortress stood’ (III.932-933), is quietly crowded with the voices and shadows of literature as well as with the sounds of the twilight hour:

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
 Were the sole echoes, save my steed’s and mine,
 And vesper bell’s that rose the boughs along;
 The spectre huntsman of Onesti’s line,
 His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng,
 Which learn’d from this example not to fly
 From a true lover, shadow’d my mind’s eye. (III.937-944)

The forest is a resonant space for Byron, where the onset of evening is accompanied not by a sense of loss, but by a ghostly fullness. The poet hears the ‘faint dying day-hymn [steal] aloft’ and the ‘ceaseless song’ of the cicalas that is already circumscribed by the length of the summer, while the chiming repetition of ‘hour’ across the stanzas evokes the toll of the vesper bells rising among the trees and formally keeps time. In a beautiful play of the aural, the poem re-sounds its own

echoes in mellifluous alliteration and in the tantalizing, half-heard chimes of ‘shrill’, ‘sole’, ‘bell’, ‘boughs along’.

Byron invokes the weight of a religious hush, which gathers around the soft sound of bells and hymns but is not confined to the markers of Catholic worship. To borrow a term from Timothy Morton, this is ambient space, ‘a realm in which events have room to happen, a thick, embodied, heightened atmosphere, neither full nor empty.’¹⁰⁹ Part of the thickening of the atmosphere comes from the presence of other literary voices; this is a place ‘haunted’ (III.935) and ‘shadow’d’ (III.944) by the sounds and figures of ‘Boccaccio’s lore/ And Dryden’s lay’ (III.934-935). Outside of the poetry, Byron will return to this sense of a ghostly fullness, a space in which the literary and historical past seem to have a tangible presence; in his *Conversations*, Medwin records the poet as saying:

Ravenna lies out of the way of travellers. I was never tired of my rides in the pine-forest: it breathes of the Decameron; it is poetical ground. Francesca lived, and Dante was exiled and died at Ravenna. There is something inspiring in such an air.¹¹⁰

It is, as Jane Stabler writes, ‘as if Byron has taken in the air that Dante expired.’¹¹¹ Though it might be ‘out of the way of travellers’, the pine-forest at Ravenna is, for Byron, a crowded solitude, a space imaginatively shared with centuries-old writers and figures of literature, a space in which past poetic breath might inspire the present poet.

¹⁰⁹ Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 93.

¹¹⁰ Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. (ed.), *Medwin’s Conversations of Lord Byron* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 25. See also Byron’s letter to Murray, of 29 June 1819, *BLJ*, VI, p. 166.

¹¹¹ Jane Stabler, *The Artistry of Exile: Romantic and Victorian Writers in Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 129.

As in the opening Dedication, in which Byron presents Italy as an alternative political space for the poet-wanderer in exile, so in the Ravenna stanzas does he offer Italy as an alternative poetic space. Ravenna is a place that yet has the power to inspire. Stabler writes suggestively of the connection in these stanzas between Byron's attachment to the Italian literary tradition and his ever-increasing sense of separation from England:

In *Don Juan* Canto III, in the middle of the Juan-Haidee episode on a Greek island, Byron uses a digression about Ravenna to remind Murray and his disapproving readers that the narrator of *Don Juan* occupies more spacious mental territory, if not higher ground, than they do, and breathes a different atmosphere.¹¹²

Still more importantly, perhaps, these stanzas are not just directed to Byron's critical English readership, but to certain poets of his native shore. As discussed above, the Ravenna stanzas follow on the heels of a scathing critique of the Lake Poets and Wordsworth in particular. Having situated the elder poet firmly within the Lake District, the turn towards the poetic fullness of Ravenna reinforces, by contrast, Byron's sense of the uninspiring and problematic location of his contemporaries. Furthermore, the Ravenna stanzas form a second rebuttal to Wordsworth's negative assessment of Dryden, expressed in his 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' in the 1815 *Poems*, and which Byron recounts as 'hisses' and 'sneers' in the earlier critique. Byron reasserts Dryden's literary genius, for it is his English voice, as much as Boccaccio's or Dante's Italian voices, that creates the forest as ambient space. It is a fluid voice, one not circumscribed—like Wordsworth's—by the bounds of the Lake District, or even England, but cross-cultural. Byron's cosmopolitan poetics are deftly at play here through the act of

¹¹² Stabler, *Artistry of Exile*, p. 129.

translation, as ‘Dryden’s lay’ is afforded equal space with ‘Boccaccio’s lore’; the poet invokes an English presence within an Italian literary tradition that speaks to his own sense of self within this place. Byron follows the translator Dryden, sounding voices other than his own, in stanzas 107 and 108, which are, respectively, a loose translation of a Sapphic fragment and a translation of lines from Dante’s *Purgatorio*.¹¹³ If the sounds of the vesper bells and the cicadas are expressly geospatial, notes in a recognisably Italian soundscape, the poetic voices Byron invokes are less so. Here, the voice of the non-native speaks as powerfully as the resident, and the English poet in exile finds a counterpart, five hundred years on, with the exiled Italian.

Although there is a poetic cosmopolitanism at work in these lines, it does not extend to the living residents of Ravenna. Byron is drawn to the seclusion of this place, its location ‘out of the way of travellers’, and more expressly to the separation of Ravenna from England and the English. Ravenna is, for Byron, a different sort of Keswick, a place in which geographical limitation or constancy might prove to be the opposite of stultifying. In December 1820, a year into his second residence in Ravenna, Byron wrote of his temporary home to Francis Hodgson, one of his former contemporaries at Cambridge University:

We have here the Sepulchre of Dante and the forest of Dryden and Boccaccio, all in very poetical preservation. I ride and write, and have here some Italian friends and connexions of both sexes, horses and dogs, and the usual means and appliances of life, which passes chequered as usual (& with all) with good and evil; few English pass by this place, and none remain,

¹¹³ Cheeke considers 1818-1821 as a period of Byron’s life dominated by the idea of translation, as he was gradually absorbed into Italian society under the role of Teresa Guiccioli’s *cavalier servente*. He suggests that ‘[r]epeatedly Byron turns over the themes of acculturation and transplantation, of passing from one place to another, and then passing further into the interior of that culture – becoming acclimatized or going native; being translated, both in the figurative and in the literal sense.’ While Cheeke is primarily concerned with customs and cultural identity, the sense of a prevailing motif of acculturation bears upon Byron’s poetic presentation of translation and of himself as a translator. See *Byron and Place*, p. 111, and more generally pp. 110-156.

which renders it a much more eligible residence for a man who would rather see them in England than out of it.¹¹⁴

The letter works to distance the poet from his own Englishness; Byron opens the letter with a reminder that he has been absent from his (and Hodgson's) homeland for almost five years. What he has been doing, he suggests 'would but little interest' Hodgson, 'as it regards another country and another people, & would be almost speaking another language, for my own is not quite so familiar to me as it used to be.'¹¹⁵ Ravenna is a place not for the traveller but for the poet-in-exile. Here exile comes closest to a sense of dwelling; as Byron detaches himself from England he also works to resituate himself within the Italian community, the repetition of 'usual' quietly reinforces the sense of settledness that Byron evokes in his list of what might be termed 'ordinary life', the life of the resident not the tourist.

Ravenna's eligibility as a residence is twofold; not only is it particularly well-suited to the exile seeking a place absent of a restrictive English presence, it is also—as Byron continues to inform the reader in prose and verse—well-suited to the poet. Byron's description of the forest at Ravenna as in 'poetical preservation' is a further reminder of the value he ascribes to the poetic legacy of this place. In this word pairing there is a sense of slippage between the living and the dead, between what was and what is now, between the page and the animate forest. Coupled with the tomb of Dante, 'preservation' contains an almost uncomfortable materiality, a strange sense of halted decay that is both in keeping and at odds with the memorialising function of the sepulchre that anchors personal and national memory. What is preserved is a sense of the poet in place. The word 'poetical' itself

¹¹⁴ *BLJ*, VII, p. 252.

¹¹⁵ *BLJ*, VII, p. 252.

slips between meanings; here it may be read as ‘of, belonging to, or characteristic of poets or poetry’ as well as ‘having the style or character proper to poetry’ or ‘consisting of or written in verse’.¹¹⁶ The preservation is poetical not only because poets and poetry are the things preserved, but because the preservation takes place through poetry. First through Dryden’s poetry and then Byron’s, a particular encounter with, or expression of, the forest is maintained. It is telling that Byron follows the description of place with two activities that are more than syntactically coupled in his imagination: ‘I ride and write’. This is the same poet we encounter in *Don Juan*, who takes the literature-steeped forest and his own twilight rides within it as subject fit for poetry. If, in Ravenna, the sense of the poet in place is preserved, this sense pertains just as powerfully to Byron as to Dante or Boccaccio. He writes in his Ravenna Journal, begun shortly after his letter to Hodgson in January 1821, of being invited to dine with the ‘Americana’, a branch of the Carbonari, with whom he was already linked:

It is to be in *the Forest* of Boccaccio’s and Dryden’s ‘Huntsman’s Ghost’; and, even if I had not the same political feelings, (to say nothing of my old convivial turn, which every now and then revives), I would go as a poet, or, at least, as a lover of poetry. I shall expect to see the spectre of ‘Ostasio degli Onesti’ (Dryden has turned him into Guido Cavalcanti – an essentially different person, as may be found in Dante) come ‘thundering for his prey’ in the midst of the festival. At any rate, whether he does or no, I will get as tipsy and patriotic as possible.¹¹⁷

This passage oscillates between Byron’s poetic and political feeling; he might attend the dinner as ‘one of the C[arbonar]i’ but the sense of his own poethood is equally compelling.¹¹⁸ Byron knows he is on haunted ground in more ways than one; he writes, as in *Don Juan*, as if, in the forest, spectral literary characters might

¹¹⁶ See *OED*, ‘Poetical’.

¹¹⁷ *BLJ*, VIII, p. 48.

¹¹⁸ *BLJ*, VIII, p. 48.

blend with living persons. Nevertheless, there is a hesitancy in these words, a question of self-identity: in this place that speaks so loudly of past poets is Byron also a poet, or just a lover of poetry?¹¹⁹

In the Ravenna stanzas of *Don Juan*, Byron explores the same questions of poethood, exile, and belonging that preoccupy him in prose. The forest at Ravenna offers Byron what we might call poetic breathing space. Writing of the forest soundscape in stanza 106, a place acoustically rich with the sound of cicadas and vesper bells, Byron hears other echoes too: ‘The shrill cicadas, people of the pine, / . . . / Were the sole echoes, save my steed’s and mine’. ‘Mine’ is both particular and ambiguous, the reader cannot know precisely what echoes the poet hears of himself, yet so close to the ‘ceaseless song’ of the cicadas it is hard not to think of these ‘echoes’ in terms of voice or poetry. As Byron records these self-echoes he widens the soundscape of the forest, writing himself into its rich poetic history. What he explores in these stanzas is a place of belonging. Yet the verse registers the shadow of exile even as it offers an alternative: the stanzas of translation immediately following connect the twilight hour to both a homecoming and a departing. Byron’s sounding of other voices considers the distinct and shared experience of the dweller and the traveller alongside and against his own. He is not, after all, the home-comer or the pilgrim described by Sappho and Dante, but another figure, the solitary exile whose vivid connection to place is made more powerful by a recognition of its fragility, its temporality. Byron is quietly self-aware of the twilight hour as a poeticised experience: the words of Sappho and Dante that Byron voices are general, not specific, unrooted in this particular forest landscape though still rising

¹¹⁹ The feeling that impels this sentence is not far removed from the words with which Byron concludes this journal entry: ‘Within these few days I have read, but not written.’

from it to his ear. They, in a different way to Boccaccio and Dryden, create the forest as an echoing space, a space in which the solitary Byron might enter within a community of poets.

What is unexpected, in the midst of Byron's cosmopolitan community of voices, is a quiet English undersong. Although the noise of the cicalas is a geospatial sound marker of the Italian forest, it is also an echo of a different sort. In the 'shrill' sound of the cicalas, 'Making their summer lives one ceaseless song', there is heard the voice of William Lisle Bowles in his poem 'The African'.¹²⁰ In Bowles's anti-slavery poem of 1791, the companions of a dying slave recall the evocative soundscape and landscape of their long-distant homeland:

Where thro' green Savannah's wide
Cooling rivers silent glide,
Or the shrill sigarras sing
Ceaseless to their murmuring:
Where the dance, the festive song
Of many a friend divided long,
Doom'd thro' stranger lands to roam,
Shall bid thy Spirit welcome home!¹²¹

The Portuguese 'sigarras' of Bowles poem became Italian 'cicalas' like Byron's in later publications of the work under the title 'The Dying Slave', but the insects—and their 'shrill' sound—are, from the beginning, the same. In Bowles's poem, the longing for home is held in tension with the shadowy sense of homecoming that only the spirit of the slave may experience, a freedom bought with the price of death. The idea of home then, or the want of it, that is, both desire and lack, ghosts the 'ceaseless song' of Byron's cicalas. Stabler writes:

Bowles was in Byron's mind because of the Pope controversy: the 'Letter to John Murray' discusses Bowles as an indifferent lyric poet, as well as a critic, but, in a fascinating way, Bowles's lines on the sound of

¹²⁰ See Stabler, *Artistry of Exile*, p. 130.

¹²¹ William Lisle Bowles, *Monody, Written at Matlock* (London: C. Dilly, 1791), p. 15.

homesickness becomes the medium through which *Don Juan* rejects England and looks to Italy, and yet turns back to England.¹²²

That Byron responds to the imagined last words spoken to a dying man is peculiarly apt in a forest landscape that is more than usually spectral. The Bowles allusion casts a faint shadow over the translation of Sappho that follows, deepening the sense of longing that is already felt in this expression of home.

Unlike Byron's satirical critique in the 'Letter', this is a creative engagement with Bowles, one that allows his voice to murmur in the poem and with it a number of other English voices. The sound of the cicadas forms part of a tradition of English expressions of Italian space, even for those who had no personal experience of the Mediterranean. Ann Radcliffe, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), contrasts English and Italian space through the distinct soundscapes of their different insects:

Then the *lucciola*, the fire-fly of Tuscany, was seen to flash its sudden sparks among the foliage, while the *cicala*, with its shrill note, became more clamorous than even during the noon-day heat, loving best the hour when the English beetle, with less offensive sound,

..... winds
His small but sullen horn,
As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.¹²³

Radcliffe brings an English literary tradition to bear on Italian space as she quotes from William Collins's 'Ode to Evening', and there is a quiet patriotism at work in her comparison of the muted hum of the English beetle and the displeasingly loud noise of the Italian cicada. In the midst of a vivid description of the journey through the bucolic landscape of the Arno, Radcliffe opens the door to the English pastoral.

¹²² Stabler, *Artistry of Exile*, p. 130.

¹²³ Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 461.

These voices form the low English undersong in Byron's forest of Ravenna, a resoundingly Italian space that is nevertheless haunted by echoes that invite a contrasting spatial experience. In the allusions to English writers we find a quiet remembrance of home that deepens Byron's meditation on exilic dwelling.

The Ravenna stanzas form a lyric counterpart to the preceding satire of the Lake Poets, as Byron invokes a community of voices that enrich an already echoing space. This is the counter-response to the portrait he offers of a stilted company of poets, complacently creeping around with nothing—or, at least, nothing worth hearing—to say: in the satirical critique, Wordsworth's voice is intentionally diminished as Byron clips single words from *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell* and reduces his remarks about Dryden and Pope to a 'hiss' above their graves. Wordsworth's voice remains muted as Byron goes on to shape a counter-place to the English Lakes, but as the verse discloses its quiet English influence, Wordsworth resurfaces at the edges of the text. Wordsworth's poetry is heard as a displaced echo as Byron's lyric passage recalls the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and his earlier meditations on landscape, memory, and the place of the poet that are shadowed by Wordsworthian thought. Although Byron allows a combative, comedic note to sound in stanza 104, as he rebuffs the critics who claim that he has 'no devotion' (III.922), the final lines of the stanza resume a lyric mode:

My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul. (III.926-928)

These lines shift from the Catholic sensibilities of the previous stanzas, with the repeated 'Ave Maria!', towards a pantheistic sense of worship within a numinous landscape. The lines evoke Byron's expressions, in the Lake Lemman passage of

Childe Harold III, of an intermingling of self and nature—‘the Soul can flee,/ And with the sky—the peak—the heaving plain/ Of Ocean, or the Stars, mingle—and not in vain’ (*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, III.686-688)—as well as a sense of the uncircumscribed freedom of ‘Nature’s realms of worship, earth and air’ (III.858).¹²⁴ Byron’s altars recall those of the early Persian, imagined in stanza 91 of *Childe Harold* III, who made ‘His altar the high places and the peak/ Of earth-o’ergazing mountains’ (III.852-853). In both poems, the altars suggest Byron’s reception of Wordsworth through Percy Bysshe Shelley in the summer of 1816; it is Shelley, not Wordsworth, after all, who constructs pagan altars. Yet, as Medwin’s *Conversations* suggests, for Byron, it is in the expression of nature worship that these two poets come together: ‘[Wordsworth] had once a feeling of Nature, which he carried almost to a deification of it:—that’s why Shelley liked his poetry.’¹²⁵ As discussed in the opening chapter, in the Lake Lemman passage of *Childe Harold* III, Byron’s evocation of twilight is allusively Wordsworthian; the echoes of those stanzas in the Ravenna passage suggests a lingering Wordsworthianism in Byron’s approach to nature and to solitude.

In the Ravenna stanzas, Wordsworth’s voice is not invoked directly, yet it murmurs in Byron’s recollection and resounding of his own Wordsworth-inflected poetics. In addition to the scene of *Childe Harold*, the twilight episode recalls another, not long past in *Don Juan*, in which Wordsworth’s voice is sounded audibly. The Ravenna stanzas are animated by memory, memory that plays itself out on the page, as the recollection of the poem’s narrative (‘T’ our tale’), and the spatio-temporal location of the lovers within it, turns back to Canto II even as it

¹²⁴ See also *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto III, ll. 680-682, 707-708, 836-841.

¹²⁵ Lovell (ed.), *Medwin’s Conversations*, p. 194.

reorients the poet within his own memory of place. Byron alights on the figures of Juan and Haidee for barely a stanza; he returns us to the narrative at the hour of twilight, the feast ended and all the revellers retired save the lovers, only to turn imaginatively on the hour of twilight to his own lived locale:

The lady and her lover, left alone,
 The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired;—
 Ave Maria! o'er earth and sea,
 That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft[.] (III.901-908)¹²⁶

The 'Ave Maria' linguistically transplants us from the Greek coast to the Italian forest and to Byron's reflection on personal solitude, but this meditation also casts back to an earlier exploration of solitude. Byron's image of the lovers, secluded in the hour of twilight, is taken from the second canto:

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
 Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright; (II.1473-1474)
 . . .
 Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
 So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
 Was that in which the heart is always full[.] (II.1529-1531)

¹²⁶ It is worth noting again Byron's concern for his own situatedness in the Ravenna stanzas. The enumerated blessings move from time to space: from 'the hour' to 'the clime' or region of Italy that becomes the very particular 'spot' of the forest of Ravenna. Cheeke discusses thoroughly the importance of 'being on the spot' in Byron's writing, as an authenticating act in which the self is able to experience unmediated connection with the spirit-of-place. Although Cheeke argues for a realignment of '[t]he commanding precedence of place, the overwhelming claim to authenticity through being there on the spot, and the sense of mystery in the historical locus' after Byron's exile to the continent, after which travel becomes acculturation and the idea of 'being there' is reconstituted in terms of 'being in-between', this moment in the Ravenna stanzas is invested in the earlier ecstatic response to place. What Cheeke describes in *Childe Harold* is felt even more strongly in the Ravenna stanzas, amplified by the religious landscape: 'there is an etiquette of lowered voices in holy places, of a respectful hush or awe-struck silence as if a spot consecrated by events of historical significance becomes a kind of church'. See Cheeke, *Byron and Place*, p. 109, 52.

The second canto's discussion of solitude, explored within the narrative of the poem, remains with Juan and Haidee and does not give way, as in the third, to questions of Byron's place of belonging—his dwelling-in-exile—or the sense in which his own solitude, both the experience of seclusion and the place of that seclusion, is an echoing space. Nevertheless, Juan and Haidee's solitude too is informed and transformed by echoes. As in the Ravenna stanzas, in the midst of a foreign landscape Byron hears the resonances of an English space and of one English voice in particular, Wordsworth's. Not muted by satire, Byron's unsignalled engagement with Wordsworth's poetry in this passage of *Don Juan* suggests that, in a similar way to *Childe Harold*, thinking about solitude, for Byron, often meant thinking through Wordsworth.

In Canto II, having wildly digressed for a few stanzas on the drinking of wine ('Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;/ The best of life is but intoxication' (II.1424-1425)), Byron, with characteristic suddenness, plunges the reader back into the scene of the narrative. Juan and Haidee are located on the coast, 'a wild and breaker-beaten coast,/ With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore' (II.1409-1410) that, we are informed, 'Lay at this period quiet as the sky' (II.1443).¹²⁷ The phrase

¹²⁷ Richard Cronin writes insightfully of Byron's use of language in *Don Juan* in 'Words and the Word: The Diction of *Don Juan*', in Gavin Hopps and Jane Stabler (eds.), *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 137-154. He singles out the lines of Canto II on the Greek island coast (II.1409-1410), to illustrate an instance in which Byron 'breaks into "poetry"' in *Don Juan*, that is, offers phrases or lines that appear 'as if they were enclosed within invisible quotation marks'. Such an effect, Cronin argues, is related to Byron's 'habit of quotation' in the poem, which 'works to reveal poetry as a particular kind of language, an idiolect that poets have in common'. This idea of a shared language is of particular importance to these Canto II lines, not only because in them we see the doubleness of Byron's use of poetic idiolect—Cronin describes these lines as both 'good lines' and 'claptrap': 'They are offered to us for our admiration, but it is an admiration in which an amusement at the ease with which Byron can toss off such lines is certainly mixed'—but because it is not simply 'poetry' that Byron 'breaks into', but the poetry of a particular poet, Wordsworth. Although these lines are certainly not strong enough to be called an allusion in their own right, they are the lines which introduce 'Tintern Abbey' as an echo chamber for this passage of *Don Juan*. See p. 147.

introduces a tonal shift that thickens the poetic texture of the verse, and is indebted to Wordsworth. Byron writing his own wild, secluded scene of cliffs and waters hears the opening of ‘Tintern Abbey’ and the evocation of

steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the *quiet of the sky*. (5-8 my emphasis)¹²⁸

The echo of ‘Tintern Abbey’ ushers in a sense of solitude that Byron adopts, even as he unsettles it through the playful reminder that Juan and Haidee are alone in a manner that transforms the deep sense of solitude into the rather more risqué sense of being unchaperoned.

Though Byron disrupts the movement of the verse towards the sublime, the sense of a weighted stillness and solitude re-emerges in his articulation of falling dusk:

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush’d, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye. (II.1457-1464)

The twilight scene is finely balanced between the impulses of expansion and enclosure; Byron’s vista, though vast, is circular. The single verse-sentence weaves around itself like the light of the setting sun that seems to circle ‘all nature’, coming

¹²⁸ This is not the first time Byron has sounded this line of ‘Tintern Abbey’ in his own poetry. In his 1816 ‘Epistle to Augusta’, Byron asks of nature that he may be allowed ‘To mingle with the quiet of her sky’ (84). For the poem see *BCPW*, IV, pp. 33-40. For a discussion of the ‘Epistle to Augusta’ as Byron’s response to ‘Tintern Abbey’, see Robert R. Harson, ‘Byron’s “Tintern Abbey”’, *Keats-Shelley Journal* 20 (1971), 113-121. Given the island location, it is also possible that Byron hears this line via ‘Ruth’ (first published in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*), in which Wordsworth himself echoes ‘Tintern Abbey’ in his description of islands that ‘together lie/ As quietly as spots of sky’ (64-65).

back time and again to an encompassing circularity in the rhymes of ‘rounded’, ‘bounded’, and ‘surrounded’ and in the fluid enjambement that formally extends the curved lines of the landscape. The wideness of this space of sea and sky seems to empty the verse of human presence, there is only a shadowed sense of embodiment in the image of the eye, which is held at the edges of the verse and the landscape. The moment of poised lyric stillness introduced by the quiet sky retains an air of the Wordsworthian; Byron’s landscape is ghosted by the ‘sense sublime’ of ‘Tintern Abbey’, ‘Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,/ And the round ocean, and the living air’ (98-99), and the image of the lone star gestures towards solitude and Wordsworth’s vision of the poet in nature. Yet this impulse is immediately countered as Byron reinvests the scene with the physicality of the lovers who wander forth ‘hand in hand’ (II.1465). Stanza 185 forms an inverse echo of the earlier scene, the same sense of space is created but Juan and Haidee now appear at the centre of it: ‘They look’d up to the sky . . . They gazed upon the glittering sea below’ (II.1473-1475). The sky is once more described as ‘rosy’ (II.1474) and light as ‘circling’ (II.1476), though now it is the rising moon rather than the setting sun. Still yet, the eye reappears, here fully embodied and star-like in its turn: the lover’s ‘saw each other’s dark eyes darting light/ Into each other—and, beholding this,/ Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss’ (II.1478-1480). This is not, after all, the deep solitude of the opening verse-paragraph of ‘Tintern Abbey’, or the haunted companionship of its close, but a moonlight tryst.

Nevertheless, ‘Tintern Abbey’ forms a quietly resonant cave throughout this passage of *Don Juan*, as Byron explores what might be described as a social solitude. He not only hears the quiet solitude of the opening of Wordsworth’s poem,

but its opposite also, the unsettled isolation that makes ‘Tintern Abbey’ so powerful, and is made present as Byron re-sounds the ‘lonely rooms’ of the earlier poem. The rooms simultaneously exist and do not exist in the verse, and Byron’s very invocation of Wordsworth’s lines defines exactly the kind of solitude Haidee and Juan do not experience: ‘They were alone, but not alone as they/ Who shut in chambers think it loneliness’ (II.1497-1498). It is a transformative allusion that refuses to give weight to Wordsworth’s sense of troubled weariness even as the lines invoked cast a shade over the verse. James Thompson observes that this sense of despondent solitariness was new to the Romantic period:

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, earlier meanings of lonely and loneliness are emotionally neutral and refer simply to a state of being alone or solitary, without company, but not necessarily without anything else. Loneliness acquires its emotional connotations of sadness and dejection only in the early nineteenth century, that is to say, under Romanticism: the first examples of these emotional uses are drawn from Byron and from Wordsworth’s *Excursion* of 1814: ‘He grew up/ From year to year in loneliness of soul.’¹²⁹

This is the emotional register of the earlier ‘lonely rooms’ of ‘Tintern Abbey’, rooms that are lonely because they contain the poet in his loneliness, and Byron draws this sorrowful sense within the compass of his scene even as he rejects it in favour of alternative solitudes.

The language of solitude permeates this passage on the coast: the lovers are ‘alone’ and ‘lonely’ (II.1530), the space in which they are located is ‘lone’ (II.1505) and the hour is that ‘Of Love’s, and Night’s, and Ocean’s solitude’ (II.1578). This

¹²⁹ James Thompson, *Between Self and World: The Novels of Jane Austen* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), p. 174, qtd. in Beth Lau, ‘Placing Jane Austen in the Romantic Period: Self and Solitude in the Works of Austen and the Male Romantic Poets’, *European Romantic Review* 15.2 (2004), 255-267. For a wider sense of despondency in the period see Thomas Pfau’s discussion of the three paradigmatic moods of paranoia, trauma, and melancholy that he sees as structuring a Romantic experience of history. *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

last line captures the paradoxical nature of the solitude Byron explores, in which solitude is shared but also singular. The slippage between companionship and isolation in these stanzas creates a space in which Haidee can share in—or perhaps succumb to (her soul is ‘o’erflow’d’)—the ‘united power’ (II.1579) of the three-fold solitude even as that same solitude reinforces the intensely insular nature of the lovers’ communion: ‘She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,/ Where nought upon their passion could intrude’ (II.1581-1582). The passage is animated by competing solitudes, where the acute isolation of the lovers, who quite literally only have eyes for each other, is heightened by, but also different from, the loneliness of the uninhabited landscape of ‘barren sand and rocks so rude’ (II.1580) that contains them: ‘They fear’d no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,/ They felt no terrors from the night, they were/ All in all to each other’ (II.1505-1507). The echo chamber of ‘Tintern Abbey’ emerges here again, in the echo of Wordsworth’s line ‘Nature then to me was all in all’. If it is a different kind of solitude, it is also a different kind of companionship.

In ‘Tintern Abbey’, the remembrance of ‘lonely rooms’ deepens Wordsworth’s sense of nature’s power to heal. It is a twofold recollection that forms a point of connection between the poet in his youth and his present experience; standing on the banks of the Wye, Wordsworth recalls not only his separation from the river, but the sustaining memory of his early encounter with this place and the Wye as a continuing source of moral fortitude and sublime transcendence. In *Don Juan*, even in the act of allusion, the verse holds at bay the Wordsworthian impulse to gather past, present, and future in a single moment. What Wordsworth finds in the ‘light of setting suns/ And the round ocean and the living air’ (98-99) is a

transcendent sense of connectivity between man and nature; what Juan and Haidee find is each other:

The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
 The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
 The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
 Around them, made them to each other press,
 As if there were no life beneath the sky
 Save theirs, and that their life could never die. (II.1499-1504)

Theirs is an immediacy of experience that is entirely self-contained; the natural world elicits no response from the lovers that is not directed at each other.

Byron plays with Wordsworth's impassioned response to nature. As discussed in the earlier section on 'Tintern Abbey', the elegiac and the restorative blend in Wordsworth's poem, as the poet's union with nature wavers between dissolution of the self and a firm grounding through shared experience with his sister. Both Nature and Dorothy take their place as counterparts to the poet, as the fevered passion of the lone poet in the landscape gives way to a different kind of intensity in the passionate prayer of the poem's close. Byron quietly adopts and disturbs the depth of Wordsworthian sentiment in this moment: behind the image of the light-darting eyes of the lovers lingers Wordsworth's description of his sister, in which the 'shooting lights' (119) of her 'wild eyes' (120) reflect the poet's own former pleasures. The echoes in this passage of *Don Juan* are not free of the satiric impulses that characterise Byron's other engagements with Wordsworth's verse, but, unsignalled, they allow for creative play. In an early fragment of Wordsworth's, that would later echo in 'Tintern Abbey' and suggest to him the rhythms and responses of a return to a beloved landscape, he writes of the 'peculiar voice' of the River Derwent, 'Heard in the stillness of the evening air,/ Half-heard

and half-created' (4-6).¹³⁰ This seems a peculiarly apposite description of Wordsworth's own voice in this passage of *Don Juan*, as Byron sounds out Wordsworthian sensibilities only to recreate them in his own image. Part of the purpose of invoking 'Tintern Abbey' is to poke fun at the Wordsworthian ideal of nature; where Wordsworth's passion leads to nature, Byron's leads to Haidee.

As the passage on the island coast progresses, Byron continues to reject the Wordsworthian evocation of the poet in communion with nature. Unlike in the lyric digression of Canto III, it is not nature that is worshipped, but the woman:

She loved, and was beloved—she adored,
 And she was worshipp'd; after nature's fashion,
 Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
 If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion[.] (II.1521-1524)

Nevertheless, nature provides the model for Juan and Haidee's high devotion as well as for the bodily passion that will be imaged, in the next lines, in language suggestive of the pounding surge of the ocean, and which recalls Juan's earlier shipwreck: 'But by degrees their senses were restored,/ Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on' (II.1525-1526). Moreover, line 1522 invites us to read or to hear that Haidee was worshipped 'after nature's fashion', even as the semi-colon separates 'worship' from 'nature'. Having already sounded 'Tintern Abbey' in this passage, the line echoes, even as it rejects, Wordsworth's affirmation that he has been 'so long/ A worshipper of Nature' (153). Byron resituates Wordsworth's 'holier love' (156) as he does in the first canto of *Don Juan*, where he has a lovesick Juan turn to nature and to solitude in a pointed parody of a Wordsworthian mode of experience.

¹³⁰ *LBOP*, p. 274.

In Canto I, Juan's first experience of love is figured as a self-absorbed retreat into nature, in the style of Wordsworth and the Lake Poets. As Paul H. Fry observes, 'Juan falling in love becomes a Laker; hence of the reason for his embarrassment in Julia's presence "he had no more notion/ Than he who never saw the sea of ocean"'.¹³¹ Byron situates Juan in a landscape suggestive of vacancy and correspondent impenetrable poetics:

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks
 Thinking unutterable things; he threw
 Himself at length within the leafy nooks
 Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;
 There poets find materials for their books,
 And every now and then we read them through,
 So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
 Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

He, Juan, (and not Wordsworth) so pursued
 His self-communion with his own high soul,
 Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
 Had mitigated part, though not the whole
 Of its disease; [. . .] (I.713-725)

There is a suggestive slippage between figures in Byron's parentheses: it might have been Wordsworth, but is, instead, his stand-in. As in 'Churchill's Grave', Byron parodies Wordsworth's tone or style, rather than a particular poem. Byron glances at the 'high-souled poets' of the 'Thanksgiving Ode', and evokes the London of 'Westminster Bridge' to suggest Juan's (and Wordsworth's) grandiose egotism, while the wandering poet figure who rests in 'nooks' alludes to the Wordsworth of *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Excursion*. Stanza 90 responds most overtly to Wordsworth's 'epic', and the critique anticipates Byron's fiercer censure in Canto III. Not only a Wordsworthian-sounding word, '[u]nutterable' likely

¹³¹ Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are*, p. 57.

comes to Byron via *The Excursion*, where it is used in the description of the Wanderer as a young boy, in transcendent communion with nature.¹³² The un-prefix paves the way for ‘unintelligible’ as Byron connects the inexpressible with the meaningless and lays them both at Wordsworth’s door.

This is Byron’s first signalled engagement with Wordsworth in the cantos of *Don Juan*, and it suggests the pattern of opposition that will frame the later episodes. If Juan is solitary in the style of Wordsworth, Byron reminds the reader that he, the poet, is not:

I’m fond myself of Solitude or so,
 But then, I beg it may be understood,
 By solitude I mean a sultan’s, not
 A hermit’s, with a haram for a grot. (I.693-696)

The lines are comic in their transformation of the introspective solitude of ‘lonely wood’ (I.690) and ‘grot’, into the insouciant ‘solitude or so’ of a sultan amidst his women. Byron associates himself with the exotic (and erotic), in a performance of his cosmopolitan identity that, he suggests, may be seen as oppositional to the reclusive insularity of a poet like Wordsworth. Nevertheless, the solitudes that are articulated in *Don Juan* are animated by Byron’s engagement with Wordsworth, as they both pull away from, and resound, Wordsworthian ideas.

In a poem that is invested in re-imaginings and transformations, it is fitting that the solitude expressed in Canto I as satire, should be revisited in Canto II in a manner that blends a counter-response with contemplation. Juan and Haidee’s communion in the wild, secluded landscape is inflected by Byron’s creative play with Wordsworth. Haidee’s death, in Canto IV, continues this creative engagement,

¹³² See *TE*, I.185-243.

as Byron thinks through Wordsworth even as he rejects the elder poet's poetics, here those of the grave. As in 'Churchill's Grave' and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron's sense is of the failure of memory to hold up against the depredations of time, and his stanzas on Haidee's death respond to Wordsworth's winning of peace in view of the grave in the Lucy poems and *The Excursion*. Byron's allusive descriptions of Haidee, as his later portrayals of Dudu and Aurora Raby, suggest that he has a Wordsworthian figure in mind; the description of Haidee as 'Nature's bride' (II.1609) in Canto II is reprised in Canto XV as 'Nature's all' (XV.462), a connection that suggests a different form of communion to the one she shares with Juan.¹³³ The seclusion that is expressed in the Lucy poems, particularly in 'Three years she grew' and 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways', is re-sounded in Canto IV, stanzas 15 and 28; although Haidee and Juan are not alone as Lucy is, the manner of their solitude evokes Wordsworth's lyrics, as Byron suggests that they should live 'unseen' (IV.118) in nature's recesses, 'To pass their lives in fountains

¹³³ The characterisation of Dudu in Canto VI as 'A child of Nature' (VI.475) and more like a skittish fawn reflected in a lake than a coquettish concubine at her glass, draws the Lucy of 'Three years she grew in sun and shower' within view, as a 'child', 'sportive as the fawn' (13), whom 'Nature' adopts in the opening stanza of Wordsworth's poem:

Three years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own. (1-6)

These same lines are echoed nine cantos later when Byron introduces us to Aurora Raby as one who 'gazed upon a World she scarcely knew/ As seeking not to know it; silent—lone/ As grows a Flower—thus quietly she grew' (XV.369-371). Byron's lines draw the seclusion of 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways' within their compass also, where the figure of Lucy is again imaged as a flower—'A violet by a mossy stone/ Half-hidden from the eye!' (5-6)—and as separate from the world. Later in Canto XV, Byron will distinguish Aurora from the 'lost Haidee' (XV.458), 'The Island Girl—bred up by the lone Sea' (XV.460); here Haidee resembles a 'flower' and Aurora a 'Gem' (XV.464), yet the shared echoes draw them back together. All three women are inflected with Wordsworthian feeling; in alluding to Wordsworth's poems Byron invests his characters with the same natural innocence that Wordsworth renders in Lucy, an idealised feminine figure formed and preserved through communion with nature.

and on flowers' (IV.119) or 'together deep in woods/ Unseen as sings the nightingale' (IV.217-218). The repetition of 'unseen' is noticeable, and recalls the un- prefixes of 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways', where the obscure abode of the opening line anticipates the life 'lived unknown' (9).

Like Lucy, Haidee is associated with the outdoors world; she and Juan are 'Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes/ Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care' (IV.219-220). The experience of the poet-narrator surfaces in this opposition, just as it will in Canto V, when he interrupts the narrative to inform the reader that he 'pass[es his] evenings in long galleries solely,/ And that's the reason [he's] so melancholy' (V.463-464). Byron rehearses the binary of natural and urban solitudes:

Two or three seem so little, *one* seems nothing:
 In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore,
 There solitude, we know, has her full growth in
 The spots which were her realms for evermore;
 But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in
 More modern buildings and those built of yore,
 A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
 Seeing what's meant for many with but one.— (V.449-456)

The poet claims a different kind of solitary being in his articulation of the urbane city solitudes in which he locates himself, yet his stanzas are self-aware of their own posturing—this is a performance of cosmopolitan poetics writ against Wordsworthian seclusion. The 'spots' of solitude recall *Childe Harold* III, and line 450 is a direct echo of the earlier work in which Byron says of Harold's communion with nature, 'The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,/ Were unto him companionship' (III.113-114). 'Crowds' replace nature's 'cavern' of the earlier lines, but the word serves to draw other echoes of *Childe Harold* within its bounds, those of the poet who insists that though he might be 'in the crowd' (III.1053), he

is not of it, one who has ‘stood and stand[s] alone’ (III.1048).¹³⁴ Byron’s digression in *Don Juan* knowingly tilts at his portrayal of the melancholic Harold and his earlier attempts, both in life and in art, of a solitary retreat into nature.

Byron, writing Haidee’s death in Canto IV, engages with the movement of Wordsworth’s Lucy poems, in which the vital Lucy becomes ‘a thing that could not feel/ The touch of earthly years’ (‘A slumber’, 3-4) and the poet’s grief is stilled. The high agony of the emphatic last lines of ‘She dwelt among the untrodden ways’—‘But she is in her grave, and, O!/ The difference to me!’ (11-12)—is calmed in the permanent transposition of Lucy into the scene of nature in which she lived. The final lines of ‘Three years she grew’ are tranquil in their sorrow and suggest a recompense gained in the recollection of what has been left behind:

She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be. (39-42)

Like so many Wordsworthian women, particularly those of *The Excursion*, Lucy is enfolded in the earth, to be, as Wordsworth describes it, ‘Roll’d round in earth’s diurnal course/ With rocks, and stones, and trees’ (‘A slumber’, 7-8). Byron troubles the resolution of ‘A slumber’ and ‘Three years she grew’ in the passage on Haidee’s death:

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her
 Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
 Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth; her days and pleasures were
 Brief, but delightful—such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but She sleeps well
By the sea shore, whereon she loved to dwell. (IV.561)

¹³⁴ See also *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto III, Stanza 71.

Byron stresses the idea that Haidee was not meant to bear weight—stanza 71 recalls the earlier lines on Haidee and Juan’s retreat from the world, in which they are ‘To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,/ And never know the weight of human hours’ (IV.119-120). Byron seems to hear Wordsworth’s description of Lucy as one who can no longer feel the ‘touch of earthly years’, but without Wordsworth’s sense of comfort. The final lines of the stanza share the cadences of Wordsworth’s conclusion to Margaret’s story in *The Excursion*: ‘She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here’ (I.971). Yet Byron’s prepositions also seem to keep Haidee unburied, she is not ‘in’ the earth, but by it, on it. Moreover, Haidee’s death is haunted by the dream sequence that precedes it, in which the seashore appears as a place of fixed unrest: Haidee dreams ‘of being alone on the sea-shore,/ Chain’d to a rock; she knew not how, but stir /She could not from the spot’ (IV.241-243) in lines that ghost her burial. Stanza 71 steps back from the downward, inward movement of the grave in the previous stanza, in which Haidee’s child ‘went down to the grave unborn, wherein/ Blossom and bough lie wither’d with one blight’ (IV.557-558). Haidee’s ‘wither’d’ (IV.545) body, which declines in the preceding stanzas, is naturalised in death, a branch in place of a woman, as though Byron cannot bear to put Haidee herself in the ground. Haidee’s death shares in the tragedy of Margaret’s and Ellen’s untimely deaths in *The Excursion*, but where Wordsworth wins peace through re-interment even after moments of anguish, Byron is left with a haunting sense that it is not enough.

The opening lines of Stanza 72 are tonally Wordsworthian, evoking the altered landscapes of the *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Excursion*, in which time and nature erase the markers of human activity and life:

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants past away;
 None but her own and father's grave is there,
 And nothing outward tells of human clay[.] (IV.569-572)

Yet, where Wordsworth takes refuge in the things that do endure, physical objects to which the poet may pin his tales of loss, for Byron, 'No stone is there to show, no tongue to say/ What was' (IV.574-575). Byron's landscape is illegible and elegiacally silent: 'No dirge, except the hollow sea's,/ Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades' (IV.575-576). Nevertheless, like Wordsworth, Byron does suggest the endurance of memory through an oral record; the poet is placed within the community of 'Greek maid[s]' who sigh in 'loving song' (IV.577) over Haidee's name and with the 'islander[s]' (IV.578) who tell the story of Lambro.

Later in Canto IV, Byron's meditations on death will turn towards personal experience, as his digression from the narrative directs the reader to Ravenna once more, and the poet's daily passing of Dante's tomb. Byron's thoughts on his own fame and death emerge in a landscape of graves and memorials. The poet seems to echo his earlier lines on Haidee when imagining his own death, in the claim that whether his verse be remembered or not, 'The grass upon [his] grave will grow as long,/ And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song' (IV.791-792). As at Haidee's grave, Byron anticipates a kind of silence, where only nature's wordless voice is heard. The poet again picks up the theme of the depredations of time in stanzas that present the threat of entropy and erasure at the grave with a melancholic inevitability:

The very generations of the dead
 Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
 Until the memory of an age is fled,
 And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
 Where are the epitaphs our fathers read? (IV.809-813)

Byron's rhetorical question points to his sense of the fragility of objects and acts of memorialising, even, or especially, those of language. The stanza is less about the physical erasure of memorials than it is about forgetfulness—here, memory is not preserved even within a generation. In contrast to 'Churchill's Grave', the poet suggests that there is no 'glory' in a name in these stanzas, but only 'nothing', for here 'great names are nothing more than nominal' (IV.801). Nevertheless, even as he suggests its futility, Byron performs an act of memorialising as he names the monuments that he passes daily. One of these is the column that commemorates the 1512 Battle of Ravenna and the death of the French general Gaston De Foix, and Byron adds a locationally specific note that works to affirm his familiarity with the spot. The other monument is Dante's tomb, 'A little cupola, more neat than solemn' (IV.826), and the mirrored opening lines of the stanzas on each memorial—'I canter by the spot each afternoon' (IV.817) and 'I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid' (IV.825)—suggests a habitual marking of the sites of memory. Byron's observation that 'reverence here is paid/ To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column' (IV.827-828) is one that he is not entirely comfortable with; his anger at the neglect and defilement of the column is the counter response to the acceptance that one day both tomb and column will decay beyond memory. Nevertheless, the ongoing preservation of Dante's tomb is significant. As in Canto III, Byron shares space with Dante; he is one of the reverent, one who preserves the place and the name of the poet.

Byron's meditation on the end of fame becomes more combative as he turns to the contemporary reception of his work and to the critics of *Don Juan*. Byron's primary target is his female readership, the 'Benign Ceruleans of the second Sex!'

(IV.858), with whom, Byron suggests, he is out of favour; yet, as so often in *Don Juan*, when Byron thinks about fame and poetic reception, Wordsworth and Southey also emerge as party to his censure. The Lake poets are situated alongside the coterie of ‘bluestockings’ that Byron claims opposition with, just as they will be in his farcical play, *The Blues: A Literary Eclogue*, which was written in August 1821, around the time that Murray published Cantos III-V of *Don Juan*, and in which they appear in the guise of ‘Wordswords’ and ‘Mouthey’, both names that suggest the slur of prolixity (and tedious repetition, for Wordsworth in particular) that Byron recurrently levelled at each poet.¹³⁵ The stanzas make a mockery of Wordsworth and Southey as Byron parrots their prose and poetry. He borrows a line from Southey’s *Madoc in Wales* in his parodic description of the bluestockings:

Oh! ‘darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,’
 As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
 And I, ye learned ladies, say of you[.] (IV.873-875)

The quotation marks signal the allusion, but Byron immediately follows it with the suggestion that the poetry is not worth attending to, a slight made more cutting by the fact that the meter would fit Southey’s name as easily as the placeholder it contains. Byron dismisses Southey, as Wordsworth in the stanza above, as being inconsequential, the ‘somewhere’ is most definitely not ‘here’.

Considering his own changing poetic reception from the distance of self-exile in Italy, Byron alights on his usual sense of opposition with the English poets, and with Wordsworth in particular, whose own account of the caprices of fame Byron parodies. Stanza 109 is a characteristic performance of Byronic doubleness, as the poet undercuts his exclusion from the current literary fashion with the

¹³⁵ *BCPW*, VI, p. 378.

sardonic suggestion that he did not wish to be there in the first place, even as the verse reminds the reader of his earlier pre-eminence:

What, can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
 A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
 To bear the compliments of many a bore,
 And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's starling;
 Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore,
 (Because the world won't read him, always snarling)
 That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
 Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie. (IV.865-872)

Byron takes aim at Wordsworth's *Essay Supplementary to the Preface* in the final lines of the stanza, and to Wordsworth's insistent justification of his lack of sales; the ironic suggestion of shared sentiments is made only to show the greater difference between the poets. As so often in his satire, Byron diminishes Wordsworth, here visibly in the physical act of shortening his name, which makes him more long-winded and less worthy of poetic estimation, and in the parentheses, which seem to enact the poet's separation from 'the world'.

Nevertheless, the wonderful irony of Byron's aside is that even as it reminds the reader that Wordsworth is continually complaining about not being read, it also reminds us that Byron *has* read Wordsworth. Indeed, Byron's engagement with Wordsworth here is anticipated three stanzas earlier in an unsignalled allusion to Wordsworth's 'Note to the Thorn'. Wordsworth writes in the note that 'the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion', and Byron, writing of the 'unquiet feelings' (IV.843) that give rise to verse, echoes Wordsworth's words:

Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
 Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
 Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion. (IV.846-848)¹³⁶

¹³⁶ See *LBOP*, p. 351.

As ‘passion’ falls to ‘fashion’ in the couplet rhyme, Byron turns the tables on Wordsworth—perhaps the reader can be too often reminded after all. The introduction of what is ‘fashionable’ also prepares the way for Byron’s combative stanzas on his poetic reception. Byron’s allusion to Wordsworth marks the shift from the meditative contemplation of the end of fame, to a satiric critique on the making of it, and in doing so points again to the double nature of Byron’s relationship with Wordsworth in *Don Juan*. Byron’s hearing of Wordsworth’s poetry and his re-sounding of the elder poet is deeper and more complex than his satirical ripostes suggest. In the later cantos of *Don Juan*, allusions to Wordsworth remain present, although they, along with Byron’s signalled satire of the poet, recur with less frequency. In a nuanced episode of Canto VIII, Byron will make a Wordsworthian turn to nature in the midst of a scene of war: Byron’s digression concerns an historical American figure, yet in striking ways this figure, and the scene of dwelling, is inflected with Wordsworth’s poetry of the *Lyrical Ballads*.¹³⁷ In the English Cantos also, Wordsworth will be heard audibly as Byron reimagines his homeland through Juan’s eyes. Nevertheless, it is in the early cantos of Byron’s epic that his critical and creative engagement with Wordsworth is most felt. In Byron’s writing on solitude and the grave, fame and the place of the poet, Wordsworthian spatial poetics murmur. Byron’s sense of his own poethood is sharpened by his opposition to the poet of the Lakes and to Wordsworth’s poetics of recompense that are grounded in dwelling, but it is a creative antagonism that provides space in which Byron can not only think against Wordsworth, but through him. In *Don Juan*, by the grave and in nature’s recess, Wordsworth is ‘half heard

¹³⁷ See Canto VIII, stanzas 59-68.

and half created'. My final chapter considers the less antagonistic, but no less lyrically complex, relationship between Wordsworth and Keats.

CHAPTER III.

‘ON HELVELLYN’S SUMMIT WIDE AWAKE’:

KEATS AND WORDSWORTH

On 20 November 1816, having spent the previous evening at the home of Benjamin Robert Haydon, where he was, as he described it, ‘wrought . . . up’, Keats sent a letter to his host containing a freshly composed sonnet in celebration of his artistic mentors: Haydon himself, Leigh Hunt, and Wordsworth.¹ Following the sonnet’s opening line, Keats presents a portrait of the poet who was to be the most influential of his elder contemporaries; though unnamed, Wordsworth’s identity is coded in the evocation of the sublime landscape of the Lake District:

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning;
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
 Who on Helvellyn’s summit, wide awake,
 Catches his freshness from archangel’s wing[.] (1-4)²

¹ *LJK*, I, 117.

² The fourth line of the sonnet seems to pull against the preceding sense of groundedness that Keats evokes in Wordsworth’s location, a tension that will recur in Keats’s own hill-top stationing in ‘I stood tip-toe’, see ll. 1-25. The unexpected introduction of the ‘archangel’s wing’ perhaps owes something to Keats’s evening with Haydon, whose religious feeling was pronounced, and the image shadows the poet’s connection of Haydon and Raphael in the eighth line of the sonnet, where Raphael designates both the painter and the messenger to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Although there is no obvious line of *Paradise Lost* recalled here, the description of Raphael’s arrival at Eden in Book V, in which he ‘shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled/ The circuit wide’ (V.286-287), may be in Keats’s mind. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, (ed.) Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 1971). The first half of Keats’s line, in which Wordsworth ‘catches his freshness’, is suggestive of Keats’s Cockneyisms; nevertheless, it may also be a recollection of Archibald Alison’s *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, which, as an aspiring poet, Keats possibly would have read. In an illustration of how the emotion of Beauty may be increased by picturesque objects, Alison quotes Thomas Whately’s description of the Tinian lawn at Hagley in *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770): ‘[“]It is delightful then to saunter here, and see the grass and the gossamer which entwines it glistening with dew, to listen and hear nothing stir, except perhaps a withered leaf, dropping gently through a tree, and sheltered from the chill, to catch the freshness of the evening air.” It is difficult to conceive any thing more beautiful than this description, yet how much is its beauty increased by the concluding circumstance? “A solitary urn, chosen by Mr Pope for the spot, and now inscribed to his memory, when seen by a gleam of moonlight through the trees, fixes that thoughtfulness and composure, to which the mind is insensibly led by the rest of this elegant scene.”’ *Essays on the Nature and*

The sonnet exhibits Keats's early reading of Wordsworth, the first line and the theme take their cue from Wordsworth's Sonnet 15 of the 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty' section of *Poems, in Two Volumes*, 'Great men have been among us'. Keats brings Wordsworth's lauded 'hands that penn'd/ And tongues that utter'd wisdom' ('Great men' 1-2) into the present moment. Where Wordsworth looks back to 'The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,/ Young Vane, and others who call'd Milton Friend' ('Great men' 3-4), in a political act of invocation that sets England's acclaimed literary history against what the poet felt to be France's present lack, Keats looks forward to a poetic landscape of which he might be a part: the gathered 'other spirits' (9) that stand 'Upon the forehead of the age to come' (10) are imaginatively stationed on a prospect, the counterpart to Wordsworth's material 'summit', and, unnamed, they offer imaginative space for the young poet. Keats's 'spirits' allude to Wordsworth's 'delicate spirits' (44) of the 'Prospectus' to *The Excursion*, who compose 'fair ideal Forms . . . / From earth's materials' (43-45), and so Keats gestures to a Wordsworthian articulation of poethood and to a tradition in which he might follow.

Keats's metaphorical use of 'forehead' possibly also arises from his reading of Wordsworth; like Wordsworth, Keats's foreheads tend to be made of stone if they are not formed of flesh, and though here the 'forehead of the age' is somewhat abstract, it resonates with the figure of the mountain. Wordsworth finds in the image

Principles of Taste (Dublin: P. Byrne, J. Moore, Grueber and M'allister, W. Jones, and R. White, 1790), pp. 29-30. The passage is suggestive for its numerous images that resonate for Keats, including the falling leaf that shares similarities with the opening passage of *Hyperion: A Fragment*, ll. 7-10, and the introduction of the urn as an object of heightened beauty. The final clause of the quotation, in which the mind is 'insensibly led' to contemplation, anticipates Wordsworth's own formulations. For Keats's possible reading of Alison, see James R. Caldwell, *John Keats' Fancy: The Effect on Keats of the Psychology of his Day* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1945), and Beth Lau, 'Keats, Associationism, and "Ode to a Nightingale"', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 32 (1983), 46-62.

of the ‘forehead’ an apt metaphor for rocky protuberances or peaks, as in ‘The Brothers’, which opens with a portrait of a tourist ‘perch’d’ (7) ‘Upon the forehead of a jutting crag’ (6). This geography will echo for Keats much later in the mountainous landscape of *Hyperion: A Fragment*, in which he describes ‘Crag jutting forth to crag’ (II.10) beside rocks that ‘Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns’ (II.12). In Book IV of *Endymion*, in an image that is closer to the sonnet, Keats has the titular character and his disguised goddess companion unexpectedly peer at the figure of Sleep as ‘one would look’

... from old Skiddaw’s top, when fog conceals
 His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,
 With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale
 Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far. (IV.394-397)

Though it is here through Skiddaw, rather than Helvellyn, Keats again evokes the sublime topography of the Lake District. The image of the English mountain arises in the mythic geography of Keats’s poem in response to his invocation to the ‘Muse of my native land’ (IV.354). The gesture recalls Wordsworth’s in the ‘Prospectus’ to *The Recluse*, which prefaces *The Excursion*, in which he invokes Urania:

—Urania, I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. (25-30)

Keats turns Wordsworth’s Greek muse into an English one, and his airy footsteps into wings, and claims the same wide expansive space:

This is the giddy air, and I must spread
 Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread
 Or height, or depth, or width, or my chance
 Precipitous. (IV.355-358)

Keats implicitly connects his sense of vision and the seat of English poetry to the landscape that Wordsworth claims, and which will form the locale for *The Excursion*, the poem that Keats is later to describe, in a letter to Haydon, as among ‘three things to rejoice at in this Age’.³

Wordsworth’s sonnet, ‘Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side’, first published in the 1815 *Poems*, is perhaps one of the texts informing Keats’s idea of Skiddaw in *Endymion*. Wordsworth lauds the classical mountains of Pelion, Ossa, Olympus, and Parnassus—the ‘inspiring Hill, which “did divide/ Into two ample horns his forehead wide”’ (4-5)—while lamenting that ‘not an English Mountain we behold/ By the celestial muses glorified’ (7-8).⁴ In the sestet, Wordsworth elevates Skiddaw; the sublimity of the mountain offers, to Wordsworth’s mind, a fit place for the locus of English poetry:

Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
 What was the great Parnassus’ self to Thee,
 Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
 Our British Hill is fairer far: He shrouds
 His double-fronted head in higher clouds,
 And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly. (9-14)

As Keats recalls Wordsworth’s image of Skiddaw, he motions to an alternative poetic geography. His ‘native’ muse is situated not within the familiar suburban environment of Hampstead, nor the fashionable locale of Box Hill in Surrey, where Keats wrote much of the fourth book of *Endymion* in the environment of ‘Hill and Dale and a little River’, but in Wordsworth’s ‘native land’: the Lake District.⁵

³ *LJK*, I, p. 203.

⁴ In ll. 4-5, Wordsworth quotes from Spenser’s work of translation ‘Virgil’s Gnat’, which, as an English translation of a classical text, is pertinent to Wordsworth’s own act of ‘translation’, as the poet carries across the idea of the mountain home of the Greek muses into an English landscape.

⁵ *LJK*, I, p. 188.

It is a translocation that Keats had earlier imagined in October 1815, in the sonnet ‘O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell’, in which the poet seeks to leave behind his present cityscape, a ‘jumbled heap/ Of murky buildings’, and to climb, with the personified Solitude, ‘the steep,—/ Nature’s observatory—whence the dell,/ Its flowery slopes, its river’s crystal swell,/ May seem a span’ (3-6). Keats’s debt to Wordsworth in this early sonnet has often been noted, as the evocative image of the forested hill ‘where the deer’s swift leap/ Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell’ (7-8) echoes the Prefatory sonnet of the miscellaneous sonnet sequence in the 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*, ‘Nuns fret not at their convent’s narrow room’, in which Wordsworth writes: ‘Bees that soar for bloom,/ High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,/ Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells’ (5-7). More than simply borrowing the image of bee and foxglove from Wordsworth, Robert Gittings argues that the ‘treatment and phrasing’ of the sonnet are ‘wholly Wordsworthian’: ‘[t]o the new realistic scenery of his working life, “the jumbled heap” of the Borough buildings, he has added a new poetic climate and geography’.⁶ Keats’s foxglove may be ‘[t]ransplanted from its remote Wordsworthian summit’, as Nicholas Roe suggests, to ‘a more frequented slope just outside of town’, nevertheless, the movement in Keats’s sonnet is towards a Wordsworthian prospect, a height on which the composition of poetry might take place.⁷ Keats’s use of the word ‘span’ to express his new sense of expansive vision also gathers the rural landscape into the space of an outstretched hand, from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger. Wordsworth’s poem is concerned with the work of poetry taking place within ‘the Sonnet’s scanty plot of ground’ (11) and Keats’s verse is

⁶ Robert Gittings, *John Keats* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 53.

⁷ Nicholas Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 78.

shadowed by this account of composition: the poet's imagination is graphic, textual—he would 'trace' (9) the vista before him and the 'words' that are 'images of thoughts refin'd' (11) are poetic as well as conversational.⁸

From 'O Solitude' to *Endymion*, Keats's early poems allude to Wordsworthian prospects. The 'little hill' of Keats's long couplet poem, 'I stood tip-toe on a little hill' recalls the 'steep' of the sonnet—it is, after all, Hampstead Heath—but it also shares in the anticipatory posture of the poet on Hellvelyn or Skiddaw. The same nexus of mountains, wings, and the visionary that is expressed in 'Great spirits' and in the 'native muse' passage of *Endymion* informs the opening passage of 'I stood tip-toe':

There was wide wandering for the greediest eye,
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint, and curious bending
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending;
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury
Had played upon my heels[.] (15-25)

Indeed, Keats seems to recall these lines in *Endymion* Book IV, in which the poet's invocation to the muse follows the sublime appearance of the 'Foot-feather'd Mercury' (IV.331), and the misty prospect of Skiddaw prompts the poet's imagined 'eye-guess' towards the picturesque 'pleasant vale' and 'favourite hamlet'. Nancy

⁸ My reading is akin to Jennifer Ann Wagner's here; she argues that Keats's sonnet is 'less about solitude per se than about writing poetry, less about absence from society than about the presence of the materials of poetry, nature, thought and words'. Wagner observes Keats's debt to Wordsworth's self-reflexive poetics of enclosure, particularly as expressed in 'Nuns fret not', and suggests that 'Keats's octave describes a scene akin to those solitary Wordsworthian scenes of labor; the sonnet space is a solitary mental space where the work of poetry takes place.' See *A Moment's Monument: Revisionary Poetics and the Nineteenth-Century English Sonnet* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), p. 84-85.

Moore Goslee has well discussed the influence of Miltonic stationing on Keats's verse, but Wordsworth too is a clear informative presence.⁹ Moore Goslee observes the poet's familiarity with the picturesque usage of 'station', which Keats would have encountered in *The Excursion*, as in the portrait of the Wanderer in Book IV:

What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine; when stationed on the top
Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up[.] (IV.111-114)¹⁰

Variations on the posture of being 'stood' or 'standing' recur in *The Excursion* and elsewhere in Wordsworth's verse, as a means to locate the poet on an edge in which physical place yields to imaginative vision. Wordsworth's sonnet, 'The world is too much with us', contains perhaps the most influential of such stationings for Keats; its final lines echo in 'I stood tip-toe' as in *Endymion*, in a similar way to the myth-making lines of Book IV of *The Excursion*: 'standing on this pleasant lea', Wordsworth imagines having 'glimpses that would make [him] less forlorn;/ Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;/ Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn' (11-14). In 'I stood tip-toe', Keats expresses a 'poetics of the edge': the straying that occurs in the poem, at its beginning and in its final line ('My wand'ring spirit must no farther soar'(242)), is of the eyes and the spirit, not the feet. It is in the writing of the Northern tour that Wordsworth's poetic geographies will take on new resonances as the imagined landscape of the Lakes becomes, for Keats, a reality, and the earlier aerial wandering is grounded.

At the beginning of his Northern tour in the summer of 1818, when close to Wordsworth's home in the Lake District, Keats will recall the lines of the

⁹ Nancy Moore Goslee, *Uriel's Eye: Miltonic Stationing and Statuary in Blake, Keats, and Shelley* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1985).

¹⁰ See Goslee, *Uriel's Eye*, pp. 10-12.

‘Prospectus’ that echo in ‘Great spirits’: those of the ‘delicate spirits’ who turn earth’s materials into poetry. He writes, in his first letter of the tour, of visiting Stock Ghyll Force in Ambleside, on the morning that he and Charles Brown will make the walk to Rydal, to call on what will turn out to be an absent Wordsworth. In what is perhaps a consciously Wordsworthian moment, Keats describes how they ‘fortunately, missed the direct path, and after wandering a little, found it out by the noise—for, mark you, it is buried in trees, in the bottom of the valley’.¹¹ The echoes of *The Excursion* surface as Keats proclaims:

I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavour of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one’s fellows.¹²

Wordsworth separates ‘Beauty—a living Presence of the earth’ (‘Prospectus’ 42) from the ‘craft of delicate Spirits’ that she surpasses; as he recalls these lines, Keats transforms them: it is poetry here that is elevated, a reminder that Keats’s experience of the landscape is recurrently mediated through poetry, and the poetry of Wordsworth in particular. With the palpable presence of both ‘he of the cloud, the cataract, the lake’ and Helvellyn to the immediate north, Keats rehearses the gesture of his early sonnet. The idea of the ‘ethereal existence’ of poetry recalls the fourth line of ‘Great spirits’, in which the sublimity of the landscape is subsumed by the mythos of the poet who ‘Catches his freshness from archangel’s wing’. Keats will move beyond the portrait of the poet on a quasi-Milonic prospect, yet the image of the mountain remains a resonant one for him.

¹¹ *LJK*, I, p. 300.

¹² *LJK*, I, p. 301.

The breathless fervency with which Keats responds to Haydon's intention to send the 'Great Spirits' sonnet to Wordsworth—'you know with what Reverence—I would send my Wellwishes to him'—is tempered by the time he arrived in the Lake District in June 1818; nevertheless, the letter makes audible the poet's sense of Wordsworth's poetic power.¹³ Between Keats's writing of the sonnet and his Northern tour, the two poets had met, more than once, in London, with Haydon again a mediating presence. Much more has been recorded of these meetings in December 1817 and on into January than of Byron and Wordsworth's earlier encounter, and, more than five years on, Wordsworth cuts a more formidable figure: he certainly was the most distinguished guest at Haydon's—now famous—'Immortal Dinner'. As many of Keats's recent critics and biographers have shown, the nineteenth-century accounts of the two poets' first meeting at the home of Thomas Monkhouse, during which Keats recited the 'Hymn to Pan' from *Endymion* and Wordsworth responded that it was 'a very pretty piece of paganism', are at best only partially accurate, written predominantly at second (or more) hand, and contain a greater sense of resentment over the younger poet's treatment by the elder than may actually have been felt.¹⁴ Keats was not as hurt as his friends later were on his behalf, and though he was disturbed by Wordsworth's pomposity and the same politics that Byron would find so problematic, his sense of Wordsworth's greatness as a poet was undiminished.

¹³ *LJK*, I, p. 118.

¹⁴ Jack Stillinger addresses the conflicting accounts and Keats's response in his discussion of Keats and Wordsworth in *Romantic Complexity: Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 20-27. For the most recent extended biographical accounts of the 'Immortal Dinner' and the interactions of Wordsworth and Keats during this period, see Stanley Plumly, *The Immortal Evening: A Legendary Dinner with Keats, Wordsworth, and Lamb* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014) and Penelope Hughes Hallett, *The Immortal Dinner: A Famous Evening of Genius and Laughter in Literary London, 1817*, 2nd edn. (London: Penguin, 2001).

The same perturbations would surface when Keats arrived in the Lake District and heard that Wordsworth was out ‘canvassing for the Lowthers’, as part of the Tory campaign, and would shadow the literary pilgrimage aspect of Keats’s tour with disappointment, as the sense of poverty and wretchedness felt in Burns’s country would later do the same.¹⁵ In his first journal letter to Tom, Keats complains that ‘Lord Wordsworth, instead of being in retirement, has himself and his house full in the thick of fashionable visitors quite convenient to be pointed at all the summer long.’¹⁶ Keats’s criticism is political, personal, and poetic: having found the landscape to ‘surpass [his] expectation’, Keats was disappointed to discover that Wordsworth was not so much the poet of *The Excursion* as he had perceived him to be.¹⁷ The idea of Wordsworth’s ‘retirement’ is drawn directly from the ‘Prospectus’ to *The Recluse*, in which the poet characterises his project in terms of solitude and seclusion; Wordsworth’s location in his ‘native Mountains’ is a preeminent part of the articulation of his poethood: *The Recluse* is so entitled ‘as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a Poet living in retirement.’¹⁸ The facetious designation of Wordsworth as a ‘Lord’ glances at the pomposity and self-aggrandisement that Keats had espied in London and which seemed to have emerged again in Wordsworth’s position in fashionable and aristocratic society, and in his connection to Lord Lowther. Yet it also reflects on Keats’s own sense of identity. Keats’s impression of the contradictory nature of Wordsworth’s socio-political and poetic place is bound up in the same question of authenticity that informs his self-presentation as separate to the London ‘miasma’,

¹⁵ *LJK*, I, p. 299.

¹⁶ *LJK*, I, p. 299.

¹⁷ *LJK*, I, p. 298.

¹⁸ *TE*, p. 38.

whose presence disfigures the Lake District.¹⁹ Away from the popular tourist locale of Windermere, Wordsworth's possible 'lordship' would appear in a different light. The blended echoes of 'Great spirits' and *The Excursion* that emerge by the waterfall at Ambleside draw out one of the enduring facets of Keats's reception of Wordsworth: his emplaced poethood. In view of a cataract that made visible the imagined landscape of his early sonnet, Keats was reminded that Wordsworth had already formed from these 'grand materials' a personal poetic geography. Even more so than in 'Great spirits', Keats's sense of what it meant to be among the English poets involved being among the mountains of the Lake District.

De Certeau's peripatetic image of the reader as poacher, travelling across written fields is a suggestive model for considering Wordsworth's influence on Keats. Wordsworth is a long-heard resonant voice in Keats's poetry, and, as before in the chapter on Byron, this chapter pays close attention to the echoes of the elder poet as they arise in the work of his later contemporary. Yet, unlike Byron, whose physical and imaginative movement is recurrently portrayed as antipodal to Wordsworth's, Keats shares with Wordsworth a pedestrian experience and poetic. In the famous letter to John Hamilton Reynolds of 3 May 1818, in which Keats writes of his idea of human life as 'a large Mansion of Many Apartments', he measures the relationship of sentiment and experience through footsteps, prompted by a consideration of the comparative visionary reach of Wordsworth and Milton:

—And here I have nothing but surmises, from an uncertainty whether Miltons apparently less anxiety for Humanity proceeds from his seeing further or no than Wordsworth: And whether Wordsworth has in truth epic passion<s>, and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main region of his song—In regard to his genius alone—we find what he says true as far as we have experienced and we can judge no further but by larger experience—

¹⁹ *LJK*, I, p. 299.

for axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses: We read fine—things but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the Author.²⁰

The steps that Keats describes are metonymic, they stand in for wider experience and are as philosophical, or intellectual, as they are physical. The image is a pertinent one, emerging from Keats's ruminations on Wordsworth and followed rapidly by perhaps Keats's most famous spatial metaphor, which involves chambers into which the poet must 'step', following Wordsworth as a guide, whose 'Genius is explorative of those dark passages' into which Keats would venture.²¹ Leon Waldoff suggests that Keats's 'use of "steps," "doors," "chambers," "dark passages," and making "discoveries"' in this section of the letter 'offers unconscious reassurance of the hope that he might succeed Wordsworth and go beyond him.'²² Wordsworth's spatial identities and poetic geographies intimately inform Keats's perception of place—philosophical, imaginative, and physical. Keats's 'footing slow across a silent plain' ('There is a joy in footing slow across a silent plain' 1) in Scotland, with its contrary potential for 'joy' and for a kind of visionary blindness is inseparable from the 'stepping' that takes place in the letter. The remainder of this chapter looks at the ways in which Wordsworth's physical and poetic geographies emerge, prompted in part by Keats's Northern tour, in the landscape of his blank-verse fragment, *Hyperion*.

²⁰ *LJK*, I, p. 279.

²¹ *LJK*, I, pp. 280-281.

²² Leon Waldoff, 'Keats's Identification with Wordsworth: Selective Affinities', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 38 (1989), 47-65.

'Quiet as a stone': Wordsworth, Keats, and Primordial Landscape from the Northern Tour to Hyperion: A Fragment

In 'There is a joy', the physical topography of Keats's northern tour is overlaid with the poet's mental geography, a mapping of a poetic landscape prompted and, in part, bequeathed by Wordsworth. The imaginatively fused landscapes of the tour resurface visibly and audibly in the epic topography of *Hyperion*, with its dense forests, craggy mountains, and a cavern that clearly recalls Keats's attempt to describe the appearance of Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa. On 26 July, in his letter to Tom, struggling to find adequate words to depict a landscape and an experience 'impossible to describe', Keats invites his brother to

Suppose now the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole Mass of black Columns and bound them together like bunches of matches—and then with immense Axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns—of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the Columns—such is fingal's Cave except that the Sea has done the work of excavations and is continually dashing there—²³

The mythologising of place becomes the basis for Keats's fragment poem 'Not Aladdin magian', which follows the account in the letter and concentrates Keats's vision of the cave's mythic origins:

This was architected thus
By the great Oceanus;
Here his mighty waters play
Hollow organs all the day[.] (27-30)

Oceanus bears the weight of Keats's idea of the Titans, as the poet reimagines the geologic formation of the rock structure and its natural erosion by the 'dashing' waves to be the work of the primordial god. Yet the poem hears the sound of the

²³ *LJK*, I, p. 348-349.

sea in more ways than one; echoed in the tidal waters of Keats's cave is the eternal sea of Wordsworth's Immortality Ode: 'And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore' (170). 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' forms part of the echo chamber in which the poems of the tour take shape; confronted with an ancient landscape, Keats catches Wordsworth's pre-existent ocean within his soundscape. The aural slippage between 'hear' and 'here' augments the sense of a landscape at once localised and mytho-poetic; what Keats hears on this spot is both the reverberating sea and the resonant voices of poetry.²⁴ Keats's response to the natural environs of Staffa informs the landscape of *Hyperion* also, as the poet finds in the watery cave a fit setting for his dejected gods; though not of the sea, the sound that haunts the craggy den of the Titans is water, the 'roar/ Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse' (II.8), a tumult of noise that reflects the Titans's own disquiet.

R. S. White describes the 'clutch of short poems and fragments' that Keats took back with him to London as, 'like notes towards the "Hyperion" project', which, although perhaps diminishing the sense of the poems as a coherent loco-response to the tour, chimes with Keats's own feeling that he might harvest and gather from the 'grand materials' of landscape and of poetry such that he might 'henceforth write more than ever', where 'more' hints at the poet's epic ambitions.²⁵ The tour made the physical landscape of *The Excursion* visible, its raw materials of mountains, rocks and stones, but it also suggestively brought to life Wordsworth's poetic geographies. Keats was gratified to identify, in the environs of Grasmere, the

²⁴ The slippage of sound and place is felt with force in Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', in the line 'Here, where men sit and hear each other groan' (24); as the emphatic opening 'Here' is re-sounded in 'hear', Keats endows the line with a weighty spatial and temporal presentness that brings the sound of suffering closer to the reader's ears.

²⁵ R. S. White, 'Emotional Landscapes: Romantic Travels in Scotland', *The Keats-Shelley Review* 27.2 (2013), 76-90, p. 89.

mountain scenery of 'To Joanna', especially the 'ancient woman' of Helm Crag. It is Wordsworth's mountains—both local and poetic—that have the deepest impact on the younger poet. Writing to Bailey on 22 July, Keats compares his first encounter with the mountains of the Lake District with the comparative surfeit of mountainous terrain since: '[t]he first Mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have since seen, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away—yet I like them mainly'.²⁶ By this point in the tour, although he had yet to make his ascent of Ben Nevis, Keats considered himself, with slight qualification, 'comparatively a mountaineer', following in the footsteps of Wordsworth up Skiddaw and 'tramping in the highlands'.²⁷ The mountains form a lodestone for Keats's imagination, comprising part of his 'poetics of the feet', as attested by the near step by step accounts of the climbs of Skiddaw and Ben Nevis, the ascent of which mountains imaginatively frame the tour in his letters. It is not the poetics of the feet or the poet's phenomenological experience of the mountain that he carries into *Hyperion*, however, although he does have Saturn and Thea climb up to the mountain cavern of the forlorn Titans 'With damp and slippery footing from a depth/ More horrid still' (II.85-86), in a crystallised moment of struggle that recalls the poet's own endeavours on the mountainside and further humanises the gods. Keats invites an awareness of bodily experience and endurance into his image of the clambering Titans, one that is closer to his own trouble with damp feet, having slipped 'one leg into a squashy hole' while attempting to climb to the summit of the

²⁶ *LJK*, I, 342.

²⁷ *LJK*, I, 342. For a discussion of the identity of the mountaineer during the Romantic period and its poetic associations, see Simon Bainbridge, 'Romantic Writers and Mountaineering', *Romanticism* 18.1 (2012), 1-15.

Lodore Falls.²⁸ What Keats also finds in the mountains, in the landscape's physical form, is a sense of the otherworldly. Ailsa Craig, rising out of the sea, like Fingal's Cave, confronts the poet with its primordial nature and with an awareness of deep time.²⁹

In the mountains of 'To Joanna', Keats found the possibility of a reciprocal landscape, one that contained its own mythic agency and thus might speak. When Keats writes about rocks and mountains in the poetry of the tour, he is attuned to the idea of the mountain's voice, and the sense that the rock might be awakened from its geological slumber into poetic life.³⁰ In the comic dialogue poem, 'Upon my life, Sir Nevis, I am piqu'd', Keats shares in the playfulness of 'To Joanna', in which the mountain rock might be 'like something starting from a sleep' (54). Keats has Ben Nevis awake to the complaint of Mrs Cameron, a caricature of the female tourist in search of sublime experience, who is shocked to discover that the mountain speaks back: 'What whining bit of tongue and mouth thus dares/ Disturb my slumber of a thousand years?' (21-22). The poem's risqué humour appears in the implicit suggestion of an attempted sexual encounter between Ben Nevis and Mrs Cameron, as Keats parodies the mountain sublime, and perhaps also holds in view Wordsworth's own expression of 'ravishment' (53) before the mountains of

²⁸ *LJK*, I, 306.

²⁹ In his discussion of Romantic representations of the physical presence of the natural world, Onno Oerlemans argues that in Romantic travel and travel writing a sense of the 'authenticity' of the landscape is produced 'through a growing sense of the difference of the physical world', its unfamiliarity and inscrutability: '[c]onfronting landscape suggests noting it as a category – an object in itself – and recognizing both that it has obvious if murky relations to being, and that its existence alienates consciousness in the sense that its scope, solidity, and seeming permanence make it radically unlike human or animal existence.' See *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 152, and more generally Chapter 5.

³⁰ My thoughts on the theme of geological slumber in Keats's writings of the tour were clarified by an excellent paper given by Fiona Stafford titled 'Keats and the Living Landscapes of the North' at the John Keats and Romantic Scotland Conference, St Andrews on 11 May 2018.

Grasmere.³¹ If Keats writes a burlesque of the sublime in ‘Upon my life’, he responds also to his earlier sonnet, ‘To Ailsa Rock’, in which the mountain remains resolutely silent:

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid,
 Give answer by thy voice, the sea fowls’ screams!
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
 When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?
 How long is’t since the mighty power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid?
 Thou answer’st not, for thou art dead asleep;
 Thy life is but two dead eternities,
 The last in air, the former in the deep—
 First with the whales, last with the eagle skies;
 Drown’d wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep—
 Another cannot wake thy giant size! (1-14)

‘Upon my life’ reimagines Ailsa Craig’s resistance to animation: Ben Nevis’s disturbed ‘slumber of a thousand years’ counters the island rock’s unbroken sleep of two ‘eternities’, and though an earthquake cannot awaken Ailsa Craig, Keats has Ben Nevis comically endeavour to create his own—‘O I shall split my sides!/ I shall earthquake’ (31-32)— with the help of ‘a cave of young earth dragons’ (55), a fanciful reconception of volcanic activity.

Although strikingly different in tone and style, Keats’s concern for geologic processes and the ancient past of the rock draws the two poems closer together. As later with Fingal’s Cave, Keats’s account of the landscape in the letters seems to shape and inspire the poetry; he writes to Tom in the letter of 10 July of how he ‘descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock’, as he and Brown travelled by foot along the Ayrshire coast:

³¹ Keats’s deflation of Wordsworthian sublimity in this poem is close to Percy Bysshe Shelley’s treatment of Wordsworthian nature in his parodic *Peter Bell the Third*, ll. 315-332.

—it was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us—The effect of ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge—Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed—³²

The idea of a flood becomes the foundational image of the sonnet as Keats considers the island's distant geologic past, 'drown'd' in the ocean, before tectonic processes raised the rock from a watery bed. A sense of history, not only human, pervades Keats's imagination during the Scottish tour; he writes, again to Tom, of Inverary Castle, which he describes as 'very modern magnificent and more so from the place it is in—the woods seem old enough to remember to or three changes in the Craggs about them' [18 July].³³ Keats responds to the ancientness of the landscape, to the idea of its primordial existence. The sense of 'old' or 'deep' time inherent in 'To Ailsa Rock' is reminiscent of Wordsworth's geologic imagination in 'Resolution and Independence', another of the poems that was uppermost in Keats's mind during the tour. Both Alan Bewell and Noah Heringman have unpacked the geological discourse informing Wordsworth's presentation of the Leech-gatherer in this poem, who, in his age, stillness and isolation resembles, in the poet's imagination, an erratic rock:

As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a Sea-beast crawl'd forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself.

Such seem'd this Man, not all alive nor dead,

³² *LJK*, I, 329.

³³ *LJK*, I, 336.

Nor all asleep[.] (64-72)³⁴

For Wordsworth, as later for Keats, the rock's geological otherworldliness, its resistance to the poet's questioning, invites a paradoxical sense of slumbering agency: it is matter that is no longer quite senseless.³⁵

Heringman considers the reciprocal metaphoric relationship of man and stone in Wordsworth's image, in which the quality of duration is transferred from the 'huge stone' to the Leech-gatherer, at the same time as '[t]he old man figures the otherness of the rock': 'As the limit case of bodily endurance, the Leech-gatherer's survival hints at the unimaginably larger scope of geologic time, while also borrowing the permanence of the rock and other "forms of nature" for its idea of independence.'³⁶ As so often in his poetry, Wordsworth is concerned with the idea of endurance, a quality that manifests in his work primarily through objects of the landscape that last beyond a human span of life and form an abiding tie between a person and a locale.³⁷ In *The Excursion* in particular, the primordial landscape features as a theatre in which the local takes place. Wordsworth's ancient rocks are the counterparts to the grave stones that also mark this landscape, a reminder of the shared Latin root of duration and endurance in *durus* (hard), as Mary Jacobus has observed: '[t]he ancientness of the earth and the still, sad music of humanity come

³⁴ See Alan Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 264-272, and Noah Heringman, *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 30-53. For a wider discussion of Wordsworth's preoccupation with geology, see John Wyatt, *Wordsworth and the Geologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³⁵ For Wordsworth's discussion of how the images of stone, sea beast, and man are assimilated in these stanzas, see his 'Preface' to the 1815 *Poems. SP*, pp. 637-638.

³⁶ Heringman, *Romantic Rocks*, p. 39.

³⁷ See Mary Jacobus's chapter 'Senseless Rocks' in *Romantic Things: A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012) for a discussion of the ideas of endurance in Wordsworth's poetic rocks.

together in the word “duration,” which means not only “lasting” but “hardening”.³⁸ Even as Wordsworth draws his ancient landscape within the realm of the local and the immediate, the mountains and the rocks retain the sense of a mythic otherness. In Book III of *The Excursion*, in a passage that echoes in *Hyperion*, the Wanderer suggests that a collection of ‘Rocks and Stones’ (III.83), which appear to have formed a natural altar in the mountains, ‘bear/ A semblance strange of power intelligent,/ And of design not wholly worn away’ (III.85-87). He speaks of a haunting sense that the rocks form a record ‘[o]f purposes akin to those of Man,/ But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails’ (III.94-95), where the mighty arm is suggestive both of divine creation and of a possible ancient mythic past. In Book IV, the Poet glories in the primordial landscape that both reminds him of his own mortality, and frees him from its burden:

—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! (IV.513-518)

Like the glens and mountains, the streams that ‘rend/ Their way’ (IV.530-531) through this landscape are imagined flowing ‘[a]s at a first creation’ (IV.526); Wordsworth presents the Poet as sharing in the sublime creative power of this ancient landscape, joying to ‘roam/ An Equal amongst mightiest Energies’ (IV.531-532). The visionary confidence that Wordsworth articulates in this passage of *The Excursion* emerges through the act of straying; it is an assurance that Keats reached for during the Northern tour, with his own ‘devious footsteps’.

³⁸ Jacobus, *Romantic Things*, p. 171.

In 'To Ailsa Rock', Keats imagines his own mythic agency in the landscape. The image of the 'deluge' in his letter to Tom invites both biblical and classical undertones into the sonnet; the 'mighty power' (like Wordsworth's 'mightier arm' and 'mightiest Energies') that made the rock 'heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams', is suggestive of a mythic past, one that shadows Keats's geologic imagination. The 'airy sleep' and 'fathom dreams' convey an immateriality that is at odds with the heavy physicality of the 'craggy ocean pyramid', while the description of 'shoulders', a 'broad forehead', and a 'coverlid' of clouds layers the image of the mountain with that of a sleeping giant.³⁹ Having attempted to reach the Giant's Causeway during their brief trip across the channel to Ireland, Keats perhaps saw in the huge shape of Ailsa Craig part of his imagination come to life. Writing of 'Resolution and Independence', Heringman suggests that the 'sense of wonder' in Wordsworth's poem

responds to a conventional set of qualities in rocks—inexplicability, colossal duration, immense size, and primitive form. The same qualities also suggest the resistance of rocks, and the physical universe they stand for, to all kinds of enquiry.⁴⁰

These are the characteristics that fascinate Keats in Ailsa Craig; even as the poet mythologises the mountain island, the rock retains its inexplicability, remaining resolutely silent and immovable. Keats writes in his letter to Tom of being 'struck . . . very suddenly' by the appearance of the mountain, and the poetics of the letter recreate the moment of seeing as a kind of blockage, imaging on the page the

³⁹ In 'Upon my life', Keats again finds the homely image of a quilt productive as he has Ben Nevis fall asleep, having 'pulled the clouds again about his head' (70).

⁴⁰ Heringman, *Romantic Rocks*, p. 39.

mountain's resistance to comprehension as Keats breaks off, to resume the letter with: 'Thus far had I written before we set out this morning'.⁴¹

The sonnet 'To Ailsa Rock' is Keats's most condensed articulation of a primordial landscape, and of his fascination with the otherness and otherworldliness of a landscape that might be imagined as having a mythic as well as a geologic past. It is a geography that informs his later writing in the *Hyperion* project, in which the Titans reflect and are incorporated within the elemental landscape that surrounds them. As observed above, in *Hyperion*, Keats drew on his newly-made store of northern scenery, what he calls his 'accumulation of stupendous recollections' in a letter to Haydon written prior to the tour; the forests, mountains, and caves of the poem are grounded in the landscape of the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands.⁴² So too do the immense geological features of the northern landscapes find renewed imaginative life in the image of his huge, primeval gods. Like Ailsa Craig and Ben Nevis, Saturn is a sleeping giant, still and stone-like:

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. (I.1-7)

The image of forests suspended like a band of clouds manages to suggest Saturn's immense, mountain-like presence even as it also augments the idea of great depth, or submersion, that is articulated in the poem's opening lines. The solitary, stone-like god seems also to owe a debt to Wordsworth's Leech-gatherer, a figure that forms a part of Keats's mythologic imagination before the northern tour and was

⁴¹ *JKL*, I, p. 329.

⁴² *LJK*, I, p. 264.

once again brought to the forefront of his mind during it. Jack Stillinger has observed the echoes of ‘Resolution and Independence’ in Keats’s portrait of Glaucus in *Endymion*, an ‘old man’ who shares in the Leech-gatherer’s frailty and fixed gaze.⁴³ Wordsworth’s stationary figure is perhaps behind Keats’s depiction of Saturn’s sapped strength—‘His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead’ (I.18)—and in the association of the solitary man with ancient stone. The description of the Leech-gatherer’s body, ‘bent double’ (73) as if pain or sickness ‘[a] more than human weight upon his frame had cast’ (77), anticipates the figure of Saturn, whose head is ‘bow’d’ (20) towards the earth in grief. In the same way, the interplay of states of deathliness and slumber in the opening verse paragraphs of *Hyperion* recall the characterisation of the Leech-gatherer as ‘not all alive nor dead,/ Nor all asleep’ (73). Like Wordsworth, Keats’s concern with a ‘more than human weight’ of sorrow will find articulation throughout the poem in the motif of stone. In *The Fall of Hyperion*, as Keats brings the figure of the poet into the scene, Saturn will become yet more like Wordsworth’s strange figure of suffering, encountered in the landscape and in the mind’s eye. In the Northern tour, the latent power of Wordsworth’s poetry, like the poetry of Burns, haunted Keats beyond the disappointment of his personal experience in the poets’ places of habitation, the ‘flummery of a birthplace’.⁴⁴ In the *Hyperion* project, too, Wordsworth would prove a powerful presence, as Keats drew again on the elder poet’s mythic and material geographies in the creation of his own.

⁴³ Jack Stillinger, *Romantic Complexity: Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 25-26.

⁴⁴ *LJK*, I, p. 324.

The stony landscape of the third book of *The Excursion* echoes in the opening passage of *Hyperion* and through the poem. Wordsworth locates the Wanderer, Poet, and Solitary ‘deep within [a] lonesome Valley’ (III.8) that is characterised by rocks and waterfalls, rocks which, as observed above, ‘bear/ A semblance strange of power intelligent’ and suggest a mythic past. This is a landscape that is shadowed with intimations of druids; the stones that appear ‘like an Altar’ (III.61) and the ‘Mass of rock’ (III.53) that is situated ‘Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground’ (III.51) are suggestive of stone circles and, as several of Keats’s editors have noted, echo within Keats’s description of the gathered Titans as ‘like a dismal cirque/ Of Druid stones’ (II.34-35) in Book II of *Hyperion*.⁴⁵ Keats draws from Wordsworth’s mountainous landscape in the different spaces of the poem; Byron found *The Excursion* to be too grounded, too stuck in its own place, Keats found resonant space, and a landscape that was imaginatively malleable (if still made of solid rock). The weighty stillness and silence of Saturn’s vale recalls the motionless quiet of Wordsworth’s ‘hidden nook’ and gathered stones where

no breeze did now
 Find entrance;—high, or low, appeared no trace
 Of motion, save the Water that descended,
 Diffused adown that Barrier of steep rock,
 And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
 Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
 To brush the still breast of a chrystal Lake. (III.69-75)

⁴⁵ For a discussion of Wordsworth and druidic and ancestral history, with a particular focus on Book III of *The Excursion*, see Matthew Campbell, ‘Wordsworth and the Druids: Warton Lecture in English Poetry 2008’, in *Proceedings of the British Academy: Volume 162: 2008 Lectures*, vol. 162 (Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy, 2009), pp. 211-242. See also, Richard Gravil, *Wordsworth's Bardic Vocation, 1787-1842* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) for a broader discussion of Wordsworth’s Celtic debt. For a discussion of the pervasive influence of Celticism on Keats, see Christine Gallant, *Keats and Romantic Celticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Gallant does not consider Keats’s reception of Celtic imagery from Wordsworth.

Keats takes Wordsworth's hushed sense of stillness towards a deathly stasis: 'No stir of air was there,/ Not so much life as on a summer's day/ Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass' (I.7-9). The simile of the breath of air is reimagined later in the passage, as Keats describes Thea's voice as like a 'gradual solitary gust/ Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,/ As if the ebbing air had but one wave' (I.76-78).⁴⁶ Keats finds Wordsworth's image of a 'Voiceless' stream productive also, in his landscape of statuesque stillness, in which a 'voiceless' stream is 'deadened more' by the visible and symbolic 'shade' cast by Saturn in his fallenness (I.11-13).

The Celtic resonances of the landscape of *The Excursion* are shared by two other poems of Wordsworth's that seem to haunt the opening of *Hyperion*. Both 'Yew-Trees' and the sonnet 'Mark the concentered Hazels that enclose' were first published in Wordsworth's 1815 *Poems*. Scholars and editors of Keats have tended to find fewer echoes from the newly published poems of this collection in Keats's verse than from those published in earlier volumes, nevertheless, the shared spatial poetics of these poems is suggestive.⁴⁷ Both poems are eminently Wordsworthian in their evocation of a meaningful, loco-specific landscape; Wordsworth offers identifiable Cumbrian locations in 'Yew-Trees' (Lorton Vale, Borrowdale, Glaramara), and the sonnet, like so many of the poet's inscriptions and loco-descriptive verses of the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, opens with a directive

⁴⁶ See also *TE*, IV.1281-1283: 'hushed/ As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf/ Stirs in the mighty woods'. These lines seem to echo in lines 7-10 of *Hyperion*, and in the extended simile of Thea's voice as a gust of air that disturbs the oak trees of 'mighty woods' (I.73) that 'dream all night without a stir' (I.75).

⁴⁷ See Lau, 'Keats's Reading of Wordsworth', pp. 106-111. Miriam Allott has observed verbal similarities between 'Yew-Trees' and 'Sleep and Poetry'. See 'Keats and Wordsworth', *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin* 22 (1971), 28-43, p. 36.

to the reader to ‘Mark’ an ‘old grey Stone’ (1-2). Nevertheless, in both poems, the local yields to a sense of primordial otherness. Wordsworth foregrounds an ancient past in ‘Yew-Trees’; like Keats’s idea of the forest at Inverary being witness to successive geological change, Wordsworth’s yew of Lorton Vale has outlasted a lengthy history of medieval battles, which, the verse suggests, it was old long before. As with the ‘huge Stone’ of ‘Resolution and Independence’, it is the immense size and the longevity of the trees that evokes the primeval:

Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree!—a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay[.] (9-11)

In this poem, Richard Gravil suggests, ‘a Christian world—even one as primordial as the Anglo-Saxon—yields to something more primordial.’⁴⁸ In the ‘pillared shade’ (20) of the ‘fraternal Four of Borrowdale’ (14) Wordsworth imagines the noontide meeting of ‘ghostly Shapes’ (25):

—Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow,—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o’er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara’s inmost caves. (26-33)

Gravil and Daniel Robinson observe the ‘imaginative power’ that Wordsworth and others identified in ‘Yew-Trees’ at its time of publication, and suggest that ‘it is [a poem] in which invisible worlds usurp most boldly upon the quotidian.’⁴⁹ The

⁴⁸ Richard Gravil, *Wordsworth’s Bardic Vocation*, p. 61. Gravil comments on the intertextuality of the poem, as it draws on druidic motifs and the shady worlds of Virgil and Lucan.

⁴⁹ Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson, ‘Prelude: Of “Daffodils” (1802-1815) and “Yew-Trees” (1804-1836), Poems of Imagination’, in Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 17-32, p. 26. The chapter expands Gravil’s earlier work on the poem.

archetypal figures seem to emerge from this gloomy shade in a similar way to the creation of Greek myths in Book IV of *The Excursion*, an enlarging of Nature's powers that Wordsworth draws closer to home, to the landscape in which he is invested.

The language of 'Yew-Trees' and 'Mark the concentered Hazels' emerges in *Hyperion* and in *The Fall*, where Keats develops the sense of Saturn's vale as a place of 'unchanging gloom' (I.391) and 'mossy glooms' (I.407) in which the figure of the poet must bear the weight of 'eternal quietude' (I.390). The opening lines of the sonnet seem to resonate for Keats in the opening verse paragraph of *Hyperion*; Wordsworth creates layers of shelter in 'concentered' trees that 'enclose' (1) a stone which is 'protected from the ray/ Of noontide suns' (2-3), 'amid embowering gloom' (6). The lines evoke a sense of depth that anticipates Saturn's 'sunken' state, 'Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star'. The 'serpentine' (17) trees of 'Yew-Trees', 'Upcoiling, and inveterately convolved,—/ Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks/ That threaten the prophane' (18-20), echo in the 'wild serpent forms' (I.447) of the 'hush'd' (I.448) trees that rise above Saturn in *The Fall*, and perhaps also in the rocky cave of the Titans, in which the monstrous crags form a roof in 'thousand hugest phantasies' (II.13). It is not only in the umbrous landscapes in which the resonances arise: Wordsworth's description of the Lorton yew as standing 'single, in the midst/ Of its own darkness' (2-3) imaginatively shadows Keats's portrait of Hyperion arriving at the den of the Titans, 'a vast shade/ In midst of his own brightness' (*Hyperion*, II.372-373). Keats draws the gloom of the ancient yew tree into Hyperion's figure; though he irradiates the mountain cavern with his

divine splendour, Hyperion, like Saturn, shares in the primordial nature of rock and tree.

Wordsworth's poetic geographies are compelling for Keats; as in the passages of *The Excursion* discussed above, the imaginative power of 'Yew-Trees' and 'Mark the concentered Hazels' resides in a mythologised landscape. The seclusion and stillness of the sonnet centres on the 'old grey Stone' that appears to the poet as the 'pensive likeness' (10) of a tomb belonging to an 'ancient Chieftain' (8), and expresses again Wordsworth's concern for human endurance. The image of a tree-shrouded 'dark chamber where the Mighty sleep' (11), is recast in Keats's forested vale where the druidic figure of Saturn sleeps like a stone. In the concluding lines of the sonnet, Wordsworth articulates a sense of the deep correspondence between myth-making, nature and man:

For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities. (12-14)

'Time's forlorn humanities' draws together acts of kindness (which is here connected to Wordsworth's idea of memorials) and the sorrowful states of being human: those of loss, mourning, death. In the delayed rhyme between 'humanities' and 'Live, ye trees!' (9), Matthew Campbell suggests that Wordsworth brings Nature and mankind together 'in an exemplary resolution of a version of the Wordsworthian nostrum of the love of Nature allowing the love of mankind.'⁵⁰ These lines share in the mythos of 'Yew-Trees' and seem to anticipate and inflect Keats's poetics in the Hyperion project. In the mythic characters of the fallen Titans, who emerge within a primordial landscape, Keats offers his own idea of 'Time's

⁵⁰ Campbell, 'Wordsworth and the Druids', p. 219.

forlorn humanities'. Keats finds a figure of endurance alongside suffering in the Titans' lost divinity, an encounter with which becomes, in *The Fall*, the imaginative means of the poet's own formation. As emblems of loss, but also of an ancient stony persistence, the Titans become for Keats a fit subject in which to consider questions of poetic power and poetic inheritance; in a landscape where the poetic meets the primeval, one of the shadows cast invariably belongs to Wordsworth.

The 'altars undisturbed of mossy stone' and 'the mountain flood/ Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves' at the close of 'Yew-Trees' draw in condensed space Wordsworth's recurrent mythic geographies. The 'mountain flood', which seems to catch something of the River Wye as it murmurs, shares also in the soundscape of *The Excursion*, where the flow of water over rocks is a familiar auditory feature. Wordsworth's mountains both contain and amplify the sound of water, as in the 'Voiceless' stream of Book III that 'descends into the gulph' (III.96) or in the mountain streams of Book IV that start 'from the hollows of the earth' (IV.529) and grow into a 'deafening tumult' (IV.534).⁵¹ The 'gulph', like the imagined 'inmost caves' of Glaramara, suggests a mountain depth, one that is mirrored in Wordsworth's description of the sky as a 'chasm' (III.98) and an 'Abyss' (III.101), sublime spaces that gesture towards eternity. Keats echoes Wordsworth's language of depth in his description of the water-filled cavernous den of the Titans:

All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,

⁵¹ See also in particular *TE*, IX.688-695 in which the sound of 'swoln cataracts (which now are heard/ Soft murmuring)' is imagined to resound 'Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods' at the time of druidic sacrificial rites.

And all the headlong torrents far and near,
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
 Now saw the light and made it terrible. (II.359-366)

The sound of water that Keats evokes here, as in the earlier description of ‘the solid roar/ Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse’ (II.7-8), is likely also a response to the fourth canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, and to Byron’s stanzas on the Cascata delle Marmore in which he describes:

The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
 Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
 The fall of waters! rapid as the light
 The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
 The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
 And boil in endless torture[.] (IV.613-618)

Keats twice writes in February 1818 of his knowledge of the canto’s imminent publication (it appears in April 1818), and he probably would have encountered it not long after at the house of one of his many literary friends. In a reply to a letter of Reynolds, he writes that his friend’s letter and the sonnets it contained ‘gave [him] more pleasure than will the 4th Book of Childe Harold’, where the ‘will’ suggests Keats’s intention to read Byron’s latest work.⁵² Moreover, the passage that seems to resonate for Keats comes under discussion in Hazlitt’s review of the poem (published 2 May 1818), in which he singles out these stanzas as an example (perhaps the preeminent one) of Byron’s startling style in Canto IV.⁵³ Hazlitt gives voice to a general critical feeling when he says of stanzas 70-72: ‘The following description is obscure, tortuous, perplexed, and abortive; yet who can say that it is not beautiful, striking, and impassioned?’⁵⁴ The sense of combined agony and

⁵² *LJK*, I, p. 225.

⁵³ See Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Lord Byron: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 131-136.

⁵⁴ *Byron: Critical Heritage*, p. 135.

power in Byron's 'gulf', in which 'the giant element/ From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,/ Crushing the cliffs' (IV.627-629), seems to echo in Keats's own space of elemental suffering. Keats draws Byron's sound of torrents within the cavernous rocky spaces of *The Excursion*, melding turbulent and enduring nature.

In the opening passage of Book II of *Hyperion*, Keats evocatively describes the cave of the Titans as a 'nest of woe' (14). This stony nest is unlike the Bachelardian or Wordsworthian space of quiet refuge, 'the natural habitat of the function of inhabiting', as Bachelard describes the image of the nest, and far from Keats's early bowers, woven spaces of enclosure that are eminently nest-like.⁵⁵ The luxurious, verdant 'nest' appears in *Hyperion* as Apollo's place of habitation: he is located in the 'embowered Cyclades' (III.24), where trees form 'covert[s]' (III.39) and places of green shade. The green, arboreal nature of Delos contrasts the grey of the Titans's rocky den, and suggests something of a re-envisioning of the opening forested vale, one where feet do not sleep, as Saturn's do, but have 'wandered forth' (III.33) (Apollo) and might fall with 'solemn step' (III.46) (Mnemosyne). Nevertheless, the cave of the Titans is not wholly an abysmal space, and Keats draws out the sense of primordial shelter in its nest-like character. According to Bachelard, the nest is a 'primal' image, it 'bring[s] out the primitiveness in us'.⁵⁶ In this passage, the image of the nest speaks to that of the 'den' (II.5), both suggestive of an animalistic sense of shelter, which recalls the designation of Saturn's vale as a 'lair' in the opening verse paragraph. The cave itself is beast-like, formed of 'rocks that seem'd/ Ever as if just rising from a sleep' (II.10-11) and that 'Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns' (II.12). Keats reimagines again the mountains

⁵⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 99.

⁵⁶ Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, p. 91.

of 'To Joanna', which are 'like something starting from a sleep', and deepens the sense of a continuity between the gods and the landscape. Yet, even as he invests the rocks with a sense of primordial alterity, Keats extends the idea of the cave as a familiar, sheltering place. His designation of the cave as a 'den' is interlined in the manuscript above the more generic 'place', which is left undeleted, suggesting a tentativeness about how to define the locale.⁵⁷ Other manuscript variants reveal the clear direction of his thought towards making the cave more place-like: in the published poem, Keats has the Titans sit on 'Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge/ Stubborn'd with iron' (II.16-17), where the 'couches' replace the barer 'Rough stones' of the draft, and, like the homely detail of the 'coverlid' in 'To Ailsa Rock', bring domestic furniture within the realm of a sublime landscape. The poet focuses on the detail of the 'slaty ridge', which goes through four successive variations: 'edge of Slate', 'sharpedgd Slate', 'sharpedgd ridge', 'Slaty ridge'. In its final form, Keats has lost some of the sharpness of the image and drawn it closer to a loco-descriptive detail of the mountain landscape. 'Slaty' is a characteristically Keatsian word, which is borrowed from the letters of the Northern tour, where Keats uses it to describe the 'tone and intellect' of the waterfall at Ambleside: 'its light shade slaty Rock, Moss and Rockweed'.⁵⁸

The complex spatial character of the landscape reflects Keats's struggle to adequately depict the gods in their fallenness. Saturn and Thea seem to shrink to human size as they struggle up the mountain with 'slippery footing' before resuming their vast, immortal figures: 'Above a sombre cliff/ Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew' (II.86-87). Keats's continued association of the Titans

⁵⁷ See *PJK*, p. 341.

⁵⁸ *LJK*, I, p. 302.

with rocks—they are ‘[l]ike natural sculpture in cathedral cavern’ (I.86) and ‘like a dismal cirque/ Of Druid stones’ (II.34-35)—draws out a shared characteristic immensity and duration, qualities that evoke the eternal. Yet out of this sense of old time, Keats creates an image of suffering: the description of the Titans as a stone circle is tonally bleak, as the simile is developed to locate the stones on a ‘forlorn moor’,

When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The heaven itself, is blinded throughout the night. (II.36-38)

This is an image of exposure, a manifest vulnerability at odds with the material nature of the rock, and which qualifies the sheltering impulse of the cave. It is part of Keats’s recurrent mythic geography: he returns throughout his poetic career to the juxtaposition of spaces of warmth and life with those of chill, desolate, homelessness, epitomised by the forlorn moor and the cold hillside.

The final passage of Book II of *Hyperion* reinforces the image of the stoniness of the Titans, of their resemblance to the primordial landscapes that contain them. The passage recounts the arrival of Hyperion at the Titans’ den and concludes with the echoing of ‘old Saturn’s name’ (II.387) from Enceladus to Hyperion, and around the assembled gods:

But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn’s name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, “Saturn!”
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of “Saturn!” (II.382-391)

The final lines of the passage are composed of echoes, as ‘four’ is sounded almost immediately in ‘forth’, and the stressed second syllable of ‘Hyperion’ is heard again in ‘peak’. The most pronounced echo falls across lines 387-389, as the figure of Saturn becomes the very echo of his name, which is immediately re-sounded in diminished and distorted form in ‘sat near’. Keats makes the form of the verse bear the weight of its meaning, as the sound of ““Saturn!”” surrounds ‘the Gods’ in the repeated line endings. Peter McDonald well observes the rhetorical patterning of this passage when he writes, ‘Keats finds in the arranged repetitions an effective means of making the verse itself somewhat hollow-throated: the repetition is a figuring-forth of the stasis that is so much Keats’s theme’.⁵⁹ The resonance is visual also, as the image of Saturn ‘sat near the Mother of the Gods’ recalls the opening portrait of the Titan, ‘Sat . . . quiet as a stone’, seeming to listen ‘to the Earth/ His ancient mother’, and Keats draws the subdued stillness of the poem’s opening scene into this echoing space.

Keats’s lines evoke the central event of Wordsworth’s ‘To Joanna’, in which the ‘brotherhood/ Of ancient mountains’ (69-70) takes up Joanna’s laughter and echoes it from peak to peak, making ‘loud uproar in the hills’ (73). Wordsworth’s mythology of the primordial living landscape, which Keats employs in the correspondences between his ancient gods and the landscape that contains them, here seems to inform his acoustics also. Yet, Keats turns the moment to sombre effect: the echoing name does not provoke the wonder of Wordsworth’s poem, but a sense of loss. If Keats has Wordsworth in mind then, he draws also on the pastoral

⁵⁹ Peter McDonald, *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 135.

tradition of lament, and the association is perhaps Virgilian, as in the sixth *Eclogue* in which Virgil follows an account of creation with the Argonauts' echoing cry in their search for the lost Hylas:

*Namque canebat, uti magnum per inane coacta
semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent
et liquidi simul ignis; ut his ex omnia primis,
omnia et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis;
tum durare solum et discludere Nerea ponto
coeperit et rerum paulatim sumere formas;
iamque novum terrae stupeant lucescere solem,
altius utque cadant summotis nubibus imbres,
incipiant silvae cum primum surgere cumque
rara per ignaros errent animalia montis.
Hinc lapides Pyrrhae iactos, Saturnia regna,
Caucasiasque refert volucris furtumque Promethei.
his adiungit, Hylan nautae quo fonte relictum
clamassent, ut litus "Hyla, Hyla" omne sonaret;*

[For he sang how, through the vast void, the seeds of earth, and air, and sea, and liquid fire withal were gathered together; how from these elements all nascent things, yes all, and even the young globe of the world grew together; how the earth began to harden, to shut off the Sea god in the deep, and little by little to assume the shapes of things; how next the lands are astounded at the new sun shining and how rains fall as the clouds are lifted higher, when first woods begin to arise and here and there living creatures move over mountains that know them not.

Then he tells of the stones that Pyrrha threw, of Saturn's reign, of Caucasian eagles, and the theft of Prometheus. To these he adds the tale of the spring where Hylas was left, and how the seamen called on him, till the whole shore echoed "Hylas! Hylas!"]⁶⁰

The resonances are compelling, as the echoes of loss arise from a primeval landscape in which stones, as in the myth of Pyrrha, become living human beings.

⁶⁰Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), pp. 62-65. Keats's earliest encounter with Virgil was during his schooling at Enfield, during which time he began a translation of *The Aeneid*, later completed in the course of the first year of his apprenticeship to Thomas Hammond. See F. B. Pinion, *A Keats Chronology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 14-18. Keats read often with Charles Cowden Clarke during this period, and Aileen Ward suggests that Virgil's *Eclogues* were amongst other works of classical poetry that he studied at the time. See Ward, *John Keats: The Making of a Poet* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963), p. 26. For a discussion of the mythology and poetic use of echo see John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1981).

The cry of the mariners resonates with Saturn's own cry in the first book of *Hyperion*, 'where is Saturn?' (I.134), and the echoes return to him, not in the forest where he struggles into speech and then finds that passion made 'his voice to cease', but in the reverberating cave: "'Saturn!' . . . 'Saturn!'". Wordsworth anthropomorphises the mountains in 'To Joanna', giving them a voice, and so drawing them within his community of dwellers, whilst also finding in their midst a place to dwell. The opposite happens in *Hyperion*: the endowment of the gods with a mineral nature and the circumscription of their collective voice suggests the return of the Titans to the speechless natural world from which, as suggested by Oceanus's account at the centre of Book II, they once arose.

In their fallen state, the Titans become like the mountains and caves in which they have sought refuge, able only to echo Saturn's name in their 'hollow throats', words that when articulated create in the speaker an awareness of that very hollow space. Keats is attuned to the shared acoustics of the throat and the cavern, describing Enceladus's speech as 'like sullen waves/ In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks' (II.305-306), in which the guttural sound of 'glut' picks up the softer consonance of 'sullen' and 'hollows' and evokes the meeting of water and stone cavity. As a recurrent epithet for the Titans (who have hollow ears, eyes, and throats) and as a descriptor of the landscape they reflect, 'hollow' echoes through the poem, even as it also forms a space in which echoes occur. It is suggestive of mineral space—not luxurious like Keats's early bowers, but elemental, and thus more barren. In the hollow organs of communication, Keats suggests an emptiness,

a linguistic void.⁶¹ Like the radiance of the troubled, but not yet fallen, titular sun-god, which reveals ‘all the sad spaces of oblivion’ (II.359) surrounding the Titans, spaces that evoke emptiness, Hyperion’s echo of ‘Saturn!’ exposes the absence at the centre of the Titans’s world. Christoph Bode has well discussed Keats’s concern with language and translation in the *Hyperion* project; on the Titans’ struggle to overcome speechlessness in *Hyperion* he writes: ‘The fallen gods have no words for what has happened to them. What they say is a periphrasis, or circumscription, of how they feel.’⁶² The hollowness of the gods corresponds to this idea of speaking around something, of an inability to speak meaningfully, with direction. In *Hyperion*, sound (or the lack of sound, as in the opening passage of the poem) surrounds: in the opening of Book II, the noise of the cataracts in the cave of the Titans both amplifies and encloses the sound of anguish:

It was a den where no insulting light
 Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where. (II.5-9)

The Titans exist in a landscape that, like themselves, is alternately ‘Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams’ (II.362), a soundscape of inarticulate grief.

In *Hyperion*, the hollowness of the Titans is opposed to Apollo’s fullness or abundance, his ability to be filled. Clymene’s speech to the assembled gods makes clear this comparison through the image of the shell, which is, like the cave, another echo chamber for the Titans’ sorrow. Clymene’s song of misery and ‘[t]he dull

⁶¹ See Anya Taylor, ‘Superhuman Silence: Language in *Hyperion*’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 19.4 (1979), 673-687, for a discussion of the dynamics of speech and silence in *Hyperion*.

⁶² Christoph Bode, ‘Hyperion, *The Fall of Hyperion*, and Keats’s Poetics’, *The Wordsworth Circle* 31.1 (2000), 31-37, p. 34.

shell's echo' (II.274) that 'pass into the breeze' (II.273) and fade are overwhelmed by the song of Apollo, which has a greater material reality: having thrown the shell away, 'a wave fill'd it, as [her] sense was fill'd/ With that new blissful golden melody' (II.279-280). Unlike the Titans, Apollo's throat is 'melodious' (III.81), an instrument of song. The 'hollows' that define him form a repository for the materials of poetry, which prompt his apotheosis:

Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me[.] (III.114-118)

Mnemosyne's muteness in this moment ('Mute thou remainest—mute! yet I can read/ A wondrous lesson in thy silent face' (III.111-112)) is significant: as part of the old order of gods her gift is vision, not speech; she has no words for the sorrow she has witnessed. *The Fall of Hyperion* rehearses the struggle of speechlessness, though here, rather than Apollo, it is the figure of the poet, ghosted by Wordsworth, with whom Keats is primarily concerned, and the poet's ability to speak out of those 'wide hollows'.

CODA

SINCE risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
 Appeared the Crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
 With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
 His sides, or wreath with mist his forehead high:
 Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
 Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
 Towering above the sea and little ships;
 For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
 Each for her haven; with her freight of Care,
 Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks
 Into the secret of to-morrow's fare;
 Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
 Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
 For her mute Powers, fix'd Forms, or transient Shows.¹

Wordsworth's sonnet 'In the Frith of Clyde, Ailsa Crag. (July 17, 1833.)' was composed sometime in the late summer of 1833, following the poet's tour of Scotland, and published in his 1835 collection, *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems*. In the context of this thesis it is notable for the quiet resonances it shares with Keats's sonnet on the same subject: 'To Ailsa Rock'. At the beginning of the chapter on Keats, I discussed the poet's inheritance of the image of the forehead as a way of approaching the figure of the mountain, a line of influence in which 'To Ailsa Rock' follows, and which perhaps reverberates in Wordsworth's own depiction of the mountain island. For Wordsworth in 'In the Frith of Clyde', as for Keats in 'To Ailsa Rock', the vast shape of the mountain emerging from the sea evokes the idea of a stone giant, figured not only in the 'forehead' but in the pervasive anthropomorphism that suggests a latent agency. Both poems also foreground the impenetrability of the rock, its distance from, or resistance to, the

¹ See *SSIP*, pp. 589-590.

poet's understanding. Although Wordsworth evokes almost a sense of gentleness in the play of light on the surface of the rock—these are lines that share in the cadences of the sonnet 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge'—the expression of beauty gives way to a form of sublime terror, in which the mountain towers above the sea and the dwarf-like ships, which in their size, motion, and business, are the rock's very opposite.² The opening word of the sixth line, 'Still', holds the sense of being without change or cessation as well as motionlessness; the mountain's presence is one of stillness and endurance, a sublime and solitary stoniness that is prefigured in Keats's earlier verse.

The possibility that Wordsworth encountered Keats's sonnet is, necessarily, speculative. There are very few poems of Keats's that we can be certain Wordsworth was familiar with—the 'Great spirits' sonnet is one of them, the extract that Keats read from *Endymion* during the London meetings, is another. We know that when Keats sent an inscribed copy of his first collection, *Poems*, to Wordsworth, following its publication in 1817, Wordsworth left most of the pages uncut.³ Nevertheless, in a letter to Haydon of 16 January 1820, he enquires after Keats, whom he describes as 'a youth of promise too great for the company he keeps'.⁴ Wordsworth writes in the letter of his plans to be in London in the spring, perhaps calling to mind his earlier visit in the winter of 1817-1818, and his multiple meetings with the young poet where poetry was discussed and shared. His sense of Keats's promise might, however, possibly also have been prompted by his recent reading. Between the publication of *Poems* and the writing of the letter to Haydon,

² See ll. 9-10 of 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge': 'Never did sun more beautifully steep/ In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill'. *PTV*, p. 147.

³ See R. S. White, *John Keats: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 71.

⁴ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 578.

only two of Keats's new verses came into print: they were the sonnet on 'The Human Seasons' and 'To Ailsa Rock', both of which were published by Hunt in his *Literary Pocket Book* of 1819. There is no record of Wordsworth having owned the *Pocket Book*; yet, it was a popular production and, as Wordsworth and Hunt's relationship had improved in 1815 following Hunt's revisions to *The Feast of the Poets*, such that Wordsworth might praise Hunt's *The Descent of Liberty* in a letter to Haydon of 13 January 1816, the same letter in which he mentions his own sonnets that will shortly be published by Hunt in *The Examiner*, it is likely that had he encountered the collection, perhaps through literary friends, he would have read it.⁵

Tracing the reverberations of Wordsworth's spatial poetics in the verse of his contemporaries and heirs is a delicate work, hearing those echoes come back to Wordsworth yet more so. The geo-mythic imagination that Keats intuits from Wordsworth in 'To Ailsa Rock' may simply be articulated afresh by Wordsworth here. Nevertheless, the echoes remain compelling. In the final lines of the sonnet, Wordsworth draws out the enduring otherness of the natural world, with its wordless and inexpressible powers in a landscape that appears everlasting, undisturbed by a weather and climate as changeful as the transitory motion of the sail boats beneath it—a deep alterity that might go unheeded by the preoccupied traveller, but not by the poet. Behind the description of 'mute Powers, and fix'd forms' lies the vast rock that has defiantly risen from the sea into weighty silence and stillness, yet the 'mute Powers' seem also to hear and to rehearse the 'mighty power' that makes Keats's speechless rock heave into greater silence. Across two decades, these silences speak to one another.

⁵ *LWDW: MY, II*, p. 273.

Wordsworth's poetry is invested in revisiting; that he might revisit his own poetics in a geographical and textual space he shared with Keats and Byron points towards new avenues of research that lie beyond this current thesis. The textual situatedness in which this thesis has engaged deepens the biographical work on Wordsworth, Byron, and Keats and might further in particular eco-critical writing and research. Throughout I have tried to enrich biographical encounters with a textual dimension and to see the grounded, material aspects of intertextual relationships. With its focus on the coalescence of voices in shared textual and geographic space, the thesis looks towards the current geo-spatial work of mapping being undertaken, as in Lancaster University's creation of a deep map of the Lake District, which seeks to uncover new understandings of the literary and cultural geographies of the region, and the ongoing chronotopic mapping of the Lakes being led by Sally Bushell. Approaching places as sites of layered textuality and texts as echoing spaces, formed and reformed by physical and imaginative geographies, this thesis offers a way into a reconception of influence in the nineteenth century that is situated on shared ground.

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