Romantic Poet-Critics and the Uses of Genre, 1798-1821

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Abstract

This thesis examines literary-critical writings, across a variety of genres, by British Romantic-era poets: William Wordsworth's prefaces (1798-1815), Samuel Taylor Coleridge's lectures (1808-19) and *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Lord Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), James Hogg's *The Poetic Mirror* (1816), Thomas Love Peacock's 'The Four Ages of Poetry' (1820), and Percy Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry' (1821). I argue that the critical ideas of Romantic poet-critics are shaped by their authors' uses, and engagement with the idea, of genre. These poets were as conscious of genre, and as innovative in their uses of it, in their critical prose as they were in their poetry. Each chapter focuses on a particular generic form: prefaces, public lectures, satire, and defences of poetry. Chapter One argues that Wordsworth's construction of the perfect critic in his prefaces builds a defensive wall to protect his poems from reviewers, while Coleridge's playful use of paratexts ironically undermines his critical tenets. Chapter Two explores how Coleridge's lectures map a unique terrain for literary studies by imitating the popular genre of the scientific lecture. Chapter Three shows that the satires of Byron and Hogg simultaneously imitate, parody, and mock the periodical giant of the day, the *Edinburgh Review*, and its antagonists. In the final chapter, I argue that Peacock's 'The Four Ages' defends his withdrawal from the classical genre of tragedy in favour of comedy. Conversely, Shelley's 'Defence' revises his beliefs on poetry in order to negotiate conflicting philosophical and historicist defences against attacks by Peacock and Plato. In my reading, poet-critics are not insiders offering a behind-the-scenes view of poetry-writing. They shape and are shaped by the private and public concerns of their historical moment. In a combative literary culture, Romantic poet-critics are interested parties in the battle for the relevance and purpose of poetry.

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Abbreviations

I have consulted a print copy of *Sibylline Leaves* in the Special Collections at Senate House Library, London, shelf mark: [S.L.] I [Coleridge – 1817] Copy 1. I have also consulted the facsimile printed by Woodstock Books in the *Revolution and Romanticism* series, and a copy digitised from the New York Public Library. The copy of Hogg's *Poetic Mirror* that I have consulted is that held by the Philip Robinson Library, Newcastle University (Shelfmark: C19th Coll. 821.7 HOG). The print copy of *Ollier's Literary Miscellany* from which I cite is that held in the British Library, Shelfmark: C.131.d.15.

BCPW	Lord Byron, *Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-93)
BL	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
BLJ	*Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. by Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (London: John Murray, 1973-94)
CL	*Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71)
CLL	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1809-19: On Literature*, ed. by R.A. Foakes, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)
CPW	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works I: Reading Text*, ed. by J.C.C. Mays, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)

DCW	*The Collected Works of Sir Humphry Davy*, ed. by John Davy, 9 vols (Smith, Elder, and Co., 1839-40)
'Defence'	Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 674-701
EBSR	Lord Byron, 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers', in *BCPW* I, pp. 227-64, 393-419
'FA'	Thomas Love Peacock, 'The Four Ages of Poetry', in *NA*, pp. 134-57
Halliford	*The Halliford Edition of the Works of Thomas Love Peacock*, ed. by H.F.B. Brett-Smith and C.E. Jones, 10 vols (London: Constable, 1924-34)
HL	*The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004-08)
'Memoir'	James Hogg, 'Memoir of the Author's Life', in *Altrive Tales*, ed. by Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 11-52
NA	Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. by Nicholas A. Joukovsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)
OLM	*Ollier's Literary Miscellany*, 1 (1820)
PBSL	*The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964)
PBSP	*The Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Geoffrey Matthews, Kelvin Everest, Jack Donovan, Cian Duffy, and Michael Rossington, 4 vols (London: Routledge, 2014)

PL	*The Letters of Thomas Love Peacock*, ed. by Nicholas A. Joukovsky, 2 vols (London: Clarendon Press, 2001)
PM	[James Hogg], *The Poetic Mirror, or The Living Bards of Britain* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Edinburgh: John Ballantyne, 1816)
PVR	Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Philosophical View of Reform', in *Shelley and His Circle 1773-1822: Volume 6*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 945-1066
SL	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Sibylline Leaves: A Collection of Poems* (London: Rest Fenner, 1817)
WL	*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth,* ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, Chester L. Shaver, Mary Moorman, and Alan G. Hill, 2nd edn, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969-93)
WPW	*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

Introduction

'Imperfect Critics'

Sometime between 1807 and 1808—around the time that he first embarked on a career as a lecturer on literature—Samuel Taylor Coleridge made the following entry in his notebook:

> The question fairly stated how far a man can be an adequate, or even a good, as far as he goes, tho' inadequate Critic, of Poetry who is not a Poet at least in *posse*?—Here are the questions—adequate, & good tho' not commensurate/but another distinction—supposing he is not only not a Poet, but is a *bad* Poet?[1]

Ernest Hartley Coleridge smoothed out this passage for publication in *Anima Poetæ* (1895):

> The question should be fairly stated, how far a man can be an adequate, or even a good (as far as he goes) though inadequate critic of poetry who is not a poet, at least, *in posse*? Can he be an adequate, can he be a good critic, though not commensurate [with the poet criticised]? But there is yet another distinction. Supposing he is not only not a poet, but is a bad poet! What then?[2]

At the heart of this passage lies a concern not only common to Romantic-era writers, but to poets and critics across literary history: the question of *who* is qualified to write literary criticism. It is, however, a question of particular significance in the early nineteenth century, as it is an age that witnessed the rise of what William Christie calls 'the professional critic'—writers like Francis Jeffrey and William Hazlitt who were not specialists in academic fields commenting on books within their specialisms, but "experts" in the reading and judging of books.[3] For Coleridge, who or what constitutes an 'adequate critic' is not a simple matter. A good poet is better, but a bad poet worse, than a non-poet, and a critic may be a poet without

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[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume 2:1804-1809*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 2002), I, 3214, original emphasis. For dating, see: II, p. 449.

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Anima Poetæ: From the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: William Heinemann, 1895), pp. 127-28, original emphasis. The parenthetical remark is Ernest Hartley Coleridge's.

[3] William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 35-8.

writing poetry—the Latin term 'in posse' referring to an individual's potential to be something that they currently are not. This is typical of a period in which poets defined "a poet" as anything but a writer of verses—a distinctive feature of the period's genre theory being, as David Duff argues, the shift to non-formal definitions of genres.[4] Coleridge's characterisation of critics, however, holds a fundamental irony: just as one is required to be identified as a great poet in order to judge (and therefore identify) other great poets, one is also required to be recognised as a literary critic in order to ascertain who can be a literary critic. Coleridge implies a closed, controlled, and defensive circle of literary commentators, a self-empowered and self-electing tribunal of poets. They no doubt stand in opposition to the 'anonymous critics' that Coleridge would later characterise (in his defence of Southey against those reviewers) as the 'self-elected [...] judge[s]' of literature, who are unwilling to treat books (and, implicitly, their authors) as 'religious oracles' (*BL* I, pp. 48, 57). In revising Coleridge's note for publication, the younger Coleridge emphasises the critical distinctions being made in the elder Coleridge's thought, whilst drawing out the note of playful humour in it. The question of who is writing criticism is one that simultaneously requires Coleridge's philosophically minded distinctions between classes, and his comic mockery—a dialectic of serious and satirical criticism that is central to the literary-critical writings of Romantic-era poet-critics.

Coleridge and his age are not alone in musing over the ideal critic. Ben Jonson, in a similar statement, argued that 'To judge of poets is only the faculty of poets; and not all poets, but the best'.[5] In making this declaration he cites Joseph Scaliger as a source, who in turn cites the Italian poet Lilio Gregorio Giraldi: '*Certe de poetis iudicare, poetarum est duntaxat, idque non omnium, sed optimorum*'.[6] In Lorna Hutson's translation: 'Indeed, it is, as far as possible, for poets to judge of poetry; and that is not all poets, but of the best'.[7] This was, as Hutson says, a widely disseminated belief in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[8] T.S. Eliot, in his first book of criticism, *The Sacred Wood* (1922), closes his essay 'The Perfect Critic' by stating that, as 'The two directions [of poetry and criticism] are complementary [...] it is to be expected that the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same person'.[9] As this collection of

[4] David Duff, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 46. A famous example of this tendency is William Wordsworth's pronouncement, in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), that a poet is: 'a man speaking to men: a man [...] endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind' (*WPW* I, p. 138).
[5] Ben Jonson, 'Timber, or Discoveries', in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson: Volume 7*, ed. by Lorna Hutson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 481-596 (p. 587).
[6] Qtd. in Jonson, p. 587.
[7] Lorna Hutson (ed.), in Jonson, p. 587.
[8] Hutson, p. 587, fn.
[9] T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, 7th edn (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 16.

essays begins with an epigraph from Petronius's *Satyricon*, in which the Poetaster declares 'ego [...] poeta sum' (I am a poet), it becomes clear who Eliot's perfect critic is: himself.[10] Eliot follows this essay with a series of short pieces on poet-critics and non-poet critics, entitled 'Imperfect Critics'—his Platonic ideal for a critic never having been achieved at his time of writing. Thirty years later, Eliot would look back over a career in poetry and criticism to note that: 'I am, I admit, much more interested in what other poets have written about poetry than in what critics who are not poets have said about it'.[11] This is a startling, though perhaps not altogether surprising, admission from a writer who took criticism as seriously as he did. While the necessity of the early essay has cooled to a statement of personal interest, Eliot's belief that poets' pronouncements on poetry transcend their critical acumen highlights the importance of what poets have to say about poetry *to other poets*. Simultaneously, the change in emphasis across the decades encourages scepticism regarding the critical writings of poet-critics. As Eliot remarks in that late essay, in those early days he was 'implicitly defending the sort of poetry that [he] and [his] friends wrote'.[12]

This anxiety over the authorship of criticism has not been confined to poets, nor to arguments for poets as the ideal critics. Plato, upon concluding his proposal to banish poets from his ideal society, wrote that he was willing to hear a defence of poetry, so long as the defence was in prose and the defender was not a poet.[13] He was no doubt concerned that a poet would defend poetry as Philip Sidney stated that he himself would—'with more good will than good reasons'—or as Plato's own depiction of the tragic poet Agathon did in describing love in the *Symposium*: unable to prevent himself from breaking into verse.[14] Twentieth-century critic Harold Bloom, in his work on 'poetic misprision'—the belief that 'There are no interpretations but only misinterpretations' of poetry—argued that if all readings of poetry were mis-readings, poets were the worst mis-readers of the triumvirate of poets, critics, and general readers (the last being the best interpreters of the three, having the least agenda).[15] 'Poets', according to Bloom, 'are not common readers, and particularly are not critics, in the true sense

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[10] Eliot, *Sacred Wood*, p. xviii.
[11] T.S. Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic, and Other Writings* (London: Faber, 1978), p. 25.
[12] Eliot, *Criticize*, p. 16.
[13] Plato, 'Republic', trans. by G.M.A. Grube, rev. by C.D.C. Reeve, in *Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), pp. 971-1223 (p. 1212). Plato's challenge to defenders of poetry is discussed below, pp. 215.
[14] Philip Sidney, 'The Defence of Poesy', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 212-50 (p. 212); Plato, 'Symposium', trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, pp. 457-505 (p. 480).
[15] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 95.

of critics' due to their 'self-saving […] perverse, wilful revisionism'.[16] What these examples show is that there is a long tradition of seeing poets, for better or worse, as a distinct class of reader and interpreter of poetry—critics swayed by self-interest, whose writings are attempts to control the critical reception of themselves and their peers, full of biases, inherently defensive, and yet retaining a significance that transcends their critical acumen, thereby having a greater likeliness of being handed down to posterity than the criticism of non-poet critics. After all, the critical writings of Jeffrey and Hazlitt are less read today than the canonical statements of Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. It cannot be overlooked, however, that, emerging from this defensive self-interest, are influential literary-critical works. Despite Bloom's protestations, Coleridge's *Biographia* and his Shakespearean lectures are pivotal works in the development of practical criticism and literary studies in general, just as Eliot's are in the evolution of New Criticism. Poets can be critics in the 'true sense' of the word.

In examining the writings of poet-critics—henceforward defined as poets who, alongside or intertwined with their creative practice, write literary criticism—this study takes as its subject matter, not the ideal of a "perfect" critic, but a series of "imperfect" critics considered within their historical context—in particular, between the years 1798 and 1821. Each of my four chapters examines a genre of literary-critical discourse—prefaces, lectures, satire, and the poetic apologia—with each containing a comparative case study. These chapters examine Wordsworth's prefatory prose (1798-1815), Coleridge's *Biographia* and literary lectures (1808-19), Lord Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (1809), James Hogg's *The Poetic Mirror, or The Living Bards of Britain* (1816), Thomas Love Peacock's 'The Four Ages of Poetry' (1820), and Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry' (1821). As genre is a site of conflict between tradition and the individual, text and context, originality and imitation, it is an incisive lens through which to examine the agency of the poet-as-critic. Thus, in highlighting the ways in which these texts and the critical ideas they contain are shaped by their authors' uses of genre, this study shows how poet-critics navigate the literary and critical culture of their historical moment: eighteenth-century canon formation; the decline of patronage; the expansion of the literary marketplace initiated by advances in book production and changes to copyright law; increased literacy levels; discipline formation within the sciences and arts; the usurpation of a poetics of imitation by that of originality; the cult of genius; the era's distinctive genre-awareness; increased nationalism in the wake of the French Revolution; and the rise of a fraught and violent periodical culture that dictated the direction of literary-critical discussion.

[16] Bloom, pp. 30-1.

In so doing, I identify the foremost traits and tendencies that distinguish Romantic poet-critics and their critical works: the close relationship between a poet's criticism and poetry; poets' need to retrospectively and pre-emptively control their critical reception; their use of poetic devices across their poetical and critical works; their attempts to elevate literary studies out of the mire of periodical culture and into the arenas of science and philosophy; their desire to self-canonise, or to situate themselves within both a contemporaneous poetic landscape and an ongoing literary tradition; the satirical or playful turn in much Romantic-era criticism; and, cutting across all such concerns, the need to defend their poems, their poetic practices, and poetry in general.

By arguing thus, I aim to disrupt the all-too-easy reliance on critical texts by poets as keys to unlocking their authors' poetical works. Indeed, this thesis often inverts this narrative, with a poet's poetical works being used as the marginal texts which aid in the elucidation and interrogation of their literary-critical writings. This thesis therefore encourages the kind of critical scepticism towards Romantic poets' 'self-definitions' and 'self-representations' that was proposed by Jerome McGann in *The Romantic Ideology* (1983).[17] Poet-critics are not insiders granting readers a behind-the-scenes look at *poiesis*. They are interested parties in the case for poetry's purpose and relevance. Poet-critics in the early nineteenth century introduce and frame their own poetry, attempt to delineate the boundaries of literary criticism as a discipline, and parody the dominant critical discourse of the day. They render their literary ambitions as critical dogmas; control their immediate critical reception as well as their posthumous legacy; hierarchise themselves amongst their contemporaries; reap the financial and reputational benefits of writing critical works; engage in self-promotion; and enforce their self-constructed literary identities, defining the spirit of the age around those constructions. In an age when literature and discussion around literature were frequently characterised in terms of violence—what Byron called 'paper bullets' and Shelley 'spoken daggers'—and was even liable to erupt into real-world violence, literary-critical discourse is a battleground in which poets stand to win or lose everything (*EBSR*, p. 227; *PBSP* IV, p. 263). Against their contemporaries, and against arguments as old as those of Plato, Romantic poet-critics are defenders of their own vocation. Yet, at a time when the relationship between poets and critics is defined as one of enmity—nowhere more evident than in the myth of John Keats's death at the hands of a bad review—they are also transgressors of and infiltrators into enemy territory.

[17] Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. ix, 1.

Romantic poet-critics are as revolutionary and revelatory in their roles as critics as they are in those as poets.

In the term "Romantic poet-critics", the word "Romantic" refers not to a shared ideology or collection of overlapping ideologies, but to a historical moment in British literature, between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In using this specific phrase, I refer to the Romantic era, not to Romanticism as a philosophy. The dates in my title cover the composition dates of the works here examined, indicating the ambition to situate these texts within their contexts; they are not intended to be indicators of the start and finish of the Romantic period. The word "criticism" is used broadly throughout this work to cover the ground occupied by the overlapping disciplines (or genres) of literary theory, poetics, and practical criticism. These sub-genres of criticism—which I would loosely define by their temporal relationship to literature (theory is about what poetry is; practical criticism, what literature has been; poetics, what literature should be)—are all to be found throughout the works here examined, often within the same text. In the writings of poet-critics, the three sub-genres are difficult to separate precisely because poet-critics are interested parties in discussion of what poetry is, has been, and should be. The term "poet-critic" therefore includes a wide range of works that can be described as (in Robert Sheppard's phrase) 'the writings writers write about writing', with a focus on texts by poets on the subject of poetry, poems, *poiesis*, other poets, and criticisms of poetry.[18]

I focus on writings that are dedicated in their entirety to the subject of literature. Thus I include poetical works like Byron's *English Bards* and Hogg's *Poetic Mirror* which, as a whole, survey the literary landscape of Britain at their authors' time of writing. I do not include a text like Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850), which, though containing explorations of poetry, is not, in itself, a poem about poetry. *The Prelude* is criticism in part; *English Bards* is criticism in toto. On a similar note, satirical and parodic poetry may seem an unusual inclusion. However, satire was frequently associated by writers of the period with the most popular form of literary criticism: periodical reviewing.[19] Satire was therefore recognised as a mode of critical discussion by the writers that this thesis covers, and, as has been said, serious and satirical stances are adopted not just by a writer such as Byron, who is an inheritor of the Augustan tradition, but by writers such as Coleridge, in their attempts to criticise the critics. Further, I

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[18] Robert Sheppard, 'Poetics and the Manifesto: On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke', *Jacket 2* (2014) <https://jacket2.org/taxonomy/term/5875/0> [accessed 3 June 2022].
[19] The relationship between satire and reviewing forms the subject of my third chapter.

include satire for the reason that M.H. Abrams excludes Byron from his attempt to locate a unifying ideology for the era in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1973)—on the basis of his 'ironic counter-voice' and 'satirical perspective'.[20] As an outlier or antagonist to a coherent narrative for the poetics of the age, satire complicates, nuances, and defines the limits of Romanticism, and opens up a study of Romantic poet-critics beyond the self-constructions familiar in Romantic studies. Thus it is my chapter on satire that places the influences and antagonisms of reviewers centre stage. Perhaps the most striking omission from this study is the body of criticism contained in Keats's private correspondence. These writings, alongside the works by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley that are here examined, form what might be called the canonical manifesto on Romanticism. This study, however, focuses on poet-critics as public figures, examining critical works intended for public, rather than private, consumption. I focus not just on what poets have to say about poetry, but how those views are shaped for the public. The genre of the private epistle is therefore excluded.

I share with Duff a fascination with what Gérard Genette terms 'paratexts'—'the thresholds of interpretation' through which readers must pass in order to enter a literary work.[21] These are the interpretable signs that 'surround', 'extend', and 'present' a text, and include titles and subtitles, the author's name as stated on the title page, prefaces, dedications, footnotes and endnotes, blurbs, marginalia, typefaces, binding, paper quality, and book size—everything, as Genette says, that 'enables a text to become a book'.[22] In short, paratexts are that which locate a literary work in history, a text within its context. They are also vital to a study of genre, as paratexts not only designate and indicate the genre(s) of a work, they are textual spaces used by writers to negotiate their place within genres. Paratexts announce genres—sometimes by explicit statement (as in subtitles), at other times implicitly by their presence (such as footnotes implying academicism). Some paratextual forms, such as prefaces, become literary genres in themselves. Thus in their genre-announcements, paratexts are subject to the same kinds of flexibility, fluidity, and transgressive participation that I identify below as the defining traits of genre. Paratexts are there to be used and abused, bent and broken, relied upon and exploited in a writer's critical and creative endeavours. Perhaps most significantly, literary-critical texts by poets can be seen, in themselves, as paratexts to their authors' poetical writings. The critical writings of poets are often textual spaces through which readers pass in order to interpret

[20] M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 13.
[21] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[22] Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 1.

creative works, shaping and framing the poetry, and attempting to control its reception. It is vital, therefore, to scrutinise those thresholds and their self-serving objectives, to centralise them and reject their historically marginal status—that is, to treat them as texts.

In the remainder of the Introduction, I situate this study of poet-critics within Romantic studies and beyond; I demarcate my methodology, creating a flexible definition of genre which acts as a lens for textual analysis; and outline the structure of the subsequent chapters.

0.1. Critical and Historical Background

Though this thesis contributes to a wider discourse on poet-critics throughout history, it is first and foremost a contribution to Romantic studies. Historically seen as marginal to the era's poetry, there is a growing body of work which centralises prose, periodicals, and literary-critical writings within Romantic scholarship. The period between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has long been seen as a pivotal moment in the history of English poetics and of literary criticism. In *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* (1955-91)—a history which, tellingly, begins in the late-eighteenth century—René Wellek views Romantic criticism as a turning point between neoclassical doctrines and modern critical traditions.[23] Similarly, Abrams highlights the era's rejection of the neoclassical doctrine of imitation in favour of a poetics of originality and expression.[24] Regarding the critical texts of poets, there have been studies on the poetics, literary criticism, and literary theory of individual poets, and the place of that critical thought within their creative work. Indeed, the poetics and critical thought of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley remain familiar subjects in Romantic studies.[25] Equally, there have been works which draw together, and identify coherence in, the critical tenets and poetical ideologies of numerous poets as they appear across poetry and prose, with notable examples being Abrams's two great works: *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) and *Natural Supernaturalism.*[26] However, despite the recognised importance of these developments

[23] René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, 7 vols (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955-91), I, pp. 1-11.
[24] M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[25] For example, works which examine Wordsworth as a literary critic and theorist abound. See: W.J.B. Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1969); G. Kim Blank, 'The "Degrading Thirst After Outrageous Stimulation": Wordsworth as Cultural Critic', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 39 (2006), 365-82; Alexander Regier and Stefan H. Uhlig (eds), *Wordsworth's Poetic Theory: Knowledge, Language, Experience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
[26] In the latter of these works, Abrams identified a common tendency amongst Romantic-era writers: 'the secularization of inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking'; Abrams, *Natural*, p. 12.

in literary criticism, theory, and poetics, the Romantic era has historically been characterised as a time of exciting and innovative poetry, and not always of innovative prose. In recent years, this view has been challenged. Like many prevailing narratives about the period, it is one that begins, as John R. Nabholtz has shown, with writers of the Romantic generation themselves, such as Wordsworth and Thomas De Quincey, who lamented the state of prose in their time.[27] Modern scholarship, in its expansion out from a restricted focus on the so-called "canonical" poets, is now acknowledging the Romantic era as a time of experimental and original prose across an array of creative and critical genres. As Annette Wheeler Cafarelli observes in *Prose in the Age of Poets* (1990), 'Romantic experimentation in prose is part of the complex matrix of generic redefinition and experimentation that characterizes the early nineteenth century'.[28] Indeed, Cafarelli views the development of prose as being closely related to that of poetry. The period's experimentation in literary biography, she argues, is a reflection of the Romantic poets' 'interest in literature as an expression of self' and, in the wake of Samuel Johnson, it 'assumed new significance as an agent for discussing theories of creativity, canon, and the place of the poet in society'.[29] It is not just the poets of the era who have been rediscovered as ground-breaking figures in the development of Romantic prose. Thomas McFarland's study on Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Charles Lamb, argues for the defining contribution of these writers to that contentious and contested 'spirit of the age' that is retrospectively termed Romanticism.[30] For McFarland, these authors are 'mountains, not outlying foothills', in the literary landscape.[31] They are no longer at the margins of Romantic studies, but central to a modern understanding of the period.

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[27] John R. Nabholtz, *"My Reader My Fellow-Labourer": A Study of English Romantic Prose* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 1-4.

[28] Annette Wheeler Cafarelli, *Prose in the Age of Poets: Romanticism and Biographical Narrative from Johnson to De Quincey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. 1

[29] Cafarelli, pp. 2, 5.

[30] Thomas McFarland, *Romantic Cruxes: The English Essayists and the Spirit of the Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 1-24. The notion of "the spirit of the age"—both as it applies to Romanticism and to history more broadly—is a site of contention, and the ability to pin it down (if it can be pinned down, if it is singular and not multiple) becomes increasingly difficult, as McFarland says, the more that our literary horizons are broadened. The term, however, continues to hold power, especially in the Romantic era, when so many of its leading figures attempted to define the age. Edmund Burke pronounced, in the wake of the era-defining French Revolution, that 'the age of chivalry is gone.—That of sophistsers, oeconomists, and calculators, has succeeded'. In response to Burke, Thomas Paine wrote his defence of deism, pointedly titled *The Age of Reason* (1794). Hazlitt, in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825)—a work which attempted to define the author's time of writing through a series of sketches of prominent writers and orators—began his essay on Coleridge by declaring: 'The present is an age of talkers, and not of doers'. It is a statement with more than a little echo of Burke. Coleridge called his own time an 'AGE OF PERSONALITY, [an] age of literary and political GOSSIPING' (*BL* I, p. 41). In 'The Four Ages of Poetry', Peacock defined the period by an attack on the Lake Poets, presenting Wordsworth as the era's emblematic figure—a presager of modern definitions of Romanticism ('FA', pp. 148-50). Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. by L.G. Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 76; William Hazlitt, 'Mr Coleridge', in *The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt*, ed. by Duncan Wu, 9 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000), VII, pp. 98-105 (p. 98).

[31] McFarland, *Romantic*, p. 15.

Yet, despite this ever-growing interest in, and recognition of the significance of, the non-fictional prose, criticism, and poetics, of the period, there has been no study of the figure of the poet-critic in the early nineteenth century. Equally, there has yet to be a study of the wide variety of literary-critical genres used by Romantic poet-critics. These are lacunae that this thesis aims to fill. I focus on poet-critics as a peculiar kind of reader and interpreter of poetry—one whose critical dogmas are balanced against their poetical works. I do not attempt to trace a dominant or unifying ideology or trait, such as in, for example, Abrams's studies, or in Anne Mellor's work on 'Romantic irony'.[32] Instead, I locate these writings within a series of critical and ideological narratives and continuities: poetic defensiveness, poetical thinking, authorial anxieties, the antagonisms of periodical culture, the satirical inclinations of the era's criticism, and the interlinked dualities that characterise Romantic poetics (poetry and philosophy, imagination and reason, the arts and sciences, comedy and tragedy, satire and Romanticism). I continue the exploration of the interactions between poetry and prose through, firstly, discussion of poets' criticism in relation to their poetical works and, secondly, by including satiric poetry as a genre of literary criticism. The poetry and prose of poet-critics are mutually defining, shaping each other. This is nowhere clearer than in the interaction of prefaces and the poems they introduce, which form the subject of my first chapter.

Since Jon Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences:1790-1832* (1987), there have been an increasing number of studies on periodical culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and on the new phenomenon in the period: Reviews (magazines devoted exclusively to reviewing books).[33] Within this expanding field, numerous studies on individual magazines—notably the era's giants: the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—have shown these periodicals to play as constructive a role in the spirit of the age as the writings of its leading poets.[34] Notable for the vitriolic treatment of authors (exacerbated by authorial anonymity) and for their party-political

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[32] Anne Mellor, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).
[33] Alongside Jon Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), notable studies exploring Romantic periodical culture include: Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Mark Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The "Lower Literary Empire"* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
[34] For work on particular periodicals, see: Joanne Shattock, *Politics and Reviewers: The Edinburgh and the Quarterly in the Early Victorian Age* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989); Massimiliano Demata and Duncan Wu (eds), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review: Bicentenary Essays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts (eds), *Romanticism and* Blackwood's Magazine*: 'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Megan Coyer, *Literature and Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1817-1858* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017); Nicholas Mason and Tom Mole (eds), *Romantic Periodicals in the Twenty-First Century: Eleven Case Studies from* Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

affiliations, the mass readership for Reviews granted these periodicals the ability, not just to make or break a text in the public consciousness, but to make and re-make audiences, as Klancher argues. They therefore had a shaping and defining impact on the poetics of Romantic poetry's leading figures, and their own negotiations of audience. As Lucy Newlyn writes, the potential of the reviews to direct and re-direct public opinion produced in the era's writers an 'anxiety of reception' and a need to control their reception in response to received, or in anticipation of imagined, criticism.[35] In Wordsworth's phrase, a poet needed to '*creat*[*e*] the taste by which he [was] to be enjoyed' (*WPW* III, p. 80, original emphasis). While the poets themselves characterised such audience negotiations as rejections of a contemporary readership in favour of an imagined future audience, it is now clear that there exists a 'competitive-collaborative relationship between creativity and criticism' (as Newlyn puts it), both between a poet-critic's poetry and criticism, and between poets and their critics.[36] The prominence of magazines in the literature of the era and their complex place within the consciousness of the era's writers is nowhere more on display than in the recurring presence of the *Edinburgh* as both an antagonist and an influence in Byron's and Hogg's depictions of, and self-placements within, the literary landscape of Britain, as I discuss in my third chapter. I therefore expand and develop work on the place of periodicals in the Romantic period through a focus on their formative influence on the critical writings of poet-critics. The earliest formed of the three giants of magazine publishing, the *Edinburgh*, is the primary antagonist for authors and works here examined—namely, Wordsworth's prefaces, Coleridge's *Biographia*, Byron's *English Bards*, and, to a certain extent, Peacock's 'Four Ages'. The *Edinburgh* casts its long shadow across the period, reappearing as a haunting presence—the vitriolic Review *par excellence*—in the writings of poet-critics. As Coleridge remarked, 'I think the commencement of the Edinburgh Review an important epoch in periodical criticism' (*BL* II, p. 108).

Vital to this thesis, and related to the importance of periodicals, is the characterisation of the age, not as one of shared ideologies, but one of antagonisms and enmities. An important work on the violent literary culture of the period is Richard Cronin's *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (2010). Beginning with an account of two duels fought over periodical articles, and continued through a series of notorious arguments and confrontations, Cronin highlights the literary and literal violence that characterised nineteenth-century writing. For Cronin, it is 'a period constituted not [….] by the doctrine of sympathy that its leading

[35] Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[36] Newlyn, p. xii.

writers held in common but by the antagonisms that divided them'.[37] At the centre of these battles, lies periodical culture and the tendency of magazines to affiliate themselves with political parties, such as the *Edinburgh* with the Whigs and the *Quarterly* with the Tories. As Cronin observes, the 'magazine war' and the 'war between the political parties […] were not always easy to distinguish'.[38] Reviews of literary works—the most popular form of literary-critical discourse in the period—often became, as Christie notes, pretexts for long disquisitions on political and topical subjects.[39] As Megan Coyer shows, even when discussing medicine and medical remedies, articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 'participated in a wider critique of liberal Whig ideology'.[40] It is in this context that *English Bards* locates the dispute between poets and critics within national debates, as its title suggests. Thus, within the dialectic of poetry and criticism which forms the subject of this study, there are numerous relationships between poets and critics that are characterised in terms of enmity: Wordsworth and Jeffrey, Keats and the *Quarterly*, Byron and the *Edinburgh*. (The first and last of these play a vital role in this thesis.) Familiar characterisations of literary coteries and the literary landscape, such as the Lake School and the Cockney Poets, evoke these notorious disputes and their sectarian underpinnings. The public arena into which poet-critics send their creative and critical works is not simply a literary marketplace where writers compete for attention and canonical status, but a battleground where more is professed to be at stake than the state of literature. Within this fraught arena, Coleridge's metaphysically inclined criticism is exposed as more than a retreat from his radical past. It is, as I explore in Chapter Two, an attempt to elevate criticism out of the violence of periodical culture and party politics, and into the realm of scientific institutions which professed the depoliticization of knowledge, the poet-critic becoming the poet-philosopher.[41] As with all Romantic self-representations, these enmities are not to be reduced or accepted uncritically. Byron, as I argue in Chapter Three, crosses both the national and disciplinary lines that are drawn in the title of his poem. Similarly, Coleridge's condemnation of the hostility of anonymous reviewing throughout the *Biographia* is weakened by the insertion, at the end of the second volume, of his own anonymously published and hostile review of Charles Maturin's *Bertram* (1816). I do not mean to undermine the antagonistic,

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[37] Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 13.
[38] Cronin, p. 6.
[39] Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 22-7.
[40] Coyer, p. 1.
[41] An example of the institutionalised belief in a depoliticised scientific community involves the Royal Institution's celebrity lecturer, Humphry Davy. In 1813, Davy was awarded the Prix Napoléon by the Institut de France in Paris, and he travelled to France to collect it in order to highlight science's transcendence of political conflict, much to the disapproval of several periodical-writers. This is discussed in more detail in: Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science* (London: Harper Press, 2009), pp. 352-54.

violent, and confrontational characterisation of the age, but simply to indicate that, just because a writer draws a line in the sand, does not mean that they do not cross it, wittingly or unwittingly. As Newlyn writes, 'In an environment of attack and counter-attack, survival was the key enterprise', and poets say whatever is necessary in order to survive.[42]

Despite the historical specificity of this study, this thesis situates Romantic poet-critics within a broader historical narrative, as poet-critics are becoming an increasingly familiar figure in the wider history of literary criticism. A notable work in this field is Evan Kindley's *Poet-Critics and the Administration of Culture* (2017), whose subject is poet-critics within the modernist tradition. I share with Kindley the belief that poet-critics are not a unique phenomenon to any particular period.[43] One need only look to Horace, Dante, Sidney, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Samuel Johnson for antecedents stretching back thousands of years, and to Algernon Swinburne and Matthew Arnold as immediate descendants of the Romantic period. In the twenty-first century, as Kindley points out, poet-critics are more familiar figures than ever before, with modern poets almost expected to be either critics or teachers within the new academic field of creative writing.[44] However, poet-critics have the same period-distinctiveness in their critical works as they do in their poems—the genres of literary criticism being as historically contingent as those of poetry. As the two are often inseparable in a poet-critic's oeuvre, the distinctiveness of their creative works must inevitably be the distinctiveness of their critical works. For Kindley, modernist poets were critically supplementing their poetry at a time when academic criticism was solidifying into the forms in which it is known today.[45] Romantic poet-critics were working in (and contributing to) a transitional period in literary-critical discourse—that between the Neoclassical and the Modern—and at a moment of inception for the role of professional literary critic. Different historical moments thus produce different kinds of critic. While Kindley's identification of 'explanation' and 'justification' as the guiding impulses of poet-critics in the modernist period is analogous to the defensiveness ubiquitous in the critical writings of poets in the Romantic period, it is not the same.[46] Kindley views this justification in relation to 'social institutions'—the aristocracy, the academy, the state—whereas I argue that Romantic poet-critics often adopt an increasingly insular defensiveness which rejects such institutions, represented by the images

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[42] Newlyn, p. 35.
[43] Evan Kindley, *Poet-Critics and the Administration of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 3.
[44] Kindley, p. 3.
[45] Kindley, p. 3.
[46] Kindley, pp. 1, 10.

of the Wordsworthian recluse, the Coleridgean metaphysician, and the Shelleyan radical.[47] Modernist poet-critics are 'administrators' participating within a capitalist bureaucracy.[48] Their Romantic counterparts are defenders in a fraught and violent literary battleground. This work therefore closes with a focus on poetic defences or apologias, highlighting how even the most antagonistic of writings by poet-critics, such as Peacock's 'Four Ages', can act as a covert defence of the poet.

This thesis also contributes to the expanding body of scholarship on genre in the early nineteenth century. In recent years, there have been vital studies produced on the subject of genre and form, and its relation to that spirit of the age termed Romanticism. Notable works are Stuart Curran's *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1989), Susan Wolfson's *Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism* (1997), Duff's *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (2009), and the essays collected by Tilottama Rajan and Julia M. Wright in *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre* (1998). These works counter what Duff calls 'the anti-generic hypothesis, the belief that Romanticism was fundamentally hostile to genre, or interested in genres only for the purposes of dissolving or transcending them'.[49] For Wolfson, the values of 'intention', 'expressiveness', and 'organic form', which lie at the centre of Romantic poetics, creates the illusion that the era's poetry is resistant to formalist readings.[50] As Curran says, the theory of underlying generic structures and constraints would seem to be antithetical to the Romantics' conceptions of poetry as divine inspiration—the breeze playing over the Eolian lyre in Coleridge and Shelley—or what Wordsworth called 'spontaneous overflow' (*WPW* I, p. 126).[51] Yet to take these poets at their word (as McGann would advise against) is to dislocate Romanticism from its context. According to Curran, 'the intrenched belief that Romanticism was inherently suspicious of, even hostile to, traditional literary forms' runs the risk of 'divorcing [the Romantic era] from history, from the continuities of Western literature, and from the conceptual syntax that encodes them'.[52] Indeed, as Klancher explains, it is in the critical writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the modern formulation of genres as historically contingent first emerges.[53] To separate Romantic-era

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[47] Kindley, p. 6.
[48] Kindley, p. 4.
[49] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 1.
[50] Susan J. Wolfson, *Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 10, 11.
[51] Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 12.
[52] Curran, p. 4.
[53] Jon Klancher, 'Godwin and the Genre Reformers: On Necessity and Contingency in Romantic Narrative Theory', in *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre: Re-forming Literature 1789-1837*, ed. by Tilottama Rajan and Julia M. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 21-38.

poetry and poetics from genre would be to separate it from its self-consciously revolutionary underpinnings.

More importantly, such 'anti-generic' beliefs regarding the early nineteenth century overlook the complex engagement with, and uses of, genre in the period. It is an age which witnesses the rise of the novel, the revival of the sonnet tradition, the death of the epic, the apotheosis of lyric, the popularisation of the fragment as a poetic form, the decline of oral and ballad culture, the advent of periodical reviewing, the invention of science-fiction and the addiction narrative, and the proliferation of literary biography, among numerous other generic developments and revisions. As Rajan and Wright state, 'Romantic literature is characterized by its generic experimentation'.[54] The title of such a defining work as *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems* (1802)—a volume whose first edition defines its contents as 'experiments'—highlights the complex genre-navigations being performed by the era's leading figures (*WPW* I, p. 116). The inclinations of Coleridge and Wordsworth to divide their collected works into distinct and idiosyncratic categories—composed of traditional and non-traditional genres—indicates a desire to expand and nuance genre designations and to situate their texts within complex formal and generic constraints.[55] Significantly, such categorises are more than arbitrary organisational systems; they are a means to control the reception of poems. In *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), Coleridge placed 'Frost at Midnight' amongst the 'Meditative Poems in Blank Verse', separating it from the political context of its original 1798 publication alongside 'Fears in Solitude' and 'France: An Ode' (categorised in the 1817 collection as 'Poems Occasioned by Political Events')—a seeming re- or de-politicisation of this poem's implicit rejection of external, public matters in favour of the internal, the domestic, and the personal. As Wolfson argues, Romantic revisions of genre are a 'politicization of form' rather than an 'anti-formalism', a revolution in genre rather than a rejection of it.[56]

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[54] Tilottama Rajan and Julia M. Wright, 'Introduction', to *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre*, pp. 1-18 (p. 1).

[55] The traditional and non-traditional genres which divide Wordsworth's *Poems* (1815) and Coleridge's *Sibylline Leaves* (1817) show the complex interactions between subject matter, recognised poetic forms, mental faculties, time of writing, and textual space, that inform these poets' genre-navigations. In Wordsworth's collection, the poems are divided into thirteen sections: 'Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood', 'Juvenile Pieces', 'Poems Founded on the Affections', 'Poems of the Fancy', 'Poems of the Imagination', 'Poems Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection', 'Miscellaneous Sonnets', 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty, First Part. Published in 1807', 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty, Second Part. From the Year 1807 to 1813', 'Poems on the Naming of Places', 'Inscriptions', 'Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age', and 'Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems'. *Sibylline Leaves* is in four sections: 'Poems Occasioned by Political Events or Feelings Connected with Them', 'Love-Poems', 'Meditative Poems in Blank Verse', and 'Odes and Miscellaneous Poems'. William Wordsworth, *Poems* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1815), pp. xliii-li; *SL* pp. 47, 117, 163, 235.

[56] Wolfson, pp. 20-1.

I follow previous scholars in arguing that the early nineteenth century was a period of (in Duff's words) 'hyper-consciousness about genre', with a vast range of genres being developed, subverted, recovered, resuscitated, intermixed, and invented throughout the period. It is also a period which, as both Klancher and Duff observe, witnesses the birth of modern genre theory, with writers rejecting rigid Neoclassical and Enlightenment genre systems in favour of more fluid approaches to the subject of literary kinds.[57] Where this thesis diverts from previous studies is in its focus on literary-critical writings, and on the genres in which those writings participate. Genres of poetry are the primary subject matter for Curran, Wolfson, and Duff. While Duff and Wolfson are concerned with poetics and the critical awareness of genre in the period as expressed in creative and critical texts, their focus is nonetheless with poetic genres, and with poets' and critics' theorising about them. I develop this work by turning attention to the forms and traditions in which poet-critics announce their critical dogmas. Applying this understanding of Romantic hyper-awareness to the genres of literary criticism, I highlight how, at a time when both literary criticism and genre theory begin to take their modern shape, poet-critics were as conscious of, and innovative in, their uses of genre in their critical writings as they were in their poetry. This thesis does not, however, aim to be a contribution to genre theory or the history of genre theory, but to use genre as a critical lens through which to examine and explore the writings of Romantic poet-critics. It is thus imperative to make explicit my definition of genre, my understanding of modern genre theory and its relationship to Romantic-era genre theory, and my uses of particular theories in my case studies. This methodology and its critical background are outlined in the following section.

0.2. Methodology: The Uses of Genre

Building on the work of several genre-theorists, I adopt a broad and flexible definition of genre which is open to the flexibility of individual genres.[58] A genre is here defined as a recognisable form of categorisation that carries with it and identifies precedents, traditions, conventions, codes, and expectations—all of which shape the production and reception of texts. However, while categorisation—the processes of establishing patterns, systems, and codes of likeness and unlikeness between texts—is the underlying impulse of genre, it is not genre's fundamental nature. Authors have agency in their uses of genre. They wrestle with these codes and

[57] Klancher, 'Godwin', p. 34; Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 5.

[58] For my understanding of genre theory, I am indebted to the essays collected by David Duff (ed.) in *Modern Genre Theory* (Harlow: Longman, 2000). These essays, as well as Duff's introduction, formed a starting point for my research into the contested academic field of genre theory.

conventions, both consciously and unconsciously, at times embracing them and at others resisting them. This battle between tradition and the individual, between the impulses of imitation and originality, mean that a genre (and, according to Yury Tynanov, perhaps the nature of genre itself) is in a state of constant flux. [59] Genres thus need to be considered within the realms of what reception-theorist Hans Robert Jauss calls 'horizon[s] of expectation'—the audience expectations on the macro- and microscopic levels which govern the reception of a text, and whose boundaries shift across time and space.[60] For Jauss, production and reception are intertwined, with production being a form of receiving and responding to earlier texts, while reception influences production through audience expectations which may be expressed by the audience or be presupposed by the author. Jauss argues that critics must 'reconstruct' a text's original horizon, examining it within 'the objectifiable system of expectations that arises for each work in the historical moment of its appearance, from a pre-understanding of genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works'.[61] Thus analysis of a genre must, as Alastair Fowler emphasises, reconstruct a genre in its historical context, attempting to understand a text's genre in terms of what that genre was at the moment of that text's creation and its first publication.[62] While this is not a simple or unproblematic process—as Fowler observes, knowledge of the historical state of a genre is tainted by knowledge of its subsequent states—I devote, in each of my case-studies, space to consideration of the state of each examined literary kind within its historical context, as well as identifying what might be termed "era-specific genres", such as that which I call the "*Edinburgh*-reply" in my third chapter.[63]

In adopting this broad definition, I reject a pseudo-scientific system of classification which attempts to adapt terms such as genre, sub-genre, form, mode, medium, class, and kind, to the taxonomic ranks of species and genus. As Duff has said, such a taxonomy would require consensus, and there is none.[64] Genette, in his survey of genre theory across the centuries, shows that attempts to systematise genres have produced contradictions and inconsistencies, even when genre theorists appear to be in agreement.[65] Highlighting the 'erroneous attribution' of

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[59] Tynyanov argues that the idea of genre itself, like that of individual genres, is 'not a constant, stable system'. Never 'static', genres and genre are 'ceaselessly evolving'. Yuri Tynyanov, 'The Literary Fact', trans. by Ann Shukman, in Duff, *Modern*, pp. 29-49 (pp. 32, 46).
[60] Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 22.
[61] Jauss, pp. 19, 22.
[62] Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 259.
[63] Fowler, p. 261.
[64] David Duff, 'Introduction', to *Modern*, pp. 1-24 (p. 17).
[65] Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

the tripartite division of poetry—epic, drama, lyric—to Aristotle, Genette argues that commentators have attempted to bend and reshape their own theories of genre to this division, arbitrarily adapting other trinities (such as past, present, and future) to the epic-lyric-drama triumvirate, hoping to situate their own ideas within a system supposedly sanctioned by classical authority.[66] None of these systems, he argues, is more natural than any other, and there is nothing that rules out new systems.[67] This does not prevent Genette from making his own distinctions, particularly between modes and genres, but he reiterates the personal and idiosyncratic nature of those distinctions: it is, he says, '*my* system'.[68] Ultimately, he encourages a scepticism towards models of theoretical systemisation, even questioning their necessity when genres cannot be deduced, but only empirically observed.[69] As many genres are defined by an 'intersection' of literary form, narrative modes, character types, and kinds of subject matters and themes, a model to encode the system would have to be infinitely complex and ultimately useless as a critical 'instrument'.[70] In this thesis, I am first and foremost concerned with genre theory as a tool for critical analysis of individual texts and genres. As Robert Scholes notes, there is a certain amount of 'poetic thinking' in Genette's theory, and it is this openness to tracing likenesses (the basis of the primary instrument of the poet, metaphor) that I take forward.[71]

In defending a flexible definition and a flexible use of terms, I would add to these arguments that genre classification is not simply observational, but interactive and participatory. As Jacques Derrida puts it, texts and authors 'participat[e] without belonging' in genres, always 'overflowing' their genre-boundaries as they operate within them.[72] 'Every text', he says, '*participates* in one or several genres'; for Derrida, 'there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres'.[73] And just as texts spill over genre-boundaries, Genette observes that 'any genre can always contain several genres' which exist at the intersection of other genres, further disrupting the differentiation processes involved in classification.[74] Indeed, genres evolve, overlap, and intermix with such rapidity and complexity that it is difficult to adopt a strict taxonomic system. Even structuralist critics who attempt systemisation

[66] Genette, *Architext*, pp. 61, 23-58.
[67] Genette, *Architext*, p. 65.
[68] Genette, *Architext*, p. 83, original emphasis.
[69] Genette, *Architext*, p. 66.
[70] Genette, *Architext*, pp. 73, 84
[71] Robert Scholes, 'Foreword to the English-Language Edition', in Genette, *Architext*, pp. vii-ix (p. viii).
[72] Jacques Derrida, 'The Law of Genre', trans. by Avital Ronell, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 221-52 (pp. 227, 228).
[73] Derrida, p. 230, emphasis added.
[74] Genette, *Architext*, p. 65.

acknowledge that genre is 'a system of constant transformation', in Tzvetan Todorov's phrase.[75] The act of categorisation, whether performed by the creator of, or the audience for, a text, creates expectations within the processes of production and reception that alter those processes. A genre continually shapes, and is shaped by, its texts, with new genres emerging out of previous ones. Thus, Mary Shelley's ground-breaking work of science fiction, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), emerges from the tradition of the gothic novel, but also from Miltonic epic, the epistolary novel, the travel narrative, and (as the title suggests) classical mythology. As is suggested by Todorov, the "canonical" works in a genre are often those which subvert and transgress against pre-existing expectations, expanding the boundaries of that genre and, over time, establishing their transgressions as the new genre-conventions.[76] Yesterday's originality becomes today's cliché. Genres rise and fall. They disappear only to be rediscovered and renovated generations later, while new genres emerge as literary and political antagonists to older genres—a process of '*struggle and supplanting*' (in Tynyanov's phrase) which Curran compares to Darwinian 'natural selection'.[77] If a genre has "rules" and "laws"—Derrida's '"do" or "do not"'—they are rules to be broken and revised.[78] Thus I prefer more flexible and voluntary terms like codes, conventions, tropes, and expectations. My definition of genre therefore incorporates less fluid terms such as form and media—to use Genette's phrase, genre 'cuts across' these terms—as they both carry with them expectations and traditions that shape a literary work.[79] A sonnet is both a relatively fixed (though not inflexible) poetic form but also an evolving literary genre whose precedents impact the content of new works and an audience's interactions with them. Similarly, I use the term "sub-genre" throughout, not as a category distinct from "genre", but as a means to understanding the relationship between genres. Literary lectures are a genre, but also a sub-genre of the public lecture. This stance may, on the surface, appear nebulous—in general, the broader array of works that a genre covers, the more nebulous a genre becomes; the fewer works, the more focused and specific—but I encourage a flexibility which is alert to both this broadness and this specificity.

There are three particular terms which are important in this study. The first is what Tynyanov calls 'dominant' genres, or Ireneusz Opacki calls 'royal genres'.[80] These terms refer

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[75] Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 15.
[76] Todorov, p. 14.
[77] Tynyanov, p. 34, original emphasis; Curran, p. 8.
[78] Derrida, p. 224.
[79] Genette, in distinguishing between the terms 'genre' and 'mode', observes genre's ability 'to cut across modes […] perhaps the way individual works cut across genres'. Genette, *Architext*, p. 71.
[80] Tynyanov, p. 38. Ireneusz Opacki, 'Royal Genres', trans. by David Malcolm, in Duff, *Modern*, pp. 118-26.

to the hierarchisation of genres, and the tendency of contemporaneous 'secondary' genres to lean towards and adopt the conventions of their dominant textual kinds.[81] These inherently ideological hierarchies—which can be defined by popularity, cultural esteem, audience, originality, or longevity—cause genres to rise and fall. Such hierarchies are therefore as protean and historically determined as genres themselves. The shifting cultural value of the novel in the nineteenth century, from a feminine to a masculine genre, is a prime example of this. For Opacki, this means that genres are in a constant state of 'hybridisation', unconsciously participating in other literary species, particularly those considered to be dominant.[82] Thus, in my second chapter, I show Coleridge's literary lectures and *Biographia* leaning towards the popular scientific lectures of Humphry Davy, attempting to borrow from its success. The second term is what Tynyanov calls 'genre-consciousness', or genre-awareness.[83] This refers to an author's and an age's familiarity with the expectations of a genre through their uses of that genre. It is important, however, to observe that this awareness can be as unconscious as it is conscious, as known as it is intuited. In this way, it is related to Julia Kristeva's concept of 'intertextuality'—the theory that texts are always in dialogue with other texts, and always composed of other texts, even if their authors are not conscious of it.[84] In my first chapter, for example, I trace Coleridge's awareness of prefaces and other paratextual genres through his uses of them across his literary career as much as through his theorising about them. Finally, to these two key terms, I would add a third that I call "genre-anxiety". Partaking of other authorial neuroses—Bloom's 'influence-anxiety', W. Jackson Bate's 'burden of the past', Newlyn's 'anxiety of reception', Andrew Bennett's anxiety of posterity, and Gilbert and Gubar's female-specific 'anxiety of authorship'—genre-anxieties are authorial concerns regarding the popularity, critical esteem, cultural value, and ideological implications, of a genre.[85] Writers grapple with genres just as they grapple with readers, reviewers, and antecedent writers. Thus,

[81] Opacki, p. 120.
[82] Opacki, p. 121.
[83] Tynyavov, p. 32.
[84] While, as Leon S. Roudiez observes, Kristeva's term originally applied to 'the transposition of one or more *system* of signs into another', not to 'matters of influence' or 'sources of a literary work', the term has been expanded by subsequent theorists to include these literary aspects. Genette has identified 'intertextuality' as the first of five kinds of 'transtextuality'. These are the various relationships of texts to other texts, and 'transtextuality' is a term which 'subsumes' the subject of genres (or 'architexts', as Genette calls them), with 'architextuality' as another of its five kinds. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 66; Leon S. Roudiez, 'Introduction', in Kristeva, pp. 1-20 (p. 15); Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 1, 2.
[85] Bloom, p. xxiii; W. Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971); Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 18; Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 45-92.

in Chapter Four, I highlight Peacock's vacillations between the ancient genres of comedy and tragedy, and his unease over their social utility.

A modern understanding of genre is relevant to a study of Romantic-era poetics and criticism because it is the age which witnesses the birth of modern genre theory. The state of genre theory in the British Romantic era has been explored by Duff, whose wide-ranging book on the subject is alert to the contradictions and reductive characterisations by both writers of the period and subsequent commentators in discussions of genre.[86] This alertness is highlighted by his examination of the anachronistic phrase "Romantic genre theory". In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the word "romantic" had a different meaning than it does now, "theory" was little used, and "genre" did not enter English in its current meaning until the twentieth century.[87] Despite such anachronism, discussion of literary 'species', 'kinds', and 'classes'—synonymous terms in genre theory—as well as of 'forms', is wide and varied leading up to and throughout the period, both by poet-critics and non-poet critics.[88] The traditional 'anti-generic hypothesis' was an invention of the Romantics themselves, with poets taking up anti-generic stances in their poetry and criticism. Southey, for example, 'denounced, on occasion, almost all of the genres he utilized', Coleridge wrote sonnets satirising his own works in that genre, while Shelley wrote a 'Satire on Satire' (1820)—the title of which suggests that 'generic and anti-generic' attitudes could 'coexist in the same text'.[89] The Romantic era's genre theory is defined by a stated rejection of the strict (though by no means restrictive) genre theory of Neoclassicism, which was associated with French critical traditions and therefore considered suspect in the wake of the Revolution. Though there are many continuities between Neoclassical and Romantic genre theories, Duff observes two keys ways in which Romantic theory developed on the Neoclassical that are relevant to this thesis. Firstly, there is an increased focus on non-formal definitions of genres. Writers resisted older genre-definitions based on content or structure, instead embracing new, psychological genre-descriptions which centralised the mental faculties that produce a text.[90] Thus Wordsworth's *Poems* (1815) contains categories such as 'Poems of the Fancy' and 'Poems of the Imagination'. Secondly, writers of the early nineteenth century broadened, multiplied, and added to the limited array of pre-existing genres—a project which can be witnessed in the 'eclecticism of contemporary labelling systems' which authors and publishers made use of in order to market their works,

[86] The rest of this paragraph paraphrases and builds upon Duff's *Romanticism*.
[87] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 74.
[88] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 31.
[89] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 11, 16, 19.
[90] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 46-57.

often in the form of subtitles.[91] Precise and complex genre navigation was therefore a publishing convention in the early nineteenth century. For Duff, 'Romantic genre theory' can be seen as a vital constituent of the period's literary revolution, and its defining traits are summarised as:

> relaxation of genre rules; loosening of generic boundaries; acceptance of generic mixture; enlargement of the genre spectrum; shifts in the hierarchy of genres; recognition of the historical variability of genres; and integration of literary genre theory into larger rhetorical and aesthetic systems.[92]

In short, Romantic genre theory is the beginning of modern genre theory, just as Wellek saw Romantic criticism as the beginnings of modern literary-critical discourse. The primary importance of acknowledging this era-specific theorising in a thesis which analyses historical genres, rather than historical genre theory, is to highlight that the poets examined herein were conscious of genre in ways that covered the literary, the ideological, and the economic. They were not abandoning, rejecting, or transcending genre, as they claimed, but revolutionising it. The critical terms may be anachronistic, but the subject is not.

Ultimately, discussing Romantic poet-critics entails an exploration of genre. This is for two key reasons. Firstly, it would be impossible to discuss poets' literary criticism in the period without covering an array of generic forms. To the diversity of the works contained within this study, one could also add Keat's private correspondence, certain of William Blake's prophetic books, and the periodical reviews written by so many poets of the era. Remarkably, each of the so-called "canonical" statements on Romanticism by poets of the era—Wordsworth's prefaces, Coleridge's lectures and *Biographia*, Shelley's 'Defence', Keats's letters—all participate in different forms and genres. Secondly, all of the works examined in this thesis at some point or

[91] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 54. Curran provides an abecedary of poems and poetry collections highlighting the inventive genre designations appended to literary works: Shelley's *Adonais*: *An Elegy on the Death of John Keats* (1821); Byron's *The Blues: A Literary Eclogue* (1821) and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt* (1812); Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode' (1802); Keats's *Endymion*: *A Poetic Romance* (1818) and 'The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream' (1856); Byron's *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* (1813); Shelley's *Hellas: A Lyrical Drama* (1822); Wordsworth's 'The Idle Shepherd-Boys: A Pastoral' (1800); Southey's *Joan of Arc: An Epic Poem* (1796); Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan: A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment' (1816); Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817); Wordsworth's 'Michael: A Pastoral Poem' (1800); Coleridge's 'The Nightingale: A Conversational Poem' (1798); Wordsworth's 'The Oak and the Broom: A Pastoral' (1800); Coleridge's 'Perspiration: A Travelling Eclogue' (1794); Shelley's *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem* (1813) and *Rosalind and Helen: A Modern Eclogue* (1919); William Bowles's *The Spirit of Discovery: A Descriptive and Historical Poem* (1804); Byron's *The Two Foscari: An Historical Tragedy* (1821); John Clare's 'Upon the Plain: A Ballad' (1820); Byron's 'Venice: An Ode' (1819) and *Waltz: An Apostrophic Hymn* (1813); Southey's *Ximalpoca*: *A Monodrama* (1798); Thomas Campbell's 'Ye Mariners of England: A Naval Ode' (1801); and Coleridge's *Zapolya: A Christmas Tale* (1816). Curran, p. xi.
[92] Duff, *Romanticism*, p. 41.

another deal explicitly with the subject of genre or genres. Wordsworth's prefaces examine the relationship between the languages of poetry, prose, science, and philosophy. Coleridge's lectures move across considerations of Shakespearean comedy and tragedy, while his *Biographia* praises Southey for the 'variety and extent of his [literary] acquirements' in history, biography, and 'every species' of poetry (*BL* I, pp. 63-4). Byron's *English Bards*, conversely, criticises Southey's overuse of epic. 'Epistle to Mr. R. S****' in Hogg's *Poetic Mirror* depicts a poet roaming over the Scottish landscape identifying the different genres—pastoral, folklore, romance, history, autobiography—that its sights elicit. In 'The Four Ages', Peacock divided literary history into ages of epic, tragedy, and comedy. Shelley's definition of poetry expands to include numerous 'classes of mimetic representation', and he discusses the supposedly Aristotelian triumvirate of lyric, drama, and epic, as well as didactic, bucolic, and erotic forms of poetry ('Defence', p. 676). The importance of genre theory to the subject of Romantic poet-critics thus goes beyond the permanent relevance of the subject of genre in literary criticism.

Throughout this study I may share with Romantic poets an eagerness to identify new genres—Romantic prefaces, the lecture-as-literary-text, the *Edinburgh*-reply. This is because, as Cafarelli observes, so much Romantic prose, whether by poets or non-poets, resists traditional generic classification due to its experimentation.[93] I am careful, however, to allow genre-identification to pose new questions, and not to become an answer in itself. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes (interpreting Derrida), 'To make a new word is to run the risk of forgetting the problem or believing it solved'.[94] To observe and define new genres is to acknowledge previously unacknowledged precedents, and to trace new trajectories of influence, tradition, and intertextual interaction. Categorisation is, after all, always retrospective, whether at a distance of two, two-hundred, or two-thousand years. A genre requires multiple works to exist before they can be grouped together, though the nature of influence and intertextuality means that those works interact before they are identified as forming a distinct literary kind. There is no greater indicator of the consciousness of unnamed and unacknowledged genres than in the production of satire and parody. De Quincey's 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' (1827), for example, is presented as a lecture-text, utilising this frame for a commentary on the institutionalisation of knowledge. Hogg, as I show in my third chapter, parodied the *Edinburgh*-reply, repeating and redeploying familiar tropes of this genre in his imitations of Wordsworth and Southey. Thus new genre designations do not replace older

[93] Cafarelli, p. 8.
[94] Gatyari Chakravorty Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. ix-lxxxvii (p. xv).

designations, but expand, multiply, and add to them. Drawing together works previously little-connected opens these works to new comparative readings. Genre theory provides a lens through which to focus in on what Jauss calls the 'overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions' which 'awakens memories of that which is already read'—everything that arouses expectations that have a shaping influence on the processes of production and reception.[95] Through the lens of genre theory, Romantic poet-critics can be seen as both the producers and the products of their age, originators and imitators, influencers and influenced; and their critical works and critical tenets as shaping and shaped by their contexts of production and reception.

0.3. Structure of the Thesis

Each chapter of this thesis focuses on a genre, and contains a comparative case study of two authors within that genre. In my first chapter, I examine a genre that was ubiquitous in, but also remarkably peculiar to, the Romantic era: that of the preface to one's own poetry. This chapter takes as its case studies Wordsworth's prefatory and paratextual prose, and Coleridge's *Biographia*. After highlighting the consciousness of the preface genre by these two writers—Wordsworth's increasingly antagonised and antagonistic prose, and Coleridge's playful interactions between text and paratext—I focus on Wordsworth's dichotomy (familiar in the period) of poets and philosophers, and the fragmentation and interruption found across Coleridge's poetry and prose. I argue that Wordsworth's figuration of the ideal critic—simultaneously poetical and philosophical—evolves in relation to his increasingly negative critical reception, with the figure of the poet-critic becoming increasingly prominent (if not explicit) in his thinking. Conversely, I show how Coleridge constructs a unified public identity around his awareness of his own failures in regards to that famous critical tenet of his which was of such importance to the New Critics in the early twentieth century: that of organic unity. Like the *Christabel* volume (1816), Coleridge's *Biographia* and its related collection of poems, *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), are unified by their disunity, whole in their fragmentation. In so arguing, this chapter introduces many of the recurring concerns, anxieties, and ideas shared by Romantic poet-critics: defensive identity-construction and self-justification, dialectical thinking, the connection (literally and metaphorically) between a poet's poetry and criticism, genre-awareness and genre-experimentation, and the managing of one's public reception. This

[95] Jauss, p. 23.

chapter also introduces two recurring tendencies in the literary-critical writings of Romantic poet-critics: the often playful or satirical turn, and the haunting presence of periodicals, particularly in the form of the *Edinburgh Review*.

My second chapter continues the discussion of Coleridge, and takes as its subject his literary lectures, and their textual counterpart, the *Biographia*, which I consider within a genre that I term the "lecture-as-literary-text". These texts are compared to the scientific lectures of Humphry Davy, and his use of poetic quotation and scientific demonstration. While Davy may be unfamiliar to readers as a poet-critic, he was a writer of poetry alongside his work as a scientist—indeed, his manuscript poems often appear alongside his scientific notes—and he therefore fits into Coleridge's construction of the poet-philosopher. Nonetheless, this chapter primarily focuses on Coleridge, viewing Davy as a generic influence. Associated with organisations such as the Royal Institution of Great Britain that claimed public education as their mission, public lectures on academic subjects became a popular and lucrative genre at the turn of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, lecturing could make celebrities of unknowns (such as Davy and Hazlitt), whilst, on the other, it thrived on the pre-existing fame of lecturers such as Coleridge, who was hired because he was a notable literary figure. In this context, I argue that, in his imitation of Davy and of the dominant genre of the scientific lecture, Coleridge developed his ground-breaking notion of practical criticism as a counterpart to the dramatic scientific demonstrations that made Davy famous. Literary quotation and poetic recitation were used as frequently by Coleridge as experimentation was used by Davy, and therefore became central to the entertainment value of lectures. This, I argue, formed the basis of Coleridge's quotation-heavy method of analysis in the *Biographia*. This chapter thus highlights a poet-critic negotiating a unique terrain for literary-critical study, one which is freed from periodical reviewing and which stands in close relation to the more respectable discourses of scientific institutions. It is an attempt to elevate both poetry and criticism into the academic dialectic of the sciences and the arts.

Chapter Three examines satirical and parodic descriptions, depictions, and imitations of poets in Byron's *English Bards* and Hogg's *Poetic Mirror*. In this chapter, I highlight the common perception in the early nineteenth century of reviewing as a form of satire, before then identifying a genre that I term the "*Edinburgh*-reply", a wide and varied literary kind connecting works written in response to the *Edinburgh Review* and its editor, Francis Jeffrey. It is this genre in which Byron participates in *English Bards*, and which Hogg parodies in his imitations of Wordsworth and Southey in *The Poetic Mirror*. I argue that, by responding to the *Edinburgh*,

whilst simultaneously using it as a source of many of his criticisms of poets (including himself), Byron blurs the boundaries between the three roles of the full title of his poem: those of poet, critic, and satirist. Hogg, in parodying the animosities of Wordsworth and Southey towards Jeffrey, exposes a similar blurring of roles between poet and reviewer, implying that these poets became, in their guise as poet-critics, the very thing that they despised. Thus, in this chapter, the influence of periodical reviewing on poets in both their poetry and criticism, as well as the satirical inclinations of Romantic poet-critics, take centre stage. Indeed, the two are closely related. Just as Byron's career as a satirist begins with his savaging at the hands of the *Edinburgh* in the review of his *Hours of Idleness* (1807), the satirical turn in Romantic-era criticism is a response to the satirical savagery of periodical reviewers. However, the image of periodicals as a straightforward antagonist to the era's poetry is destabilised by showing the influence of reviews upon the critical thinking of poets. Similarly, building on the work of Steven E. Jones, the supposed antithesis between satire and Romanticism—which, like the anti-generic view of Romanticism, begins with the Romantics themselves—is complicated and undermined.[96]

The final chapter focuses on the poetic apologia—the genre which 'cuts across' all critical genres used by Romantic poet-critics—taking as its case studies, Peacock's 'Four Ages' and Shelley's 'Defence'. As the primary antecedent in this genre, I adopt Sidney's notion of 'self-love' as the guiding impulse in poetic defences.[97] Revising the familiar image of Peacock as a writer who gave up poetry for prose, I argue that Peacock perceives his literary career as caught between the ancient genres of comedy and tragedy. His satirical essay, 'The Four Ages', written at a period of transition in his writing, is a covert defence (in the guise of an attack) of his increasing prioritisation of comic literature over his earlier inclinations to the tragic. Shelley, on the other hand, in responding to opposing historical and philosophical attacks on poetry by Peacock and Plato—two writers connected in his life and thought—revises and hyperbolises an earlier defence of poetry, *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1820). Shelley adapts his earlier response to Plato to the new attack by Peacock in 'The Four Ages', fully formulating his all-consuming view of poetry in the 'Defence'. In so arguing, I highlight defensiveness and self-justification not just as defining traits of even the most antagonistic writings of Romantic poet-critics, but as spurs to intellectual exertion. Defensiveness is not just the cause of Wordsworth's hermeticism, or the antagonism of Byron's equal and opposite reaction to his critics. It is the cause of innovation, and of critical and personal revelation.

[96] Steven E. Jones, *Satire and Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
[97] Sidney, p. 212.

Chapter 1

Poets and Critics:
Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Romantic Prefaces

Prefaces are the perfect starting point for examining the literary-critical writings of Romantic poets. This genre physically connects the roles of poet and critic in a dialectic that parallels the dynamic of text and paratext, and the forms of poetry and prose. Within this genre, there are two texts which are vital to a study of Romantic poet-critics: Wordsworth's era-defining poetics contained within his prefatory and supplementary prose, and Coleridge's seminal work of literary criticism, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, which, I argue, should be reconsidered as a preface to *Sibylline Leaves*. I focus on the roles of poet and critic as they are constructed and characterised in Wordsworth's prefaces, with a particular focus on the 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface' (1815), and in Coleridge's 'literary life'. I argue that Wordsworth's construction of the perfect critic—a critic worthy of criticising Wordsworth—develops throughout his early literary career in response to his perception of his critical reception, and in order to form and re-form his public identity as a poet destined to be unappreciated in his lifetime. The figure of the poet-critic haunts the ambiguities of Wordsworth's theory of criticism, an unrealised and unspoken implication in his characterisation of the ideal critic as 'at once poetical and philosophical' (*WPW* III, p. 66). In the second case study, I highlight the disparity between Coleridge's poetics and his poems, arguing that his failure to fulfil his own theories, particularly that which is now termed "organic unity", is a vital aspect of his self-constructed identity as a writer of unfulfilled potential. Throughout these case studies, I show how the poetics and critical theories of both poets shape, and are shaped by, the foremost expectations of the preface genre: self-representation and self-defence. This chapter therefore begins to identify many of the recurring concerns of Romantic-era poet-critics: authorial defensiveness, the haunting spectre of periodical reviewing (in particular the *Edinburgh Review*), the desire to re-create the role of critic, the dynamic of seriousness and playfulness, and the relationship between poetry and the various disciplines which fall under the term "philosophy".

Wordsworth's critical reception, and his attempts to construct or imagine an identity and an audience in response to that reception, is a familiar subject in Romantic studies.[1] I expand upon this work by focusing on another facet of Wordsworth's self-positioning beyond his own identity- and audience-construction: his attempt to define the perfect critic. Numerous commentators have argued that Wordsworth uses prefaces and other paratexts to present himself in several roles, including those of editor, critic, and literary and cultural scholar.[2] Though I argue that Wordsworth implies the necessity of a critic being a poet, I do not situate Wordsworth within his own criteria for the perfect critic. By considering Wordsworth's theory of criticism within a wider tradition of poets writing about literary-critical discourse, I highlight how Wordsworth separates himself from other notable poet-critics through his lack of self-promotion. His ideal commentator, as constructed in the 'Essay, Supplementary', is not himself, but a figure of almost unattainable qualifications. A critic qualified to appreciate Wordsworth is as rare as a genius of Wordsworth's stature. Further, in my analysis of antitheses in Wordsworth's prefaces (poet and critic, poetry and philosophy, nature and education), I build on the work of Alexander Regier. Regier shows that 'Wordsworth is very astute at uncovering false oppositions' and finding (to use Wordsworth's phrase) 'a finer connection than that of contrast' between apparently antithetical terms—of which, I argue, "poet" and "critic" are two (*WPW* II, p. 53).[3]

Similarly, the chaotic, fragmentary, and cross-generic nature of the *Biographia*, along with its discursive failures, have long been subjects of critical discussion. As Paul Hamilton has written, Coleridgean scholars seek to argue that 'Coleridge's incompleteness is really complete', seeing 'his failures [as] successful ironies', and providing 'Over-ingenious' explanations for 'the broken argument' of the *Biographia*.[4] Hamilton's seminal work encourages readings of the *Biographia* that are alert to its ellipses and argumentative failings, but which remain open to their potential completion through wider reading in Coleridge's oeuvre.[5] Thus Hamilton finds integrity in the disparate parts of Coleridge's 'literary life' through a focus on what Coleridge called 'desynonymy', with Hamilton supplementing the incomplete expression of this theory in the *Biographia* through an analysis of the subject in the

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[1] For example, see: Klancher, *Making,* pp. 91-133; Scott Hess, 'Wordsworth's "System", the Critical Reviews, and the Reconstruction of Literary Authority', *European Romantic Review*, 16 (2005), 471-497.

[2] Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic*; Blank, pp. 365-82; Alex Broadhead, 'Framing Dialect in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*: Wordsworth's Regionalisms and Footnotes', *Language and Literature* 19 (2010), 249-63; Brian R. Bates, *Wordsworth's Poetic Collections, Supplementary Writing and Parodic Reception* (London: Routledge, 2012).

[3] Alexander Regier, 'Words Worth Repeating: Language and Repetition in Wordsworth's Poetic Theory', in Regier and Uhlig, pp. 61-80 (p. 63).

[4] Paul Hamilton, *Coleridge's Poetics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 1, 18.

[5] Hamilton, p. 2.

poet's wider writings, both published and unpublished.[6] While I agree that the *Biographia* is defined by its discursive failures, I argue that, by situating Coleridge's autobiography within the genre of the Romantic preface, and in relation to his poetical writings in *Sibylline Leaves*, this critical text finds its unity as part of the era's fragmentary poetry. Where Hamilton views Coleridge as a 'transcendentalist philosopher', or philosopher-critic, bridging the gaps in his philosophical thought through examination of other prose works, I consider him as a poet-critic, highlighting the poetic devices Coleridge uses to bridge those gaps himself.[7] In this context, Coleridge's autobiography is a prose counterpart to *Sibylline Leaves*—fragmentary, incomplete, and awaiting the reader's reconstruction.

At the centre of this chapter is the argument that a prose preface to one's own poetry is a distinct genre in the Romantic period. Scott Simpkin argues that prefaces 'became a literary genre for the Romantics', but only as a passing remark in a wider argument.[8] Despite work by Paul Magnuson on the public discourses that prefaces invoke, and by Brian R. Bates on Wordsworth's uses of prefaces as modes of 'authorial presentation', the implications of Simpkin's statement are yet to be fully explored, particularly in regards to a demarcation of the genre's boundaries, the conventions and expectations that govern usage of that genre, and the genre-consciousness of the period.[9] This a lacuna I aim to fill. Beyond the field of Romanticism, there have been scholarly works which delineate individual preface genres by periodisation and the authorial status (the preface-writer's relationship to the text being prefaced). María Carmen Buesa Gómez argues that seventeenth-century prefaces to English translations constitute a genre in their own right, while Milda Bikmaniene argues more generally for prefaces to translations as an independent literary kind.[10] Therefore, as well as contributing to our knowledge of poet-critics, this chapter builds upon a wider field of criticism on preface-writing, delineating the boundaries of a genre that I term "Romantic prefaces", which I define as prose prefaces to a poet's own collection of poems in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Similarly, my study participates in the expanding body of scholarship on paratexts in the period. These include Alex Watson's work on footnotes and endnotes, Fiona Stafford's examination of epigraphs, Anne Ferry's discussion of titles, Neil Fraistat's exploration of the

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[6] Hamilton supplements the *Biographia* through readings of *The Friend* (1809-10), the *Lay Sermons* (1816-17), Coleridge's Shakespearean criticism, and the disparate musings in his notebooks. See, in particular: pp. 97-134.
[7] Hamilton, p. 69.
[8] Scott Simpkin, 'The Reader and the Romantic Preface', *Rocky Mountain Review of Literature*, 44 (1990), 17-34 (p. 20).
[9] Paul Magnuson, *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Bates, p. 7.
[10] María Carmen Buesa Gómez, 'The Preface as a Genre in English Translations in the 17th Century', *Estudios Humanísticos Filología*, 25 (2003), 185-96; Milda Bikmaniene, 'Translator's Preface as a Genre: A Comparative Analysis of Lithuanian and English Prefaces', *Sustainable Multilingualism*, 12 (2018), 184-201.

'contexture' or ordering of poetry collections, and Duff's investigation of prospectuses, which he similarly argues became a '"Romantic" genre'.[11] I contribute to this critical field by situating prefaces in relation to other paratextual forms and as parts of physical, printed, and organised texts (particularly in my discussion of Coleridge); by treating "Romantic prefaces" as a genre which shapes poets' usage of the form; and by tracing this shaping power through the literary criticism of two major poet-critics.

Finally, in discussing Romantic prefaces as a literary genre, I follow Genette's wider definition of a preface as 'every type of introductory (preludial or postludial) text [...] consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it'.[12] I therefore incorporate Wordsworth's appendices, postscripts, and supplementary essays (though not his footnotes and endnotes) into my discussion of his prefaces. Similarly, Genette's dissection of the authorial status, and the spatial and temporal situation, of prefaces has informed my specific identification of the prose preface to one's own collection of original poetry as a genre distinct from other prefaces. I would not, however, characterise prefaces solely in terms of 'thresholds', as is Genette's characterisation of paratexts in general. Instead I utilise Wordsworth's imagery from the 'Preface' to *The Excursion* (1814), in which he imagines his poems as 'ante-chapel[s ...] cells, oratories and sepulchral recesses' to the 'gothic church' that is his proposed poem, *The Recluse* (*WPW* III, pp. 5-6). Prefaces are their own chambers, chapels, and niches that contribute to the wider architecture that is the book as a whole. They are not simply thresholds that readers pass through in order to enter the text, but textual spaces to be inhabited and explored.

I begin by examining the short-lived genre of the Romantic preface and its uses in the period. Preface-writing, I argue, became an obsession for the era's poets, largely as a response to advances in book production, changes in copyright law, developments in poetics, and the rise of a fraught and violent periodical culture. I then highlight the peculiar genre-consciousness of Wordsworth and Coleridge within the wider cultural practice of preface-writing. While Wordsworth uses prefaces for strict literary-critical purposes which are always at the service of his poetry, Coleridge's use of prefaces and other paratexts is frequently playful, and his

[11] Alex Watson, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* (London: Routledge, 2016); Fiona Stafford, *Starting Lines in Scottish, Irish and English Poetry: From Burns to Heaney* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Anne Ferry, *The Title of the Poem* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Neil Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book: Interpreting Collections of Romantic Poetry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985) p. 4; David Duff, 'Wordsworth's "Prospectus": The Genre', *Wordsworth Circle*, 45 (2014), 178-84 (p. 181).
[12] Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 161.

paratextual criticism rooted in creative self-presentation. In the first of the two case studies, I place greater emphasis on Wordsworth's 'Essay, Supplementary', rather than on the more obvious choice of the prefaces and appendices to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798-1802), as this essay presents what might tentatively be called a theory of criticism. This theory of criticism provides the opening rhetorical flourish in an argument that concludes with an authorial self-construction, perfectly embodying the Romantic preface as a critical genre. It is a literary theory which serves both the poet's self-representation and the poems themselves. Coleridge's *Biographia*, on the other hand, in its unprecedented scale (it is twice the length of the text it prefaces), is the most symbolic product of the Romantics' obsession with preface-writing. Seen as a paratext, the *Biographia*'s failures and incompletion combine with the fragmentary nature of his poetry collection, *Sibylline Leaves*, to form a literary work which, like the *Christabel* volume, is unified in its disunity, and whole in its fragmentation.

1.1. The Romantic Obsession with Preface-Writing

For a brief time in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, prefaces became a ubiquitous presence in the paratextual framing of a poetry collection. Prefaces to translations, anthologies, antiquarian collections, and edited collections of poetry by (usually deceased) poets who are not the preface-writer, have been common in British poetry since the age of Chaucer. Prose prefaces to one's own collections of original poetry, however, are remarkably scarce throughout English literary history. Looking to the century preceding the Romantic era, it can be observed that, until the late eighteenth century, prefacing one's own poetry was far from being an established tradition. While Samuel Johnson and Anna Laetitia Barbauld produced large-scale prefatory projects for other writers' works, they did not write prefaces to their own poems. Thomas Gray, William Cowper, and William Collins occasionally made use of prose introductions, but only briefly and sparingly. Although John Dryden and Alexander Pope prefaced original works, their explicitly imitative styles often blurred the boundary between translation and original composition. Only Pope's *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) is comparable to the obsessive accumulation of paratexts that occurred in the Romantic period, but this text satirises a scholarly, not a poetic, tradition.[13] Following the Romantic era, in the later years of the nineteenth century, some poets, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, wrote numerous prefaces, but many of the major poets of the Victorian age abandoned the genre early

[13] I have made this argument elsewhere. See: David O'Hanlon-Alexandra, 'The Transformation of Robert Southey: Prefaces to the *Poetical Works* (1837-38)', *European Romantic Review*, 33 (2022), 367-88 (pp. 384, 386).

in their careers, or never embraced it at all. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Christina Rossetti made little use of prefaces. Robert Browning attached prefaces to his early collections, but not his later publications, dispensing with the custom. Even Matthew Arnold and Algernon Charles Swinburne, two dedicated literary critics, were sparing in their use of prefaces where their own poetry was concerned. Into the early twentieth century, prefaces to one's own poetry all but disappear. In a 'Preface' to Djuna Barnes's novel, *Nightwood* (1936), T.S. Eliot remarked that, 'When the question is raised, of writing an introduction to a book of a creative order, I always feel that the few books worth introducing are exactly those which it is an impertinence to introduce'.[14] Prefacing literary texts with introductory comments became, in an age in which authorial interpretations of texts were treated with increasing suspicion, an imposition upon readers. Yet in early nineteenth-century Britain, prose prefaces to one's own poems were ubiquitous, and to be found attached to collections by the most notable names throughout the period: Robert Burns, Mary Robinson, Maria Edgeworth, George Crabbe, Helen Maria Williams, John Thelwall, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, Peacock, Byron, Percy Shelley, Keats, Hogg, John Clare, Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, and numerous others. Writing in 1827, in his 'Preface' to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Clare called prefaces 'customary things, and oft repeated'—an observation which, on the one hand, obscures the peculiarity of such prefaces to the Romantic period, whilst, on the other, highlighting the speed at which they became established as a publishing convention.[15]

Yet Clare's remark on custom understates the prevalence of prefaces in the period. Preface-writing was an obsession for poets in the early nineteenth century. Like the poetry to which these texts are appended, prose prefaces are revised and expanded, collected and combined, organised and re-organised. Prefaces are piled upon prefaces. Wordsworth's 'Advertisement' to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), for example, underwent an expansion to the significantly longer 'Preface' of 1800, and again to the 'Preface' and 'Appendix' of 1802. There is also evidence in his letters that Wordsworth considered adding another preface to the second volume of the *Lyrical Ballads* (*WL* I, pp. 307-08). In *Poems* (1815), both the 'Preface' and 'Appendix' to *Lyrical Ballads* (both of which were again revised) were placed at the end of the second volume, while a new 'Preface' and 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface' were printed at the beginning and end of the first volume respectively. The two prefaces, 'Appendix', and 'Essay' were retained, albeit in shifting locations, in the various lifetime editions of

[14] T.S. Eliot, 'Preface', in Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (London; Faber, 2007), pp.xvii-xxii (p. xvii).
[15] John Clare, *The Shepherd's Calendar; with Village Stories, and other Poems* (London: John Taylor, 1827), p. vii.

Wordsworth's *Poetical Works* (1827, 1832, 1836-37, 1845, 1849-50), and joined by the 'Postscript' to *Yarrow Revisited* (1835) in the later editions. These texts were eventually collected into a separate section for the 1845 and 1850 editions, entitled 'Appendices, Prefaces, etc. etc.'. Prefaces to individual works, such as those to *The Excursion* and *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), were also retained and remained attached to their prefaced poems. Even for *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807)—the only Wordsworth collection without a preface—there is a draft of an 'Advertisement' in his notebooks.[16] Significantly, these prefaces, like the poems to which they are attached, undergo revision in almost every edition. Sally Bushell describes Wordsworth as 'the poet of endless return', referring to his obsessive revision of his poetry.[17] This description can be expanded to incorporate his role as preface-writer.

This prefatory obsession is not unique to Wordsworth. For Coleridge, the 'Preface' written in 1796 appears in every edition of his *Poems* (1796, 1797, 1803) and his *Poetical Works* (1828, 1829, 1834), undergoing numerous revisions and expansions across almost forty years. Coleridge even manages to include two prefaces in *Christabel*, a volume containing only three poems. Those two prefaces are included—along with those to 'The Three Graves' (written 1797-98; published 1809), 'Fire, Slaughter, and Famine' (1798), 'The Wanderings of Cain' (written 1797-1807; published 1828), *Zapolya* (1817), and each of the two parts of *Wallenstein* (1800)—in the three editions of the *Poetical Works*, again undergoing revisions and expansions. Even *Sibylline Leaves*, which is prefaced by the *Biographia*, has its own 'Preface', as well as those for two individual poems ('The Three Graves', 'Fire, Slaughter, and Famine'). Perhaps the most remarkable of prefatory frameworks is that of Southey's *Poetical Works* (1837-38), in which newly written prefaces to nine of the ten volumes (though the tenth has a brief 'Advertisement') were combined with earlier prefaces to the epics and shorter poems. The result is that, throughout the edition, there are no fewer than sixteen separate texts appearing under the title of 'Preface', as well as dozens of 'Advertisements' and untitled prose introductions to poems scattered across the ten volumes.[18] Combined with the tendency of these poets to present copies of their books to friends and acquaintances with introductory letters or marginal commentaries, the overall picture is of an obsessive impulse to frame their poetical works and to present them on their own terms. While this prefatory impulse might not be found to such an extent amongst the second generation of "canonical" Romantics, this may be due to their lack

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[16] This drafted preface can be found in: William Wordsworth, *Poems in Two Volumes, and other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. by Jared Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 527, 539-41.
[17] Sally Bushell, 'Composition and Revision', in *William Wordsworth in Context*, ed. by Andrew Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 27-37 (p. 27).
[18] I have written more extensively about Southey's attempt, in his *Poetical Works*, to revise his authorial identity in anticipation of posthumous biographers. See: O'Hanlon-Alexandra, 'The Transformation of Robert Southey'.

of commercial success (at least for Keats and Shelley) and their early deaths—situations resulting in a lack of subsequent lifetime editions. Nonetheless, Byron, Keats, and Shelley each have prefaces of note, and the preface-writing obsession demonstrated by the Lake Poets can still be seen in a work like *English Bards*. In the second edition of 1809, Byron not only extended his 'Preface', he added a prose 'Postscript', and even re-wrote and significantly expanded both the opening and closing stanzas of his verse essay, completely re-framing and re-presenting his poem. He had inherited the prefatory obsession from the earlier generation.

This obsession with prefaces was a product of the evolving literary culture, and it is within these contexts that the codes, conventions, and expectations of Romantic prefaces can be identified. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was an increasing need for poets to negotiate and compete in a rapidly expanding print market. In this light, a preface is a poet's direct attempt (as opposed to the indirect way of allowing poems to amalgamate into an image of the artist) to brand and re-brand themselves—a process of identity construction and self-representation. The transition from a poetics of imitation to one emphasising individual expression placed greater onus on poets to explicitly demarcate their originality and their own subjective viewpoint—a space provided by a prose preface. Prefaces also play an integral role in eighteenth-century canon formation. Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779-81) was originally composed of fifty prefaces to accompany the individual volumes of a canon-constructing collection made possible only by the 1774 case of Donaldson vs. Beckett, which decisively brought an end to perpetual copyright.[19] Similarly, collections such as James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) and Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) could grant "low" texts elevated status as part of British cultural heritage through the use of a critical armature—a process in which, according to Kathryn Sutherland, prefaces play a pivotal role.[20] Poets were also under pressure to pre-empt and defend against an increasingly hostile and influential culture of book reviewing.[21] It is not a coincidence that poets who suffered the most sustained campaigns of abuse from periodical writers were the most obsessive of preface-writers—Wordsworth and Southey being noteworthy examples. Prefaces, therefore, are a symptom of the anxieties of audience and

[19] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 123. See also: Trevor Ross, 'The Emergence of "Literature": Making and Reading the English Canon in the Eighteenth Century', *ELH*, 63 (1996), 397-422 (p. 410); John Brewer and Iain McCalman, 'Publishing', in *An Oxford Companion to The Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, ed. by Iain McCalman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 197-206 (pp. 198-99).
[20] Kathryn Sutherland, 'The Native Poet: The Influence of Percy's Minstrel from Beattie to Wordsworth', *The Review of English Studies*, 33 (1982), 414-33 (pp. 414-15).
[21] The violence of periodical culture is further explored in my third chapter.

reception described respectively by Bennett and Newlyn.[22] It is important, however, not to oversimplify this narrative. Wordsworth's 'Preface' to the *Lyrical Ballads* predates the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802. Jeffrey's first attack on what he called the new '*sect* of poets'—in the review of Southey's *Thalaba* (1802) in the first issue of the *Edinburgh*—was a response to Wordsworth's introductory prose.[23] Prefaces may respond to and pre-empt the vitriol of periodical criticism, but the vitriol of periodical criticism is, at least in part, a reaction to the period's preface-writing obsession. A preface is thus a place to establish the importance of a collection of poems, to pre-empt or respond to critics, and to explicitly state one's originality. It is an arena codified for self-construction, self-representation, and even self-canonisation. It is therefore not surprising that Coleridge's *Biographia*, the monumental preface to *Sibylline Leaves,* was expanded from an essay into a book-length autobiography which attempts to establish 'fixed canons of criticism' and to present the case for Wordsworth's (and implicitly his own) canonisation (*BL* I, p. 62). The genre-conventions of self-presentation, self-promotion, and reception-navigation are all present.

A crucial aspect of preface-writing culture worth highlighting is the potential of prefaces to fail. Key examples of this potential for failure are the prefaces to Byron's *Hours of Idleness* and Keats's *Endymion* (1818). In Byron's first public collection, he presented himself as a minor and of the nobility, pleading leniency for the former, but none for the latter. Henry Brougham, writing in the *Edinburgh*, declared this prefatory self-representation to be the motivation behind the infamous review that prompted Byron's ire in *English Bards*.[24] Similarly, John Wilson Croker, writing anonymously in the *Quarterly Review* (the magazine which, according to Byron, was the cause of Keats's death), stated that he would have 'abstained from inflicting upon him any of the tortures of the "*fierce hell*" of criticism [...] if [Keats] had not begged to be spared' in the 'Advertisement' to *Endymion*.[25] In both cases, a defensive and apologetic self-representation (the central conventions of Romantic prefaces) is stated as the determining factor in the production of the harshest criticisms. The attempt to control one's critical reception is a provocation to a professional critic. The uncertain impact of preface-writing was remarked upon by Coleridge in his discussion of the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*

[22] See above, p. 11, n. 35; p. 20, n. 85.

[23] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. VIII. *Thalaba, the Destroyer*: A Metrical Romance. By Robert Southey', *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1802), 63-83 (p. 63), original emphasis.

[24] Brougham's review and Byron's response to it are discussed at greater length below, pp. 147-51.

[25] [John Wilson Croker], 'Art. VII. *Endymion: A Poetic Romance*. By John Keats', *The Quarterly Review*, 19 (1818), 204-08 (p. 205), original emphasis. Croker is identified by G.M. Matthews in *Keats: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 110. Prior to immortalising the image of Keats being 'snuffed out by an Article' in the eleventh Canto of *Don Juan* (1819-24), Byron wrote to John Murray enquiring if it was true that the young poet had 'died at Rome of the Quarterly Review' (*BCPW* V, XI.480; *BLJ* VIII, p. 102).

in the *Biographia*. Coleridge deemed Wordsworth's 'critical remarks' to have been 'the true origin of the unexampled opposition' towards his poetry because his forgivable 'failures' and 'imperfections' had been 'announced as intentional' (*BL* I, p. 70). In these comments, Coleridge not only shows his consciousness of the potential for failure, but also draws attention to the notion of authorial intent that characterises preface-writing. If, as Ben Lerner has said, the mark of a terrible poem is a palpable disparity between its ambition and its achievement, prefaces can become an arena in which poets unwittingly present their unachieved ambitions.[26] Thus Southey's claim in his dedication to *A Vision of Judgement* (1821), that his poem will be 'of some importance in English poetry', only serves to make a weak poem appear worse than it is.[27] While a full analysis of the failure of the genre requires more space than is available here, it is at least worth noting that such failures may be the cause of the decline of prefaces to poetry collections in the mid-nineteenth century. Significantly, this potential for failure plays an active role in my two case studies. Wordsworth developed his theory of criticism in response to what he perceived to be a reviewing culture that was hostile to his work. As Scott Hess shows, the hostility that Wordsworth received frequently referred to his poetic 'system'—a system outlined in his prefaces.[28] In short, Wordsworth's characterisation of critics, developed in his later prefaces, is in part the product of the failure of his own prefaces, and the hostility they had provoked. Further, as I argue in the second case study, Coleridge's awareness of Wordsworth's prefatory failures plays a role in the self-conscious failure of his own poems to fulfil his poetics.

Romantic prefaces, however, are not entirely a failing genre. There are some notable successes. These include Wordsworth's 'Essay, Supplementary'. Despite being, as W.J.B. Owen has said, a fallacious syllogism—summarised as: "if great poets are neglected in their lifetime, and I am neglected in my lifetime, I must therefore be a great poet"—this paratextual work contains an argument which is repeated by Wordsworth's admirers.[29] Positive reviews which appeared anonymously (though two have been identified as being authored by John Scott) in *The British Review*, *The Champion,* and the *European Magazine*, in the years following the publication of *Poems* (1815), all echo Wordsworth's theory of popularity and poetic neglect, presenting him as a poet destined to be unpopular in his lifetime.[30] Whether or

[26] Ben Lerner, *The Hatred of Poetry* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2016), p. 43.

[27] Robert Southey, 'A Vision of Judgement', in *Later Poetical Works: 1811-1838*, ed. by Lynda Pratt, Daniel E. White, Ian Packer, Tim Fulford and Carol Bolton, 4 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), III, pp. 517-655 (p. 533).

[28] Hess, p. 471.

[29] Owen, p. 189.

[30] [John Scott], 'Mr. Wordsworth's Poems', *The Champion* (June 25 1815), 205-06; 'Art. XVII. *The White Doe of Rylstone: or the Fate of the Nortons: a Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *British Review, and London Critical Journal*, 6 (1815), 370-77 (pp. 370-73); [John Scott], 'Wordsworth's Thanksgiving Ode', *The Champion* (October

not Wordsworth '*creat*[*ed*] the taste by which he is to be enjoyed', he certainly created the rhetoric by which he was to be defended.[31] Similarly, one might look to the historical triumph of these texts, their critical tenets, and their authorial self-representations. In the twenty-first century, Wordsworth's prefatory prose has long been accepted in Romantic scholarship as pivotal in the development of the age's poetics, as well as being hailed as a masterful piece of prose. Thus a work like McGann's *The Romantic Ideology* became necessary to discourage uncritical immersion in the Romantic's self-characterisations.[32] If, as Bennett argues, Romantic-era poets addressed their writings to an imagined future audience more sympathetic than their present readership, poets' preface-writing is a success story, future audiences being more receptive to them than their authors' contemporaneous readers.[33]

1.1.1. Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Genre-Consciousness

For Wordsworth, paratextual prose is significant for its permanence. This is made explicit in the 'Postscript' to *Yarrow Revisited.* Though it is a political commentary on the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 rather than a work of literary theory, Wordsworth nonetheless expresses his attitude towards paratextual modes of discourse. Choosing to 'avail [him]self of the periodical press', where he might offer his thoughts 'anonymously', he instead attaches those thoughts to his new collection as, firstly, 'they may derive some advantage, however small, from [his] name' and, secondly, they are 'presented in a less fugitive state' (*WPW* III, p. 240). His critical prose benefits by attachment to the endurance of his name and his poetry. It is therefore not surprising to find that Wordsworth, unlike Coleridge, committed little of his literary theory to periodicals. Even when he did, such as with the first 'Essay upon Epitaphs' (1810), which appeared in Coleridge's short-lived periodical *The Friend* (1809-10), he later incorporated it into his endnotes to *The Excursion*, to which it remained attached in every subsequent printing of that poem in his lifetime. This permanence is reiterated in the re-printing of all of Wordsworth's prefaces and appendices in the five editions of his *Poetical Works* between 1827 and 1850. In the final two editions, the various prose texts are, like the various divisions of poems, collected together (previously they had been scattered through the volumes)

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20 1816), 334-35; J.B., 'Peter Bell: A Tale in Verse. By William Wordsworth', *European Magazine, and London Review*, 75 (1819) 445-48. Scott has been identified as the author of the two articles in *The Champion* by Robert Woof, in *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage, Volume I: 1793-1820* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 522, 623.

[31] See above, p. 11.

[32] See above, p. 5, n. 17.

[33] A. Bennett, p. 3.

and separated off by their own subject heading, 'Appendix, Prefaces, etc. etc.', forming a poetic manifesto. Even if Wordsworth was later willing to negate the importance of his theory—in 1815 he referred to the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* as having 'little […] application' to his later poems—his paratextual criticism was nonetheless treated as an enduring part of his poetic legacy (*WPW* III, p. 26).

For Coleridge, there is a similar sense of permanence (albeit unstated), but not to the same degree. Individual poems such as 'Christabel' (written 1798-1800; published 1816), 'Kubla Khan' (written 1797-99; published 1816), 'The Three Graves', and 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', and the play, *Remorse* (1813), retained their prefatory remarks in published form. Similarly, as I have said, the 'Preface' to *Poems* (1796) introduced every subsequent edition of his *Poems* and his *Poetical Works*. Conspicuously absent, however, is the great preface that was the *Biographia*, which was not republished in Coleridge's lifetime. Neither was the short 'Preface' to *Sibylline Leaves*, despite the title 'Sibylline Leaves' being retained throughout the later collections as a subject division. Perhaps what is most telling is that the prefaces of Coleridge which do survive each reprinting retain their introductory positions in relation to the poems. This is in stark contrast to Wordsworth's prefaces, which are reorganised and repositioned, no longer introductory to the poems, but a distinct body of criticism.

Similarly, the two poets show different approaches in the critical content of their prefaces. For Coleridge, prefaces (and paratexts in general) subordinate their literary-critical potential to the performative and self-representative functions of the preface. Coleridge was a dedicated literary critic and theorist, and his criticism therefore appears in a wide variety of genres, including lectures, periodical essays, private correspondence, satire, and the multiple genres that converge in the *Biographia*. Yet his prefaces (with the exception of the *Biographia*) are surprisingly short on literary theory.[34] Instead, Coleridge's prefaces prioritise narratives of creation and personal anecdotes contextualising or re-contextualising his poems, with those narratives functioning as oblique or dramatised explorations of the poetic process, as is the case in the prefatory prose to 'Kubla Khan'. Even when Coleridge's prefaces move towards more methodical critical insights, such as in the *Biographia* or the 'Apologetic Preface' to 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', the critical ideas are framed by autobiography and personal anecdote. Indeed, Coleridge's approach to paratexts is often creative and playful. In *Poems* (1797), he utilises an invented Latin epigraph with indecipherable (because invented) citations. The title

[34] Many of the prefaces and paratextual forms touched on in this paragraph are explored in more depth later in this chapter.

of *Sibylline Leaves* presents his poetry in a simultaneously self-parodical and self-aggrandising way—as both disordered and prophetic. An early version of 'To a Young Ass' (1794) contains the self-parodic footnote: 'This is a truly poetical Line, of which the Author has assured us, that He did not *mean* it to have any *meaning*. Ed.' (*CPW* I.1, p. 146, original emphasis). Thus Coleridge, presenting 'The Author' (himself) as a comic character, raises a question over the semiotic relationship between the poetical and the meaningful. Most famously, he added the marginal gloss to 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798; gloss added 1817) which, far from elucidating the poem, disrupts it by adding a third voice to that of the Poet-Narrator and the Mariner: that of the Gloss-Writer. Like the prefatory prose to 'Kubla Khan', it performs rather than states its critical insights, and the critical ideas contained require interpretation on the part of the reader. The closest Coleridge comes to a preface which methodically sets out either its critical ideas or the theories underlying the poems is in the *Biographia*, but even that is, by his own admission, an 'immethodical […] miscellany' that utilises biographical 'narration' to 'giv[e] continuity to […] the miscellaneous reflection' (*BL* I, pp. 88, 5). For Coleridge, paratexts provide an almost satirical framework in which critical tenets are scattered through, or emerge interpretatively from, authorial self-constructions.

Conversely, and perhaps surprisingly, the preface is, for Wordsworth, a more critical genre, which he utilises more methodically than Coleridge. Self-representation and narratives of creation are subordinated to the methodical explication of the theories and influences underlying a poem and its production. The 'Advertisement' to *Lyrical Ballads*, the later 'Preface' and 'Appendix' to that collection, the 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815) as well as its supplementary essay, all contain elaborate critical and theoretical arguments on the subjects of metre, poetic diction, canonicity, public reception, poetic genius, the definition of poetry, and the distinctions between Romanticism's defining dialectics—poetry and prose, poetry and science, and imagination and fancy. Similarly, the prefatory prose to *The Excursion* and the drafted, but unpublished, preface to *The White Doe* set out the themes, scope, influences, and form of the poems being prefaced.[35] These often amalgamate into and imply a representation of Wordsworth himself—particularly the discussion of what makes a poet in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*—but those self-representations emerge from his criticism, just as Coleridge's criticisms (at least so far as the paratexts to his poetry collections are concerned) emerge from his self-representations.

[35] Though the published version of *The White Doe* contains a brief 'Advertisement', Wordsworth drafted a longer introduction that went unpublished. The draft of this preface is printed in: William Wordsworth, *The White Doe of Rylstone; or The Fate of the Nortons*, ed. by Kristine Dugas (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 185-203.

Despite the surprise of finding Wordsworth to be a more methodical user of prefaces, and Coleridge to be a more creative preface-writer, this understanding fits into familiar characterisations of the two poets. That Coleridge's most methodical literary criticism is to be found in genres disconnected from his poetry—his lectures on literature (1808-19), the 'Essays on the Principles of Genial Criticism' (1814), and the 'Essays on the Principles of Method' (1818)—implies a separation between his criticism and his poetry, and the seriousness with which he took criticism as an independent discipline.[36] Conversely, the vast majority of Wordsworth's literary criticism and theory is to be found in the prefaces, appendices, supplementary essays, and endnotes attached to his collections of poems. This is indicative of the connection between his poetry and his criticism in his own thinking. Literary-critical writing is, for Wordsworth, always at the service of his poetry. These opposed treatments of critical discourse—as separate from poetry, and as a supplement to poetry—result in polarised attitudes to, and theories of, literary criticism and theory. As has been said, Coleridge sought to establish 'fixed canons of criticism' with which to elucidate the poetical works of others, while Wordsworth encouraged readers to 'utterly reject' any 'canon of criticism' in judging his work, and 'decide by [their] own feelings genuinely, and not by [...] the judgment of others' (*WPW* I, pp. 132, 154). Thus it is in the differing approaches to the preface as a genre that their deviating attitudes toward literary criticism and theory is enacted, and it is with the unique approaches to the preface genre displayed by these two poets in mind—Wordsworth's characterised by methodical analyses, Coleridge by creative and playful self-representation—that I begin my case studies of the representations of two figures: firstly, the idealised critic in Wordsworth's examination of criticism throughout his prefaces; and secondly, Coleridge's favourite figure of analysis in his prefaces: himself.

1.2. A Wordsworthian Critic

In the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth posed himself the question 'What is a poet?' (*WPW* I, p. 138). In answering, he produced some of English Literature's most famous pronouncements on the nature of poetry, including the definition of his elected art form as both 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' and 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' (*WPW* I, pp. 126, 148). In this text, he situated poets in relation to other epistemological disciplines: 'the Biographer and Historian', 'the Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician', 'the

[36] Discipline formation and Coleridge's use of literary-critical methods derived from scientific practices is the subject of my second chapter.

Anatomist', 'the Botanist, or Mineralogist' (*WPW* I, p. 139, 140, 141). In these figurations, a poet, on the one hand, exists in various states of symbiosis with practitioners of these disciplines, but on the other, transcends these academic and professional fields by speaking to their readers 'not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man' (*WPW* I, pp. 139-41). For Wordsworth, a poet gets closer than other investigative methodologies to the fundamental nature of human life, speaking with a voice and a vocabulary that transcends these disciplines. Absent, however, from Wordsworth's relative positioning of the poet is that figure (and Wordsworth deals in idealised figures, not the branches of knowledge they serve) with whom his prefaces argue: the literary critic. Despite the considerable amount that Wordsworth has to say on the subject of critics and criticism, this figure is underdeveloped in his prefaces. In the 'Essay, Supplementary', he does attempt an examination of the profession of literary critic, characterising it in terms of qualification and life experience, and utilising terms that parallel those which he uses to define the role of poet. However, the analysis of critics in the 'Essay' poses problems, the most prominent of which is that it lacks the systematic comprehensiveness of the analysis of poets in the 1802 'Preface'. This is due to its function as a rhetorical introduction to his real agenda: a treaty on poetic neglect. Wordsworth's image of critics ends abruptly as he passes into the central subject of the 'Essay'. Thus Owen, in his text-by-text analysis of Wordsworth's literary criticism, bypasses anything that contributes to Wordsworth's fallacious syllogism, instead focusing on what he deemed the only 'valuable' aspect of the 'Essay': 'the concept of power'.[37] Similarly, Bates, in his book-by-book analysis of Wordsworth's collections, focuses on the latter half of the 'Essay, Supplementary', and Wordsworth's invocation of the 'bibliophilia craze' of the 1810s in his self-positioning among neglected poets.[38] By contrast, I focus on this rhetorical introduction. This is because it parallels the preface-poems dynamic in its subordination of theory to self-representation, and because there is an ideal of a perfect critic being developed, one which implies, without explicitly stating, the necessity of critics who are also poets—at least, as Coleridge said, 'in posse'.[39]

In this case study, therefore, I examine Wordsworth's characterisation of the perfect critic in the 'Essay, Supplementary'—a characterisation which has precedence in the prefatory texts to *Lyrical Ballads*, but which develops into its final formulation in 1815. I highlight a series of dichotomies that are grafted onto one another—poetry and philosophy, passion and reason, genius and talent, nature and education—and argue that the poetical halves of these

[37] Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic*, pp. 189, 226.
[38] Bates, p. 78.
[39] See above, p. 1, n. 1.

dialectics, absent in the construction of critics in *Lyrical Ballads*, become central to Wordsworth's later set of qualifications for a writer of literary criticism. Characterising the perfect critic as possessing 'a mind at once poetical and philosophical', Wordsworth elevates the role of literary critic out of the mire of periodical criticism, resulting in qualifications that are, for Wordsworth, as rare and unattainable as poetic genius. This paralleling of critics and poets is on the cusp of, but never fully committed to, stating that, as Eliot put it a hundred years later, 'the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same person'.[40] However, unlike Eliot, who is implicitly presenting himself as the perfect critic, Wordsworth does not place himself in this role. Instead, he defines a literary critic of abilities as rare as poetic genius—the only critic worthy of criticising Wordsworth.

Before continuing, it is important to reiterate the potentially nebulous meaning of the word "philosophy" in the period, and to raise awareness of Wordsworth's use of the word. The early nineteenth century was a time when academic disciplines were beginning to form into their modern shape, and the boundaries of the current academic division of the arts (or humanities) and sciences were being delineated.[41] In this context, the word "philosophy" was transitioning from a term encompassing all epistemological disciplines to its modern definition as a field of study which approaches questions of being and existence. The term "man of science" (and, from the 1830s onwards, "scientist") was thus beginning to replace the older designation of "natural philosopher", though some retained this terminology. Humphry Davy, for example, saw himself as a chemical philosopher, as the title of his 1812 work, *Elements of Chemical Philosophy*, shows.[42] Wordsworth's famous statement that the opposite of poetry is 'Matter of Fact, or Science' highlights his discrimination of philosophy from other forms of knowledge—the qualification, 'Matter of Fact', differentiating the sciences from the kinds of metaphysical speculations he would have associated with Coleridge (*WPW* I, p. 135). As will become clear, Wordsworth's references to philosophy and philosophers are more inclined towards the Coleridgean reasoner than the Newtonian scientist, but this is not without fluctuation.

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[40] See above, p. 2, n. 9.
[41] See: Jon Klancher, *Transfiguring the Arts and Sciences: Knowledge and Cultural Institutions in the Romantic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[42] This is further discussed below, p. 76.

1.2.1. 'A Mind at Once Poetical and Philosophical'

The changing characterisation of the critic in Wordsworth's writing that I pursue in this chapter is the product of his much-discussed critical reception. However, it is worthwhile observing that Wordsworth's critical reception was not as unanimously scathing as he would have his readers believe or, indeed, as he may have believed himself. Coleridge and Wordsworth were in Germany when *Lyrical Ballads* was published, and they were therefore not aware of the positive responses that it received.[43] As Jeffrey was willing to concede in 1807, 'The Lyrical Ballads were unquestionably popular'.[44] There are two factors which contributed to a distorted view of the collection's reception. The first is the long and far-from-positive review from what must have seemed the most likely source of a favourable response: Southey writing in the *Critical Review*.[45] The other is a letter from Sara Coleridge to her husband which, perhaps influenced by Southey's response, claimed that 'The Lyrical Ballads are laughed at and disliked by all with very few excepted'.[46] *The Excursion* similarly received more praise than condemnation. A remarkable three-part encomium by Hazlitt appeared in the *Examiner* between August and October 1814, as did a glowing review by Charles Lamb in the *Quarterly Review*. An anonymous reviewer in the *Monthly Magazine* even deemed *The Excursion* 'one of the best poems of th[e] age'.[47] Wordsworth's perception was distorted by the repeated high-profile attacks on his work in the most powerful and feared journal of the day, the *Edinburgh Review*. As Christie highlights, in the first five years of the *Edinburgh*'s existence, Wordsworth was singled out for abuse roughly every other issue, despite having not published a new volume

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[43] Positive notices appeared in: 'Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems', *Monthly Mirror*, 6 (1978), 224-5; 'Art. VII. *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems*', *Analytical Review*, 28 (1798), 583-87; 'Domestic Literature of the Year 1798', *New Annual Register 1798* (1799), 215-317 (pp. 309-10); '*Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems*', *New London Review*, 1 (1799), 33-5; [Charles Burney], 'Art. XIX. *Lyrical Ballads*, with a few other Poems', *Monthly Review*, 29 (1799), 202-10; 'Art. VI. *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems*', *The British Critic*, 14 (1799), 364-69; [W. Heath], 'Art. XXIV. *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems*', *Anti-Jacobin Review*, 5 (1800), 434. Burney and Heath are identified as the authors of these articles by Woof, pp. 74, 84.

[44] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. XIV. *Poems, in Two Volumes*. By William Wordsworth', *Edinburgh Review*, 11 (1807), 214-31.

[45] [Robert Southey], 'Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems', *Critical Review*, 24 (1798), 197-204.

[46] Quoted in J.R. de J. Jackson (ed.), *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970-91), I, p. 61.

[47] [William Hazlitt], 'Character of Mr Wordsworth's New Poem, The Excursion', *Examiner*, 347 (1814), 541-42; [William Hazlitt], 'On Mr. Wordsworth's Excursion', *Examiner*, 348 (1814) 555-58; [William Hazlitt], 'On Mr. Wordsworth's "Excursion"', *Examiner*, 353 (1814), 636-38; [Charles Lamb], 'Art. V. *The Excursion; a Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *Quarterly Review*, 12 (1814), 100-11; '*The Excursion: Being a Portion of The Recluse; A Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *Monthly Magazine*, 39 (1815), 638 (p. 638). See also: [James Montgomery], 'Art. II. *The Excursion*: being a portion of the Recluse, a Poem. By William Wordsworth', *Eclectic Review*, 3 (1815), 13-39; [John Taylor Coleridge], 'Art. I. *The Excursion; being Part of the Recluse, a Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *British Critic*, 3 (1815), 449-67; [Charles Abraham Elton], 'Art. III. *The Excursion, being a Portion of the Recluse: A Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *British Review, and London Critical Journal*, 6 (1815) 50-64. Hazlitt, Lamb, Montgomery, Coleridge, and Elton are identified as the authors of these articles by Woof, pp. 366, 404, 416, 443, 458.

in that period of time.[48] Beginning with the review of Southey's *Thalaba* in the first issue, Jeffrey's campaign of censure culminated in the infamous article on *The Excursion* which opened the November 1814 issue with the words 'This will never do'.[49] Tellingly, the review of *The Excursion* was published little over a month before Wordsworth began work on the 'Preface' and supplementary essay to his 1815 collection, and the positive reactions to *The Excursion* were clouded by Jeffrey's scathing response. It is no doubt Jeffrey whom Wordsworth has in mind when, in the opening paragraph of the 'Essay, Supplementary', he characterises his critics as 'opponents whom [he] internally despise[s]' (*WPW* III, p. 62). Unsurprisingly, this paragraph was suppressed in subsequent printings of the essay due to its extremity—an extremity by no means unwarranted. Jeffrey's attacks were brutal, frequent, and of an overtly ideological character.[50] To this extent, the 'Essay, Supplementary' should not simply be characterised as a general defence against critics, but as part of the literary genre, widespread in the period, that I identify in my third chapter—that of the *Edinburgh*-reply.

It is only the 1807 collection, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, that elicited anything like the unanimous dislike described by Sara Coleridge. Yet Wordsworth's views on criticism, popularity, and neglect, expressed publicly in 1815, were forming prior to the publication of the 1807 collection. In a letter to Lady Beaumont on the 21st May 1807, a month before the appearance of the first negative review, Wordsworth was already expressing his lack of hope for positive reactions from 'the Public' and from 'incompetent judges' who 'do not *read* books' but 'merely snatch a glance at them' (*WL* II.1, pp. 145, 150, original emphasis). Instead, he was handing his poems over to '*time*' for judgement, whilst noting Coleridge's dictum that 'every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great and original, must create the taste by which he is to be relished'—a statement that Wordsworth would repeat in the 'Essay, Supplementary' (*WL* II.1, p. 150, original emphasis). Though it strengthened and developed Wordsworth's belief in the inevitability of neglect in a poet's lifetime, the unanimously scathing response to *Poems in Two Volumes* did not initiate his formulation of this theory. In private, Wordsworth was building his defensive walls pre-emptively. The reviews of *Poems in Two Volumes* and Jeffrey's article on *The Excursion* simply encouraged him to make those defences public.

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[48] Christie, *Edinburgh*, p. 64.

[49] [Jeffrey], 'Art. VIII. Thalaba', 63-83; [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. I. *The Excursion, being a Portion of the Recluse, a Poem*. By William Wordsworth', *Edinburgh Review*, 24 (1814), 1-30 (p. 1).

[50] Christie has written on the ideological differences that set Jeffrey at odds with Wordsworth—his education in Scottish Enlightenment values of common-association being antithetical to Wordsworth's subjectivism. Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 59-79.

In his earlier prefaces, Wordsworth does not idealise the role of critic as he does other disciplines. When he discusses 'the Poet' in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, he imagines a standard towards which an individual poet should strive. While he does refer to 'bad Poets' and 'the greatest Poets', the use of the phrase 'Writers in metre' to describe those whose style he deviates from indicates that, for Wordsworth, 'Poet' is, to a certain extent, a qualitative term (*WPW* I, pp. 132, 137, 131). Thus in his lectures, Coleridge, with whom Wordsworth had long conversations on poetry, raised the question of whether Pope could be called a poet.[51] This is another facet of the non-formal approach to genre that Duff identifies in the period.[52] However, despite the identification of the practitioners of the above-mentioned epistemologies being preceded by the determiner 'the', there is no ideal of *the* critic. This is not to suggest that Wordsworth focuses more on the discipline than the figure. His attention is on critics, not criticism, but, throughout his prefaces, critics are referred to either in the plural or by the determiner 'a', and only ever as 'the critic' when a named writer is under discussion. Instead of a spectrum similar to one that transitions from 'Writers in metre' to 'the greatest Poets', critics exist on a spectrum of good to bad, with the designation 'critic' having no implication of quality or qualification. In the earlier prefatory writings, criticism is not a professional or academic pursuit to the same extent as poetry—a point which is reiterated by his use of the word 'criticism' in his letters to describe any form of constructive feedback.[53]

This seeming diminution of the vocation of critic is evident in Wordsworth's later classification of critics as a sub-class of reader. However, in that classification, he begins his paralleling of poets and critics. In the 'Essay, Supplementary', Wordsworth argued that there are three 'classes' of 'Reader', each of which are defined by their life-experience (*WPW* III, p. 62). Firstly, there are those who begin reading poetry in youth, but who discontinue that literary pursuit, returning to it only as a form of escapism and with their taste undeveloped since youth; secondly, there are those who come to poetry in their maturity, and are 'thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities […] thinking it proper that their understanding should enjoy a holiday'; finally, there are those readers who did not discontinue reading poetry in their youth, and therefore cultivated their love of literature '*as a study*' throughout their life (*WPW* III, pp. 62-66, original emphasis). For Wordsworth, critics 'abound' in all three classes, though it is only in the last that critics who make 'decisions of […] absolute value' can be found (*WPW* III,

[51] The question of Pope's claim to poetic greatness, and whether he is a poet at all, recurs throughout Coleridge's lectures. For Coleridge, Pope is certainly a 'delightful writer', but whether he is a poet needs to 'be determined' (*CLL* I, p. 515; see also: *CLL* I, pp. 202, 204, 218-19).
[52] See above, p. 2, n. 4.
[53] For examples of Wordsworth referring to privately expressed feedback as 'criticism', see: *WL* II, pp. 194, 470; *WL* III, pp. 346.

pp. 62, 66). In contrast to the examination of the poet in *Lyrical Ballads* (in which life experience makes a poet), life experience does not determine whether a reader is a critic, but whether they are a valuable one. A *good* critic, however, is like a poet: qualified by life experience. There is an ambiguity here or, at least, a question that can only be inferred; namely, in which class of readers do poets belong (for surely poets are also readers)? To locate Wordsworth's ideal of the poet amongst any other class than that in which good critics abound would be to misunderstand Wordsworthian poetics. It is unstated, yet in the failure to articulate an alternative, this elision implies 'a finer connection than that of contrast' between good critics and the ideal poet.

This lack of clarity in determining the separation between poets and critics has been evident since 1798. Wordsworth first explored the role of critics in the text which contains the first intimations of his poetic theory—the 1798 'Advertisement' to *Lyrical Ballads*:

> It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.
>
> (*WPW* I, p. 116)

There are two points to which I wish to draw attention in these sentences. The first is the subordination of the remark on critics to the more pertinent argument of what constitutes a fit subject for poetry. This strategy is on display throughout the 'Advertisement'. When Wordsworth implores readers to abandon their 'pre-established codes of decision', it is not with the ambition of improving an ailing culture of literary-critical discourse, but with the intention of preparing his readers for poems of a style and content to which they will be little 'accustomed' (*WPW* I, p. 116). He is priming readers for his own poems. It is a rhetoric which clears the path for the real argument, and is thus a theory of criticism that serves a poetics and, more importantly, Wordsworth's poetry. Secondly, there is the uncertainty surrounding the word 'writings'. It is not clear whether Wordsworth is referring his readers to the poetry or the critical prose of poets in defence of his poetics. Poets' writings on poetry are certainly being elevated above the commentary of non-poet critics, but whether Wordsworth is rejecting criticism altogether, or is arguing for a particular commentator (one that is also a poet), remains unclear—an ambiguity only exacerbated by the fact that this statement is made in a work of critical prose. The implied figure of the poet-critic haunts these pronouncements.

Despite this haunting presence, the 'Appendix' and 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* describe poets and critics as having different qualifications—qualification being central to Wordsworthian theory. Wordsworth's poet is defined, not as someone who composes in verse, or who is committed to a genre or a discipline, but as a figure possessing a series of natural and educational endowments. In the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, the qualifications of the poet, which are a combination of nature and experiential education, are contrasted with the qualifications of the critic, which are solely those of formal education. In 1800, Wordsworth wrote that 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings […] by a man who being possessed of *more than usual organic sensibility* had also *thought long and deeply*' (*WPW* I, p. 126, emphasis added). In this figuration, a poet is qualified by a combination of natural endowments ('more than usual organic sensibility') with education (long and deep thought). This is expanded upon in the additions of 1802. In answering the question 'What is a Poet?', Wordsworth writes:

> a man […] end[ued] with more lively *sensibility*, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive *soul*, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in *the spirit of life that is in him*; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and *habitually impelled* to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a *disposition* to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an *ability* of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as produced by real events, yet […] do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and *from practice*, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.
>
> (*WPW* I, p. 138, emphasis added).

In this passage, there is a complex interweaving of nature with experiential (as opposed to formal) education, with the natural endowments of 'sensibility', 'soul', and 'disposition' being

nurtured by 'habit', 'ability', and 'practice'. The emphasis is upon the organic qualifications, and the education of poets is presented as a development or enrichment of those natural qualifications. This combination of nature and nurture applies to Wordsworth's ambitions. As he wrote in the 'Preface' to *The Excursion*, he had 'retired to the mountains' to 'take a review of his own mind, and examine how far *Nature and Education* had qualified him' to write 'a literary Work that might live' (*WPW* III, p. 5, emphasis added). Part of this 'preparation' involved 'record[ing] in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers' (*WPW* III, p. 5). For Wordsworth, writing *The Prelude* was a necessary process in ascertaining his qualifications to write his 'philosophical poem' (*WPW* III, p. 5). This dialectic of nature and education resembles the recurring distinction between 'genius' and 'talent' that occurs throughout Coleridge's *Biographia*. For Coleridge, talent is 'the faculty of appropriating and applying the knowledge of others', while genius is a 'creative and self-suffixing power', and 'though talents may exist without genius, […] genius cannot exist, certainly not manifest itself, without talents' (*BL* I, pp. 31, 224). Great poets, therefore, combine natural endowments with education, and their innate genius with talents developed through learning.

Conversely, Wordsworth's critic, at least in its earliest construction, only requires talent and education. In the passage of the 'Advertisement' to *Lyrical Ballads* which appeared almost verbatim in the 'Preface' of 1800 (and continued to be appear in all subsequent printings of the text), Wordsworth stated that 'An accurate taste in poetry […] is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by *severe thought*, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition', and without which 'judgment may be erroneous' (*WPW* I, p. 116-17, emphasis added). While that 'severe thought' connects critics with poets who have 'thought long and deeply', there is nothing which corresponds to a poet's 'organic sensibility', the more important qualification in the dialectic of nature and education. Moreover, Wordsworth is implying a more formal education. Unlike poets, whose education is in life and nature, critics must appropriate and apply the knowledge of others, as Coleridge says. Where poets must (as Wordsworth puts it in 'The Tables Turned') 'quit [their] books', critics must pick them up.[54]

This focus on education over natural endowment may at first appear to be repeated in the 'Essay, Supplementary'. As noted above, Wordsworth sets out three classes of reader, defined by their intercourse with poetry, before situating good critics within that class which has studied poetry from a young age. However, in situating good critics within that class,

[54] William Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned', in *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. by James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), l. 3.

Wordsworth characterises good critics in a series of dialectics which echo his statements on the poet:

> Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once *poetical and philosophical*; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? […] For a *natural sensibility* that has been *tutored into correctness* without losing any thing of its quickness[?]
>
> (*WPW* III, p. 66, emphasis added)

That 'natural sensibility' is an echo of the poet's 'organic sensibility' in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*—a text which, it should not be forgotten, appears in every lifetime collection of Wordsworth's poems that contains the 'Essay, Supplementary'. It also presents the two faculties in a duality of emotion and intellect. In this description of the critic, a new element has been introduced—that of nature and, perhaps by implication, that of genius (as is suggested by Coleridge's dialectic of genius and talent). Further, Wordsworth's dichotomies of nature and education, and Coleridge's of genius and talent, are echoed by the notions of poetry and philosophy—a pairing which has wider significance in Wordsworth's writing. That 'at once' which connects the philosophical and poetical faculties might seem to indicate the simultaneity of opposite or discordant impulses, implying a figure who bridges the antithetical. However, the metaphor of the government and the people which Wordsworth uses to elaborate upon his critical mandate uncovers the more complex relationship between his conceptions of poetry and philosophy. While 'government' here refers to the act of governing, rather than explicitly to a parliamentary body, the juxtaposition of this notion with that of 'society' implies the institution as much as the act. The people—who represent the poetical impulse in Wordsworth (a poet is 'a man speaking to men')—are defined emotionally (as having 'affections […] free and kindly'), while the government (representing philosophy) is characterised in terms of intellect (with 'understanding severe [and] dispassionate') (*WPW* I, p. 138). The dichotomy of subjects and rulers appears antithetical, until it is considered that a democratic government is *of* the people. One emerges from, and is a part of, the other, whilst simultaneously being capable of being (mis)understood as an entity distinct from the other. Though the roles are seemingly reversed—in the metaphor, the government is formed of members elected from the people,

whilst in Wordsworth's writing poetry is a branch of philosophy—it functions as a metaphor that complicates and disrupts a seeming antithesis.

Poetry and philosophy, bard and sage, are terms regularly paired in Wordsworth's writing, and an examination of this pairing elucidates Wordsworth's image of the 'poetical and philosophical' critic. Poetry and philosophy can be found in relation to one another across his oeuvre, from early poems, such as 'The Poet's Epitaph' (1800), in which a philosopher is one of the professions that comes under the speaker's admonition, to late poems, such as the thirty-ninth sonnet in *Sonnets Composed or Suggested during a Tour in Scotland, in the Summer of 1833* (1835), which depicts the superseding of 'the heathen schools of philosophic lore' by the 'Arts' in the ages following the death of Christ.[55] The pairing of, and opposition between, poetry and philosophy can be traced to the classical world. Before banishing poets from his ideal Republic, Plato acknowledged what he called the 'ancient quarrel' between poetry and philosophy, suggesting that the dispute had raged since long before even his time.[56] It was ancient to the ancients. In this sense, Wordsworth continues the millennia-old dispute. The pairing is also inherently lyrical. The words 'poetry' and 'philosophy' rhyme, share assonance in their 'o' sounds, and even alliterate visually, if not aurally. These musical qualities are retained across noun and adjective forms (poetry and philosophy, poetic and philosophic), and the phrase 'poetical and philosophical', as Wordsworth uses the pairing in the 'Essay, Supplementary', is a line of iambic pentameter. There is something equally lyrical in the combining of bard and sage, with their monosyllables and similar 'a' sounds fitting together succinctly. Utilising this poetic pairing to describe his perfect critic, Wordsworth implies more than just the qualification of a particular mind-set. He implies a lyrical figure.

Significantly, Wordsworth usually combines these two disciplines in order to elevate poetry. The most famous example of this pairing of poetry and philosophy is Wordsworth's proposed 'philosophic song', *The Recluse*. Simon Jarvis has written on Wordsworth's use of the word 'philosophic' in relation both to *The Recluse* and to descriptions of philosophical poets that appear in his writing. For Jarvis,

> what could be meant by 'philosophic Song' might be something quite different from a system, a method, a theodicy, or any other kind of philosophical edifice

[55] William Wordsworth, 'Sonnet XXXIX', in *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820-1845*, ed. by Geoffrey Jackson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), ll. 2, 10.
[56] Plato, 'Republic', p. 1211.

> [….]. It might mean, not that philosophy gets fitted into song—where all the thinking is done by philosophy and only the handiwork by verse—but that the song itself, *as song*, is philosophic. It might mean a different kind of thinking happens in verse—that instead of being a sort of thoughtless ornament or reliquary for thinking, verse is itself a kind of cognition.[57]

Jarvis's astute reading of *The Recluse* as philosophical poetry, not poetical philosophy, draws attention to the linguistic structure of these terms. 'Philosophic' is the adjective providing distinction to the nouns 'song' and 'poet', and it is that adjective which signifies the importance of Wordsworth's proposed masterpiece. Indeed, poetry is often characterised by Wordsworth as philosophical, suggesting that his 'philosophic song' utilises poetry to its full potential rather than reinventing it. In the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, he states that 'Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so' (*WPW* I, p. 139). This statement, which defines poetry as an inherently philosophical mode of writing and thinking, provides remarkable insight into Wordsworth's view of poetry and philosophy. That 'I have been told', along with the seeming ignorance of, and unwillingness to consult, the writings of this seminal figure who is surely invoked for his philosophical authority, is peculiarly dismissive. It is then combined with the hubristic simplicity of the 'it is so', which implies a greater authority on Wordsworth's part to validate such a claim. Poets—the practitioners of an art that is at once poetical and philosophical—are raised above the unpoetical Athenian.

In *The Prelude*, the text which establishes Wordsworth's own qualifications for his philosophic song, he situated philosopher and poet within another dialectic which echoes his description of good critics in the 'Essay, Supplementary'. Early on in Book Five of the thirteen-book text of 1805, the poet 'grieves' for the perishable forms (physical books) in which immortal works of literature appear, leading into a lamentation for what perishes in those forms:

> But all the meditations of mankind,
> Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth,
> By reason built, or passion, which itself
> Is highest reason in a soul sublime;
> The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
> Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,

[57] Simon Jarvis, *Wordsworth's Philosophic Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 3-4.

Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes[.][58]

Though 'Bard and Sage' are separated by antithetical impulses of the body and mind—passion and reason, sense and intellect—Wordsworth twice bridges this gap, first by calling passion the pinnacle of reason, and then by describing both figures as 'Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes'. Readers are presented with opposing methodologies which emerge, like twins, from the same origin or source (reason) and are directed towards the same end (the search for 'truth'). Passion and reason (echoes of the 'kindly spirit' and severe 'understanding' of the critic), which are here grafted onto poetry and philosophy, are continuations of the dialectics of nature and education, and genius and talent—the qualifications of both the poet and the critic in Wordsworth's theoretical writings.

What is most important is that, for Wordsworth, even if poetry is superior philosophy, philosophy remains with poetry the highest achievement in cultural history. The signal importance of the two disciplines and their interconnected nature are stated in the same instance in the tenth book of *The Prelude.* In his grief for Coleridge, who has left England for the continent, Wordsworth invokes the dialectic of poet and philosopher as the pinnacles of human attainment:

> […] there's not a single name
> Of note belonging to that honor'd Isle,
> Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles
> Or Archimedes, deep and tranquil Soul—
> That is not like a comfort to my grief.[59]

The suggestion in the parenthetical clause is that the names of note are mostly (if not solely) to be selected from the ranks of poets and philosophers. They are the crowning achievements of a civilisation. Yet the choice of these two names to embody the dialectic of philosopher and poet indicates a subordinating role for philosophy. Following the words 'Philosopher or bard', the names of Empedocles and Archimedes appear to be exemplars of these disciplines. Archimedes, however, is more widely recognised as a mathematician and scientist than an abstract philosopher. This highlights Wordsworth's own fluctuations regarding the wide umbrella that

[58] William Wordsworth, *The Thirteen-Book Prelude*, ed. by Mark Reed, 2 vols (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), I, V.37-44.
[59] Wordsworth, *Prelude* I, X.1010-14.

is the word "philosophy" in the Romantic period. Empedocles, on the other hand, would traditionally be acknowledged as a philosopher, but his pairing with Archimedes suggests that it is the verse form of his writings (common to pre-Socratic philosophers) being prioritised over the philosophical content of his treatises. To have chosen a figure that embodies both poetry and philosophy to represent the role of bard, and to place him in contrast to a mathematician, is indicative of his feelings regarding poetry as an inherently philosophical discipline (in the sense of approaching questions of being and existence). The poet-philosopher and the scientist-mathematician is an echo of the antithesis between 'poetry' and 'Matter of Fact' in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth thus characterises the qualifications of the ideal critic not simply in terms of the dualities of nature and education, sense and intellect, passion and reason, but that of the greatest products of civilisation—every discipline that is implied in the dichotomy of poetry and philosophy—which are equally the qualifications of the poet. Critics must possess talents and abilities as rare and culturally significant as those attributed to poets. Wordsworth requires (to use Coleridge's phrase) a 'commensurate' critic.[60]

While Wordsworth's implication that the ideal critic is also a poet places him within a wider tradition of poets discussing the idea of the perfect literary critic, he is unusual in that he does not situate himself within his ideal construction. When Wordsworth concludes his examination of critics in the 'Essay, Supplementary' by writing that, due to these qualifications, 'the number of judges who can confidently be relied upon [is] in reality so small', he appears a step away from repeating Pope's declaration, in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), that 'In poets as true genius is but rare, | True taste as seldom is the critic's share'.[61] Wordsworth, in fact, goes beyond Pope's statement. While the Augustan argued that poets and critics possessed divergent faculties ('wit and judgment'), albeit in a poem about criticism, Wordsworth instead presents both poet and critic as possessors of shared qualifications—'a mind at once poetical and philosophical'.[62] Simultaneously, he has not rendered his views as explicitly as Eliot, who made the above-quoted proclamation that poets and critics 'should frequently be the same person'. Wordsworth's figuration of the critic is similarly divergent from that of Matthew Arnold. In 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' (1864), Arnold, an admirer of Wordsworth as both a poet and a critic, argues for 'detachment' and 'disinterestedness' on the part of critics—implying a separation from poetry's practitioners.[63] It is therefore not surprising to learn that

[60] See above, p. 1, n. 1.
[61] Alexander Pope, 'Essay on Criticism', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), ll. 11-12.
[62] Pope, 'Essay on Criticism', l. 82.
[63] Matthew Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', in *Culture and Anarchy, and Other Selected Prose*, ed. by P.J. Keating (London: Penguin Books, 2015), pp. 105-32 (pp. 122, 117).

Arnold's literary career can be split into two halves, the first dedicated to writing poetry, and the second to critical prose.[64] He did not pursue these disciplines simultaneously. However, where Wordsworth's implied suggestion that the ideal critic should also be a poet differs greatly from Pope, Eliot, and Arnold is in the lack of implied self-election. Pope, Eliot, and Arnold are elucidating their own vocation.[65] Wordsworth is not presenting himself as the ideal critic. Thus his theory of criticism is subordinated to his theory of poetic neglect. Unlike Pope's 'Essay on Criticism', Eliot's 'Perfect Critic', or Arnold's 'The Function of Criticism'—which, as their titles indicate, are dedicated to theorising on the nature of criticism—Wordsworth's 'Essay, Supplementary' is interested in an ideal of the critic only insofar as he can navigate and re-characterise his own critical reception, and imply the rarity or even impossibility of a critic worthy of him. Wordsworth simply desires a critic that appreciates his poetry.

These qualifications of nature and education, poetry and philosophy, genius and talent, no doubt made Coleridge's *Biographia*—which Wordsworth appears to have treated dismissively—all the more galling.[66] Coleridge had sandwiched his criticisms of Wordsworth between a volume containing his literary and philosophical qualifications, and a volume of poems, *Sibylline Leaves*, thereby stating his own appropriateness for the role of dissecting his fellow Lake Poet. If *The Prelude* is the narrative of the growth of a poet's mind and a statement of Wordsworth's qualifications to write *The Recluse*, the *Biographia* is the narrative of the growth of a critic's mind and a statement of Coleridge's poetical and philosophical qualifications to criticise Wordsworth. It is Coleridge's construction of himself as a poetical critic to which I devote my attention in the remainder of this chapter.

1.3. Fragments of Coleridge

In my second case study, I treat the *Biographia* as a preface to *Sibylline Leaves*, considering it in relation to Coleridge's genre-consciousness regarding prefatory prose to a collection of one's

[64] As P.J. Keating has written, 'One principal division [which Arnold's life divides into] is between the poet and the writer of prose. Most of his poetry was written before 1858, when he was thirty-six years old, almost all of his prose afterwards'; 'Introduction' to *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. xi-xxxix (p. xi).

[65] Pope's ambitions within the field of literary criticism are highlighted by his translations and his edited edition of Shakespeare.

[66] In the only surviving letter of Wordsworth's that mentions the *Biographia*—a paucity that itself indicates a lack of admiration for Coleridge's criticisms—Wordsworth claimed to have only 'skimm[ed] parts of it' (*WL* III, p. 399). Jeff Cowton of the Wordsworth Trust showed me Wordsworth's copy of the *Biographia*, which the poet had not had rebound in leather—a common practice for a cherished book—but simply kept in its original paper boards. This, he said, indicated Wordsworth's displeasure at Coleridge's criticisms.

own poetry. I highlight the disparity between Coleridge's poetics and his poems, particularly concerning the notion of "organic unity", and, in so doing, I draw attention to the parallels between this seeming failure, and his own criticisms and praises of Wordsworth. In the *Biographia*, he takes delight in 'how little a mere theory, though of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius' (*BL* II, pp. 59-60). This conscious failure, found in microcosm within *Sibylline Leaves*, allows the *Biographia* and its prefaced collection to combine, firstly, to create unity in fragmentation and, secondly, into a self-representation which continues that begun in the *Christabel* volume—that of Coleridge's unfulfilled potential and of his 'poetic powers' being 'in a state of suspended animation' (*CPW* II.1, p. 625). I begin by considering why the *Biographia* should be treated as part of the preface genre, showing how this genre-designation sheds new light upon both texts.

1.3.1. Prefaces and the Genre of **Biographia Literaria**

As H.J. Jackson notes, the *Biographia* has 'been bedeviled [sic] from the beginning by questions of form and genre. What', asks Jackson, 'is this chaotic thing?'[67] Critics from Hazlitt to Raimonda Modiano have categorised it in terms of one of the oldest of life-writing genres, the 'Apology' or '*apologia*', complicating even the most rudimentary of genre designations: that of autobiography.[68] Jackson, however, questions the extent to which it is an autobiography and, though ultimately arguing that it is, she suggests that it be considered in light of a genre that she terms the 'biographia literaria'—the biographies of literary figures that supply 'a cautionary or an exemplary narrative' for aspiring writers.[69] Abrams and Lawrence Buell each characterise Coleridge's text as a *Bildgungsgeschichte*, 'a sort of epic of the individual mind's development', a designation which connects the *Biographia* to an esteemed poetic genre, and in particular to Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[70] Jerome J. Christensen, Donald H. Reiman, and Thomas Vogler have each suggested that the *Biographia* might be understood in terms of parody or satire, with Reiman comparing the *Biographia* to Laurence Sternes's digressive

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[67] H. J. Jackson, 'Coleridge's *Biographia*: When is an Autobiography Not an Autobiography?', *Biography*, 20 (1997), 54-71 (p. 54).
[68] [William Hazlitt], 'Art. X. *Biographia Literaria*', *Edinburgh Review*, 28 (1817), 488-515 (p. 488); Raimonda Modiano, 'Coleridge as Literary Critic: *Biographia Literaria* and *Essays on the Principles of Genial Criticism*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 204-234 (p. 210), original emphasis.
[69] H.J. Jackson, pp. 60, 62.
[70] M. H. Abrams, 'Coleridge and the Romantic Vision of the World', in *Coleridge's Variety*, ed. by John Beer (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1974), pp. 101-34 (p. 104); Lawrence Buell, 'The Question of Form in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*', *ELH*, 46 (1979), 399-417 (p. 403).

novel, *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-67), whose protagonist, like Coleridge, struggles with the Hartleyan theory of association.[71] Christensen argues that there is a temptation to view Coleridge's 'bizarre book' as an 'imaginative work', but observes that this designation is inappropriate to a work which investigates the nature of imagination.[72] This is chaotic enough without having broached the subject of Coleridge's text as either a philosophical treatise or 'a pioneering work of literary criticism'—a subject in which the question of whether the *Biographia* might be termed practical or philosophical criticism becomes as much a question of genre as it is of methodology. [73] It is a testament to the generic diversity of the *Biographia* as a literary-critical text that it could fit into each of the chapters of this thesis, as a preface, lecture-text, *Edinburgh*-reply, satire, and poetic apologia.

These genre designations have implications in the critical history of the *Biographia*. Christensen has argued that this influential work on "organic unity" is not a unified whole, and that arguments for its unity involve an arbitrary selection of what the text is truly "about"—Coleridge's life, the philosophical treatment of the imagination, or the critique of Wordsworth.[74] Establishing the primary or dominant genre as that of autobiography, philosophy, or literary criticism is a means to establishing the unity of the *Biographia* and solving the problem of its seeming incoherence.[75] Designating the *Biographia* an 'imaginative work', or even a philosophical or critical treatise, mitigates the wholesale inventions, manipulations, and falsehoods identified by Fruman in the biographical chapters.[76] Calling it a parody rather than a critical or philosophical text excuses the gaps in Coleridge's philosophical analysis of the imagination, and between the philosophical and literary-critical chapters. Most significantly, designation of imaginative or parodic genres excuses the much-debated plagiarisms in his literary life.[77] If the text is a parody of criticism, then the plagiarisms are a

[71] Jerome J. Christensen, 'The Genius in the *Biographia Literaria*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 17 (1978), 215-31 (p. 231); Donald H. Reiman, 'Coleridge and the Art of Equivocation', *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (1986), 325-50; Thomas Vogler, 'Coleridge's Book of Moonlight', in *Coleridge's Biographia Literaria: Text and Meaning*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), pp. 20-46.
[72] Jerome J. Christensen, 'Coleridge's Marginal Method in the *Biographia Literaria*', *PMLA*, 92 (1977), 928-40 (p. 936); Christensen, 'Genius', p. 216.
[73] H.J. Jackson, p. 55.
[74] Christensen, 'Genius', p. 219.
[75] Notable examples include: Kathleen M. Wheeler, *Sources, Processes and Methods in Coleridge's Biographia Literaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Jerome J. McGann's 'The *Biographia Literaria* and the Contentions of English Romanticism', in *Text and Meaning*, ed. by Burwick, pp. 233-54. Both are powerful arguments for the unity of the *Biographia*.
[76] Norman Fruman, 'Review Essay: Aids to Reflection on the New Biographia', *Studies in Romanticism*, 24 (1985), 141-73; Norman Fruman, 'Editing and Annotating the *Biographia Literaria*', in *Text and Meaning*, ed. by Burwick, pp. 1-19.
[77] For a detailed history of attacks on and defences of Coleridge's plagiarisms from Thomas De Quincey in 1834 through to the 1960s, see: Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 1-52.

satirical tool, a satire *of* plagiarism, and not a failing on the author's part. In short, new genre designations present solutions to many of the problems that have clouded readings of the *Biographia* since its first publication.

Missing from discussions of genre is the *Biographia*'s status as a preface, as a commentary affixed to a specific text. The origin of the *Biographia* as a preface to *Sibylline Leaves* is widely acknowledged, but this acknowledgement rarely extends beyond recognising it as the first stage in the historical development of a text which is considered an independent work. Such an understanding of the *Biographia* as a work in its own right appears to emerge from Coleridge himself. In a letter to his publisher, John Gutch, two days before he submitted the entire draft of the *Biographia*, he explained that 'the Biographical Sketches are not a *Preface* or any thing [sic] in the Nature of a Preface, but a Work per se' and that 'The *Autobiography* [he] regard[ed] as the *main* work' (*CL* IV, p. 585, original emphasis). He then presented a title which subordinated his poems:

> Biographical Sketches of my LITERARY LIFE, Principles, and Opinions, chiefly on the Subjects of Poetry and Philosophy, and the Differences at present prevailing concerning both: by S.T. COLERIDGE. To which are *added*, SIBYLLINE LEAVES, or a Collection of Poems, by the same Author.
>
> (*CL* IV, p. 584, original emphasis)

In this unused title, Coleridge's poems have become an appendix—the paratext to the main text of the *Biographia*. Yet even in this title, in this elevation of the *Biographia* to 'a Work', Coleridge's biography retains its prefatory character, as a piece of prose connected to his poems. As was outlined in my 'Introduction', no text is confined to a single genre, and the *Biographia* certainly spans several, but to overlook its place within the preface genre, and to regard it as a preface solely in terms of its historical origin, is to overlook a vital factor in its production and reception. A genre does not simply designate what a text is; it is a collection of traditions and expectations which shape the production of a text. Begun as a preface, the *Biographia* participates in the genre. The closest a critic has come to uncovering the significance of this genre designation is Christensen, who argues that Coleridge's *Biographia* is not a philosophical treatise, but a commentary, and should be considered in terms of marginalia—an argument that

leads to the unanswered question in his conclusion as to whether the text is 'preface or book'.[78] This question has a potential answer by John Morgan, Coleridge's amanuensis in the composition of the *Biographia*, who also acted as an agent between the poet and his publisher. In a letter to William Hood in August 1815, Morgan describes the *Biographia* as a 'prefacing work'—a term which implies that it is both a preface and an independent work, both text and paratext, and that the compositional process has been one of evolution and innovation within the preface genre rather than transcendence of it.[79] The transition from short prose introduction to two-volume biography is not one of replacement, but of expansion, and the *Biographia* maintains much of its prefatory character, even if viewed as a work in its own right.

However, the physical uniformity of the three volumes of the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* insists upon their connection, and Coleridge explicitly insists upon this connection in his letters. The history of the composition and publication of the *Biographia* is well documented, and it is unnecessary to rehearse it in full. However, it is relevant to this study to reiterate that the text was originally envisioned as a single volume, before being divided into two. The second volume was then padded out with the 'Satyrane Letters' (originally published in *The Friend*) and the review of Maturin's *Bertram* (originally published anonymously in *The Courier* in five parts between the 29th August and the 11th September 1816), in order that both volumes be uniform in size (octavo) and number of pages, not just with each other, but with *Sibylline Leaves*. Thus there are three volumes of identical length, each containing three-hundred-and-twenty pages in nineteen octavo gatherings.[80] When it is considered that Wordsworth's *Poems* (1807), *Poems* (1815), and the two-volume editions of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800, 1802, 1805) are all of similar, but not identical, lengths across their two volumes, this becomes an unusually meticulous uniformity. Indeed, Coleridge, throughout his letters, refers to the two texts as 'volumes' of a single work, indicating his perception of them as parts of a larger whole (*CL* IV, pp. 586, 588, 591). In a letter to Lord Byron in October 1816, after the completion of both texts but prior to the division of the *Biographia* into two, Coleridge discusses an 'Edition' which is comprised of two volumes, the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* (*CL* IV, pp. 597-98). There are also repeated references in the years leading up to their eventual publication to 'my Life and Poems', to which at one point he appends the parenthetical remark 'Volumes 3—Edition 750' (*CL* IV, pp. 653, 680, 681). Significantly, the words 'VOL. II' appear in the printer's signature on the first page of every gathering of *Sibylline Leaves*, with the sole

[78] Christensen, 'Marginal', p. 937.
[79] Morgan's letter is included as an appendix in *BL* II, pp. 283-84 (p. 283).
[80] My bibliographic terminology is that of John Carter, Nicolas Barker, and Simran Thadani in *John Carter's ABC for Book Collectors*, 9th edn (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2016).

exception of the first (as is standard practice, according to John Carter, et. al.).[81] The printer's signature is one of the traces of the intended connection between the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* which remains in the printed volumes.

The most significant imperative for considering the *Biographia* in terms of a preface is contained within the infamous letter which closes the first volume. This letter has been much examined and debated by critics, and for good reason. The *Biographia* is a difficult text to define or characterise, yet within its pages there is an instance in which Coleridge pretends to leave his authorial role and assumes the perspective of a reader. Early on in the letter, the Friend describes the *Biographia* as '*a sort of introduction to a volume of poems*', and then a few paragraphs later as '*introductory to a volume of miscellaneous poems*' (*BL* I, pp. 301, 303, original emphasis). Coleridge's fictional interlocutor presents the text to the public as not exactly a preface (indicated by that hesitant 'sort of' and the adjective 'introductory'), but as something more like, to again use Morgan's phrase, a 'prefacing work'. If what Nigel Leask calls the 'orthodox' reconstruction of the timeline of the composition of the *Biographia*, originally outlined by Daniel Fogel, is accepted—that the philosophical chapters were written last, and in great haste to meet the printer's deadline—then the letter, which is the culmination of that haste, is one of the last pieces of original material to be added to the text.[82] It is therefore telling that, at this late stage of composition, Coleridge twice reiterates the work's status as a preface or introduction. Even alternative timelines of construction, proposed by Leask and Fruman—in which the philosophical chapters were composed earlier, and the final month leading up to the submission of the full manuscript on the 19th September 1815 was dedicated to more leisurely revisions of the text as a whole—implies Coleridge's desire at the end of the compositional process to present the work as a preface. Notably, these characterisations of the *Biographia* as 'introductory' are maintained in the 1847 edition edited by Sara Coleridge, which, Fruman conjectures, makes changes based on a now-lost copy of the *Biographia*

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[81] Carter, et. al., p. 230.

[82] Nigel Leask (ed.), 'Introduction', to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (London: Everyman, 1997), pp. xxvii-liii (p. xlv). Modiano summarises disputes regarding the compositional history of the *Biographia*. Acknowledging 'the absence of a substantial evidentiary record regarding the order in which Coleridge composed various chapters', with this 'record amount[ing] to a total of three letters', Modiano identifies two camps: those who believe that the philosophical chapters were written last and in great haste (such as Fogel, Earl Leslie Griggs, and James Engell and W. Jackson Bate), and those who believe the philosophical chapters are an earlier and more leisurely composition (such as Fruman and Leask). Modiano, 'Coleridge', pp. 205-208. See: Daniel Fogel, 'A Compositional History of *Biographia Literaria*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 30 (1977), 219-34; Fruman, 'Review', pp. 159-165; James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 'Introduction', to *BL* I, pp. xli-cxxxvi (pp. li-lviii); Earl Leslie Griggs, 'Introduction' to *CL* III, pp. xxix-liii (pp. xlvii-xlix).

annotated by Coleridge himself. This suggests a willingness to maintain this presentation of his biography as prefatory to his poems.[83]

Treating the *Biographia* as a preface to *Sibylline Leaves* highlights how the two texts interact with, echo, and enliven each other. For example, many of Coleridge's poems in the collection frame their literary, philosophical, and political opinions within a biographical or anecdotal framework, most notably those classified within that peculiar Coleridgean genre, the 'conversation poem': 'The Eolian Harp' (1796), 'Reflections on having Left a Place of Retirement' (1796), 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' (1800), 'Frost at Midnight' (1798), 'Fears in Solitude' (1798), 'The Nightingale' (1798), 'Dejection' (1802), and 'To William Wordsworth' (written 1807; published 1817).[84] All eight of the conversation poems are contained within *Sibylline Leaves*, and their shared format of framing critical speculations within a biographical narrative lends a poetical colouring to the attached *Biographia*. Rooting philosophy in the subjective experience of the poet is, after all, a defining characteristic of Romantic-era poetry. In a similar way, the 'Apologetic Preface' added to 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', on its republication in *Sibylline Leaves*, utilises personal anecdote to frame its critical arguments, in a preface-poem dynamic that is the *Biographia*-*Sibylline Leaves* relationship in microcosm (a point to which I will return). There is, therefore, a clear echo between Coleridge's method of philosophical speculation in poetry and the *Biographia*. The interaction of these texts suggests that poetical and critical methods of investigation share some common ground.

Similarly, the poems in *Sibylline Leaves* interact with the discussion of Wordsworth and Wordsworthian poetics in the *Biographia*. The epigraph to 'Reflections on having Left a Place of Retirement', for example, performs a critical function re-shaped by the relationship to Coleridge's literary life. Between the title and the poem is a quotation from Horace's *Satires*: 'Sermoni propriora' (*SL*, p. 178). In the context of Horace's poem, in which he is downplaying his role as poet, this line means 'more akin to prose'.[85] J.C.C. Mays provides an alternative translation: 'Belonging, rather, to common speech' (*CPW* I.1, p. 260). In the *Biographia*,

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[83] Fruman, 'Review', pp. 145-50.

[84] These poems were first identified as forming a distinct literary kind by George McLean Harper in 1928, who named the genre after the subtitle to 'The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem'. This is a famous example of the retrospective genre-grouping of texts across large periods of time—in this case, a century. George McLean Harper, 'Coleridge's Conversation Poems', in *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. by M.H. Abrams, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 188-201.

[85] Horace, 'Satire 1.4', in *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), l. 42 (pp. 50-1).

Coleridge refutes Wordsworth's assertions that there is no difference between the language of poetry and prose, and that the proper language of poetry is 'the real language of men' (*WPW* I, p. 118). Yet here, in 'Reflections', he presents readers with a poem that professedly utilises the language of either prose, common speech, or both. The discussion of this subject in the prefatory work imbues this epigraph with peculiar significance, drawing readers into a hermeneutic game, encouraging them to do the critical work (performed by Coleridge himself in the *Biographia*) of ascertaining what is and is not the language appropriate to poetry. In 'To a Gentleman' (previously titled 'To William Wordsworth'), the subtitle's disclosure that the gentleman in question is the author 'of a Poem on the Growth of an Individual Mind' renders the identity of the individual explicit to anyone familiar with Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *The Excursion*. 'To a Gentleman' is therefore a poetical response to Wordsworth's poetry, just as the *Biographia* is a critical and philosophical one. Combined they are the twinned responses of the poet-critic, two roles which are (in Wordsworth's phrase) 'heirs of the same hopes'—in this instance, the hope of canonising Wordsworth.

Acknowledging the interactions between the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* ultimately recasts one of the most notorious points of contention in the prefatory work: the failure of Coleridge's philosophical treatise. In order to cut short his philosophical discourse, Coleridge utilises one of his favourite poetic devices: the interruption. The similarity between the Friend whose letter interrupts the philosophical chapters, and the Man from Porlock in 'Kubla Khan', has been noted by Vogler, but there are also parallels with poems collected in *Sibylline Leaves*.[86] In 'The Eolian Harp', the 'serious eye' of Sara Coleridge cuts shorts Coleridge's musings (*SL*, p. 177), while the tears of Genevieve interrupt the song-within-a-song in 'Love' (1799) at the moment when the speaker was set to relate the 'tenderest strain of all the ditty': the 'dying words' of his Arthurian Knight (*SL*, p. 122). Whenever Coleridge reaches an apotheosis, he is interrupted. Alongside such narrative interruptions, Coleridge also utilises textual interruptions. The marginal gloss to the 'Ancient Mariner', first published in *Sibylline Leaves*, not only breaks the flow of the narrative as readers move between poem and gloss, it visually interferes with the text. The final stanzas of 'Part the Second' are glossed by two long notes which wrap around the text of the poem. Stretching from one margin to the other, the commentary bursts out of its marginal status, forcing itself between the lines and interrupting the poem (Figure 1.1). This is paralleled by Coleridge's preference for footnotes rather than endnotes, often with the paratext having dominance on the page, as is the case in one of the

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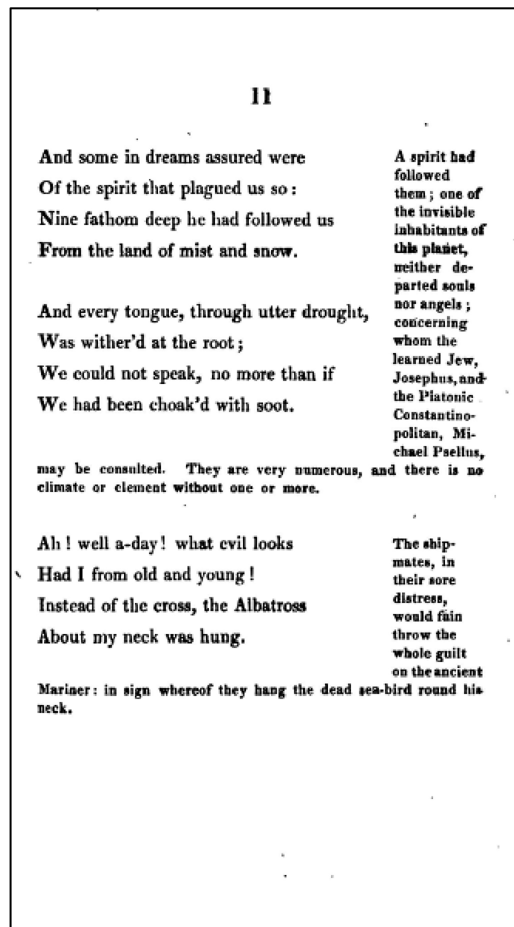
[86] Vogler, p. 33.

notes to 'The Destiny of Nations' (1817), which takes up two thirds of the page, despite continuing onto the next (*SL*, p. 301-02). The letter, therefore, deploys an adaptable poetic device found half a dozen times throughout *Sibylline Leaves*. This device was familiar enough amongst Coleridge's readers that Peacock parodied it in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). In the middle of a philosophical disquisition, the Coleridgean character, Mr. Flosky, 'suddenly stopped: he found himself unintentionally trespassing within the limits of common sense' (*NA*, p. 50). Even if the letter-writing friend's interruption is necessitated by an impending publisher's deadline, the letter must have seemed to Coleridge like a poetic way to close his argument, and its poetical nature is only heightened by its close relationship to other interruptions in *Sibylline Leaves*. Coleridge's discursive and philosophical failure, while not obscured, is nonetheless rendered in poetical terms.



11

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was wither'd at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choak'd with soot.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Figure 1.1. The eleventh page of *Sibylline Leaves*, showing the interference of the marginal gloss.[87]

[87] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Sibylline Leaves* (London: Rest Fenner, 1817), p. 11. Digitised by the New York Public Library, *Internet Archive* <archive.org/details/sibyllineleaves00colegoog/page/n32/mode/2up> [accessed 2 August 2022].

Indeed, as Hamilton remarks, the letter that closes the first volume is one of the great moments of sublimity in the *Biographia*.[88] Describing his experience of reading Coleridge's philosophical thoughts, the Friend writes:

> *The effect on my* feelings *[...] I cannot better represent, than by supposing myself to have known only our light airy modern chapels of ease, and then for the first time to have been placed, and left alone, in one of our largest Gothic cathedrals in a gusty moonlight night of autumn. 'Now in glimmer, and now in gloom;' often in palpable darkness not without a chilly sensation of terror; then suddenly emerging into broad yet visionary lights with coloured shadows, of fantastic shapes yet all decked with holy insignia and mystic symbols; and ever and anon coming out full upon pictures and stone-work images of great men, with whose* names *I was familiar, but which looked upon me with countenances and an expression, the most dissimilar to all I had been in the habit of connecting with those names. Those whom I had been taught to venerate as almost super-human in magnitude of intellect, I found perched in little fret-work niches, as grotesque dwarfs; while the grotesques, in my hitherto belief, stood guarding the high altar with all the characters of Apotheosis. In short, what I had supposed substances were thinned away into shadows, while every where shadows were deepened into substances*[.]

(*BL* I, p. 301, original emphasis)

It is perhaps the most intensely lyrical passage in the *Biographia*, and it is geared towards a poetic and aesthetic characterisation of the philosophical chapters. The images of the 'light airy chapel' and the darkness and terror of the 'Gothic cathedral' recall Edmund Burke's distinctions between the beautiful and the sublime. For Burke,

> sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small, […] beauty should not be obscure; the [sublime] ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the [sublime] ought to be solid, and even massive.[89]

[88] Hamilton, p. 19.
[89] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. by Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 100-01.

The movement between darkness and extreme light, which Coleridge describes, is an explicit part of Burke's theory of the sublime, as it causes disorientation, alienation, and obliteration of the self.[90] Coleridge similarly revises Wordsworth's description of his life's work as a 'gothic church' in the 'Preface' to *The Excursion*. Applying Wordsworth's symbolic image for his 'philosophic song' to the metaphysical prose of the *Biographia*, Coleridge continues the presentation of his autobiography as a philosophical and literary-critical other to Wordsworth's poetry—the work of a critic 'at once poetical and philosophical'. He thus characterises the most philosophically rigorous aspect of his text in terms of the aesthetic values of beauty and sublimity, and his poetic interruption recasts his philosophy in terms of Burkean aesthetics and Wordsworthian poetics. He transforms his failure into a poem.

Failure is, however, a stated part of Coleridge's romanticised self-image in the *Biographia*, and it is this subject which I explore in the remainder of this chapter. In particular, I focus on the apparent failure of Coleridge's texts to conform to his own ideas of unity, suggesting that Coleridge embraces this failure, perpetuating his self-constructed identity as a writer possessing great, but unfulfilled, literary and philosophical potential. This self-portrait emerges in the unifying of text and paratext, poems and preface, poet and critic.

1.3.2. Uniting the **Biographia** *and* **Sibylline Leaves**

Perhaps the most influential critical idea to be extracted from the *Biographia* (which was adopted almost religiously by the New Critics) is that of "organic unity". Throughout the *Biographia*, Coleridge returns to the idea of the subordination of a poem's parts to its whole, to the harmony that a great poet achieves between a poem's constituent parts, and to the power of the imagination, which 'forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole' (*BL* II, p. 18). This notion of unity is pertinent on both macro- and micro-cosmic levels. It applies to collections as well as individual poems. Thus Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *The Excursion* presents his individual poems as parts of a great gothic church. Considering the *Biographia* as a preface to *Sibylline Leaves* therefore raises questions regarding the extent to which the 1817 collection is a 'graceful and intelligent whole'. While it remains a point of contention as to whether the *Biographia* should be considered a unified work, this argument is not so regularly applied to *Sibylline Leaves*. In this final section, I argue that *Sibylline Leaves*, read independently, is not a unified

[90] Burke, *Philosophical*, p. 66.

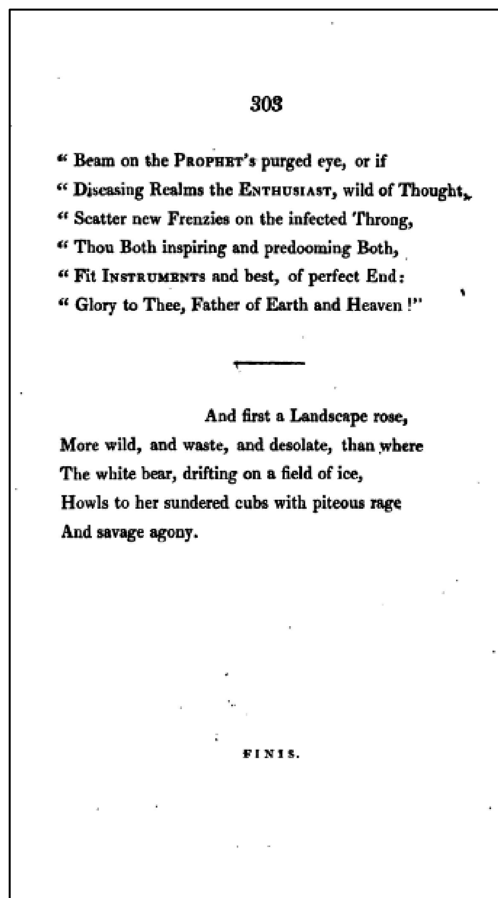
whole, but that this seeming failure of Coleridge's literary-critical theory is anticipated both in the *Biographia* and in the 'Apologetic Preface' to 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter'. The *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* find their unity when combined in the text-paratext dynamic.

Coleridge's 1817 collection announces its own disorder. This is first noticeable in the confused organisation of the poems and their various sections. The brief (and, one might call it, in light of this discussion, secondary) 'Preface' to *Sibylline Leaves* informs readers that the poems 'may be divided into three classes': those previously collected in *Poems* and *Lyrical Ballads*, those published in journals but which remained uncollected, and those which were unpublished (*SL*, pp. i-ii). It is a classification system structured on publication history. Yet the collection itself is divided into sections, each marked with their own divisional title-pages, using a different structure of categorisation: 'Poems Occasioned by Political Events or Feelings Connected With Them', 'Love-Poems', 'Meditative Poems in Blank Verse', and 'Odes and Miscellaneous Poems'.[91] There are two categories defined thematically, one formally, and one both thematically and formally—all of which are at odds with the classes outlined in the 'Preface'. There are also noticeable anomalies in these sections. 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'The Foster-Mother's Tale' (1798) appear prior to any section heading, and are therefore uncategorised, and while the former has its own divisional title-page, the latter does not and is simply separated from the previous poem by a blank page. Similarly, while the section of political poems understandably closes with 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', which has its own divisional title-page and preface, the ballad of 'The Three Graves', which also has its own divisional title-page and preface, concludes the section of 'Meditative Poems in Blank Verse'—a section into which it fits neither formally nor thematically. The result is a confusing contexture, comprised of conflicting, inconsistent, and anomalous classifications. Yet this disorder goes beyond the organisation of the poems, into the organisation of the volume as a whole, including its paratextual framing. The list of 'Errata' (which is two pages long and replaces entire stanzas, itself expressing disorder) is, due to printing timetables and the expansion of the preface to a two-volume work, not situated at the beginning or end of the volume, but is instead placed between two poems ('Mutual Passion' and the 'Ancient Mariner'). It interrupts the text. Similarly, 'To the Rev. George Coleridge, of Ottery St. Mary, Devon, with Some Poems'—the dedicatory poem that opened Coleridge's collections of 1797 and 1803, and which, significantly, reads like a dedicatory poem, as the title suggests—is to be found midway through *Sibylline Leaves*, amongst the 'Meditative Poems in Blank Verse'. These paratextual

[91] See above, p. 15, n. 55.

elements have found their way into the middle of the text. The disruptive and seemingly thoughtless organisation of even the basic constituents of a printed book diminish any sense of the collection as a 'graceful and intelligent whole'.

The chaos of the collection is reiterated in the fragmentation that occurs in the final poem of the collection, 'The Destiny of Nations, A Vision'. There are six poems in the collection which are designated as a 'Fragment' in their subtitle: 'The Foster-Mother's Tale: A Dramatic Fragment', 'The Night-Scene: A Dramatic Fragment' (written 1801; published 1817), 'The Happy Husband: A Fragment' (1817), 'The Three Graves: A Fragment of a Sexton's Tale', 'Melancholy: A Fragment' (1797), and 'Human Life, On the Denial of Immortality: A Fragment' (1817). Yet these fragments, like the three fragmentary poems in *Christabel*, are "complete" fragments. They read coherently from beginning to end, even if there is implied contextualisation or framing missing. 'The Destiny of Nations', however—which is not designated a fragment, either in a preface or a subtitle—is not a fragment, but a fragmented poem. After thirteen pages of coherent blank verse, the poem is interrupted by a parenthetical remark: '[The following fragments were intended to form part of the Poem when finished.]' (*SL*, p. 293). Then follows a series of disconnected stanzas separated by horizontal rules, the last of which begins a numbered series of actions ('And first a landscape rose') but without making it beyond the first action (*SL*, p. 303). The text thus disintegrates and peters out. With this close to the volume, the printer's 'FINIS', appearing a few centimetres beneath that final disconnected fragment, is almost satirical, ironically announcing the unfinished nature of both the poem and the collection (*SL*, p. 303; see Figure 1.2).


303

" Beam on the PROPHET's purged eye, or if
" Diseasing Realms the ENTHUSIAST, wild of Thought,
" Scatter new Frenzies on the infected Throng,
" Thou Both inspiring and predooming Both,
" Fit INSTRUMENTS and best, of perfect End:
" Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven !"

And first a Landscape rose,
More wild, and waste, and desolate, than where
The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
Howls to her sundered cubs with piteous rage
And savage agony.

FINIS.

Figure 1.2. The final page of 'The Destiny of Nations' in *Sibylline Leaves*.[92]

Coleridge is conscious of the failings and inconsistencies which exist between his poetry and his poetics. This can be seen in a number of the prose-poetry relationships within *Sibylline Leaves* that perform in microcosm the dynamic between the collection and its two-volume preface. One such instance is the marginal gloss to 'The Ancient Mariner'. As Wendy Wall observes, the presence of the gloss seems to contradict one of the central tenets of Coleridge's poetics—that a poem cannot be translated into 'words of the same language without injury to the meaning' (*BL* II, p. 142).[93] However, this breach of his own poetics does not diminish, but enriches the poem. Thus there is a whole branch of criticism dedicated to the gloss and how it is, as Wheeler says, 'never […] "saying the same thing" as the verse'.[94] It is now common to

[92] Coleridge, *Sibylline Leaves*, *Internet Archive*, p. 303.
[93] Wendy Wall, 'Interpreting Poetic Shadows: The Gloss of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Criticism*, 29 (1987), 179-95 (p. 179-80).
[94] K.M. Wheeler, *The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1981), p. 52. Beginning with Huntington Brown in 1945, there has been several studies on the interaction between the gloss and the poem. See: Huntington Brown, 'The Gloss to The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 6 (1945), 319-25; Sarah Dyck, 'Perspective in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 13 (1973), 591-604; Raimonda Modiano, 'Words and Languageless Meanings: Limits of Expression in *The Rime*

interpret the writer of the gloss and the poet-speaker as distinct personas speaking two different languages, and to view the gloss-poem relationship as performing multiple functions, including enhancing the poem's status as an antiquarian pastiche, acting as an analysis of hermeneutic processes, dramatising the imaginative and reasoning mental faculties in opposition to each other, dramatising editorial procedures, or even performing an act of unification on the disconnected events of the poem.[95] Regardless of the interpretation, Coleridge's scepticism towards paraphrasing poetry in the *Biographia* warns readers not to take the gloss at face value and, far from undermining the poem, the gloss opens out rather than restricts interpretation. Significantly, the success in widening the hermeneutic potential of 'The Ancient Mariner' relies upon the failure of the gloss to impose its interpretation on the text.

The failure of *Sibylline Leaves* to fulfil the poetics of the *Biographia* is echoed and repeated in the interaction between poem and preface in 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter. A War-Eclogue. With an Apologetic Preface'. The importance of the prefatory prose is indicated both by its announcement in the title and the dominance it has over the poem. The preface, in the 1817 printing, fills twenty-one pages, while the poem takes up six—an imbalance which leans heavily towards the prose, echoing the relationship between the *Biographia* and its prefaced collection. Also similar to the *Biographia* is the way in which the 'War-Eclogue' presents its literary criticism in the form of a biographical anecdote. At the home of 'a gentleman' (William Sotheby), 'an illustrious poet' (Walter Scott) recites Coleridge's poem which had been published anonymously several years prior (*SL*, p. 89).[96] Amongst all those present, there was 'only one' (Humphry Davy) who knew Coleridge to be the author. After the recitation, Sotheby stated that Scott 'had over-rated the merits of the poetry' and called its sentiments 'atrocious' and the product of 'malignity of heart' (*SL*, p. 90). Coleridge therefore launches into a long and extravagant defence of his poem, the six pages of which can be summarised as: genuine rage which produces physical violence is terse, unremarkable, and certainly not as eloquent as the poem. In support of his argument, Coleridge refers to the language of Shakespeare in matters of violence; the willingness of Dante and Jeremy Bishop to violently condemn others to hell in literary works, but without enacting such violence in reality; and the similar use of hellish allegorical personifications in Milton. After inflating the argument to huge proportions,

of the Ancient Mariner', *Modern language Quarterly*, 38 (1977), 40-61; Lawrence Lipking, 'The Marginal Gloss', *Critical Inquiry*, 3 (1977), 609-55 (pp. 613-21); Jerome J. McGann, 'The Meaning of the Ancient Mariner', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1981), 35-67 (pp. 38-42); Mark L. Barr, 'The Forms of Justice: Precedent and Gloss in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', *ELH*, 78 (2011), 863-89.

[95] McGann, 'Meaning', p. 38-42; Wall, pp. 179-95; Wheeler, *Creative*, pp. 42-64; Brown, p. 320; Lipking, pp. 620-21.

[96] J.C.C. Mays identifies these characters in *CPW* I.1, pp. 429-30.

Coleridge then proceeds to burst it: 'Our kind host smiled, and with a courteous compliment observed, that the defence was too good for the cause' (*SL*, p. 97). That kind smile—which is Coleridge's own representation of the scene—reduces his argument to airy nothings, and he responds with the meek confession of his authorship and the hope that his poem will be received as little 'more or less than a sport of fancy' (*SL*, p. 97). This external admonition, an echo of the letter from a Friend in the *Biographia* and the 'serious eye' of Sara Coleridge in 'The Eolian Harp', comes at the halfway point of the preface, at which point it transforms into a defence of other literary figures (Milton and Taylor) that, like the defence of Wordsworth's genius in the second volume of his biography, can be read as a covert defence of Coleridge himself.[97] It is, however, the image of Coleridge's erudite argument ultimately meeting failure because it is 'too good for the cause' that is most revealing. The manner in which the 'Apologetic Preface' parallels the *Biographia* and its relationship to *Sibylline Leaves*, renders this re-presentation of the preface-poem dynamic as a demonstration and reiteration of Coleridge's consciousness of the disconnection between theory and practice. It suggests that *Biographia* is, as much as the 'Apologetic Preface', too good for its cause.

Notably, in the *Biographia*, Coleridge identifies a similar disparity between Wordsworth's poetics and poems. He argues that 'were there excluded from Mr. Wordsworth's poetic compositions all, that a literal adherence to the theory of his preface *would* exclude, two-thirds at least of the marked beauties of his poetry must be erased' (*BL* II, p. 106, original emphasis). He further argues that, 'Could a rule be given from *without*, poetry would cease to be poetry, and sink into a mechanical art' (*BL* II, p. 83, original emphasis). This disconnection between theory and practice, however, is not an inhibitor to poetic creation. In analysing Wordsworth's poetry, Coleridge 'reflect[s] with delight, how little a mere theory, though of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius' (*BL* II, pp. 59-60). That this disconnection can appear in a writer whom Coleridge believes 'in imaginative power […] stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespear [sic] and Milton' has implications for Coleridge himself as a poet and a critic (*BL* II, p. 151). The greatest poets transcend literary theory, even their own, and Coleridge's poems, as he draws attention to, deviate from his own poetics.

This disparity between Coleridge's poetics and his poems contributes to a recurring self-representation in Coleridge's prefaces, including the *Biographia*—that of unfulfilled potential.

[97] For an examination of Coleridge's defence of Wordsworth's genius as a covert defence of his own, see: Christensen, 'Genius'.

The first intimation of this self-representation in 1817 is in another aspect of the paratextual framing—the title to the collection of poems. Coleridge elsewhere shows an ability to unify fragments through his use of paratexts, and this is most evident in the *Christabel* volume (published in-between the preparation and eventual publication of *Sibylline Leaves*) in which all three poems are presented as fragmentary or incomplete. Through this presentation, fragmentation becomes the unifying principle of the collection. A similar principle of unity through fragmentation is contained within the title to *Sibylline Leaves*. By Coleridge's own admission, the title is an 'allusion to the fragmentary and widely scattered state in which [his poems] have long been suffered to remain' (*SL*, p. i). The specific allusion is to the Cumaean Sibyl in Virgil's *Aeneid*, who wrote the verses of her prophecies on leaves:

> Whatever verses the maid has traced on Leaves she arranges in order and stores away in the cave. These remain unmoved in their places and quit not their rank; but when at the turn of the hinge a light breeze has stirred them, and the open door scattered the tender foliage, never does she thereafter care to catch them, as they flutter in the rocky cave, nor to recover their places, nor to unite the verses; uncounselled, men depart[.][98]

Coleridge's collection is presented as an attempt either to find the integral order of various fragments or to request readers' ingenuity in ascertaining an as-yet unfound order. Coleridge's title informs his readers that disorder is the nature of the reading experience of *Sibylline Leaves*. What it suggests more than anything, however, is potential—the potential of Coleridge's poems to ascend to the status of prophecy. In the two-volume preface to that collection, Coleridge had already drawn attention to his untapped abilities. He refers to the 'rumour of [him] having dreamt away [his] life to no purpose', and to his public depiction as 'a man incorrigibly idle, and who intrusted [sic] not only with ample talents, but favoured with unusual opportunities of improving them, had nevertheless suffered them to rust away'—a portrait of the artist that had 'become an admitted fact in private literary circles' (*BL* I, pp. 221, 219-20). Despite arguing against such characterisations, he laments his 'deficiency in self-controul [sic], and the neglect of concentering [his] powers to the realization of some permanent work' (*BL* I, p. 221). He interrupts his own lamentation, however, to state that it is 'to verse rather than to prose […] belongs the "voice of mourning"' (*BL* I, p. 221). It is his poems (or, at least, the volume

[98] Virgil, 'Aeneid', in *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 379 (III.445-52).

containing his poems) which performs this mourning. The broken and fragmentary nature of *Sibylline Leaves* is a lamentation for Coleridge's yet-to-be-fulfilled potential.

This self-image is compounded by Coleridge's presentation of his literary career being in decline. In the 'Conclusion' to the *Biographia*, Coleridge suggests the idea of writing 'an Auto-biography', which he determines to do at a future date: '*write* it I assuredly shall, should life and leisure be granted me' (*BL* II, p. 237, original emphasis). While George Watson is right to remark that this 'shows how little [Coleridge] regarded the *Biographia* as autobiographical', it is important to see the distinction Coleridge is making.[99] The *Biographia* is, as he calls it throughout, his 'literary life'. He is making a distinction common to the period between the writer and the man.[100] In a review in the *British Critic* in 1817, the anonymous reviewer observed precisely this:

> In naming the volumes, to which we propose confining our remarks, "Biographical Sketches of his literary Life and Opinions", Mr. Coleridge has signified very accurately the real nature of his publication; for it is with circumstances that have a relation to his literary life only, that he makes his reader acquainted; with respect to his birth, parentage, and personal history, he says almost nothing; these he tells us may afford materials for a separate work which he seems to contemplate [.][101]

In viewing Coleridge's text as a 'literary life' rather than an 'Auto-biography', it is important to observe that Coleridge's anecdotes end abruptly with the publication of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* and its 'Preface' in 1800. It is as though this is where his 'literary life' ends—fifteen years before the composition, and seventeen before the publication, of the *Biographia*. Thus, in the opening paragraph of the *Biographia*, Coleridge pointed to the 'fewness' of his publications and his 'retirement and distance, in which [he has] lived, both from the literary and political world' (*BL* I, p. 5). Though this is, as Fruman observes, completely untrue (one need only look to his regular courses of lectures between 1808 and 1819, the writing and editing of his short-lived periodical *The Friend* between 1809-10, and the production and publication of

[99] George Watson (ed.), *Biographia Literaria* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1975), p. 281.
[100] On this distinction, see: Cronin, pp. 1-17.
[101] 'Art II. *Sibylline Leaves. By S.T. Coleridge, Esq*. Art III. *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions. By S.T. Coleridge, Esq.*', *The British Critic*, 8 (1817), 460-81 (p. 462).

his play *Remorse* in 1813), it is a self-representation of an early literary past that has petered out.[102]

Sibylline Leaves confirms this cut-off date for Coleridge's literary life through its dating and back-dating of poems. While the 'Preface' claims that the volume 'contains the whole of the author's poetical compositions, from 1793 to the present date, with the exception of a few works', the collection dates everything back to before the turn of the century (*SL*, p. i). Thirteen of Coleridge's poems in *Sibylline Leaves* are dated, and all of them dated to the 1790s.[103] The only references to the nineteenth century are the anomalously included poem by Washington Allston, which is dated '1810', and in the preface to 'The Three Graves', which claims that the poem was written 'somewhat more than twelve years ago' (*SL*, pp. 276, 218). When it is considered that there are mis-dated poems in the collection—'Parliamentary Oscillators', 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter', 'Lewti', and 'Melancholy'—and that all are given earlier, rather than later, composition and publication dates, it can begin to be seen that Coleridge is deliberately ascribing poems to his youth.[104] This is common throughout *Sibylline Leaves*. The section of 'Love-Poems' opens with an epigraph from Petrarch urging readers to consider his poems the products of youth, while the 'Preface' declares the first two poems in the collection ('Time, Real and Imaginary' and 'The Raven') to be 'school-boy poems' when they are not (*SL*, p. iii).[105] While Fruman (discussing 'Time, Real and Imaginary') is right to argue that this process of assigning everything to a more youthful origin (in the *Biographia*, Coleridge dates his 1796 volume to 1794) is a part of a campaign across the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* to establish himself as a precocious child, the flip side of that coin is that it suggests a lack of mature works.[106] This is a continuation of his self-image created in *Christabel* (a volume in which the two parts of 'Christabel' are dated to 1797 and 1800, and 'Kubla Khan' to 1797) as a poet whose 'poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation' (*CPW* I.1, p. 625).

Yet if the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* combine to form a fragmentary monument to unfulfilled potential, echoing the failure of his poems to live up to his poetics, that fulfilment is presented as in view. The 'Preface' to *Sibylline Leaves* declares that 'Henceforward the author

[102] Fruman, 'Editing', p. 12.
[103] See: *SL*, pp. 17, 51, 63, 64, 85, 116, 127, 173, 189, 204, 251, 258, 262.
[104] Mays dates 'Parliamentary Oscillators' to 1797, 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter' to 1797, 'Lewti' to 1798, and 'Melancholy' to 1797, while Coleridge dates them to 1794, 1796, 1795, and 1794, respectively (*CPW* I.1, pp. 420, 428, 457, 334; *SL*, pp. 85, 116, 127, 262).
[105] Mays dates 'The Raven' to 1796 or 1797, when Coleridge was in his mid-twenties, and 'Time' to 1806 at the earliest, when the poet was in his thirties (*CPW* I.1, p. 316; *CPW* I.2, p. 387).
[106] Fruman, 'Editing', p. 13.

must be occupied by studies of a different kind', referring to his philosophical magnum opus, the *Logosophia*, the publication of which is characterised as imminent throughout the *Biographia* (*SL*, p. iii; *BL* I, pp. 136, 163, 263, 302). It is a form of potential-fulfilment that, significantly, connects him to Wordsworth, as the other Lake Poet is still, for Coleridge, a source of unrealised talents: 'What Mr. Wordsworth *will* produce, it is not for me to prophesy: but I could pronounce with the liveliest convictions what he is capable of producing. It is the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC POEM' (*BL* II, pp. 155-56, original emphasis). Both poets have a philosophical masterwork to produce. That neither the *Logosophia* nor completed versions of poems such as 'Christabel' and 'The Destiny of Nations' (or, indeed, Wordsworth's *Recluse*) ever appeared has maintained Coleridge's self-representation as a writer of great, but unfulfilled potential—an image all too familiar to readers and critics of Coleridge. Just as the autobiographical *Prelude* explores Wordsworth's fitness for his great philosophical undertaking, so too does Coleridge's *Biographia* state not only his credentials for his philosophical magnum opus, but the means by which it might be achieved. As Coleridge suggests, his own masterpiece may simply be a matter of combining and re-ordering his scattered writings, like the prophetic leaves of the Sibyl. As in the *Aeneid*, it is not the sibyl who performs this task, but the supplicant seeking council—that is, the reader, or, indeed, the critic who, two-hundred years later, seeks the unity of the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves.*

It is worth reiterating that Coleridge considered his prose writings to be as scattered and fragmented as his poetry. He saw the disparateness of the *Biographia*'s parts as an 'immethodical […] miscellany'. He applied this characterisation to his wider critical and philosophical writings. In a letter to Thomas Allsop in March 1820, Coleridge proposed a series of four new prose works:

> I have already the *written* materials and contents, requiring only to be put together, from the loose papers and numerous Common-place or Memorandum Books, & needing no other change whether of omission, addition, or correction, than the mere act of arranging […]. To the completion of these four Works I have literally nothing more to do, than *to transcribe*; but, as I before hinted, from so many scraps & *sibylline* leaves, including Margins of Books & blank Pages that unfortunately I must be my own Scribe—& not done by myself, they will be all but lost[.]
>
> (*CL* V, p. 25-7, original emphasis)

It is significant that Coleridge represents his prose fragments scattered across notebooks, scraps, and marginalia, as 'sibylline leaves', but also that the process of composition described here by Coleridge resembles the compositional process of the *Biographia*. Coleridge dictated the *Biographia* to an amanuensis, with his notebooks and published works at hand to be mined for ideas and even complete passages. It is this process which has been suggested as a cause of many of Coleridge's plagiarisms—the plagiarised passages, which are verbatim translations from German texts, having been first translated into his notebooks without citation.[107] With this characterisation of his prose works, identical to his characterisation of his poetry, the *Biographia* becomes a prose *Sibylline Leaves*—an attempt to find the prophetic order in his errant writings. The three volumes unite into the fragmentary poetry and prose of a poet-critic.

1.4. The Poet and the Critic

Prefaces, through the physical connection between text and paratext within a single book, lay bare the relationship between poetry and criticism as produced by the singular figure of the poet-critic. The material connection between prefaces and their prefaced poems identify the inevitable interplay between a poet's creative and critical work produced in any form, but in a uniquely focused interaction that is facilitated by the paratextual nature of the genre. Physical proximity shapes both poetry and prose in a process that is as unavoidable as that between other texts and paratexts (such as a poem and its title), creating meaning in the movement between prose and poetry, even when there is a discord between poems and poetics. That discord, more pronounced due to the material connection between text and paratexts, is a generator of meaning. Critical work becomes a part of the creative act, just as poetry becomes a part of the critical. In the case of Coleridge's *Biographia*, it achieves the poems' ambition of unity through its connection with *Sibylline Leaves*, utilising poetic devices such as fragmentation and interruption across both text and paratext to bridge the gaps in its discursive insights. Through the interaction of these two texts, Coleridge's literary criticism is exposed as poetical in its methodologies, just as his poetry is literary-critical in its ambitions. Similarly, prefaces highlight the manner in which criticism for poet-critics is a servant to their creative products and their public image, particularly in the ways their critical tenets are shaped by the genre in which they are expounded. In this case, theories of poetry and criticism are shaped by the conventions of self-defence and self-representation. Thus Wordsworth's theory of criticism is

[107] See: Engell and Bate, cxxix-cxxxii; and McFarland, *Coleridge*, p. 40.

always at the service of his own critical reception, and of the poems he is presenting to his readership. His implication that the ideal critic should also be a poet is neither an act of self-election nor a sincere contribution to literary-critical discourse, but a means to establishing his image as a poet neglected in his lifetime.

In the next chapter, I move away from the interaction of criticism and poetry. By focusing on the literary lectures of Coleridge and the scientific lectures of Humphry Davy, I examine, not the more familiar interaction in Romantic studies between science and poetry, but that between science and literary criticism. In so doing, I return to Wordsworth's polarised relationship of poet and philosopher, scrutinising the term which Davy used for Coleridge: the 'Poet-philosopher' (*CL* II, p. 668). The *Biographia* again takes a central role, with Coleridge's lectures, which exist in scattered and fragmentary form, being combined and re-organised in Coleridge's literary life.

Chapter 2

Demonstrating Poetics:
Practical Criticism and the Lectures of Coleridge and Davy

In a letter to Thomas Poole in February 1801, Coleridge proudly claimed that '[Humphry] Davy in the kindness of his heart calls me the Poet-philosopher' (*CL* II, p. 668). This image has been a source of fascination for critics approaching Coleridge's lectures, with Sarah Zimmerman arguing that this is the identity that Coleridge constructed before his lecture audiences—that of a metaphysical muser on literary matters.[1] However, as was discussed in my previous chapter, the word "philosopher" in the period was broader in its meaning than its current usage as a term for abstract contemplation, and the source of that appellation in which Coleridge takes such pride might shape our understanding of it. Davy's preferred terms for his vocation were not "man of science" or "chemist" (the word "scientist" was not coined until the 1830s), but 'natural philosopher' and 'chemical philosopher'.[2] It might seem presumptuous to close read what may have been a throw-away comment from Davy, but the implied roles of Coleridge as either a poet and scientist, or a scientist of poetry, have ramifications in the era's discussions on the relationship between poetry and science (such as in the 1802 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*), and on Coleridge's career as a lecturer on literature, beginning in the scientifically oriented Royal Institution of Great Britain.

In this chapter, I argue that Coleridge's influential critical methodology that he termed 'practical criticism' in *Biographia Literaria* was developed through his participation in the genre of the public lecture (*BL* II, p. 19). I highlight the parallels between Davy's spectacular scientific demonstrations for his audiences, and Coleridge's use of textual quotation in his developing lecturing practice. Scientific demonstration and textual quotation, I argue, are analogous methodologies in the disciplines of science and literary criticism. They are also

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[1] Sarah Zimmerman, *The Romantic Literary Lecture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 30-59.

[2] In *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* (1812), Davy refers to his discipline as some variation on the phrase 'chemical philosophy' a dozen times, including, significantly, the title of the work itself. The word 'philosophy' and its derivatives appears more in this text than derivations of the word 'science', the former appearing seventy-four times (including the title) and the latter only fifty-seven. Humphry Davy, *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* (London: J. Johnson, 1812). This data is derived from the copy digitised by the Bavarian State Library for *Google Books.*

interconnected conventions in the popular entertainment form of the public lecture. By establishing the public lecture as a genre which offered Coleridge financial and reputational rewards, I create a counter narrative to recent critical views of this mode of discourse as an undignified profession that he sought to transcend. Coleridge embraced the genre as much as he resisted it, and the particular convention which he adopts is that of the scientific demonstration. Further, by situating the *Biographia* in relation to the genre that I term "the lecture-as-literary-text", I identify a relationship between Coleridge's analysis of Wordsworth in his literary life and his evolving lecturing style. In developing his lecturing methods towards the entertaining aspects of Davy's scientific lectures through the incorporation of increased textual quotation, Coleridge simultaneously distances himself from Davy's scientific methods. Davy's primary focus is on illustrating principles, and only secondarily on what was referred to in the period as 'practical science'—science that begins not with reasoned principles, but with experimentation.[3] Conversely, Coleridge transitioned from a theoretical method of literary analysis which centralised the illustration of theoretical principles towards one which prioritised analysis of texts. Thus Coleridge establishes his critical tenet (practical criticism) within the context of the period's discipline formation, in which, according to Klancher, 'Distinct and differentiating cultural fields of artistic, literary, scientific, and other modes of cultural production […] *organize*[*d*] themselves out of the far-less defined and negotiated world known to the eighteenth-century discourse of "arts and sciences"'.[4] This chapter therefore situates a particular critical theory of a Romantic poet-critic within this transitional moment in the history of literary criticism, highlighting the pressures on poet-critics in the period to delineate the boundaries of their creative and critical practices.

There has been a surge of interest in Coleridge's lectures since the publication of R.A. Foakes's edition of the *Lectures on Literature* (1987). Foakes reconstructs the poet's lectures chronologically through Coleridge's notes, as well as third party reports, creating a polyphonic work which brings to life the performative aspects of public lecturing. Significant work has since been done by Klancher, Zimmerman, J.N. Hays, Gillian Russell, Kurtis Hessel, David Hadley, Peter J. Manning, and William Christie, on the culture of public (as opposed to academic) lecturing on literature in Romantic-era Britain, and specifically on Coleridge as a lecturer within that culture.[5] This field of scholarship is extended by Sean Franzel's work on

[3] According to Davy, 'The great use of practical science is discovery'; quoted from an unpublished notebook by John Davy, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1836), I, p. 377.
[4] Klancher, *Transfiguring*, p. 229, original emphasis.
[5] For studies on Romantic-era lecturing, see: J.N. Hays, 'The London Lecturing Empire, 1800-50', in *Metropolis and Province: Science in British Culture, 1780-1850*, ed. by Ian Inkster and Jack Morell (London: Hutchinson,

lecturing in German Romanticism and Angela G. Ray's work on the American lyceums of the nineteenth century.[6] Beyond acknowledging that, as Zimmerman notes, 'the public lecture on literature [is] a genre with a history and conventions of its own', this field of scholarship has recognised that lectures are performances, and therefore need to be considered within the bounds of audience and reception theory.[7] In performances, production and reception are simultaneous; they are delivered by performers in ideologically-coded spaces; and exist in a singular instance in time that is now lost.[8] Examining lectures is, according to Zimmerman, 'necessarily speculative work [which] requires gathering surviving documents from both speakers and listeners, and situating these events in their specific times and places'.[9] Thus I utilise a range of sources spanning a variety of media, including the materials used by lecturers, analysis of the spaces and institutions in which lectures were delivered, and the literary and visual responses that appeared in periodicals, reminiscences, private correspondence, poetry, fiction, satire, and the fine arts.

Within this body of scholarship, there has been much speculation about Coleridge's construction of a performance identity, and the development of his critical methods. A recurring focus in this discussion is on his adoption of a Shakespearean persona—being 'Hamlet in Fleet Street', as Holmes puts it.[10] Zimmerman, in her work on the literary lecture in Romantic Britain, argues that Coleridge's critical ideas were shaped by the expectations of the lecture genre. She links his lecturing persona, developed within this performative arena, to the evolution of his

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1983), pp. 91-119; Gillian Russell, 'Spouters or Washerwomen: the Sociability of Romantic Lecturing', in *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain 1770-1840*, ed. by Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 123-44; Kurtis Hessel, 'The Romantic-Era Lecture: Dividing and Reuniting the Arts and Sciences', *Configurations*, 24 (2016), 501-32. For work on Coleridge as a lecturer, see: Jon Klancher, 'Transmission Failure', in *Theoretical Issues in Literary Study*, ed. by David Perkins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 173-95; Klancher, *Transfiguring,* pp. 153-81; David Hadley, 'Public Lectures and Private Societies: Expounding Literature and the Arts in Romantic London', in *English Romanticism: Preludes and Postludes*, ed. by Donald Schoonmaker and John A. Alford (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1993), pp. 43-58; Peter J. Manning, 'Manufacturing the Romantic Image: Hazlitt and Coleridge Lecturing', in *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*, ed. by James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 227-45; Sarah Zimmerman, 'Coleridge the Lecturer, A Disappearing Act', in *Spheres of Action: Speech and Performance in Romantic Culture*, ed. by Alexander Dick and Angela Esterhammer (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), pp. 46-72; Zimmerman, *Romantic*, pp. 30-59; William Christie, 'Res Theatralis Histrionica: Acting Coleridge in the Lecture Theatre', *Studies in Romanticism*, 52 (2013), 485-509.

[6] Sean Franzel, *Connected by the Ear: The Media, Pedagogy, and Politics of the Romantic Lecture* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013); Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005).

[7] Zimmerman, 'Coleridge', p. 50.

[8] My understanding of reception theory is derived from Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1997).

[9] Zimmerman, *Romantic*, p. ix.

[10] Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 221. See also: Christie, 'Res', pp. 485-509.

dictum on performance: the 'willing suspension of disbelief' (*BL* II, p. 6).[11] I build on this work by demonstrating that another of Coleridge's critical tenets is shaped by the expectations of public lecturing. Treating the lecture as a genre, and scientific and literary lectures as interlinked sub-genres, I examine a central convention of this performative mode (the scientific demonstration), arguing that Coleridge developed a lecture style that compensated for the absence of scientific experiments and practical examples. The public lecture is a genre in which examples are vital to the educational and entertainment value of a performance, and practical criticism is, as Hamilton has observed, a critical methodology that attributes a 'sense of momentousness [...] to the literary example'.[12] This chapter therefore introduces the subject of genre-anxiety, showing how the critical tenets of this poet-critic were developed not only through performance, but in his struggle with the genre of criticism in which he worked.

In comparing Coleridge to Davy, I draw throughout upon an expanding field of research on Davy's lectures, particularly the work of Jan Golinski.[13] I also respond to discussions which have sought to introduce the chemist into studies of Romantic literature through analysis of his poetry, his role as a poet-scientist, his relationship to the major poetic figures of the time, and his invocations of poetical terminology in his science.[14] Sharon Ruston argues for an increased recognition of 'Davy's centrality to Romantic-period culture, both literary and scientific', rather than his being viewed as a peripheral figure.[15] Alongside his scientific career, Davy wrote poetry (his poems are intermingled with scientific thoughts in his notebooks), published a handful of poems in Southey's *Annual Anthology* (1800), proof-read the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, recited poetry in his lectures as examples and proofs of his scientific theories, and recruited poets (including Coleridge and Southey) to contribute creative descriptions of the

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[11] Zimmerman, *Romantic*, pp. 30-59.
[12] Hamilton, p. 26.
[13] For studies of Davy's lectures, see: Jan Golinski, *Science as Public Culture: Chemistry and Enlightenment in Britain, 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 188-235; Jan Golinski, 'Humphry Davy's Sexual Chemistry', *Configurations* 7 (1999), 15-41; Jan Golinski, 'Humphry Davy: The Experimental Self', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45 (2011), 15-28; Hattie Lloyd Edmondson, 'Chivalrous Chemistry', *Ambix,* 66 (2019), 103-120.
[14] For work on Davy's poetry and his relationship to poets, see: Roger Sharrock, 'The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to Lyrical Ballads', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 17 (1962), 57-76; Catherine E. Ross, 'How the Public Successes of a Poetic Scientist—Humphry Davy (1778-1829)—Changed English Literature', *International Congress Series*, 1242 (2002), 495-501; Catherine E. Ross, '"Twin Labourers and Heirs of the Same Hopes": The Professional Rivalry of Humphry Davy and William Wordsworth', in *Romantic Science: The Literary Forms of Natural History*, ed. by Noah Heringman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 23-52; David Knight, 'Humphry Davy, the Poet', *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 30 (2005), 356-372; Maurice Hindle, 'Humphry Davy and William Wordsworth: A Mutual Influence', *Romanticism*, 18 (2012), 16-29; Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Sharon Ruston, 'When Respiring Gas Inspired Poetry', *The Lancet*, 381 (2013), 366-67; Wahida Amin, 'The Poetry and Science of Humphry Davy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Salford University, 2013), p. 12.
[15] Ruston, *Creating*, p. 20.

effects of inhaling nitrous oxide to his first major scientific publication: *Researches, Chemical and Philosophical, Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Air, and Its Respiration* (1800). Thus Wahida Amin has called Davy 'a manifestation of Romantic interdisciplinarity'.[16] Indeed, his closeness to the world of poetry, and his use of poetical texts and techniques within his lectures, makes Davy's lecturing methods an exemplar of the parallels I draw between scientific demonstration and textual quotation.

Similarly, in identifying parallels between literary and scientific lectures, I contribute to the growing critical field which explores the relations between literature and science in Romantic-era Britain—a field in which Davy and Coleridge play pivotal roles. Ruston observes that the subject of the interactions between literature and science 'constitute[s] an exciting sub-field within the larger discipline of Romantic literature'.[17]As part of what Noah Heringman calls the 'cross-fertilization between the two methodologies' of literary studies and the history of science, critics in recent years have highlighted the similarities and interactions between the two subject matters in the Romantic period, even as they became increasingly separated and individually defined as disciplines.[18] This is epitomised by the nebulous terminology of the period, such as "arts" (which could refer to the fine as well as the mechanical and mercantile arts) and terms such as "natural history", "natural philosophy", and Davy's "chemical philosophy", whose names invoke multiple disciplines even as they attempt to define their singularity.[19] In a transition away from discourses that present Romanticism as hostile to science (drawing on Wordsworth's 'we murder to dissect'), commentators now explore the mutual interactions between science and literature, linked by an obsession with experiment, the observation of nature, and their shared literary forms.[20] As Gillian Beer observes, the dissemination of scientific knowledge relies on the written word, and scientific texts can be, and increasingly are, read as literary texts.[21] There has also been work which traces the influence of scientific texts on the era's creative literature, such as Davy's *A Discourse Introductory to a Course of Lectures* (1802) on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.[22] Catherine E.

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[16] Amin, p. 12.
[17] Ruston, *Creating*, p. 2.
[18] Noah Heringman (ed.), 'Introduction' to *Romantic Science*, pp. 1-19 (p. 7). Other studies on literature and science in the Romantic period include: Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Sharon Ruston (ed.), *Literature and Science* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008).
[19] Heringman, p. 3-4.
[20] Ruston, *Creating*, pp. 11-14; Wordsworth, 'Tables Turned', ll. 28.
[21] Gillian Beer, 'Translation or Transformation? The Relations of Literature and Science', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 44 (1990), 81-99.
[22] The influence of Davy's *Discourse* on Shelley's novel was identified by Laura E. Crouch in 'Davy's *A Discourse Introductory to A Course of Lectures on Chemistry*: A Possible Scientific Source of Frankenstein', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 27 (1978), 35-44.

Ross argues that scientists in the Romantic period 'had much more in common with poets than they usually do today', and that both utilised 'many of the same vehicles and sites of discourse'.[23] They published through the same publishers (Joseph Johnson, for example, published both Davy's *Researches* and Coleridge's 1798 pamphlet *Fears in Solitude*); lectured in the same spaces (as Davy and Coleridge did in the Royal Institution), addressed the same polymathic audiences composed of readers in multiple disciplines; were commented upon and reviewed in the same magazines; and competed for attention within the same cultural spheres.[24] However, rather than focusing on the more familiar subject of the relations between creative literature and the sciences, I expand this work by analysing the relationship between science and literary criticism, highlighting their similarities and interactions as they moved towards their own disciplinary distinctiveness.

Roger Sharrock and Maurice Hindle have shown (as has Ruston more recently) the influence of Davy's lectures (or at least his published lecture-texts) on Wordsworthian poetics, particularly his *Discourse* on the section of the 1802 'Preface' regarding the distinctions between poetry and science.[25] Ruston also highlights Coleridge's use of scientific language in his definition of poets and poetry in the *Biographia*.[26] I shed light on Davy's influence on Coleridge's literary-critical methods through his exemplary position in the genre of the public lecture. As Hessel observes, 'The incredible popularity of Davy's lectures alone would have made them a model for other lecturers regardless of discipline'.[27] Hessel's work is, as yet, the only sustained comparison between the lectures of Davy and Coleridge. He argues that Davy presents chemistry as a stable and consistent discipline, and that the disorganisation and digressiveness of Coleridge's lectures are therefore a reaction against that order. Hessel thus situates disciplinary evolution within the performative aspects of Coleridge's lecturing, and identifies processes of simultaneous division and reconciliation between bodies of knowledge. It is these last two points that I build upon. Where my analysis diverges with Hessel, and this wider body of scholarship on Davy's interactions with poets, resides (ironically, in the context of a chapter on practical criticism) in my focus on the performance conventions of a popular genre rather than on literary analysis of particular texts. Furthermore, I focus not on Davy's science, but on his performance and persona in this public forum, as a means of shedding light

[23] C.E. Ross, 'Twin', pp. 31, 33.
[24] C.E. Ross, 'Twin', pp. 31-4.
[25] Sharrock, pp. 57-76; Hindle, pp. 16-29.
[26] Ruston, *Creating*, pp. 132-74.
[27] Hessel, p. 503.

on Coleridge. By comparing the performance methods of these two lecturers, there emerges a new understanding of a literary-critical methodology the influence of which is still felt today.

I begin by examining public lectures as an occupation in which the rewards of money and fame combine with the more distinguished notion of a contribution to knowledge. In so doing, I counter the argument that Coleridge was resistant to the degrading aspects of the genre. Focusing on Davy, I then examine a convention of public lecturing, the scientific demonstration or illustration, highlighting its centrality to the genre and the need to compensate for its absence in lectures on literature. Textual quotation was utilised by lecturers such as Coleridge (and even Davy at times) in lieu of more spectacular re-enactments of experiments. After observing the close proximity of the *Biographia* to another genre—the lecture-as-literary-text—I situate the development of practical criticism in relation to Coleridge's evolving approaches to and style of lecturing. In my conclusion, I discuss the lasting influence of Coleridge's lectures in refutation of Hazlitt's condemnations of this famous 'talker'.[28]

2.1. Education and Entertainment in Public Lectures

Due to the Licensing Act restricting the number of theatres in London, public lecturing became a popular entertainment form in the early nineteenth century, drawing huge crowds and raising lecturers such as Davy and Hazlitt to the status of celebrities. Thus the best lecturers from around the country were drawn by a 'centripetal force' to what Hays calls 'the London lecturing empire'.[29] It was also a genre in which the pre-existing celebrity of figures such as Coleridge could be exploited to attract audiences, allowing the public personal contact with the major literary and scientific figures of the day. Public lectures were therefore widely reported on in magazines and newspapers, often at length, and transcripts of lectures were not uncommon publications, with the lecture 'remediat[ed]' (to use Klancher's term) as a literary text constituting its own genre.[30] Public lectures, however, are distinct from academic lectures at universities—which were not open to the paying public and were more exclusive in their outreach to wealthy, Protestant young men—and to the lectures of older academies and societies, such as the Royal Society and Royal Academy of the Arts which retained a more-exclusive membership. Public lectures were the province of what Klancher calls 'arts and

[28] Hazlitt, 'Mr Coleridge', p. 98.
[29] Hays, p. 91.
[30] Klancher, *Transfiguring*, p. 112.

sciences' institutions which were founded throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and which were increasingly public in their outreach.[31] Thanks in large part to Davy, public lecturing, initially a secondary concern, quickly became the primary objective of such institutions, being their foremost source of revenue and their best means of providing public utility.[32] These lectures were delivered to paying audiences in ideologically-coded spaces, from the aristocratic members of the Royal Institution, through the more mercantile membership of the Surrey Institution and the London Philosophical Society, to the radical associations of the Crown and Anchor which was open to anyone who could afford a ticket. All four were venues at which Coleridge lectured. Audiences in public lectures not only crossed class boundaries, they were also composed largely of women who, denied access to universities and to any room in scientific institutions other than the lecture theatre, were given access to first-hand knowledge from experts in their field. Public lecturing was therefore a genre associated with what Russell has called the 'feminized' discourses of fashion and sociability, and subsequently lambasted for this demeaning association by writers such as Southey in his *Letters from England* (1807), who called lectures 'philosophy in fashion', and Byron in his poem 'The Blues: A Literary Eclogue' (1821).[33] These male responses contrast with the celebratory responses of female writers such as Anna Letitia Barbauld and Catherine Maria Fanshawe, with Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812) hailing Davy, alongside the likes of stage-actor David Garrick and Naval hero Horatio Nelson, as one of the former heroes of English society upon which 'the beam of glory rests'.[34] Regardless of these polarised responses, that public lectures and their contested value should so frequently find their way into the creative literature of the period only serves to reiterate the significance and popularity of the genre in the public consciousness. Alongside the connection to female sociability, public lecturing also had associations with political radicalism, epitomised by the lectures of John Thelwall in the 1790s which led to his treason trial.[35] It was therefore a genre subject to much public scrutiny and debate, both from those celebrating the utility of lectures and from those condemning the manner in which it supposedly degraded science and literature.

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[31] Klancher, *Transfiguring*, p. 1.
[32] Davy remarked on this change of objective in *A Lecture on the Plan which It is Proposed to Adopt for Improving The Royal Institution, and Rendering It Permanent* (London: William Savage, 1810), p. 11. For a history of the redirection of such institutions towards lecturing, see: Klancher, *Transfiguring*, pp. 54-84.
[33] Russell, p. 129; Robert Southey, *Letters from England*, ed. by Jack Simmons (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1984), p. 453. Byron's 'The Blues' is dissected by Russell, who identifies an anxiety regarding the female usurpation of male spaces, pp. 134-37.
[34] Anna Letitia Barbauld, 'Eighteen Hundred and Eleven', in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. by William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), ll. 187-202.
[35] Russell, pp. 125-129; Zimmerman, *Romantic*, p. 4.

Modern critics highlight how lecturers sought to rise above this degraded genre. Zimmerman, in her book on literary lectures, argues that Coleridge forged a Shakespearean persona to protect himself against the degradation of lecturing and, in so doing, utilised this persona to forge his critical ideas.[36] While in agreement with this line of criticism—the hostility towards lectures by contemporary commentators and by Coleridge's Lake District circle is indisputable—I do not characterise Coleridge's personal relationship to lectures solely in terms of antagonism. As with all genres, its conventions and expectations are both resisted *and* embraced by its users. Coleridge did, after all, deliver eleven courses of lectures over the course of eleven years, most of which were self-organised, rather than by invitation or under contract. It was to his benefit to meet certain genre-expectations if he was to succeed. He was, furthermore, a sociable man who relished an audience, and was (in)famous for his ability to hold a captive audience. In this section, therefore, I offer a complementary narrative to that proposed by Zimmerman, in which Coleridge—having to participate in the conventions of the genre in order to succeed and to gain the applause that he relished—could earn money and fame, could be celebrated in literature of the time, could reinvent his political identity, could make a lasting contribution to knowledge, and could elevate the discipline of literary criticism above its associations with the periodical press. Coleridge's need to fulfil the genre's expectations will provide the foundation upon which I build my argument in subsequent sections for his use of the convention of the scientific demonstration.

The foremost appeal of lecturing for Coleridge was its financial and reputational rewards. When Coleridge returned from Malta in 1806, Davy approached the poet, then in London, about delivering a course of lectures at the Royal Institution. Though initially deterred from this plan by his Lake District circle—an indicator of their wariness towards the genre—Coleridge expressed excitement about the opportunity. In a letter to Sara Coleridge in October 1806 in which he first mentions the proposed course of lectures, he declared that he was 'much disposed to accept, both for money and reputation' (*CL* II, p. 1181). In later letters northward, attempting to justify accepting the position to Sara, the Southeys, and the Wordsworths, he frequently returned to the subject of money, announcing a variety of sums which ranged between '120£ for [a] course' and a potential '400£ a year' if he lectured regularly 'at the Royal and London Institutions' (*CL* II, pp. 1191, 1188). While his relationship with the Royal Institution never yielded such rewards, lectures remained a financial draw for Coleridge whenever necessity dictated. For example, funding the Pantisocratic scheme was the driving

[36] Zimmerman, *Romantic*, pp. 30-59.

influence behind his political lectures in 1795.[37] In 1813, in order to help the Morgan family in the financial straits which had forced Charles Morgan to flee to Ireland to escape imprisonment, Coleridge organised a course of lectures in order to raise the funds.[38] With his repetition of subject matters, and his semi-extemporaneous (sometimes completely extemporaneous) mode of delivery which required little preparation, it was an easy way for this brilliant speaker to make money, so long as he embraced the genre, at least in part.

Regarding the other appeal of public lecturing, that of 'reputation', Davy provided the shining example. Davy's lectures were so popular that Albemarle Street (where the Royal Institution is located) became the first one-way street in London in order to accommodate the sheer number of people trying to gain access to his lectures. Davy's lectures were so popular that they redirected the aims and objectives of the Royal Institution, transforming it from an organisation devoted to displaying modern inventions to one that primarily provided courses of lectures to a paying public.[39] Tellingly, as Anne Treneer observes, Davy's celebrity as a lecturer precedes his major discoveries.[40] His lecturing career began to great acclaim in 1802, but his isolation of the elements of sodium and potassium (his first major contributions to science) were not achieved until 1807.[41] Treneer makes a distinction here between popular and scientific acclaim. It was these later discoveries, rather than the earlier lectures (despite their huge popular success), that brought Davy the adulation of the scientific community.[42] Nonetheless, Davy's position and his success as a lecturer earned him a well-equipped laboratory and wealthy patronage, which included the funds for the large galvanic battery that was vital to his decomposition of potassium and sodium—a discovery which he announced, not in print, but in a lecture.[43] Coleridge remarked upon this in a letter to William Sotheby in April 1808 (shortly after the severing of his relations with the Royal Institution), stating that the Institution had 'assisted perhaps enabled Davy, to do the glorious things he has done, & […] is doing, and will do—& which assuredly will place him by the side of Bacon & Newton' (*CL* III, p. 95). Davy's example showed how lectures could establish the fame of lecturers prior to any significant contribution to knowledge, whilst simultaneously providing the means of a subsequent contribution and, in Coleridge's eyes, the immortality that genius confers.

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[37] Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (eds), 'Introduction', to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. xxiii-lxxx (p. xxvi).
[38] Holmes, *Darker*, pp. 343-348.
[39] Golinski, *Science*, p. 191; Anne Treneer, *The Mercurial Chemist: A Life of Sir Humphry Davy* (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 83.
[40] Treneer, p. 84.
[41] Treneer, p. 93.
[42] Treneer, p. 93.
[43] Golinski, 'Experimental Self', p. 22.

Davy's success also allowed him to separate himself from the radical associations of his past, re-constructing his political identity. A youthful association with radicalism is, of course, a public identity that Coleridge and his circle expended much effort in reconstructing and, in some cases, denying. Indeed, Coleridge attempted to re-present his early political leanings in the *Biographia*, referring to his younger self as 'a vehement anti-ministerialist, […] a more vehement anti-gallican, and still more intensely an anti-jacobin' (*BL* I, p. 187). Golinski shows how Davy's similar provincial origins, as well as his apprenticeship at the Pneumatic Institute (founded by medical reformer, Thomas Beddoes), haunted Davy's career. As with Coleridge and Pantisocracy, these associations—symbolised by the nitrous oxide experiments—linked Davy to a radical political past which he was never able to escape completely.[44] However, his position at the Royal Institution rescued him (albeit not entirely) from that past. The popular appeal of his lectures amongst the Institution's aristocratic clientele, the intellectual success amongst its scientific audience, and Davy's own brand of conservatively political science, led to Davy's absorption into what Golinski calls 'elite society'.[45] In 1812 he was knighted, and married the wealthy bluestocking Jane Apreece. In 1820, he was elected President of the more exclusive Royal Society. Though his application for this presidency was contested on the grounds of his past, the eventual (if reluctant) award of this role to Davy is symbolic of the reinvention of his political image.[46] Indeed, as Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter Kitson show, Davy's self-reinvention across his career rescued the science of electricity from its early radical associations, establishing a home for this branch of knowledge within a conservative institution.[47] It is telling, however, that Davy retired from lecturing almost immediately after his marriage into money and the reception of his knighthood. He no longer needed to rely on this exhausting, time-consuming, and (to some extent) demeaning occupation, as it had now secured his finances, and his political and scientific reputation.

Lectures did not just make celebrities. They provided a platform for the already-famous, exploiting and heightening their reputations. This is the case with Coleridge. When it is considered that he was originally approached by the Royal Institution in 1806 to provide 'Lectures on the Principles common to all the Fine Arts', a subject on which he had little expertise, it is clear that his pre-existing reputation informed his hiring, rather than any academic accomplishments (*CL* II, p. 1181). Reports of his lectures make this explicit. Though there were no public reports of his Royal Institution lectures, a reporter for *The Courier* who

[44] Golinski, 'Experimental Self', p. 20.
[45] Golinski, 'Experimental Self', p. 23.
[46] Holmes, *Age*, pp. 397-99.
[47] Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, pp. 191-97.

attended the celebrated course of 1811-12 remarked that 'the very respectable audience […] were collected, with some curiosity doubtless, to hear a Poet discuss the principles of his art' (*CLL* I, p. 195). It was his reputation as a poet, not as a critic, speaker, or even a lecturer, that made the event appealing. James Jennings, in an 1823 lecture on literary institutions, compared Coleridge's (as well as Davy's and Hazlitt's) appearances in scientific and literary institutions to 'when Plato taught in the groves of Academus'.[48] These figures, says Jennings, 'have appeared among us', implying their almost sacred position above the attendees of lectures.[49] If Coleridge developed his critical tenets through the genre of the public lecture, then the establishment of his influential theories owes much to his reputation as a poet, without which his lecturing career may never have begun. Here can be seen the symbiosis in the dual role of the poet-critic, with Coleridge's reputation as a poet feeding his literary criticism.

An adjunct to the rewards of money and fame is the potential for lectures to act as commercial ventures. As Duncan Wu explains, Hazlitt, whose lectures 'made him a star', would send each lecture transcript to the printer after its delivery, with the final product being released swiftly after the close of his course.[50] The lectures thereby acted as 'advanced publicity' for his own book.[51] Not dissimilarly, Coleridge's lectures served to promote a literary work, albeit not his own. In a lecture on Dante in 1818, he praised Henry Francis Cary's translation of the *Divina Commedia* (1814), which, according to Cary's son, had 'remained in utter obscurity' until Coleridge's praise suddenly caused it to sell out and require a new edition.[52] Cary's translation, according to Holmes, 'became the standard version for Victorian readers over the next fifty years'.[53] Coleridge himself observed the marketing potential of lectures. As stated in the *Biographia*, when his play *Remorse* was being staged at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in 1813, he noticed with 'heart-felt […] pleasure' that,

> the pit and the box were crowded with faces familiar to me, though of individuals whose names I did not know, and of whom I knew nothing, but that they had attended one or other of my courses of lectures.

(*BL* I, p. 221)

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[48] James Jennings, *A Lecture on the History and Utility of Literary Institutions* (London: Sherwood, Jones, and Co., 1823), p. 43
[49] Jennings, p. 43.
[50] Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 238, 240.
[51] Wu, p. 221.
[52] Quoted in: Holmes, *Darker*, p. 468.
[53] Holmes, *Darker*, p. 458.

Even Wordsworth, who was far from encouraging Coleridge's new pursuit, saw the potential for these lectures to publicise his own work. Aware that Coleridge planned to lecture on contemporary poetry at the close of his 1808 course at the Royal Institution, Wordsworth sought to coincide the release of *The White Doe* with this lecture.[54] This plan eventually fell through, and Wordsworth's publication was delayed by seven years. There is also no evidence that Coleridge delivered a lecture on the work of his contemporaries, the end of this particular course being thin on surviving evidence and the course itself petering out due to Coleridge's various physical ailments.[55] Nonetheless, the implication here is that Coleridge's critical practice acted as an effective advertisement for the creative endeavours of himself and his circle, with his criticism feeding his poetry just as his poetry fed his criticism.

While the practical concerns of money, reputation, and advertising were immediate incentives for delivering the lectures, they did not render the practice more dignified. Coleridge, in a letter to Wordsworth in May 1808, described the task of lecturing as 'disgusting', comparing it, tellingly, to Wordsworth's 'disgust to publishing' (*CL* III, pp. 108, 114). Performing before a paying public was equal to pandering to a literary marketplace that the Lake District circle professedly despised. Remaining aloof from that marketplace was vital to Coleridgean and Wordsworthian self-constructions. Coleridge in the opening line of the *Biographia* described 'the retirement and distance, in which [he had] lived, both from the literary and political world'—an invocation of the reclusion championed by Wordsworth (*BL* I, p. 5). As Fruman observes, this is not true, with the *Biographia* having been written in a period of prolific publications and ventures into public life.[56] Here lies the dilemma that produces Coleridge's ambivalence towards lecturing: the necessity of participating in the popular genre for financial and reputational awards, whilst trying to create the appearance of resisting it. There were, however, less practical, and therefore more dignified, aspects of public lecturing which made it an appealing prospect, and it is these to which I turn in the remainder of this section.

Public lectures were a useful forum for new knowledge. As Holmes has explored, the Vitalism Debate that informed *Frankenstein* was largely conducted in lectures, with print acting as a supplement to the live experience when the lectures were subsequently published.[57] Davy

[54] See Dorothy Wordsworth's letter to Catherine Clarkson, 22 April 1808: 'The poem [*The White Doe*] is to be published. We Females have been anxious that it should [...] because the buzz of the lectures will help it' (*WL* II, p. 228).
[55] The circumstances of these 1808 lectures, their scant evidence, and Wordsworth's desire to capitalise on Coleridge's publicity are discussed by Foakes (*CLL* I, pp. 14-15).
[56] See above, p. 72, n. 102.
[57] Holmes, *Age*, pp. 305-17.

himself utilised lectures to unveil his discoveries, first announcing the isolation of potassium and sodium in his Bakerian Lecture of 1807 before publishing his findings in *Transactions of the Royal Society*. In both instances, the slower process of print publication was subsequent, rather than prior, to the performative demonstration, and thus lecture audiences were composed of both members of the general public seeking entertainment and eminent figures in academic disciplines seeking the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. As far as literature was concerned, lectures formed the basis for significant works of literary and aesthetic theory in the period, most notably Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) and Joshua Reynolds's *Seven Discourses Delivered at the Royal Academy by the President* (1778). The paratextual framing of these works reiterates the contested value of lectures, particularly regarding their printing. Both Reynolds and Blair were reluctant to publish their oral texts. Reynolds's discourses, delivered between 1769 and 1776, were not given the undignified title of lectures and were, according to the preface, 'ordered' to be published by the Royal Academy.[58] Unsurprisingly, the author's name, though attached to the prefatory addresses to the King and to the Academy's members, does not appear on the title page. Blair's lectures, similarly, 'were read in the University of Edinburgh, for Twenty-four years', and were published 'not altogether as a matter of choice', serving mainly to assert his rights over them and to correct their 'surreptitious publication'.[59] Blair's text is, nonetheless, presented as a series of lectures, with each "chapter" entitled 'Lecture I', 'Lecture II' and so on.[60] Selling tens of thousands of copies and running to numerous editions, both works were hugely popular in the period and well known to Coleridge and his circle, with both being invoked by Wordsworth in his prefaces. Even more pertinent to Coleridge is the publication of A.W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Works and Literature* (1809-11; first English translation 1815). This work, which he carried with him into lecture theatres in order to quote from, was important to Coleridge, influential in the formation of many of his opinions, and features heavily in the accusations of plagiarism levelled against him. Regardless of the contested nature of lecturing, Coleridge must have known the significant contribution that could be made to literary studies through the lecture genre, just as he understood the great work Davy could produce through his association with the Royal Institution.

This awareness not just of the potential of lecturing, but of Coleridge's own critical contributions within the genre, are set out in the *Biographia*. His refutation of the eighteenth-

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[58] Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses Delivered at the Royal Academy by the President* (London: T. Cadell, 1778), p. 3.
[59] Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 3rd edn, 3 vols (London: A. Strachan, 1787), I, p. iii.
[60] Blair, I, pp. 1, 19.

century construction of Shakespeare as a wild genius through a historical dissection of the Classical Unities was a recurring subject throughout Coleridge's career as lecturer. In a footnote in the first volume of the *Biographia,* he refers to this branch of his critical thought and, in so doing, highlights the significance of lectures as a critical genre:

> [Alexander] Pope was under the common error of his age, far from being sufficiently exploded even at the present day. It consists (as I explained at large, and proved in detail in my public lectures) in mistaking for the *essentials* of the Greek stage certain rules, which the wise poets imposed upon themselves, in order to render all the remaining parts of the drama consistent with those, that had been forced upon them by circumstances independent of their will; out of which circumstances the drama itself arose. [...] I did not hesitate to declare my full conviction, that the consummate judgement of Shakespeare, not only in the general construction, but in all the *detail*, of his dramas impressed me with greater wonder, than even the might of his genius, or the depth of his philosophy. The substance of these lectures I hope soon to publish; and it is but a debt of justice to myself and my friends to notice, that the first course of lectures, which differed from the following courses only, by occasionally varying the illustrations of the same thoughts, was addressed to very numerous, and I need not add, respectable audiences at the royal institution [sic], before Mr. Schlegel gave his lectures on the same subjects at Vienna.
>
> (*BL* I, p. 34, original emphasis).

In this passage, Coleridge outlines a pervading critical misapprehension which he believes, firstly, needs refuting and, secondly, he has successfully refuted. He also states his priority over Schlegel in that refutation, clearly setting out (in modern terms) his contribution to the critical field. While modern critics might focus on his more enduring critical tenets—such as 'practical criticism' and the 'willing suspension of disbelief'—Coleridge clearly viewed his statement on Shakespeare's judgement to be his foremost contribution made through his lectures, and he reiterated this towards the end of his lecturing career. In a lecture on the 17th December 1818, he stated that 'since [his] first attempt [at lecturing] at the Royal Institution' it had been his 'Object to prove that in all points from the most important to the most minute~~s~~, the Judgement of Shakespear [sic] is commensurate with his Genius—nay, that his Genius reveals itself in ~~its~~ his Judgement' (*CLL* II, pp. 263-64). By highlighting his critical contribution in a footnote to

the *Biographia*, rather than in the main body of the text, whilst simultaneously situating that contribution within the context of his lectures, Coleridge exhibits his awareness of the value of lectures as a mode for new critical thought.

The lecture genre also had the potential to cover a vast range of subject matter, providing a foundational education. Franzel describes a course of lectures, 'unfolding' in a sequence, as 'a privileged site for articulating encyclopedic [sic] knowledge'.[61] Though discussing German Romantic lecturers, Franzel's understanding of the long-form unfolding of a sequence of lectures, and the pedagogical power of the lecture to cover vast areas without too much minutiae, is observable in Davy. Davy intended his courses to provide an elementary education in his subjects. This is clear in the titles of works published at the end of his lecturing career, which were the product of more than a decade of lectures: *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* and *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry* (1813). The titles of both suggest that Davy wished to supply an elemental education in these disciplines, and though the oral origins of the former are removed, the latter is, like Blair's *Lectures*, presented as a series of lectures. This ambition of providing a full education is also evident in the works published prior to two of his early courses of lectures: *A Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on Chemistry* (1802) and *Outlines of a Course of Lectures on Chemical Philosophy* (1804). Davy, incidentally, gave a copy of the former to Coleridge ahead of his attendance at that particular course. While both are little more than a dry list of facts intended to be expanded upon and illustrated in the lectures, the publication of these comprehensive primers reveals the seriousness with which Davy and the Institution took the aim of providing comprehensive courses.

That lectures provided didactic possibilities distinct from private reading is expressed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Shelley had attended a course of Davy's lectures and was familiar with his *Discourse Introductory*—a text which Crouch identifies as a source for the titular character's scientific beliefs.[62] Indeed, Shelley's is a text which invokes Davy. Alongside the significance of chemistry, electricity, and galvanism—subjects synonymous with Davy in the period—the young Frankenstein also attends the last lecture in a series on 'natural philosophy' delivered at an unspecified location prior to his relocation to Ingolstadt.[63] Despite finding the lecture 'incomprehensible' for having missed the previous instalments, Shelley's

[61] Sean Franzel, 'Romantic Encyclopedics and the Lecture Form: Schelling, A.W. Schlegel, A. von Humboldt', *European Romantic Review*, 25 (2014), 347-56 (p. 348).
[62] Crouch, pp. 35-44.
[63] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus: The 1818 Text*, ed. by Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 25.

protagonist describes how 'The professor discoursed with the greatest fluency of potassium and boron'—two chemical elements first isolated by Davy.[64] Similarly, the lecture of Professor Waldman at the University of Ingolstadt begins with 'a recapitulation of the history of chemistry', before moving into 'a cursory view of the present state of the science' and concluding 'with a panegyric upon modern chemistry'.[65] It is a structure that mirrors not only Davy's *Discourse*, but his general lecture style, which bookended the main body of his argument with rhetorical and poetical flourishes that served as propaganda for his chosen discipline. What is important, however, is the educational narratives that occur in the novel, first in Frankenstein's narrative, and then in the Creature's. In a text which explores miseducation—first of the young Frankenstein in alchemy, and later of the Creature—it is telling that both characters are led astray by self-directed study. The titular scientist's education is only set on the right course (though still tainted by his early reading of Cornelius Agrippa) by attendance at lectures, albeit academic, rather than public, ones. To this extent, Shelley portrays a course of lectures delivered by an expert as being of greater utility than autodidacticism. This challenges a view put forward by her father, William Godwin. For Godwin, a lecturer is 'titillated and delighted' by applause, and 'discontented, if for any length of time he is merely listened to in silence', redirecting the lecturer to entertain rather than educate.[66] 'Sober enquiry' is undertaken not 'in theatres and halls of assembly', but by 'a man in his closet, or in the domestic tranquillity of his own fire-side'.[67] Further challenging Godwin, I show that is in embracing the entertaining aspects of public lectures that Coleridge developed his critical methodologies.

A text which evidences not just the intention, but the achievement, of the educational value of lectures is Jane Marcet's anonymously published *Conversations on Chemistry* (1805). Structured as a series of dialogues between a group of young women, the text's stated aim is 'to offer to the public, and more particularly to the female sex, an Introduction to Chemistry'.[68] Printed for the publisher of the 1800 to 1805 editions of the *Lyrical Ballads* (another example of the shared domains of poetry and science), Marcet's book is the product of 'attending the excellent lectures delivered at the Royal Institution, by the present Professor of Chemistry

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[64] M. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 25.
[65] M. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 30.
[66] William Godwin, 'Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr. Pitt's Bills, Concerning Treasonable and Seditious Practices, and Unlawful Assemblies' (1795), in *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, ed. by Mark Philip, 7 vols (London: William Pickering, 1993), II, pp.123-62 (p. 132). This passage is discussed by Russell, p. 128.
[67] Godwin, p. 133.
[68] [Jane Marcet], *Conversations on Chemistry; in which the Elements of that Science are Familiarly Explained and Illustrated by Examples*, 5th edn, 2 vols (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1817), I, p. v.

[Davy]'.[69] This popular work, which ran to sixteen editions in Marcet's lifetime (she was eventually named in the twelfth edition of 1832), shows the seriousness with which public lectures were both delivered and received, going well beyond their value as popular entertainments. They could, and did, provide a course of instruction in their disciplines, particularly to those, in Marcet's words, 'whose education is seldom calculated to prepare their minds for abstract ideas, or scientific language'.[70] Indeed, during the publication process of a subsequent edition, this text fell into the hands of Michael Faraday, who, born into a working family and lacking a formal education, was plying his trade as an apprentice bookbinder. Marcet's *Conversations* is instrumental in his turn to science. Faraday subsequently attended Davy's lectures, was apprenticed to Davy, and became a celebrated lecturer in his own right, before ultimately being recognised as one of the great scientists of the nineteenth century. It is Faraday for whom the museum of the Royal Institution is now named. This trajectory of scientific knowledge and enquiry—from Davy lectures to popular text, back to Davy's lectures, and finally to Faraday's lectures and discoveries—is revealing. It highlights the role played by lecturing in the formation of scientific minds and in the education of the public across class and gender boundaries.

It is worth emphasising that education was an important subject to Coleridge, and was regularly broached in his lectures. Coleridge's lectures have often been published under some variation of the title 'Lectures on Shakespeare'. It is not an inappropriate title, as Shakespeare was Coleridge's primary subject. There are, however, other subjects that arise repeatedly in his lectures. One is Milton—one of Coleridge's lecture courses was advertised as being on 'Shakespeare and Milton'—and another is education. First broached in a lecture at the Royal Institution in which he discussed the monitorial education systems of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster (it was this controversial lecture that soured his relations with the Institution), Coleridge returned again and again to the subject of public education and its social utility. Indeed, the subject of Bell and Lancaster, like numerous recurring subjects from Coleridge's lectures, is broached in a footnote to the *Biographia* (*BL* II, pp. 60-1). As I explore below, Coleridge's use of footnotes in this work should be seen as a textual replication of his digressive oral monologues, and the allusion to this debate is an example of the connection between the lectures and the *Biographia*. That the Bell and Lancaster debate should not only find its way into the *Biographia*, but appear as a footnote to a discussion of Wordsworth, highlights how

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[69] Marcet, I, p. vi.
[70] Marcet, I, p. vii.

pervasive the subject of education was in his lectures, and how integral it was to his views on literature.

Despite Coleridge's varying claims regarding his extemporaneous delivery, prospectuses for his courses, circulated prior to the commencement of each course, imply ambitions similar to Davy's towards providing an elemental course in his chosen subject. Coleridge's 'Prospectus' produced for his course on Shakespeare and Milton at the London Philosophical Society in 1811-12 was distributed as a single sheet, printed on one side.[71] After an extended title for the series which contains the aims and objectives of the course—to illustrate 'the Principles of Poetry, and their Application as Grounds of Criticism'—there follows a paragraph that details the dramatists, dramatic characters, and critical methodologies that Coleridge will use:

> AFTER an introductory Lecture on False Criticism, (especially in Poetry,) and on its Causes: two thirds of the remaining course, will be assigned, 1st, to a philosophic Analysis and Explanation of all the principal *Characters* of our great Dramatist, […] and 2nd, to a critical *Comparison* of SHAKESPEAR [sic], in respect of Diction, Imagery, management of the Passions, Judgment in the construction of his Dramas, in short, of all that belongs to him as a Poet, and as a dramatic Poet, with his contemporaries, or immediate successors, […] in the endeavour to determine what of SHAKESPEAR's Merits and Defects are common to him with other Writers of the same age, and what remain peculiar to his own Genius.
>
> (*CLL* I, p. 179, original emphasis)

The curious elision of Milton in this paragraph aside, Coleridge presents this course as a unified sequence with specified educational outcomes. His summary of this course, however, is general, with only one lecture singled out for scrutiny ('an introductory Lecture on False Criticism') and the rest summarised as a single unit ('two thirds of the remaining course, will be assigned…'). For his course of 1812-13 on *Belles Lettres* at the Surrey Institution, Coleridge produced a more detailed 'Prospectus'. Printed on three sides of a single sheet folded to make a four-page folio—a format representative of the greater depth of this 'Prospectus'—it contained a lecture-by-

[71] I consulted original copies of this document: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Autograph Poems, Prose Pieces, Letters, etc.', London, British Library, BM Add MS 34225, fols. 38, 44.

lecture breakdown of the course content. For his course at the London Philosophical Society in 1818, he produced an even longer advertisement for his course. Again, printed on three pages of a four-page folio, it contains a long prose passage of a page and a half, which details the overall aims, objectives, and methodologies of the course. This is followed by a 'Syllabus', which takes up the remaining page and a half of text and which contains a lecture-by-lecture breakdown of the content.[72] That these detailed prospectuses are produced for his courses at London institutions—they are noticeably absent for his lectures in hired spaces such as the Willis Rooms and the Crown and Anchor (the only exception is the Prospectus for his 1814 course of lectures on Milton and Cervantes at the White Lion, Bristol)—does, of course, imply a degree of institutional pressure and expectation. Nonetheless, it can be seen that, far from abandoning courses to his digressive extemporaneity, Coleridge throughout his lecturing career sought to provide an elemental education in his subjects—his prospectuses on the one hand expressing his encyclopaedic ambitions for his courses, whilst on the other being used as a means to containing his errant tendencies. His lectures were not simply displays of his verbal, knowledgeable, and performative prowess.

Ultimately, the scientific authority conferred by the association with public institutions served to elevate literary-critical discourse out of the violent arena of magazine reviewing—the recurring antagonist of Romantic poet-critics. Coleridge began his 1811-12 lectures (as stated in the 'Prospectus') with an attack on 'false criticism' (*CLL* I, p. 189). The 'causes of false criticism' were a mixture of the 'Accidental', which 'aris[es] from the particular circumstances of the age', and the 'Permanent', which 'flow[s] from the general principles of our nature':

> Under the first head […] might be classed, <1> the events that had occurred during our own day which had themselves from their importance created a world of readers[.] 2 the practice of public speaking which encouraged a too great desire to be understood at the first blush. 3 The prevalence of Reviews, Magazines, Novels, newspapers &c.
>
> (*CLL* I, p. 189)

Perhaps most important here is the significance placed upon the genres of literary criticism. While Coleridge reiterates his ambivalent view of lecturing, he appears not to have expanded

[72] The 1812-13 and 1818 prospectuses are described and reprinted by Foakes (*CLL* I, pp. 479-81; *CLL* II, pp. 39-42).

upon his comments on public speaking. He did, however, give considerable space to the discussion of reviews and other ephemeral literary forms. For Coleridge, reviews are 'pernicious' due to the absence of reasoning from 'fixed principles'—the underlying methodology for this course as expressed in the above-cited 'Prospectus' (*CLL* I, p. 189). Tellingly, he read from the 'Prospectus' at the end of this lecture in order to express his difference from 'false criticism'. Coleridge thereby introduces his course of lectures by denigrating the form of periodical criticism, and his suggestion that public speaking damages literary-critical discourse appears, not to dismiss, but to highlight his own attempts to elevate the genre in which he is working. It is an attempt not just to revise literary-critical methods, but to rescue the discipline of criticism from its most damaging forms. Further, Coleridge's criticism being rooted in 'fixed' and 'philosophic' principles is granted greater authority by the forum in which he is speaking: the lecture theatre of the London Philosophical Society. Criticism is removed from the literary marketplace, and rehoused in the scientific institution.

The public lecture, on top of its financial and reputational rewards, was a genre in which Coleridge could outline and develop his critical theories, showcase his erudition, adopt the role of educator (education being as important a subject as to his lectures as Shakespeare and Milton), elevate the discipline of literary criticism, and make a lasting contribution to knowledge. However, if he were to succeed within that genre, to continue to draw audiences and earn the 'money and reputation' he claimed was his motivation for lecturing, Coleridge needed to adopt and participate in both its pedagogical and performative conventions.

2.1.1. Scientific Demonstrations and Textual Quotation

In this section, I examine the central convention of the scientific lecture: the demonstration. By analysing a number of sources, I identify the significance of these demonstrations to the public lecture genre, and highlight their absence from literary lectures. In so doing, I argue that there is a parallel between scientific demonstration and textual quotation, with even Davy on occasion substituting lines of poetry for his usual visual displays. It may seem self-evident that experiments and demonstrations are analogous to textual quotation in scientific and literary-critical discourses. After all, Davy in his written texts followed a statement of a principle by a description of an experiment, just as a quotation would follow a theory in literary criticism. However, the purpose of this section is to identify the importance of both as expectations within a genre which is as much a form of popular entertainment as a vehicle for the dissemination of

knowledge. I therefore consider the varying didactic, spectacular, and self-fashioning uses of demonstration; the problem of their absence in literary lectures; and the use of physical books and of textual quotation in the lectures of Davy and Coleridge. In examining this generic convention, I follow Golinksi's lead by applying H.M. Collins's terminological distinction to Davy's lectures. Writing primarily about scientific demonstrations on television (though he refers to the lectures of Davy's protégé, Michael Faraday), Collins argues for a distinction to be made between 'experiments' and 'demonstrations', with 'An "experiment" [being] done to find out something about the natural world, [while] a "demonstration" [is] intended to reveal that something to an audience'.[73] According to Collins, 'Faraday practiced the art of the experiment in the basement of the Royal Institution, but only brought the demonstration upstairs to the lecture theatre once he had perfected it'.[74] Collins therefore insists upon seeing demonstrations for their rhetorical function. They are modes of persuasion. A good demonstration convinces the audience of a point being made, of the lecturer's correctness, and even of their 'virtuosity'.[75] It does not uncover new results, and audiences are not expected to arrive at their own conclusions. Thus Golinski argues that Davy utilised demonstrations to settle scientific disputes in his favour, re-presenting his experiments to audiences who were in no position to question his findings.[76] However, while I use a terminology that distinguishes between the two terms, this was not the case in the early nineteenth century, and the writers whom I cite make freer use of both terms, usually with no distinction between the two. Further, I deploy the term "experimental demonstration" to refer to demonstrations which utilise scientific apparatuses and chemicals, and which need to be distinguished from other demonstrative and illustrative material, such as mineral samples, images, and textual quotation.

Public lectures on science were a visual spectacle. It is possible, of course, to mistake the visual aspects as secondary to the spoken dimension of a lecture. The word *lecture* is, after all, derived from the Latin *legere*, meaning 'to read' (*OED*), with its modern sense emerging from the act of reading aloud. This apparent diminution of experimentation is only emphasised by their absence in the printed texts of lectures. However, as can be seen in visual depictions of lectures from the early nineteenth century and extending into the twentieth century, experimental demonstrations were vital to the public image of institutional lectures (see the Figures in Appendix A). There is much revealing information to be extracted from visual

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[73] H.M. Collins, 'Public Experiments and Displays of Virtuosity: The Core-Set Revisited', *Social Studies of Science*, 18 (1988), 725-48 (p. 727).
[74] Collins, p. 727.
[75] Collins, p. 728.
[76] Golinski, *Science*, pp. 218-35.

depictions of lectures—particularly regarding the densely-packed, well-dressed audience, and their high female contingent—but what is of foremost importance here is the performance of the speaker. Lecturers are depicted mid-demonstration, and even when they are not, they stand before tables cluttered with scientific apparatuses. Despite the varying generic uses of these images—the satirical cartoon of James Gillray (Figure A.1), the illustrations to poems and travel literature by Thomas Rowlandson (Figures A.2-3), the engravings for newspapers (Figures A.5-8), and Henry Jamyn Brooks's oil-on-canvas painting (Figure A.9)—experimental demonstration lies at the heart of all of them. That public lectures so frequently lend themselves to being depicted visually is a testament to the visual and spectacular nature of these performances. Further, these images begin to imply an integral aspect of this generic convention: the sheer amount of visual demonstration packed into a single lecture. In all of the images, scientific instruments clutter the table that stands between the lecturer and their audience. In the image of Professor Tyndall lecturing, the instruments spill over onto smaller tables and even the floor (Figure A.8), while, in others, visual aids hang upon the wall above the lecturer (Figures A.5-7, A.9). In the engraving of Reverend Baden Powell, a pendulum is suspended from the ceiling, swinging before the lecturer's desk, demonstrating the rotation of the Earth through the use of the famous invention of Léon Foucault (Figure A.6). An experimental demonstration was not a lone or climactic spectacle in a lecture, but one of numerous demonstrations which ranged from the experimental to the imagistic.

This implied frequency and, further, the rapidity of demonstrations in lectures is made explicit in Marcet's *Conversations on Chemistry*. As noted above, Marcet's text begins with a 'Preface' outlining the influence of lectures on the production of her text. Not only are public lectures the source of her knowledge, her text is also intended as a scientific primer to aid the understanding of female lecture-goers. In outlining this pattern of influence, Marcet makes a series of comments about scientific demonstrations:

> On attending for the first time *experimental lectures*, the author found it almost impossible to derive any clear or satisfactory information from the *rapid demonstrations* which are usually, and perhaps necessarily, *crowded into popular courses* of this kind. But frequent opportunities having afterwards occurred of conversing with a friend on the subject of chemistry, and of *repeating a variety of experiments*, she became better acquainted with the principles of that science, and began to feel highly interested in its pursuit. It was then that she perceived, in attending the excellent lectures delivered at the

> Royal Institution, by the present Professor of Chemistry, the great advantage which her previous knowledge of the subject, slight as it was, gave her over others who had not enjoyed the same means of private instruction. Every fact or experiment *attracted her attention* and served to explain some theory to which she was not a total stranger; and she had the gratification to find that the *numerous and elegant illustrations*, for which that school is so much distinguished, seldom failed to produce on her mind the effect for which they were intended.[77]

The frequency with which Marcet refers to 'illustrations', 'demonstrations', and 'experiments' reiterates their importance, and her description of the courses she attends as 'experimental lectures' implies that this is their disciplinary, or even generic, designation. The demonstrations define the lectures. This passage also contains the revelation that experiments could be, and were, repeated at home. Perhaps most significant is the reiteration of how 'numerous', 'rapid', and 'crowded into popular courses' these demonstrations were, and how their profusion impeded their didactic function. Marcet creates the image of a whirlwind of activity in which there is much spectacle, but the content is difficult to follow. As Frankenstein says of lectures he attended in Geneva, in a passage deleted from Shelley's draft, 'although I did not understand them the experiments never failed to attract my attention'.[78] Indeed, this circumstance appears to have been foreseen, either by Davy or the Royal Institution. Prior to courses delivered in 1802 and 1803, Davy published his *Outline* and his *Prospectus*. These texts, which are (as has been said) little more than a list of facts, are designed to aid lecture-goers, providing the underlying knowledge that Davy would rapidly demonstrate.

This profusion of demonstrations in Davy's lectures is hinted at within his lecture scripts. Often written in a large hand on a dozen or so large sheets, each folded in half to make a folio of four pages, their sizes varying but roughly A4, Davy's lecture texts were usually fully scripted (though in practice they acted as an *aide-memoire*, rather than being directly read from). These lecture scripts, however, are thin on detail about the content and nature of his demonstrations. He does, nonetheless, mark their insertion into lectures by the word 'Instance', usually appearing on its own line and in the centre of the page, and occasionally their content

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[77] [Marcet], I, pp. v-vi, emphasis added.

[78] Mary Shelley, 'Frankenstein, Notebook A', in *The Shelley-Godwin Archive*, MS. Abinger c.56, 5^{r} <http://shelleygodwinarchive.org/sc/Oxford/frankenstein/notebook/a/#/p13> [accessed 8 April 2020]. This passage was made known to me by Sharon Ruston during her online course *Laughing Gas, Literature, and the Lamp* (Future Learn, 2019).

can be inferred from the surrounding text.[79] While 'Instance' may refer to a number of visual illustrations—a demonstration, a geological sample, a sketch, a print, or (as I shall return to later) a literary quotation—it is a word that can appear over a dozen times within a manuscript and often several times on the same page. In the fourth and fifth lectures of his 1811 course on Geology, Davy inserts 'Instance' into the texts seventeen and fourteen times respectively, while in an undated lecture on water, 'Instance' appears four times on a single leaf.[80] When it is considered that a page of Davy's large hand can count for hardly more than a couple of minutes, we can see Davy's ambitions for squeezing numerous demonstrations into his lectures.

While Davy's scripts do not contain a faithful record of his demonstrations—he may, for example, have skipped some to save time—a fuller record of Davy's demonstrations is contained within a notebook of Michael Faraday. This notebook is a testament to the profusion of Davy's experiments. Between February and April 1812, the young Faraday attended four of his future mentor's lectures. In a notebook now held in the Royal Institution's archives, and which was kept by Faraday solely for the purpose of recording Davy's lectures, Faraday wrote meticulous notes—they are almost-verbatim transcripts—of Davy's discourses.[81] They are invaluable, not only for describing in detail Davy's demonstrations and providing illustrations, but for recording Davy's narration of those demonstrations—a feature missing from Davy's scripts. Faraday's remarkable notebook shows the influence of his apprenticeship in book production. It includes handwritten title and half-title pages which imitate the typography of nineteenth-century print works, contents pages for its sections, an index, page numbers, and even printers' catchwords. The text is divided into four sections (one for each lecture), and each section divided into two sub-sections: Faraday's transcript of Davy's delivered speech, and a section containing detailed descriptions (and occasionally illustrations) of the demonstrations performed, and apparatuses used, by Davy. It is a division of material that might be characterised as the auditory and the visual. The significance of the demonstrations for the young Faraday, only just beginning his journey into science, is telling. Capturing the drama of the displays (he frequently inserts long ellipses of several lines into his transcripts which represent Davy's silence as he performs his demonstrations), Faraday highlights the theatrics of demonstration. Across these four lectures, Faraday records a remarkable seventy-one demonstrations and visual illustrations. What is most important here is that these are lectures

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[79] Professor Frank James of the Royal Institution of Great Britain alerted me to the significance of the word 'Instance' in Davy's lecture scripts.

[80] Humphry Davy, 'Geology: Lecture 4', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS HD/4/A/4; Humphry Davy, 'Geology: Lecture 5', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS HD/4/A/5; Humphry Davy, 'Lecture Notes on Water', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS HD/A/1/7, fols. 5^{r}-5^{v}.

[81] Michael Faraday, 'Notes on Lectures', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS F/4/A.

on chemistry, Davy's specialism and his most common subject to lecture upon. The lecture scripts which contain the most 'Instances' are those on geological subjects, in which Davy brought in numerous mineral samples and illustrations—demonstrative aspects of which it is easy for there to be a profusion. Faraday's notebook, however, shows how his mentor managed to incorporate as many as twenty experimental demonstrations utilising a multiplicity of apparatuses and chemicals in a single lecture.

These profuse demonstrations could be put to numerous uses. As the above quotation from Mercer illustrates, the dual function of illustrations are their entertainment and educational value. Davy, of course, worked hard to emphasise the latter in his lectures. This becomes clear in Faraday's transcription of Davy's narration of his demonstrations. In a spectacular demonstration involving two mirrors, burning coals, and some gunpowder, Davy ignited the gunpowder using the heat of the burning coal—which according to Faraday, were some eleven feet apart—radiated between the two mirrors.[82]

> These two mirrors are opposite
> and parallel to each other[.]
> if we place this pan of burning charcoal
> in the focus of that mirror a strong
> sensation of heat will be
> produced in the focus of this one so much
> so as to ignite paper and then combustible
> bodies ……………………………
> ……………………………………. there
> is now a strong effect produced on my
> hand[.] indeed it is almost too hot to
> bear[.] We shall now increase the heat
> by blowing the charcoal and then the
> radiated rays will be so strong as to
> inflame gun-powder placed in this
> focus ………………….. It is evident
> that in this experiment the whole of the
> effect must take place by the radiated

[82] RI MS F/4/A, fol. 40^{v} (paginated by Faraday as p. 72.)

heat for none can descend by other means
from the pan of coals to the powder[.]
The air surrounding the pan of coals
is heated and becomes specifically
lighter[.] it accordingly rises and is
replaced by cold air therefore no heat
can be conveyed downwards by that means[.]
the effect will take place solely by radia-
tion ……………………………….
…………………………….. it has exploded.

In this experiment it is essentially
necessary that the mirrors should be
opposite and parallel to each other and
then the effect takes place immediately.[83]

This demonstration was immediately followed by one in which the coal is replaced by ice, and a thermometer at the other mirror was used to measure the drop in temperature. This passage shows, alongside the drama of the illustration, Davy's careful narration of the demonstration, in which the science at work is conveyed directly while the process takes place. The transition into a similar, yet less spectacular, demonstration further implies the importance of the didactic content over the entertainment value, with the more impressive of the experiments not serving as a climactic moment. Instead, what might be considered the somewhat anti-climactic follow-up demonstration reinforces the scientific content.

Demonstrations did, however, have the capacity to descend into pure spectacle, even by Davy's own admission. In 'An Account of Some Experiments on Galvanic Electricity Made in the Theatre of the Royal Institution'—an article first published in the journals of the Royal Institution in 1802—Davy describes the chemical reactions of a variety of materials when used to complete the circuit of the galvanic battery. It is a catalogue of visual and auditory sense-data, with different materials causing 'sparks', 'corruscations', 'loud hissing noise[s]', 'scintillations', 'detonat[ions]', 'dazzling brightness', and a rainbow of different coloured flames (*DCW* II, p. 211-13). It is easy to imagine the spectacle that this might produce. Yet

[83] RI MS F/4/A, fols. 17^{r}-18^{r} (pp. 25-27). I have transcribed these pages using Faraday's lineation in order to show the elliptical silences of Davy's performance.

Davy's descriptions contain little scientific explication, and he closes the article with a weak excuse for their utility:

> A few only of these results have any claim to originality. On the phenomena of the combustion of bodies by galvanism we have been already furnished with many striking experiments by our own countrymen, and by the German and French philosophers. And after the path is once discovered in researches of this kind, to pursue it requires but little ability or exertion. An account of common facts, under new circumstances, particularly when they are accompanied by striking phenomena, *can however never be wholly useless*; and it sometimes gives a novel interest to the subject, and tends to awaken curiosity.
>
> (*DCW* II, p. 213, emphasis added)

That it requires a double negative—a description not in terms of the presence of utility, but its not-entire absence—suggests Davy's struggle with the spectacular nature of these experiments. He is trying to justify their entertainment value in terms of their educational utility.

Alongside arguing that Davy used demonstrations to settle scientific disputes, Golinski also argues for Davy's use of demonstrations, in combination with his rhetorical encomiums for chemistry, in the construction of his public identity.[84] Davy, in his lectures, would often digress into rhetorical and poetic passages singing the praises of science, and the powers it gave mankind—moments that were usually greeted with the same rapturous applause as the demonstrations. In the *Discourse Introductory*, Davy describes how science

> has bestowed upon [man] powers which may be called creative; which have enabled him to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his own instruments.
>
> (*DCW* II, p. 319)

[84] Golinski, *Science*, pp. 190-203; Golinski, 'Experimental Self', p. 21.

This passage implies the god-like power of the scientist, and it is not surprising to learn that Davy's *Discourse* was an influence on Mary Shelley when she created the character of Professor Waldeman, the lecturer who encourages Frankenstein to combine the science of modern chemistry with the immortal ambitions of alchemy. As Golinski shows, the combination of such rhetoric with spectacular demonstrations presents Davy in the self-constructed role of the Promethean scientist harnessing the power of the gods.[85]

Before turning to literary lectures, it is useful to contrast Davy's copious use of demonstrations at the Royal Institution to their absence in his lectures for the Royal Society. This highlights their distinctiveness to the genre of the *public* lecture. The lectures for the Royal Society are less general and more minute in their knowledge, providing not an elementary education for the general public, but the details of new discoveries for an audience composed largely of members of the scientific community. In the lectures before this scientific audience, he was not allowed to perform his usual demonstrations, appearing without any apparatuses, and instead having to rely on verbal descriptions of his experiments. In the first of his lectures before the Society—delivered on the 20th November 1806 and published in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1807—he displayed some anxiety about this format: 'I shall have to detail some minute (and I fear tedious) experiments' (*DCW* V, p. 1). Though this anxiety is absent in later lectures for the Society (no doubt due to the success of the first), Davy is operating on unfamiliar ground, in both a literal and metaphorical sense. Also absent in this new terrain are Davy's rhetorical and poetical flourishes which sing the praises of the sciences. Thus Davy is performing within a separate genre (or sub-genre) with different expectations. The combined force of demonstrations and poetical encomiums is, at least for Davy, the province of the public lecture. Thus, when Davy was elected President of the Royal Society, an anonymous pamphlet (signed 'J.W.L.G.') entitled *A Letter to Sir Humphry Davy* (1821) advised him to leave the 'glare and […] ornament' of his 'Royal Institution style (however excellent in its kind)' at that more public institution.[86]

Literary lectures are similarly notable for the absence of these spectacular demonstrations. Davy expressed his own reservations about this absence in a discourse delivered at the Royal Institution on the 3rd March 1810, which was published 'BY DESIRE OF THE MANAGERS' (according to its title page) as *A Lecture, on the Plan which it is Proposed to*

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85 Golinski, *Science*, pp. 190-203; Golinski, 'Experimental Self', p. 21.

86 J.W.L.G., *A Letter to Sir Humphry Davy, Bart. &c. &c. &c. on his being Elected the President of the Royal Society: with Some Observations on the Management of the British Museum. By A Fellow of the Royal Society* (London: James Ridgway, 1821), pp. 21, 6.

Adopt for Improving the Royal Institution, and Rendering it Permanent (1810).[87] After a short reiteration of the Institution's history, Davy turns to the organisation's future, sketching out a program of increased scientific disciplinarity. After a series of panegyrics for various scientific subjects, Davy focuses on literary lectures:

> Though the Lectures of the Royal Institution will more particularly relate to those departments of Science *which are susceptible of illustration, by experiments, or apparatus, or specimens*, yet I believe there is no intention to exclude any branches of Literature, which may relate to the progress or advancement of the physical Sciences or the Arts of Life. But the great object of public instruction in a scientific establishment, ought, it is evident, to be, *to communicate that kind of information which cannot be gained from books or from private instruction*, and to be afforded instruments and means otherwise not easily accessible. The effect produced by simple doctrine, or history, or didactic lectures, must depend entirely upon the powers of the orator; upon his excellence of composition, and the graces of delivery: but *experimental subjects may impress independent of eloquence*. The eye is not less susceptible than the ear; […] and the Philosophy of Nature, is purely a philosophy of visible and tangible effects.[88]

Coming two years after Coleridge's Royal Institution lectures, undergone at Davy's invitation, it is a remarkable public statement. Davy places what he believes to be the failure of literary lectures squarely on the absence of visual demonstrations and on their pure textuality, which requires a skilled orator to render that textuality 'impress[ive]'. Yet it is also in this text that Davy observes how literary lecturers might compensate for this lack of visual demonstration. Towards the end of the lecture, he describes an unnamed speaker:

> One of the most celebrated orators of modern times, owed great part of the effect he produced to *the copiousness of his instances*, to the fullness, variety, and minuteness of his *knowledge respecting the Scientific Principles of the refined and common Arts*; and it is this circumstance, as much as his vehement and

[87] Davy, *Lecture*, p. iii.
[88] Davy, *Lecture*, pp. 22-3, emphasis added.

> powerful manner, his poetical imagery, and his wonderful sagacity, that will carry his memory illustrious into the future.[89]

That word, 'instance', which here refers to rhetorical traits such as anecdote and textual quotation, establishes a parallel within Davy's own practice between literary examples and visual demonstrations. That it is the foremost quality of this unnamed narrator (who Hattie Lloyd Edmondson identifies as Edmund Burke) places textual quotation as the central convention of a literary lecture in much the same way that experimental demonstrations are key to scientific lectures.[90] Significantly, the description of Burke's 'knowledge respecting the Scientific Principles of the refined and common Arts' implies the Coleridgean role of 'poet-philosopher', or poet-scientist. Davy acknowledges the analogous relationship between textual quotation and scientific demonstration.

Davy himself utilised textual quotation, not just in his rhetorical and poetic introductions and conclusions, but as a mode of demonstration—as one of his 'instances'. Davy often began and ended his lectures with poetical flourishes which gained the applause of his audience, in some instances even ending lectures with a quotation from a literary work. A script for an 1806 lecture on vegetable chemistry ends with a fully written-out quotation from William Cowper's 'Yardley Oak' (1791), while a script for an 1807 lecture on 'Chemical Nature' closes with a quotation from Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620).[91] There are several published and unpublished lectures, however, in which textual quotation is integrated into the body of the lecture, and functions like a demonstration. In an undated lecture script on volcanoes, in which he made use of sketches in lieu of chemical displays—the word 'Sketch' is occasionally used instead of his usual 'Instance'—Davy inserted, beneath the word 'Sketch', a quotation from Dryden' s translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1697):

> The bastion of the [deletion] Avernus; <the lake near Monte Nuovo> so often made the subject of poetical ornament in the works of the Roman ~~poets~~ <authors> is evidently of similar origin—difficult ascent & [deletion] <guarded> by volcanic walls—shaded from the light of the sun, having its borders covered by unhealthy trees, & surrounded by a smoking & burning

[89] Davy, *Lecture*, p. 37, emphasis added
[90] Edmondson, pp. 117-18.
[91] Humphry Davy, 'Lecture 4: Vegetable Chemistry', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI HD/2/B/2, fol. 23^{v}; Humphry Davy, 'Chemical Nature 4', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI HD/2/C/2, fol. 26^{r}.

district, it might well have furnished the idea of the [deletion] <place> of descent to the infernal regions—"Sketch"

> —the ~~place~~ <spot> described by Virgil
> Deep was the vale; and, downward as it went
> From the wide mouth, a rocky rough descent;
> And here the access a gloomy grove defends,
> And here the unnavigable lake extends,
> O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
> No bird presumes to steer his airy flight;
> Such deadly vapours from the depth arise,
> And steaming sulphur, that infects the skies.[92]

As with his visual demonstrations, the text is utilised rhetorically as proof of a scientific observation. Not only does Davy give credence and real-world confirmation to a description of a mythical realm, he uses fiction to illustrate and confirm his own observations of the landscape and its geology.

The suitability of quotation as a distinct mode of demonstration within the genre of the public lectures is reiterated in the changes undergone by Davy's lectures between manuscript and print. In a script for an 1807 lecture on vegetable chemistry, Davy quoted again from Cowper's 'Yardley Oak'. The quotation in the manuscript is not written out in full, but is indicated by its central position on the page—the usual location of his 'Instances':

> Such trees abound in the crooked limbs forming knee timber which is necessary for forming the decks & the sides of ships—
>
> "the tortuous arms the shipwrights darling treasure"
>
> —The gale in elevated situations…[93]

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[92] Humphry Davy, 'Lecture Notes on Volcanoes', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS HD/1/A/1, fols. 6^{r}-6^{v}. Davy substitutes 'vale' for Dryden's 'cave' in the first line, and 'vapours' for 'stenches' in the eighth line, in order to suit his argument. See: John Dryden, 'Virgil's Æneis', in *The Works of John Dryden, Volume V: The Works of Virgil in English, 1967*, ed. by William Frost (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), VI.338-45

[93] Humphry Davy, 'Vegetable Chemistry', London, Royal Institution of Great Britain, RI MS HD/2/C/4, fol. 22^{v}. This quotation appears in a section of the lecture (fols. 21^{r}-24^{r}) which has been crossed out in pencil, though this may be to indicate that the passage had been transcribed for publication.

What is significant is that much of this lecture script is incorporated into the fifth lecture in *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry*, with the passages surrounding the Cowper quotation appearing almost verbatim, but with the verses from 'Yardley Oak' notably absent:

> Such trees abound in the crooked limbs fitted for forming knee-timber, which is necessary for joining the decks and the sides of ships. The gale in elevated situations…
>
> (*DCW* VII, p. 381).

One sentence flows immediately into the other with the parenthetical quotation missing. The absence of Cowper's lines in Davy's printed text implies the suitability of the quotation to the oral delivery, but not the publication. While this is an indicator of the complex relationship between lectures as oral performances and their translation into print, this elision is no doubt because Davy saw such flourishes as unfitting to serious scientific discourse. The absence therefore bears comparison to his removal of the poetical and rhetorical aspects, as well as the demonstrations, from his lectures when addressing the Royal Society. Though elided in print, textual quotation was part of the entertainment and demonstrative performance of a scientific lecture.

In *A Lecture on the History and Utility of Literary Institutions* (1823), Jennings devoted a considerable amount of attention to the importance of textual quotation in institutional lecture theatres. This two-and-a-half hour lecture (with an intermission) was delivered at the Surrey Institution in November 1822, and was popular enough to be repeated in its entirety the following month at the Russell Institution, and published the month after that. It provides a utilitarian argument for the achieved and potential contribution to public happiness by organisations such as the Royal, Surrey, and Russell Institutions, with a focus on the literary aspects of these organisations and their lectures. In his discourse, Jennings devotes a considerable amount of space to poetry recitation and an appeal for the utility of such recitation.[94] While the recitation of poetry is, for Jennings, primarily an 'amusement', he argues that it 'may be made extremely useful, as well as entertaining', contributing to the 'taste and discrimination' of the public.[95] He demonstrates this by quoting several poems at length, including five stanzas from the third canto of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1816). 'I

[94] Jennings, pp. 93-100.
[95] Jennings, pp. 93-4.

hope', he concludes, 'I have succeeded in convincing you that recited poetry may be made subservient to the best and most agreeable purposes'.[96] Though it is difficult to judge the reception of this aspect of his lecture, Jennings incorporates long passages of verse into his printed text to highlight the pleasurable aspects of recitation, whilst simultaneously using it as a didactic tool, demonstrating its own effectiveness as a mode of demonstration in the genre which his discourse addresses: literary lectures.

Coleridge's use of physical books shows how the use of textual quotation is connected to the performative aspects of lecturing. Indeed, his use of books within his lectures highlights the parallels not just between textual quotation and scientific demonstration, but between printed works and experimental materials. The artist Joseph Farington recorded in his diary a second-hand account of one of Coleridge's performances at the Royal Institution in 1808, relayed to him by Prince Hoare, the Foreign Secretary to the Royal Academy:

> Prince Hoare attended one of Coleridge's Lectures at the Royal Institution. When Coleridge came into the Box there were several Books laying. He opened two or three of them silently and shut them again after a short inspection. He then paused, & leaned His head on His hand, and at last said, He had been thinking for a word to express the distinct character of Milton as a Poet, but not finding one that wd. express it, He should make one "*Ideality*". He spoke extempore.—
>
> (*CLL* I, p. 145, original emphasis)

This passage has, unsurprisingly, drawn the attention of numerous critics who have scrutinised it for what it implies about Coleridge's performance. What I would like to draw attention to is the books scattered over the desk—a desk on which, during scientific lectures, there were experimental apparatuses to be used in demonstrations. Books, in this instance, replace the apparatuses. They are the instrument of the literary lecturer, or poet-scientist, and Coleridge turns to them for their performative potential. De Quincey, in his recollection of the poet in 1834, said that Coleridge, in his earliest lectures, 'relied upon his extempore ability' but that he 'read' his illustrations.[97] He described their selection as 'hap-hazard' as Coleridge failed to find

[96] Jennings, p. 99.
[97] Thomas de Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*, ed. by David Wright (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 78.

passages that would illustrate his point.[98] While his representation of Coleridge should be treated sceptically—De Quincey's recollective texts are an attempt to destabilise Coleridge's literary authority, as Mark D. Merritt shows—the relationship between extemporaneous analysis and read quotations is important to understanding Coleridge's lecturing methods.[99] Unlike Davy who, when he utilised textual quotation, usually wrote out passages in his lecture scripts, Coleridge frequently opts for page references in his lecture notes, often from multiple texts within a single lecture. Textual quotation would therefore become even more of a performative gesture, as Coleridge lifted a book, found the correct page, and read from the work.

The final section of this chapter explores the multiple functions of quotation in Coleridge's lectures. Just as demonstrations in the scientific lectures serve the multiple functions of entertainment, didacticism, and identity construction, so too these functions are evident in textual quotation. To support my argument that the critical tenets of the *Biographia* owe much to his lectures, I begin by situating Coleridge's text in relation to another genre: the lecture-as-literary-text. The *Biographia* is intimately connected with Coleridge's lectures, being composed and published between 1815 and 1817, in the middle of his lecturing career (1808-19), and is the closest Coleridge came to re-presenting his lectures on literature in print. Continuing the focus on Coleridge and Davy, examination of these lecturers' relationships to print highlight the necessity of publication in matters of longevity as well as the wariness modern readers should have in approaching lecture-texts. Orality and print symbiotically feed each other, lectures influencing printed texts and printed texts influencing lectures. This, I argue, is important in the study of the *Biographia* and the relation of its critical tenets to Coleridge's lectures.

2.2. *Biographia Literaria* and the Genre of the Lecture-as-Literary-Text

The immediate and performative genre of the public lecture has a complex relationship with print. Klancher highlights the necessity of 'remediation' involved in all academic disciplines—'when a given medium is translated or otherwise sublated into another medium (manuscript

[98] De Quincey, p. 78.
[99] Mark D, Meritt, 'De Quincey's Coleridge and the Dismantling of Romantic Authority', *Auto/Biography Studies* 20 (2005), 195-29.

into print, painting into photography, visual art into literary words)'.[100] Bodies of knowledge require the legibility, credibility, and stature conferred by the 'discursive field of letters'.[101] Lectures are no exception, especially if they are to be presented not merely as a popular and ephemeral entertainment form, but as lasting contributions to knowledge. They require remediation, from orality to print, in order to achieve legitimate and canonical status as works of scientific, literary, or aesthetic theory. Zimmerman argues against creating a binary between print and orality in discussions of lectures, as the genre utilised printed materials, not merely for their canonisation after their delivery, but in their preparation and advertisement prior to performance. Lecturers and lecturing institutions 'relied heavily upon […] newspaper advertisements, occasional notices and reviews, prospectuses, and syllabi'.[102] Similarly, Franzel points to the use of printed texts by literary lecturers for the process of textual quotation—a process by which printed materials become oral, implying a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between the two media. Lectures, according to Franzel, are 'a privileged site for reflecting on the differences and similarities between various media', for reflecting on remediation.[103] Lectures, therefore, do not move in a singular direction (from orality to print), but back and forth, each feeding into the other.

The frequency and popularity of lectures appearing in the remediated form of print publications, insist upon viewing the lecture-as-literary-text as a genre in its own right. Some lecturers, such as Hazlitt, used lectures as a prolonged marketing campaign for a printed text. Others, such as Reynolds, resisted print, and only published their works under institutional pressure. Some lecture-texts, such as Jennings's lecture on literary institutions, retain performative aspects, including details of delivery—dates, times, lengths of lectures, the presence of intermissions, and alterations made to the lecture in its performance. Other texts, such as Davy's *Chemical Philosophy*, quietly erase their origin. These differing approaches to publishing lectures imply the simultaneous adoption and resistance of conventions that typify the uses of genre, but also represent the difficult translation of one genre into another—the sense of loss that pervades any form of translation. Lectures on literature survive this remediation more intact than scientific lectures, as the performative convention of textual quotation easily translates to the methodological illustration of written literary criticism. Yet, even then, Jennings's demonstration of the value of poetry recitals is nullified by its translation to printed text. Conversely, and as an inversion of Davy's concern about literary lectures,

[100] Klancher, *Transfiguring*, p. 112.
[101] Klancher, *Transfiguring*, p. 116.
[102] Zimmerman, *Romantic*, p. 11.
[103] Franzel, *Connected*, p. 21.

experimental lectures do not survive the transition, with dramatic and spectacular demonstrations replaced by verbal description and technical drawings.

Davy published a handful of individual lectures in his career, in journals and as short publications, often with a title highlighting the institutional pressure towards publication. Those few lectures that he did publish are, notably, more like propaganda for chemistry than they are experimental and demonstrative. The *Discourse*, for example, is a history of chemistry combined with rhetorical declarations of the power of the modern chemist. It was only in his academic lectures for the Royal Society—which were free from his visual demonstrations and therefore lent themselves more naturally to print, relying as they did on description—that Davy was able to publish more in-depth scientific knowledge. However, at the end of his lecturing career he collected and revised his lectures, publishing them as *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* and *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry*. While the latter is presented as a series of lectures, the former elides this origin and presents itself as an elementary textbook. These polarised print manifestations of oral deliveries imply the complex relationship with print, while the delay in publication, waiting until his career ended, suggests an attempt to create something lasting from more than a decade of ephemeral performances. *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* was not, however, a popular success. Its title page announces it as the first part of two, but no second part ever appeared, and the part that was published was not reprinted in Davy's lifetime. This stands in stark contrast to the popularity of Marcet's work. Davy could not replicate the popularity of his lectures in the remediated from of the printed book.

The lecture-as-literary-text is a politicised site, which confirmed the exclusivity of institutional knowledge whilst disseminating it to a wider public. Printed texts were cheaper than attendance at a course of public lectures, and more accessible to those who did not have membership to the particular institution or who did not live in the vicinity of the lecture theatre. As Hays observes, the best lecturers of the day were drawn away from provincial towns and cities towards the metropolis, with Hays describing this movement in terms of imperialism.[104] As far as academic and societal lectures were concerned, the publication of lectures represent a first appearance of these discourses (at least in an authorised state) before a wider public. The lectures of Hugh Blair, for example, found wider dissemination after twenty years of confinement in a university. If public bodies such as the Royal, Surrey, and Russell Institutions represent new ambitions towards public education, the genre of the lecture-as-literary-text—

[104] Hays, p. 91.

often produced under institutional pressure—represents a wider engagement with the population. Yet the published text of a lecture, often bearing an institution's name on its title page, confirmed the authority and the pre-eminence of these public bodies in producing new knowledge. It was not just that the content of scientific and literary disciplines were rendered in a form 'more lasting than bronze' (as Horace put it).[105] It was a lasting statement of the reach of an institution. The name of an organisation on the title page lent an authority to a published work, simultaneously staking a claim of ownership over that knowledge whilst implicitly sanctioning its dissemination.

Coleridge was no stranger to the lecture-as-literary-text, publishing three lectures soon after they were delivered in Bristol in 1795: *A Moral and Political Lecture* (1795), *Conciones Ad Populum* (1795), and *The Plot Discovered* (1795). As Lewis Patton and Peter Mann explain through analysis of letters and other writings by the poet and his Bristol circle, Coleridge published his political lectures in order to clarify his political position and to mute his spontaneous excesses.[106] This did not prevent him, however, from claiming in the 'Advertisement' to *A Moral and Political Lecture* that this discourse was 'printed as it was delivered [...] with all the inaccuracies and inelegant colloquialisms of an hasty composition', for fear that he may be seen to be 'afterwards timidly qualif[ying]' his claims.[107] Publication of lectures, therefore, is not simply a matter of preservation, even if it claims to be. It is a revisionary process. Thus lecture-texts should be treated with scepticism, even if they are vital to understanding the lectures themselves. They must be considered in a way which echoes Fredric Jameson's argument on the textualisation of history: on the one hand, lecture-texts are not lectures (just as texts are not history), whilst, on the other, lectures are accessible (much like history) only in textual form.[108]

Coleridge did not publish his lectures on literature. Despite there being occasions when he expressed a desire to publish them—for example, in the *Biographia*—Coleridge was also aware of the impossibility of collecting or repeating lectures due to his methods of preparation and delivery (*BL* I, p. 34). In a letter to John Britton in February 1819 (which I further discuss below), he explained that he was unable to repeat lectures due to their lack of precise planning. Instead, he used the days leading up to the lecture 'collecting and digesting [...] materials', and

[105] Horace, 'Ode 3.30', in *Odes and Epodes*, trans. by Niall Rudd (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), l. 1 (pp. 216-17).
[106] Patton and Mann, pp. xxix-xxxv.
[107] Coleridge, *Lectures: 1795*, p. 4.
[108] Fredric Jameson, *Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 82.

'tak[ing] far, far more pains [in doing so] than would go into the set composition of a lecture', but ultimately entering the lecture theatre 'know[ing] almost as little as any one of [his] audience' what the 'words, illustrations, &c.' would be (*CL* IV, p. 924). Though this need not be taken entirely at face value—a large body of manuscript notes for lectures has been left behind by Coleridge—his reliance on extemporaneous delivery, or extemporaneous expansion on brief notes, was a feature of his lecturing method that he knew prevented their replication, either as lectures or in print. Indeed, unlike Davy, for whom there are dozens of surviving scripts, there are no full scripts from Coleridge's lectures that have survived, only scraps and notes. Though it could be argued that this says as much about his methods of preservation as those of his preparation, it suggests the rarity with which he entered the lecture theatre with a fully scripted text. Had Coleridge sought to publish his lectures, it would not have been a process of handing over his lectures to a printer, as Hazlitt did, or even a reconstructive process, like Davy's for *Chemical Philosophy*. It would have been a process of original composition. As he says in the *Biographia*, he hoped to publish 'the *substance* of these lectures'—a qualification implying that compositional process (*BL* I, p. 34, emphasis added). This distinguishes his failure to publish his lectures from his failure to complete, and his delay to see into print, poems such as 'Kubla Khan' and 'Christabel'. Both poems circulated orally, and were even imitated by other poets, prior to their publication, yet they existed in a fully composed state which could be immediately printed, albeit that, like the *Biographia*, they were complete in their incompletion. Coleridge's lectures were not fixed in their content, and the passage to print would have been more difficult.

The lack of publication, and the accompanying lack of complete lecture-texts in manuscript, has been described as a 'transmission failure' by Klancher, and a 'double […] loss' by Zimmerman, who refers to the loss of both the textual content of the lectures and the ephemeral elements of their performance.[109] Thus there have been at least ten editions of Coleridge's lectures in the nearly-two-hundred years since his death in 1834, each edition being different to the last, collecting, re-collecting, and re-organising scraps and notes, as well as any public and private responses to his appearances in lecture theatres, in an attempt to reconstruct these ephemeral performances and their content.[110] This sense of loss is not confined to modern

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[109] Klancher, 'Transmission', p. 174; Zimmerman, 'Coleridge', p. 47.

[110] Henry Nelson Coleridge (ed.), *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 4 vols (London: William Pickering, 1836); [Sara] Coleridge (ed.), *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare and Some of the Old Poets and Dramatists, with other Literary Remains of S.T. Coleridge*, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1849); J. Payne Collier (ed.), *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton by the Late S.T. Coleridge* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1856); T. Ashe (ed.), *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere* [sic] *and other English Poets* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1885); Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare and some other Old*

critics. It has been lamented since Coleridge's lifetime. In an article entitled 'A.W. Schlegel on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet; with Remarks upon the Character of German Criticism' (1820), which appeared in the first and only issue of *Ollier's Literary Miscellany* (the periodical in which Peacock's 'The Four Ages of Poetry' appeared), the anonymous author twice laments Coleridge's inability to publish the content of his lectures. In discussing the opinion that 'Shakespeare is not understood in England', the author exclaims: 'Would that Coleridge would collect all his energies for a short time, and would thoroughly wipe off this blot from our country by the publication of his lectures!' (*OLM*, p. 8). Several pages later he returns to this subject:

> Whoever has been an auditor at Mr. Coleridge's Critical Lectures will, unless at least he was unworthy to hear them, acknowledge himself to have been often delighted by the bright ideas which are ever and anon running over from his seething mind. But that powerful and teeming intellect seems so destitute of self-controul [sic], so incapable of that highest exercise of self-controul, self-denial, so unable to restrain its own faculties in due subordination, that it can never, except momentarily and by fits and starts, forget itself in and identify itself with its object, can never wed itself unto it with that fidelity and devotion which are essential to perfect love, upon which constant and holy marriage alone the spirit of nature pronounces its blessings, and accords the promise of an offspring that shall endure from generation to generation.
>
> (*OLM*, pp. 13-14)

'Self-controul' here is no doubt building upon the earlier lamentation for Coleridge's lack of publication, and implicitly refers to the discipline required to convert his oral discourses, and the thoughts which spill from his mind, into print. Echoing Shakespeare's procreation sonnets and escalating in tone through the use of a long single sentence, clause piled upon clause, this is a melodramatic lamentation for Coleridge's much observed failure to produce permanent works. Not only does it state the poet's great contribution to knowledge made through his lectures, it highlights orality's reliance on print in matters of posterity. Coleridge's lectures

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Poets and Dramatists (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1907); Thomas Middleton Raysor (ed.), *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1930; 2nd edn, London: J.M Dent and Sons, 1960); R. A. Foakes (ed.), *Coleridge on Shakespeare: The Text of the Lectures of 1811-12* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971); R.A. Foakes (ed.), *Lectures 1808-1819—On Literature*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); Adam Roberts (ed.), *Coleridge: Lectures on Shakespeare (1811-1819)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

required the permanent and canonical status of print, and the lack of such a work has been a source of frustration since their delivery.

This leads to the *Biographia*, Coleridge's most complete (though notoriously incomplete) published statement of his literary-critical principles and methods. The *Biographia* is—to echo Franzel's discussion on the relationship between lectures and print—a complex site of remediation.[111] Filled with theories and methodologies developed within the genre of the public lecture, this work is itself an oral text dictated to an amanuensis, and it includes passages read directly from his notebooks and from handwritten translations of German texts (which go uncited), as well as quotations from both print and manuscript poems by Wordsworth. Some of the most repeated literary theories from his lectures are to be found in this text, including the suspension of disbelief, a critique of the Classical Unities, the belief that Shakespeare's judgement was equal to his genius, and an analysis of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. In its digressive style, oral composition, and critical content, the *Biographia* essentially presents Coleridge's lectures remediated within a complex web of print genres. While it is not strictly a lecture-text, it is important to consider it in relation to the genre of the lecture-as-literary-text, not just because the publication repeats ideas developed in lectures, but because there is also evidence that Coleridge quoted from this work in his later lectures. The *Biographia* has been and will continue to be a touchstone for modern critics in analysis of these oral discourses, a work involved with, informing, and informed by, these performances.

It is not just the content of the *Biographia* that connects it to his lectures. It is a textual performance that mirrors Coleridge's performance in the lecture theatre. Coleridge was notoriously digressive in his lectures, often veering off at tangents, expanding on minor points, regularly leaving himself no time to cover the subjects he had promised in his prospectuses. Not only does the *Biographia* veer between genres in its much-debated tripartite structure, the philosophical chapters are brought to a sudden halt as though the author is aware that he has digressed too far, broaching the limits of autobiography just as he might overrun a lecture by talking for too long. Even the very existence of the *Biographia* in its current two-volume state, and as a work in its own right, speaks to this digressiveness. Beginning as a short preface to *Sibylline Leaves*, but expanding and digressing between subject matters and genres, it became an independent volume and then eventually two.[112] It is a quality that has drawn comparisons

[111] Franzel, *Connected*, p. 22.
[112] The history of the *Biographia*, the relation of its parts, and the interruption to the philosophical chapters are discussed above, pp. 55-74.

between this work and Lawrence Sterne's digressive-by-design novel, *Tristram Shandy*.[113] Nothing, however, speaks more to this oblique quality than Coleridge's use of footnotes. Printed in a smaller font at the bottom of the page in the first edition, these notes often run on for several pages.[114] The footnote on madrigals, for example, begins of the twenty-ninth page of the first volume and continues until page thirty-three, with only two lines of the main body of the text appearing at the top of pages thirty through thirty-three—more than four full pages almost entirely devoted to a footnote. Coleridge's footnotes include source citations, statements of priority, promises of future publications, and a wealth of quotation, including from poems in various languages, translations, and his previous publications. This branching out into liminal textual spaces represents a thought process and an erudition that struggles to conform to a linear narrative, just as Coleridge struggled for much of his lecturing career to remain within the temporal boundaries of lectures. The *Biographia* may not be the performance transcript that modern critics desire, but it is the closest work in Coleridge's oeuvre to both an authoritative and authorised statement of his lecture content, and a lecture performance replicated in print. In my final section, therefore, I turn to the concept of practical criticism—a notion developed in his lectures and outlined in the *Biographia*—which is the guiding principle of the second volume.

2.3. Demonstrating Poetics: Coleridge as Lecturer

In the second volume of the *Biographia*, Coleridge outlined a new critical methodology for the analysis of literature which he termed 'practical criticism'—a methodology the uses of which he demonstrated through a short analysis of Shakespeare and a longer investigation of the characteristics of Wordsworth. After a chapter establishing the four principles of 'poetic genius'—'GOOD SENSE', 'FANCY', 'MOTION', and 'IMAGINATION'—he briefly outlines his critical method as 'the application of these principles […] in the appraisal of works more or less imperfect' in order 'to discover what the qualities in a poem are, which may be deemed promises and specific symptoms of poetic power' in the author (*BL* II, pp. 18, 19). In demonstration of this, he cites the early poetry of Shakespeare, 'which give at once strong promises of the strength, and yet obvious proofs of the immaturity, of his genius' (*BL* II, p. 19).

[113] See above, p. 56, n. 71.
[114] For the bibliographic descriptions of the first edition of the *Biographia* in the remainder of this chapter, I consulted the copy in the Special Collections at the Robinson Library, Newcastle University. Shelfmark: Robert White (W821.72 COL). Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, 2 vols (London: Rest Fenner, 1817).

What is important to emphasise here is, firstly, that the focus is on poems, not poetry in the abstract, and on individual poets, not the idealised figure of the poet. Principles are being used as instruments of dissection. Secondly, there is a reversal of Coleridge's methodology employed in his early lectures. Foakes has observed a shift in emphasis in the way Coleridge characterised his lectures, pointing to an 1807 letter which described his upcoming 1808 lectures as being on 'the Principles of Poetry' which would be 'illustrated' by examining the works of various authors, and to the 'Prospectus' for the 1811-12 lectures which were advertised as being 'on Shakespeare and Milton in Illustration of the Principles of Poetry'.[115] Foakes is correct in identifying a shift in emphasis between this early letter and the later prospectus, but overlooks that the 1808 lectures were advertised in *The Monthly Magazine*, *Universal Magazine*, and *Jackson's Oxford Journal* as part of the Royal Institution's lecture programme as being 'on the distinguished English Poets, in illustration of the General Principles of Poetry'.[116] Furthermore, this shift in emphasis is not a shift in methodology. Coleridge's critical analysis still focuses on the abstraction of principles from phenomena—a method which has its parallels with Davy's scientific practices. Practical criticism, however, performs the opposite function. To use a scientific analogy, theory and principles are no longer the elements to be extracted from complex bodies. Instead, theory and principles are the apparatus to decompose matter into isolated elements, just as Davy used the galvanic battery to isolate potassium from potash.

The relationship between practical criticism and increased literary quotation is reiterated by the *Biographia*. Those coming to read the *Biographia* for the first time are no doubt struck by the sheer amount of textual quotation in the second volume. In the first edition, the twenty-first chapter closes with a long quotation of forty-three lines from Chaucer, a brief prose passage followed by two short quotations from George Herbert, before ending the chapter with three full pages of Herbert's poetry, printing three of his poems in full. When it comes to quoting Wordsworth throughout the twenty-second chapter, Coleridge chooses, alongside dozens of short quotations, to quote large sections at a time, utilising upwards of twenty lines from each work in order to examine 'The Blind Highland Boy' (1807), 'Ruth' (1800), 'Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle' (1807), 'Resolution and Independence' (1807), 'The Fountain' (1800), 'The Mad Mother' (1798), 'Yew-Trees' (1815), 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1807), and 'The White Doe'. At one point, in a fifteen-page section of this chapter, the textual quotation

[115] R.A. Foakes, 'Editors Introduction', to *CLL* I, pp. xxxix-lxxxvi (p. xli).
[116] 'Varieties Literary and Philosophical', *Monthly Magazine*, 25 (1808), 57-63 (p. 59); 'Transactions of Learned & Economical Societies', *Universal Magazine*, 9 (1808), 144; 'Sunday and Tuesday's Post', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 2858 (6 Feb 1808), 1.

begins to dominate Coleridge's commentary, with two-hundred-and-forty-two lines of Wordsworth's verse appearing intermingled with only two-hundred-and-fourteen lines of Coleridge's prose. Much like in the previous chapter, quotation becomes increasingly prevalent as the chapter progresses, implying a heaping up of poetic texts. Readers might, understandably, begin to believe they are reading a poetic anthology with only the barest of critical armature. Emphasis is placed on the examples and instances.

The evolution of Coleridge's lecturing methods towards his focus on practical criticism can be traced through his evolution as a lecturer on literature, and the development of his lecturing practices. Throughout his lecturing career, Coleridge's methods of preparation shifted, beginning by utilising fully composed scripts (none of which have survived), moving to a heavier reliance on his extemporaneity, and finally ending his career using notes to be expanded upon, which limited his spontaneous excesses. In the above-mentioned response to John Britton's request for him to repeat a previously delivered course of lectures, Coleridge explained why he was unable to do so. In his explanation, he produces a revealing portrait of his lecturing methods (at least as he perceived them or wished them to be perceived):

> First permit me to remove a very natural, indeed almost inevitable mistake, relative to my lectures: not that I *have* them, or that the lectures of one place or season are in any way repeated in another. [...] those who have attended me for any two seasons successively will bear witness that the lecture given at the London Philosophical Society, on the *Romeo and Juliet* for instance, was as different from that given at the Crown and Anchor as if they had been given by two individuals who, without any communication with each other, had only mastered the same principles of philosophic criticism.
>
> (*CL* IV, pp. 923-24, original emphasis)

After arguing for his priority over Schlegel in his views, he continues:

> The fact is this: during a course of lectures, I faithfully employ *all* the intervening days in collecting and digesting the materials [...]. The day of the lecture, till the hour of commencement, I devote to the consideration, what of the mass before me is best fitted to answer the purposes of a lecture—*i.e.* to keep the audience awake and interested during the delivery, and to leave a *sting*

> behind—*i.e.* a disposition to study the subject anew, under the light of a new principle. Several times, however, […] I have previously written the lecture; but before I had proceeded twenty minutes, I have been obliged to push the MSS. away, and give the subject a new turn. Nay, this was so notorious, that many of my auditors […] declar[ed] they never felt so secure of a good lecture as when they perceived that I had not a single scrap of writing before me. I take far, far more pains than would go to the set composition of a lecture, both by varied reading and by meditation; but for the words, illustrations, &c. I know almost as little as any one of my audience […] what they will be five minutes before the lecture begins.
>
> (*CL* IV, p. 924, original emphasis)

This passage presents a basic model for understanding Coleridge and his lecturing methods, namely his semi-prepared, semi-extemporaneous performances. There were, of course, lectures in which he prepared meticulously, particularly early on. His political lectures given in Bristol in the 1790s were well-enough prepared for him to be able to publish them soon after their delivery, and this fuller preparation can be noted in his first lectures on literature. In letters of 1808, in the midst of his first course of lectures on literature, he describes himself as too ill to have 'read thro' [his] lecture' and to have 'scarcely [taken his] eyes off the paper' (*CL* III, pp. 60, 59). This does not appear to have lasted long, however, as there are reports of Coleridge speaking extemporaneously in this first series, suggesting he learned the benefit of the performative gesture of pushing away his lecture notes early in his lecturing career. While the profusion of notes for his lectures undermine his claim for their absence in the lecture theatre, their scattered and brief nature reinforces the image of a speaker not working from fixed content.

This semi-scripted working method, as Coleridge notes, feeds into the textual nature of his lectures. Despite numerous references to publishing his lectures, both publicly and privately, Coleridge here suggests that no such texts exist. The lack of full lecture scripts handed down to posterity would appear to be the product less of lackadaisical preservation methods than their non-existence (though, again, there is evidence that a handful of his earliest lectures were fully scripted). There is also a curious remark about his spontaneous use of illustrations. The lack of his own papers implies the presence of texts from which to quote, though his insistence that he does not know which illustrations he will utilise is brought into question by his annotated copy

of Shakespeare (discussed below). There is, further, a focus on the entertainment value of the lectures, prioritising keeping auditors 'awake and interested' and being an encourager of independent learning. Such audience awareness implies the responsiveness of Coleridge as a lecturer, his accommodation of his audience's expectations, and his concessions to the public lecture genre. Far from developing a lecturing method and persona designed to protect himself from the less dignified aspects of public lecturing, he develops a method to become a more entertaining performer for his audience. His comments on *Romeo and Juliet* suggest his own sense of an evolving lecturing and literary-critical practice—one which prioritises the application of principles to text and of the development of practical criticism.

While Coleridge's extemporaneity could be lauded—De Quincey said that 'no written lecture could have been more effectual than one of his unpremeditated colloquial harangues'—it was also a source of weakness for his lectures, prone as Coleridge was to wild digressions.[117] This tendency towards rambling digression and swift movement between tangentially related topics is summed up in Coleridge's sole encounter with Keats in April 1819. In a letter to his brother, George Keats, the younger poet recorded his meeting with Coleridge, detailing how, in a short two-mile walk, the elder poet 'broached a thousand things', which Keats attempted to list:

> Nightingales, Poetry, on Poetical sensation, Metaphysics, Different genera and species of Dreams, Nightmare, a dream accompanied by a sense of touch, single and double touch, a dream related, First and second consciousness, the difference explained between will and Volition, so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking[,] the second consciousness, Monsters, the Kraken, Mermaids, southey believes in them, southey's belief too much diluted, A Ghost story, Good morning.[118]

He concludes: 'I heard his voice as he came towards me. I heard it as he moved away. I heard it all the interval'.[119] Keats's description presents a barrage of topics which are, nonetheless, a progressive thread, with each subject following the next, not by a coherent logic from start to finish, but by association. This digressiveness is also evident in the *Biographia*, not only through its digressive chapters, but through the prolific use of long footnotes to clarify and

[117] De Quincey, p. 78.
[118] John Keats, *Selected Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Grant F. Scott, revised edn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 278.
[119] Keats, p. 278.

expand in oblique directions. Thus it is not surprising to find that Henry Crabb Robinson—a regular audience member at Coleridge's lectures across his career, and a frequent recorder of Coleridge's performances—noted of one lecture that the speaker 'as usual, [...] wasted his time on the introduction to the introduction' and of another that Coleridge uttered 'not even a single word on the subject of polite literature'.[120] Coleridge's extemporaneous and digressive discourses needed controlling. Thus by the end of his lecturing career, Coleridge was lecturing from brief notes. For his lectures on the history of philosophy, as with those last lectures on literature, he kept fuller prompts. Coleridge's preparation methods therefore follow a general trajectory across his lecturing career. Beginning with full, publishable lecture scripts in 1795 and 1808, he transitioned to a heavier reliance on his extemporaneity, and finally to a more controlled semi-extemporaneous approach.

In his final two courses of lectures, Coleridge carried his copy of the 1807 two-volume edition of Samuel Ayscough's *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare* into the lecture theatre.[121] Coleridge had his copies of each volume rebound with blank interleaves so that every other leaf of the book provided blank pages in which he could annotate the text. His lecture notes for his lectures on Shakespeare from his two final courses delivered between 1818 and 1819 are to be found on these interleaves. Each of the annotated plays begin with a fully drafted introduction, but then becomes a series of brief marginal notes upon which Coleridge elaborated with his more palatable extemporaneity. These brief notes, however, are scattered sparingly alongside the text itself, with most of the interleaves remaining blank and those that are written on containing but a single note. Each note, tellingly, begins with a line number, a quotation to begin each point. This annotated text represents a significant shift in his lecturing methods and, I would argue, is emblematic of Coleridge's shift in his critical methodology. No longer reading from notebooks or sheets of paper, whilst reaching out for books to provide illustrations, Coleridge instead lectured directly from a literary text. His arguments developed outwards from his cited passages. The literary work is no longer there to illustrate or demonstrate, but to be worked upon and delved into. As he said of this script-notes dynamic in one of those final lectures:

> I have usually introduced & as it were laid the foundation of each Lecture by the enunciation of the general principles, from which the particular subject was *to*

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[120] Henry Crabb Robinson, *On Books and Their Writers*, ed. by Edith J. Morley, 3 vols (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1938), I, p. 114.
[121] Coleridge's annotated copy of Ayscough, which I consulted, is held in the British Library, General Reference Collection C.61.h.7.

> *receive and at the same time to give illustration*—and this I consider as not the least valuable, tho' it may most often have been felt both by the audience and myself as the heaviest portion.
>
> (*CLL* II, p. 415, emphasis added).

Coleridge portrays the interaction between theory and textual analysis as a two-way exchange in which 'principles' give illustration as well as receive it. That is, textual quotation is not simply illustrating principles. The principles are dissecting and unpacking a literary text. This is Coleridge's practical criticism in action, embodied by his means of delivery.

Yet if Coleridge's critical practice embraced this counterpart to scientific demonstration, practical criticism is a step away from Davy's scientific methods. When Coleridge attended Davy's course of lectures in 1802, the lectures followed a format that would be repeated in subsequent courses. The first of Davy's afternoon lectures, as with most of his courses, provided a history of chemistry from the early alchemical philosophers to the modern-day men of science. Afterwards, there followed lectures divided between the theoretical and the practical. There were afternoon lectures on the principles of chemistry and evening lectures on the application of those principles to the mechanical arts—a process termed 'practical science' in the period. The evening courses were necessitated by the organisation for which Davy lectured, as public utility was a foremost concern of the Royal Institution in its early days. As Davy's fame as a chemistry lecturer grew, the Institution quietly shifted its focus towards this more theoretical line of lecturing. After all, Davy's discoveries during his career as a lecturer (his invention of the safety lamp came later) were all in the field of theoretical chemistry, and his most famous displays involved the galvanic battery. Interestingly, Davy's lecture programme has a tripartite structure that is echoed by the three sections of the *Biographia*. It is not coincidence that Coleridge's term 'practical criticism' echoes Davy's 'practical science', and the three sections of history, theory, and practical application are paralleled by the biographical, philosophical, and literary-critical sections that comprise Coleridge's literary life. If Davy is orienting himself towards the theoretical aspects of his lectures, Coleridge is doing the opposite, prioritising the practical over the theoretical. In embracing the convention of the scientific demonstration in the analogous form of textual quotation, Coleridge diverges from Davy's exemplary position in the genre of the public lecture, just as the trajectory of his lecturing career is one that moves away from the Royal Institution. As mentioned above, this

move represents a significant methodological change, and one that marks out a new disciplinary terrain for literary criticism.

2.4. 'The Admiration of Posterity'

In *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), Hazlitt condemns Coleridge for having wasted his life talking:

> If Mr Coleridge had not been the most impressive talker of his age, he would probably have been the finest writer; but he lays down his pen to make sure of an auditor, and mortgages the admiration of posterity for the stare of an idler. […] he may be said to have lived on the sound of his own voice.[122]

Setting aside the irony that Hazlitt, a celebrated lecturer, had earned a living through the spoken word, this passage once again highlights the dynamic between orality, print, and posterity, and it builds on the recurring image of Coleridge as a failure and underachiever discussed in my first chapter. While the financial rewards of lecturing did indeed mean that Coleridge lived by 'the sound of his own voice', Hazlitt's summation of Coleridge's wasted breath was not prophetic. As Zimmerman shows, Coleridge developed his theory on the 'willing suspension of disbelief' within the performative arena of the lecture by resisting, and attempting to rise above, the genre. It was also in this arena that he developed his theory of practical criticism by embracing the generic convention of the demonstration. While 'suspension of disbelief' has entered into common parlance as a way of understanding individual engagement with art, practical criticism was taken up by I. A. Richards in his 1929 work named after Coleridge's methodology, and its empiricism remains the basis of much modern literary criticism.[123] This is potentially Coleridge's most enduring legacy, even beyond anything in his poetry. Both notions achieve their canonical status through their appearance in print in the *Biographia*—the work which George Saintsbury declared to be as important as Aristotle's *Poetics*, and which led a young T.S. Eliot (who, in his youth, was notoriously hostile to Romanticism) to declare Coleridge 'perhaps the greatest of English critics'.[124] Coleridge saw the importance of this work. In the letter to John Britton discussed above, he concluded with a list of what he believed to be his most important works:

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[122] Hazlitt, 'Mr. Coleridge', p. 99.
[123] I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).
[124] For a summary of the influence of the *Biographia*, see: Engell and Bate, pp. xli-xliii. According to Eliot, 'there may be a good deal to be said for Romanticism in life, there is no place for it in letters'; Eliot, *Sacred*, pp. 1, 28.

> were it in my power, my works should be confined to the second volume of my 'Literary Life', the Essays of the third volume of the 'Friend', from page 67 to page 265, with about fifty or sixty pages from the two former volumes, and some half-dozen of my poems.
>
> (*CL* IV, p. 925)

The desire to control his literacy legacy, implied by the word 'works', is a frequent refrain in Romantic prose writings. The specification of the second volume—that dedicated to practical criticism—and its placement first in a list which places his poetry last (though this relegation of his poetical works is perhaps the product of his wavering self-image) reiterates the significance of this turn in his critical thinking even in his own notoriously self-critical view of his life. Without Coleridge's gifts as a 'talker', these critical tenets may have remained under-developed. Without his talents as an orator, there would be no *Biographia*, which was dictated to an amanuensis. Embracing a genre which could have financial and reputational rewards, but which also allowed him to make meaningful contributions to knowledge, Coleridge developed a style of lecturing which compensated for the absence of scientific demonstrations by an increasing focus on textual quotation. The development of his lecture style, from one of fully written scripts to brief notes to be expanded upon extemporaneously, and from scraps of paper and notebooks (whilst occasionally turning to books for illustration) to an annotated copy of Shakespeare, parallels his transition from a critical methodology dedicated to extracting principles from texts, to a methodology that was more textually focused. It is a development that might be characterised as one from literary theory to literary criticism.

The antagonisms of periodical culture—the arena out of which Coleridge aimed to raise literary criticism—are the subject of my next chapter. Focusing on replies and responses to reviews—particularly to those in the *Edinburgh Review*—I continue the examination of Romantic-era poet-critics' development of a critical discourse which stands in opposition to the era's most prevalent form of textual analysis. Whereas Coleridge's lectures are a serious attempt to establish a criticism alternative to that of periodical reviewing, the following chapter centralises playful replies to critics, focusing on the satires and parodies of Hogg and Byron.

Chapter 3

‘That Mighty Arbitrator of the Present Day’: Hogg, Byron, and the *Edinburgh*-Reply

In the 1811 lecture on ‘the causes of false criticism’ discussed in my previous chapter, Coleridge read his passage on ‘the age of personality’, which was originally published in the tenth number of *The Friend* (1809-10), and which would reappear in a footnote to the *Biographia*:[1]

> [I]n this AGE OF PERSONALITY, this age of literary and political *Gossiping*, when the meanest Insects are worshipped with a sort of Egyptian Superstition, if only the brainless head be atoned for by the sting of *personal* malignity in the tail; when the most vapid Satires have become the objects of a keen public Interest purely from the number of contemporary characters *named* in the patch-work Notes (which possess, however, the comparative merit of being more poetical than the Text), and because, to increase the stimulus, the Author has sagaciously left his own *name* for whispers and conjectures!—In an Age, when even Sermons are published with a double Appendix stuffed with *names*—in a Generation so transformed from the characteristic reserve of Britons, that from the ephemeral Sheet of a London Newspaper to the everlasting Scotch Professorial Quarto, almost every Publication exhibits or flatters the epidemic Distemper […]. In an Age, when a bashful *Philalethes* or *Philaleutheros* is as rare on the title-pages and among the signatures of our Magazines, as a real name used to be in the days of our shy and notice-shunning Grandfathers! When (more exquisite than all) I see an EPIC POEM […] advertized with the special recommendation, that the said EPIC POEM contains more than a hundred *names* of *living* Persons![2]

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[1] See above, p. 95.

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. by Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), II, p. 138, original emphasis. This passage, taken from the tenth issue of *The Friend* (19 October 1809), appears almost verbatim in the 1812 and 1818 republications, as well as the *Biographia*, with only minor changes in typography and spelling (*BL* I, pp. 41-2).

Coleridge depicts a literary culture in which 'almost every publication' is directed toward 'personal malignity' in order to satisfy a public 'distemper', but in so doing he specifies a number of genres by way of example. Sermons and epic poems are the high genres whose purity is infected by this 'distemper', while the genre which underlies all is satire. Indeed, this statement could be taken as a commentary on Byron's *English Bards*, with its depiction of an England-Scotland divide, the litany of names, the complex relationship between poetry and notes, and its sheer popularity. In a manner not dissimilar to that of Byron's poem, there is also the irony that Coleridge is engaging in the kind of mud-slinging that he condemns (though, of course, he names no names). By re-situating this paragraph within a discussion of Reviews and magazines—it originally appeared in an article 'On The Errors of Party Spirit'—Coleridge implies that there is a correspondence between satire and periodical culture, particularly in the ironic use of the names of living people combined with authorial anonymity or pseudonymity, all to the ends of scorn and malignity. This correspondence is the subject of this chapter.

I examine the fraught interactions between poetry, satire, and reviews, particularly with regard to the recurring antagonist of the era's poet-critics—the magazine that Hogg called 'that mighty arbitrator of the present day'—the *Edinburgh Review* (*HL* I, p. 75). I argue that the ubiquity of responses to articles in the *Edinburgh*, as well as the formal diversity of those responses, constitutes a genre with recognisable conventions. This genre I call the "*Edinburgh*-reply". I suggest, firstly, that there are inherent links between this genre and that of satire, just as there are overlaps between satire and periodical reviewing, and secondly, that the self-conscious opposition to satire displayed by poets traditionally identified as "Romantic" pushes such debates to the margins of the page, appearing in prefaces and footnotes. Thus the *Edinburgh*-reply is a multivocal and dialogic literary mode, fraught with generic antagonisms and antitheses. Through two case studies—the first of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire*, the second of James Hogg's *The Poetic Mirror, or the Living Bards of Britain*—I show that Byron blurs the lines drawn between antagonists (poets, reviewers, and satirists), and that Hogg exposes this intermixing of roles in the poetry of the Lake Poets. Through his participation within the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, combined with the influence of the *Edinburgh* on his literary-critical thought, Byron embodies all three roles of his title: English bard, Scottish reviewer, and satirist. Further, I show that a primary source for, and influence upon, the survey of poets in *English Bards* is the magazine which it attacks. Byron was a reader of the *Edinburgh*. One of the items sold from his estate when he left England in

1816 was a complete collection of the periodical from its first issue in 1802 up until 1813.[3] For a parade of names, poetical works, and opinions, Byron need not have looked further. Similarly, Hogg's parodying of the *Edinburgh*-reply in his imitations of Wordsworth and Southey, and his textualizing of the paratextual concerns of these two poets, implies that Romantic egotism becomes topical antagonism. For Hogg, these poets became that which they opposed: satirists and reviewers.[4] In this chapter, therefore, periodical criticism and the *Edinburgh* are situated at the centre of literary-critical discourse, not just as an antagonist to the era's poets, provoking reactionary responses, but as a form of criticism to which poet-critics sought to produce an alternative.

Writing in 1984, Marilyn Butler observed that 'Satire is a mode with which we do not as a rule associate the Romantic period'.[5] As Steven Jones remarks, traditional opinion—amongst critics, but also amongst the Romantic poets themselves, particularly the Lake District circle—holds that satire and Romanticism are antithetical.[6] In this construction, the public-facing, argumentative, ironic, and topical nature of satirical literature is characterised as the 'generic other' to Romanticism's sincerity, introspection, and universality; it is '*the* un-Romantic mode'.[7] This opposition has prompted the question of whether Byron is even to be considered a "Romantic". Thus Mellor's influential work on the era's literary scepticism that she termed 'Romantic irony' (of which Byron's works are 'the most masterful artistic example') was set in opposition to the secular spiritualism of Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism*—a work from which Byron was excluded due to his 'satirical perspective'.[8] The titles of two prominent works—Marcus Wood's *Radical Satire and Print Culture:1790-1822* (1994) and Gary Dyer's *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1798-1832* (1997)—show that, while critics have since explored satiric works within the period, they have been uncomfortable situating them within Romanticism as an aesthetic movement.[9] Jones, however, has challenged this antithesis, instead claiming that 'satiric and Romantic modes of writing [...] were subtly interwoven' and that

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[3] Items 100 and 101 in Byron's 1816 Catalogue of his library are listed as: 'Edinburgh Review from the commencement, 23 vol' and 'Edinburgh Review, 25 various Numbers'; Peter Cochran (ed.), 'Byron's Library: the Three Book Sale Catalogues', *Peter Cochran's Website* (undated), p. 39 <petercochran.wordpress.com/byron-2/byrons-library> [accessed 01 September 2022].

[4] It is worth emphasising that this is a challenge to the self-presentation of these poets. The Lake District circle wrote satirical works, such as Coleridge's Nehemiah Higginbottom sonnets and Southey's *Letters from England*. They also wrote reviews, with Southey having a successful career as a reviewer for the *Quarterly Review*.

[5] Marilyn Butler, 'Satire and the Images of Self in the Romantic Period: The Long Tradition of Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*', in *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition*, ed. by Claude Rawson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 209-25 (p. 209).

[6] Jones, pp. 1-14.

[7] Jones, p. 3, original emphasis.

[8] Mellor, pp. 31, 5; see above, p. 7, n. 20.

[9] Marcus Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture: 1790-1822* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

they 'mutually defined each other'.[10] He has argued, for example, that Wordsworth's approach to pastoral is a reaction against the satiric depictions of rustic life by George Crabbe.[11] This chapter maintains Jones's disruption of the traditional antithesis of satire and Romanticism by continuing to destabilise oppositions, blur distinctions, and highlight interactions between the three roles of (Romantic) poet, critic, and literary satirist. In so doing, I highlight the complex dynamic of seriousness and playfulness, satire and sincerity, in the writings of numerous Romantic poet-critics.

Conversely, since Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences* (1987), the era-shaping prominence of periodicals is now established in Romantic scholarship.[12] David Stewart has called the period between 1815 and 1825 'the age of the magazine'.[13] Within this discourse, the pre-eminent standing of the *Edinburgh* in the literary marketplace is increasingly recognised and scrutinised by modern critics.[14] Building upon this important work (particularly that of Christie), I show that the *Edinburgh* exerted such power over nineteenth-century literary culture that replies to Jeffrey's magazine constitute a distinct literary genre, or sub-genre. The implications of such a genre designation are explored through Byron's participation in the genre, and through Hogg's parody of it. I also respond to a question that has been posed, though not sufficiently answered, in recent criticism, regarding the generic overlap between the two literary forms that are the subject of this chapter: satire and reviews. Both Dyer and Jones have, in passing, raised the question of whether 'scathing literary reviews' should be considered a form of satire.[15] Though Jones notes that hostile reviewing is not confined to the early nineteenth century, there is, he observes, 'something more going on' in the period.[16] The aim of this study is not to answer the question conclusively, but rather to contribute to an answer. If Jeffrey's enlightenment aesthetics can be viewed as anti-Romantic, as Christie argues, then the *Edinburgh* shares this oppositional ground with the genre of satire.[17] In my examination of the influence of the *Edinburgh* on *English Bards*, and that magazine's ability to have its material so easily adapted to the purposes of satire, as well as my reading of Brougham's review of *Hours of Idleness* (1807)—the review which prompted Byron's ire—I show that satiric conventions could be and were adopted by periodical reviews.

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[10] Jones, p. 1.
[11] Jones, pp. 15-45.
[12] See above, p. 10, n. 33.
[13] Stewart, p. 1.
[14] See above, p. 10, n. 34.
[15] Dyer, p. 17; Jones, p. 7.
[16] Jones, p. 7.
[17] Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 12-3.

This chapter also contributes to a discussion begun by Philip Cardinale, Gillian Hughes, and Meiko O'Halloran, which remains under-explored: that of the personal and literary relationship between Byron and Hogg.[18] Though the two never met, Hogg and Byron did have a brief correspondence between the years 1814 and 1816. Hogg made Byron's acquaintance whilst trying to put together a '*Poetical Repository*' (at one point bearing the provisional title of '*The Thistle and the Rose*', indicating its uniting of English and Scottish bards) to be published bi-annually, believing that a poem from Byron in the first issue would ensure the success of the project (*HL* I, pp. 198, 242, 201-02, original emphasis). The failure of the miscellany to materialise led Hogg to write the poems himself, thus creating *The Poetic Mirror*. Though all but one of Byron's letters to Hogg are lost—Hogg lamented their having been stolen in his 'Memoir of the Author's Life' (1832)—Hogg's letters to Byron reveal an openness and playfulness ('Memoir', p. 39). He appears to have found, in Byron, a sympathetic ear for his growing disillusionment with the poets of the Lake District—a scepticism which finds its greatest expression in *The Poetic Mirror*.[19] Alongside this personal relationship, the two works that are the subject of this chapter share characteristics, one of which is the inclusion of the authors within their poems as subjects of the satire in order to, on the one hand, misdirect readers regarding the authorship and, on the other, to acknowledge themselves as notable features of the British literary landscape. Similarly, both Byron and Hogg were astute observers of their literary moment, but channelled their insights into satirical and parodic, rather than discursive, works. Their satires are the vehicle for their literary-critical thought. Another parallel between the two is that both poets, after early public skirmishes with Jeffrey—Byron in *English Bards*, Hogg in the first number of *The Spy* (1810-11)—grew to admire the infamous reviewer, and even consider him as a friend. Despite the early antagonism, Jeffrey would go on to write and publish positive reviews of both poets' work. 'Old enemies […] have become new friends', as Byron put it in *Don Juan* (*BCPW* V, X.89). In examining two poets with evolving relationships towards Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review*, I have selected works which fall on either side of the eventual reconciliation, with *English Bards* being produced in enmity, and the parodies of Wordsworth and Southey in *The Poetic Mirror* being composed in a later period of amity with Jeffrey. Thus, through these case studies, the familiar construction of hostility between poets and reviewers is challenged.

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[18] Philip Cardinale, 'Heroic Models in Hogg's *Russiade*', *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 12 (2001), 104-17; Gillian Hughes, '"Native Energy": Hogg and Byron as Scottish Poets', *The Byron Journal*, 34 (2006), 133-42; Meiko O'Halloran, *James Hogg and British Romanticism: A Kaleidoscopic Art* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 47-53.

[19] In a letter to Byron in September 1814, Hogg discusses 'the *pond school*', and calls *The Excursion* 'the most heavy and the most absurd work that I ever perused without all exception' (*HL* I, p. 200-02, original emphasis).

I begin by outlining the conventions of the two genres which are integral to my argument. The first is that of satire (in which Hogg's parody should be categorised due to its topicality), the codes and expectations of which are significant in the discussion of the overlapping fields of poetry, satire, and reviewing. The second is the genre participated in, and parodied by, Byron and Hogg which I term the *Edinburgh*-reply. I then examine Byron's use of those genres in *English Bards*, highlighting the similarity of the poem to the style, language, and aesthetics of the *Edinburgh* in the condemnation of the poets in his literary landscape. Finally, I examine the parodies of Wordsworth and Southey in *The Poetic Mirror*—parodies which situate Hogg's self-positioning alongside that of his peers, whilst simultaneously identifying his rival poets' hostility to reviewers as being self-defeating, likening those poets to the man they criticise: Francis Jeffrey.

3.1. What is Satire?

As *Satire* is a disputed critical term, it is necessary to consider its generic boundaries and to establish a definition which elucidates my argument that satire, reviews, and replies are overlapping genres. Using that definition, the question posed by Dyer and Jones—whether scathing reviews should be considered a form of satire—can begin to be answered in the affirmative, at least so far as concerns Romantic-era Britain and the *Edinburgh Review*. Building upon the work of Charles Knight and Jonathan Greenberg, I argue for a flexible definition of satire which remains open to its formally and generically varied iterations across time.[20] I define satire, broadly, as artistic endeavour that is fundamentally critical, making direct interventions in topical debates through the use of irony, humour, and play. Further, parody is situated within this broad definition as a tool used by satirists, rather than as an intrinsically satirical genre.

The foremost problem in defining satire has been establishing whether it is even a genre. Alternative suggestions for its definition include as a mode, a form, or even (as Knight puts it) a 'frame of mind'.[21] Part of the complication is that the word *satire* is derived from the Latin *satura*, which is a specific literary genre most famously practiced by the Roman authors Horace, Perseus, and Juvenal. These are short poems in an epic meter (hexameters) which use irony,

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[20] Charles A. Knight, *The Literature of Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jonathan Greenberg, *The Cambridge Introduction to Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[21] C.A. Knight, p. 15.

parody, mock forms, grotesqueries, and humour to criticise the poets' contemporaries or near-contemporaries. It is this generic tradition, lifted to cultural pre-eminence in eighteenth-century England by poets such as Dryden and Pope, to which Byron's *English Bards* and its sequel, *Hints from Horace* (written 1811; published 1831), contributes. Satire is now broadened out from this limited definition, but what complicates a definition of satire as a genre is its uncertain relationship to other genres, and its ubiquitous use of other generic forms. This has led Knight to define satire as 'pre-generic', and as an exploiter and disrupter of other genres, with literary satire making use of almost all genres, forms, modes, and rhetorical devices associated with creative and discursive literature.[22] It can be poetry, drama, or fictional and non-fictional prose. It utilises monologue, dialogue, narrative, and dialectics. It can incorporate any genre from philosophy, biography, and travel writing, to epic, allegory, science fiction, and fable (often utilising many simultaneously). In short, satire is a parasite that requires a host. Hence the overlap between various generic modes that this chapter examines.

Yet uses of these genres are not uniform. A satirical work can exploit its host genre as a rhetorical device to attack people and ideas not associated with that genre (as in Pope's use of a heroic form in his 1712 poem, *The Rape of the Lock*, to mock the elevation of a minor slight to epic proportions) or utilise it in a discordant manner which satirises the genre and its users (such as Pope's paratextual framework in the *Dunciad*). Knight therefore defines satire as an imitative speech act designed to highlight discordance either between forms of discourse, or between discourses and their referents.[23] I, however, agree with Greenberg that, in defining satire, pedantry which risks rendering the definition irrelevant should be avoided.[24] Instead, I adopt a loose definition which is sensitive to the variety of texts and definitions that are labelled as "satire" by both scholars and the general public. Despite its protean nature, I treat satire as a genre, and situate it within my flexible definition of literary kinds (outlined in my Introduction), as it is a recognised category of literature which comes with its own traditions and which creates expectations in both the production and reception of individual texts. The belief expressed by writers in the Romantic period, that reviews embodied the spirit of satire (discussed below), therefore encourages a reading of reviews as a host genre for satiric criticism.

Common expectations of satire as a genre include its critical, topical, and referential nature. Satire is fundamentally critical—sometimes gently and jovially, sometimes acerbically

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[22] C.A. Knight, p. 15.
[23] C.A. Knight, p. 37.
[24] Greenberg, p. 12.

and aggressively—but this criticism is combined with humour, play, artistry, and irony. Satire is similarly notable for its referentiality and its topicality. It refers to real people (usually living or recently deceased) and current, real-world events (though those people and events are often disguised or fictionalised). Satirical works do not always address their criticised subjects directly, instead using ironic and playful means (such as personae and character types) to undermine their victims. As Dyer observes, the more radical the politics of a satire, the greater need there is for the satirist to engage in 'satiric subterfuge', disguising and ironising their referents.[25] Even when subjects are addressed directly, such as in Byron's *English Bards*, irony figures as a recurring rhetorical device in its localised details, if not in its overriding form. Most importantly, satire intervenes in ongoing public debates, from the political and cultural to the religious and philosophical. It is this topicality that can give satirical works a short shelf-life, with modern editions of historical texts requiring extensive footnotes in order to identify referents that are now largely forgotten. This is not to say that satirical works cannot have a universality and humanity that transcends their topicality and referentiality. It is the universal, human aspects of great satirical works that mean they are still available in print hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of years after the moment they satirise. Indeed, Knight has questioned the extent to which the referents are the true subject of a satirical work, instead suggesting that such referents act as historical examples contributing to a subject that transcends its moment of production.[26] Greenberg even suggests that reference to living people might not be the aim of satire, but a generic convention in its attack on wider social issues—in much the same way that the texts reviewed in the *Edinburgh* were often pre-texts for socio-political argument.[27] This interaction between 'the timely and the timeless' is, as Greenberg observes, one of many tensions that exist in satire.[28] It is also, significantly, a tension that exists between the posterity-facing nature of Romantic-era poetry and its engagement with the ephemerality of reviews.

Another such tension exists between the moral and immoral aspects of satire. Though the 'canonical' model of satire (as Greenberg calls it), suggested by critics such as Northrop Frye, implies a genre that is intrinsically conservative, and that repeats and enforces accepted social norms and morals, satire is now recognised as a genre that cannot be so easily reduced in its ideology.[29] One need only compare the politically conservative satire in *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* (1798) to Byron's irreverent, anti-authoritarian, and iconoclastic *Don Juan*. What

[25] Dyer, p. 73.
[26] C.A. Knight, p. 4.
[27] Greenberg, p. 22.
[28] Greenberg, p. 23.
[29] Greenberg, p. 13-17. See: Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 223-39.

was once seen as the morality of satire—often claimed by the satirist—is now recognised as a 'dishonest pretext' for engaging in the satiric spirit of condemnation, with satirists relishing in the immorality they condemn.[30] Frederic Bogel makes the important point that satirists, rather than responding to debates, seek out and create the subjects and grounds of their criticism.[31] Hence Byron's *English Bards* was begun (under the title 'British Bards') prior to Brougham's review of *Hours*.[32] The attack on his poems merely refocused and exacerbated his ire. As Greenberg says, satire is aligned to what Hazlitt called 'the pleasure of hating'.[33] This can result not only in contradiction, hypocrisy, and paradox, but in works which convey a clear sense of what is being condemned, but uncertainty regarding what is being encouraged or sanctioned. Both Greenberg and Knight therefore argue for 'transgression' as a vital characteristic of satire; it breaches boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour, but also transgresses the boundaries of the genres it occupies, either through the inappropriate use of a genre, or through the use of subject matters inappropriate to that genre.[34] As will become clear, Byron transgresses the boundary between review and reply, participating in the conventions of both in order to attack an entire literary landscape. Conversely, Hogg accuses the Lake Poets of a similar transgression—one of their self-defined boundaries between literary modes.

There is also uncertainty surrounding which works can be categorised as satire, with restrictive definitions inevitably excluding canonical works. Anna Letitia Barbauld's satiric masterpiece, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, is acerbic and ironic, but hardly funny or playful. Horace is humorous, but rarely scathing. Juvenal is scathing, but his political targets (such as Emperor Nero) are often deceased. *Tristram Shandy* is uncertain in its topical referents. Pope's *Essay on Criticism* combines a critical stance with the artistry of his heroic couplets, but lacks a transgressive edge. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) is aggressive to the point of misanthropy, but, like *Tristram Shandy*, its topical referents are not always clear. Indeed, defining satire loosely by this series of 'family resemblances' raises questions about other genres and their relationship to satire.[35] It is this uncertainty which forms a significant part of my argument, that satire as a genre pervades not only its explicit genre participants (such as *English Bards*) but other forms of discourse in the period, particularly reviews and replies to reviewers. Simultaneously, the presence of satirical traits in reviews and replies results in the invasion of these genres into

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[30] Greenberg, p. 16.
[31] Fredric V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
[32] See: *BLJ* I, pp. 136, 141.
[33] Greenberg, p. 17; William Hazlitt, 'On the Pleasure of Hating', in *The Selected Writings* VIII, pp. 118-26.
[34] Greenberg, p. 7; C.A. Knight, p. 58.
[35] Greenberg, p. 12.

literary satire. This can be witnessed in *English Bards* which bears more than a passing resemblance to the style and content of reviews in the *Edinburgh*. Though Byron is imitating the *Edinburgh*, it is telling that its arguments could so easily be adapted for a satirical poem.

Satire's existence as 'a genre that resists and complicates the very idea of genre' and which 'combines, inhabits, or transforms other genres', has implications in another literary kind vital to this chapter: parody.[36] Both Greenberg and Knight distinguish satire from a variety of related terms, including irony, comedy, invective, and caricature, with parody being one of their more important distinctions. Parody is its own literary genre and, as Dyer argues, it 'established itself [...] as a distinct genre' in the Romantic period.[37] Defined by Greenberg as 'work that imitates another work in a humorous or playful way', parody often 'satirize[s] the ideas, values, or attitudes embodied in [the parodied work]', but it is not inherently satirical.[38] Simultaneously, satire is not inherently parodic. Parody is one of the host genres which satire can exploit to its critical and antagonistic ends. It can be as scathingly critical as satire, but can also show admiration for its source, and sometimes take both stances—such as in *The Poetic Mirror*. Parodies provide amusement through contrast, through the similarity and differences between the parodic and the parodied works, sometimes exaggerating traits of the original while at others entertaining through the fidelity of the mimicry. By drawing attention to the idiosyncrasies of style and composition, parody 'functions as oblique literary criticism'.[39] It is the topicality of its referents that makes *The Poetic Mirror* satirical. It refers to living people and participates in ongoing discussions of poetic value and, as O'Halloran observes, the on-going formation of a Romantic literary canon.[40]

It is satire's critical stance, aggression, transgression, generic diversity, topical referentiality, and its sense of a pervading spirit as much as a formal distinction, that I take forward into my discussion of overlapping genres. In the next section, I explore a genre which is connected to satire: that of the *Edinburgh*-reply. Aggressive, critical, protean in form and genre, and inhabiting satirical paratexual spaces, the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply overlaps—though is not entirely subsumed within—the genre of satire.

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[36] Greenberg, p. 10.
[37] Dyer, p. 17.
[38] Greenberg, p. 33.
[39] Greenberg, p. 35.
[40] O'Halloran, pp. 23-47.

3.2. *Edinburgh*-Replies: A Genre

Edward Copleston, in *A Second Reply* [of three] *to the Edinburgh Review* (1810), lamented that the British reading public had 'Long […] been accustomed to the complaints of men, whose feelings have been wounded by the wanton severity of that publication'.[41] Despite appearing only eight years after the *Edinburgh*'s first issue, Copleston portrays (what feels to him) a long and familiar tradition of publications which respond to this periodical. Three years earlier (and only five years into the *Edinburgh*'s existence), John Ring, in *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, Alias the Stinkpot of Literature* (1807), had been able to draw on a dozen examples of texts responding to the *Edinburgh* as though he were drawing on a literary tradition, highlighting similar complaints among his examples as though he were identifying the *topoi* of a genre. Indeed, the sheer number of replies to the *Edinburgh* in the period, and the generic and formal diversity which those replies take, render the *Edinburgh*-reply a literary classification which comes with its own expectations—the ground upon which, in my Introduction, I defined the notion of genre. Responses to the *Edinburgh* were frequent enough for Hogg to parody them in *The Poetic Mirror*, relying upon his readers' familiarity with the genre's conventions to aid his satire. In this section, I detail the distinctiveness of the *Edinburgh* in Romantic-era literature and, through this detailing, identify the tropes and codes of the *Edinburgh*-reply.

When situating *English Bards* within the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, I am placing it not simply amongst a series of pamphlets and satirical verse essays, but amongst works of great generic diversity and amongst some of Romanticism's defining statements. The texts which occupy the bulk of the attention in this study are participants in this genre. Wordsworth's 'Adversaries' in the 'Essay, Supplementary' are primarily the reviewers for the *Edinburgh* (*WPW* III, p. 62). The *Biographia* is, as Christie notes, addressed as much to Jeffrey as it is to Wordsworth, with the second volume defending the poet against the critic, whilst the first states Coleridge's qualifications (implicitly lacking in Jeffrey) to critique his friend.[42] Nicholas Joukovsky has argued that Peacock's 'Four Ages' is a parody of Jeffrey, with its ironic voice being imitated from the *Edinburgh*.[43] These critical works show how important not just periodical culture, but the *Edinburgh* in particular, was to the formation of poetics, theories of criticism, and public identities of the era's poets. It is not, therefore, surprising that, of the four

[41] [Edward Copleston], *A Second Reply to the Edinburgh Review. By the Author of a Reply to the Calumnies of that Review Against Oxford* (Oxford: The Author, 1810), p. 55.
[42] Christie, *Edinburgh*, p. 107.
[43] Nicholas A. Joukovsky, 'Peacock's Modest Proposal: The Two Voices of "The Four Ages of Poetry"', *Philological Quarterly*, 96 (2017), 489-516 (p. 491)

texts which Christie examines in order to highlight the *Edinburgh*'s position in the literary culture of the period (Wordsworth's prefaces, the *Biographia*, *English Bards*, and Thomas Carlyles's satirical novel of 1833-34, *Sartor Resartus*), three are central to my study on Romantic poet-critics. Furthermore, this short list is a testament to the generic diversity within the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, covering prefaces, lectures, formal verse satire, prose satire, periodical essays, the multiplicity of genres that converge in Coleridge's literary life, and even entire periodicals themselves. As Christie explains, the two other giants of Romantic periodical culture—the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—were founded in opposition to Jeffrey's *Review*.[44] Like the satiric spirit, responding to the *Edinburgh* is a compulsion that incorporates multiple generic forms and modes. The *Edinburgh*-reply is a protean genre, inhabiting other literary kinds to achieve its ends.

To understand the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, it is first important to emphasise the significance, the centrality, and the distinctiveness of the *Edinburgh* in British literary culture in the early nineteenth century.[45] It is to these distinctive qualities that repliers responded. No longer aiming to be short notices of all new literary work, the *Edinburgh* distinguished itself by the length of its reviews, which could be as long as thirty pages, and by its stated mission to only select texts worthy of notice. In the 'Advertisement' to the first issue, Jeffrey announced that the *Edinburgh* 'decline[d] any attempt at exhibiting a complete view of modern literature' and would only review 'works that either have attained, or deserve, a certain portion of celebrity'.[46] To facilitate 'the full discussion of important subjects', the *Edinburgh* would 'extend these articles to a greater length, than is usual in works of this nature'.[47] The length of reviews allowed for extended selections from the text, creating anxiety in authors not only about misrepresentation, but about the power of reviews to replace the reading of the texts themselves—an anxiety manifested by Byron's use of the *Edinburgh* in *English Bards*, which shows as much familiarity with reviews as it does the reviewed texts. It similarly brought more into view than a survey of literature, regularly stepping beyond the bounds of literary reviewing to venture into 'the full discussion' of social, political, and cultural criticism. Thus Hogg, in a letter to Walter Scott in December 1806—whilst awaiting Jeffrey's verdict on *The Mountain Bard* (1806)—described the *Edinburgh* as 'that mighty arbitrator *of the present day*', implying a universal, rather than a narrow, literary scope to its critical gaze.[48] This universal scope was

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[44] Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 7, 164.
[45] This paragraph builds upon Christie's summary of the *Edinburgh*'s place in British literary culture. Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 14-38.
[46] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Advertisement', *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1802), pp. 2-3 (p. 2).
[47] [Jeffrey], 'Advertisement', p. 3.
[48] See above, p. 127, emphasis added.

combined with the imposed uniformity—or the appearance of it—produced by Jeffrey's editorial hand, and the use of 'we' rather than 'I' by its contributors, creating the appearance of a tribunal or, in Mark Schoenfield's phrase, a 'corporate identity'.[49] That uniformity was embodied in its relationship to party politics and its association to Whiggism—another cause of anxiety for authors desiring an impartial analysis of their work. The periodical was also distinguished by the savagery of its articles—a prime example being Brougham's review of *Hours*—and its hostility towards that spirit of the age that modern critics term "Romanticism", exemplified by the decades-long campaign of abuse directed against Wordsworth and his poetics. The *Edinburgh* is also notable for its wide distribution. Selling over ten thousand copies a year, and with each issue supposedly falling into the hands of at least three readers, it was circulated in numbers of which most poets—including "canonical" figures such as Wordsworth and Coleridge—could only dream.[50] It therefore had the potential to make or break a literary text. It was for this reason that Hogg so eagerly anticipated the review of *The Queen's Wake* (1813) in Jeffrey's periodical, certain that a positive notice (which he had been informed was forthcoming) would guarantee the sale of the first edition and necessitate a second.[51] Further, Jeffrey—the personality, in this 'age of personality', who was inextricably connected to the *Edinburgh*—was a significant figure in Scottish literature. In John Gibson Lockhart's *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819), the titular narrator's first visit to notable figures is to Jeffrey, being unable to visit Scott—Scotland's foremost literary celebrity.[52] Placing Jeffrey as second in eminence to the poet of the Borders, Lockhart implies the *Edinburgh*'s elevated position not simply within what Byron, in *Don Juan*, called the 'literary *lower* Empire', but within the entire Republic of Letters (*BCPW* V, XI.489, original emphasis). In light of its influential and controversial place in the literary culture of the period, its aggression towards emerging literary trends, and its commercial potential, it is hardly surprising that the age generated such a broad array of responses to its 'mighty arbitrator'.

The *Edinburgh* lay at the heart of a literary culture that was not only described in violent terms (Ring accuses Jeffrey of 'mak[ing] war on [a] whole host of authors'), but which was liable to erupt into real-world violence.[53] In the introduction to his study of literary culture after Waterloo, Cronin selects as his defining moments two duels which were the culmination of

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[49] Schoenfield, p. 6.
[50] St. Clair, pp. 478, 573.
[51] See: *HL* I, pp. 155, 157, 161, 163, 176, 182, 192, 198, 205.
[52] [John Gibson Lockhart], *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1819), I, pp. 51-2.
[53] John Ring, *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, Alias the Stinkpot of Literature* (London: H.D. Symonds, 1807), p. 1.

skirmishes in the literary sphere—moments in which what Byron called 'paper bullets' became real ones, in which the literary became literal.[54] In February 1821, John Scott of the *London Magazine* was killed in a duel with Jonathan Henry Christie (acting on behalf of John Gibson Lockhart) over articles exchanged between Scott and Lockhart. Within such a context it is not surprising to learn that Jeffrey, in July 1806, was involved in a duel with Thomas Moore, over the former's review of the latter—a duel which was interrupted, sparing the lives of both participants. Moore's *Edinburgh*-reply may be said to have been a lead, rather than a paper, bullet.[55] In a culture that perceived periodical writing as a form of violence, violent reactions are, if not understandable, at least unsurprising. It is this era-defining arena of antagonism and violence into which *Edinburgh*-replies enter and which they help to shape. This includes the replies of the poets of the Lakes—an arena which those poets claimed to rise above.

Some recurring tropes, conventions, and imagery in *Edinburgh*-replies (which will be elaborated upon later) can be summarised here. A common, though not ubiquitous, expectation of the genre is its defensiveness. These can be a defence of the author, of a third party, of a text, or even of an institution. Copleston, in his first *Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review Against Oxford* (1810), discussed three reviews—those of the third and fourth volume of Pierre-Simon La Place's *Traité de Mécanique Céleste* (1805), Thomas Falconer's *Strabonis Rerum Geographicum Libri XVII* (1807), and R.L. Edgeworth's *Essays on Professional Education* (1809)—but offered no defence of its authors, instead attacking and correcting the comments made upon Oxford University in each of these articles.[56] *English Bards* provides an example of absent or uncertain defensiveness. Though a defensive reflex on Byron's part, responding as he is to a review of *Hours*, the poem does not defend the poet or the reviewed work, with the anonymous first edition lacking the name of the poet being defended. Another common accusation levelled at the *Edinburgh* is that of being a 'party tool' (*EBSR*, l. 449). Though Christie demonstrates that Jeffrey was not a slavish mouthpiece for the Whigs, it was nonetheless an accusation that was frequently directed towards his magazine.[57] Similarly, the journal's title opened up debates about national identity, while its writers were condemned as hirelings who wrote for money, and who lacked the expertise to write on the subjects upon

[54] Cronin, pp. 1-17; see above, p. 5.
[55] As Cronin explains, the legend perpetuated by Byron in *English Bards*, that neither pistol was loaded, is untrue. It was a rumour reported as fact by the newspapers; pp. 229-30.
[56] [John Playfair], 'Art I. *Traité de Méchanique Céleste*', *Edinburgh Review*, 11 (1808), 248-84; 'Art. X. *Strabonis Rerum Geographicarum Libri XVII*', *Edinburgh Review*, 14 (1809), 429-441; [Sydney Smith], 'Art. III. *Essays on Professional Education*', *Edinburgh Review*, 15 (1809), 40-53. The authors (or possible authors) of these and all reviews in the *Edinburgh* subsequently discussed are identified using: Irwin Griggs, John D. Kern, and Elisabeth Schneider, 'Early "Edinburgh" Reviewers: A New List', *Modern Philology*, 43 (1946), 192-210.
[57] Christie, *Edinburgh*, pp. 51-4.

which they pontificated. Underlying all such arguments was an anxiety about the use to which reviews were put, that they could replace the reading of books altogether—an anxiety which provoked as much animosity towards the readers (that new, terrifying notion of a "reading public") as to the writers of reviews.[58]

That these are more than shared complaints within a discourse, but rather comprise the conventions of a genre, is made clear by the ways in which these tropes are developed and, at times, playfully deployed. This can be seen in a brief discussion of the legal-language *topos*. The identification of literary criticism and reviewing as a form of "judgement" was not new in the early nineteenth century. Pope, in his *Essay on Criticism*, placed the poet's 'wit' in opposition to the critic's 'judgement'.[59] This characterisation, however, took on new significance, with the legal implications increasingly pronounced due to the self-presentation of the *Edinburgh* and the profession of its editor. Jeffrey was a lawyer, who pursued his legal career alongside his editorial duties, while the motto appearing on the cover of every issue of the *Edinburgh* is from Publilius Syrus: 'JUDEX DAMNATUR CUM NOCENS ABSOLVITUS' ('Acquittal of the guilty damns the judge').[60] Beyond establishing the periodical's predilection to condemn, rather than praise or 'acquit', as a matter of principle (another criticism of the magazine that *Edinburgh*-repliers repeated), the quotation situates criticism within the legal field and places the critic in the position of an impartial judge. The *Edinburgh*'s antagonists, therefore, regularly examined the nature of the two legal roles (judge and advocate) represented by the periodical and its editor. Repliers highlighted the absence of election and qualification at what Coleridge called 'the bar of self-erected and self-satisfied tribunals', presided over by what Thelwall termed the 'self-constituted arbiters' of literature (*CLL* II, p. 543).[61] They noted Jeffrey's role as a lawyer, whose advocacy could be bought, as opposed to the impartiality of a judge.[62] Thus, Thelwall, in his *Letter to Francis Jeffray* [sic] (1804), refers to his addressee as an '*Advocate Reviewer*', returning to the subject of his dual professions, '*hir*[*ing*] *himself out*, alternatively to the bookseller and to the bar'.[63] (This line of discourse leads into another trope common to the genre: the implication of prostituting one's pen, with reviewers '*hir*[*ing*]

[58] Coleridge's attack on the 'age of personality' is a prime example of this attack on the reading public for the sins of writers.
[59] See above, p. 53, n. 62.
[60] Publilius Syrus, 'Sententiae', in *Minor Latin Poems: Volume I*, trans. by J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), l. 296.
[61] John Thelwall, *A Letter to Francis Jeffray, Esq. on Certain Calumnies and Misrepresentations in the Edinburgh Review* (Edinburgh: John Turnbull, 1804), p. viii.
[62] Jeffrey was eventually appointed as judge to the Scottish Court of Session in 1833.
[63] Thelwall, pp. 96, 64, original emphasis.

themselves out by the sheet' to '*Brothel Reviews*'.)[64] Repliers therefore turned the *Edinburgh*'s rhetoric back on itself, stating their accusations in criminal terms: misreadings or misinterpretations are 'defamation', misquotations are 'falsehoods and forgeries', misrepresentation is 'slander'.[65] In *English Bards*, Byron took the novel approach of comparing Jeffrey to his historical near-namesake, George Jeffries, the Chief Justice who oversaw the Bloody Assizes of 1685—a mass treason trial in which more than three-hundred were hanged and some eight-hundred more were transported to the West Indies. It is a comparison that implies the hyperbole of reviews whilst simultaneously (and unwittingly) exhibiting the hyperbole of replies. Byron's originality lies within his depiction of Jeffrey as an historical judicial figure, rather than through a reminder of Jeffrey's profession as advocate. Readers' familiarity with this trope allows Hogg, in his parody of the *Edinburgh*-reply, to depict Southey as a judge who, in condemning Jeffrey, becomes increasingly like the reviewer. This reinvigorated characterisation of the critic as judge is an image to invoke, argue with, comically undermine, or ironically appropriate.

A common (though not ubiquitous) convention of the genre which is important in a discussion of Romantic poet-critics, is the frequent polyvocality of its utterances and its inhabiting of marginal textual spaces. Copleston's anonymously published *Advice to a Young Reviewer, with a Specimen of the Art* (1807) is divided (as its title suggests) into two parts: a biting satire advising reviewers to, among other things, 'violate without scruple' any 'moral precepts' they might have in the name of entertainment; and a parodic review of John Milton's 'L'Allegro' (1645), imitating the *Edinburgh* with such precision that it could easily slip in amongst its pages.[66] Thelwall's book-length *Letter* is divided into two distinct parts. The main body of the text is a sincere discourse unpicking the inaccuracies of the *Edinburgh*'s review of the second edition of his *Poems Written Chiefly in Retirement* (1801). Its footnotes, however, provide a satirical dissection of the twelve forms of falsehood collectively termed '*Jeffs*' (after Jeffrey), and an analysis of a meaningless literary style termed '*Broughmiana*' (after Henry Brougham).[67] In this sense, it is an inversion of the dynamic between text and footnote in *English Bards*. That is, Byron's text is satirical, while his footnotes are discursive. The use of multiple textual spaces, therefore, leans towards the satirical, and through this trope we can begin to see the overlap between the two genres of this chapter (satire and *Edinburgh*-replies).

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[64] Thelwall, pp. 18, 43, original emphasis.
[65] Thelwall, pp. viii, 5, 9.
[66] [Edward Copleston], *Advice to a Young Reviewer, with a Specimen of the Art* (Oxford: J. Parker and J. Cooke, 1807), p. 2.
[67] Thelwall, pp. 11, 120, original emphasis.

Further, the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply becomes an embodiment of the dialectic of seriousness and playfulness that characterises much of the literary-critical discourse of Romantic poet-critics, and this interplay of satire and discourse, irony and sincerity, text and paratext, has implications in the works of the Wordsworth circle. The universal ambitions of Romantic-era poetry—written, as Bennett says, for 'an ideal audience [...] deferred to an unspecified future'—relegates the antagonistic, divisive, and topical (that is, satirical) addresses to one's contemporaries to paratextual spaces such as prefaces, prologues, and notes.[68] In the writings of the Lake District circle, addresses to critics are formally distinct from the poems, appearing in prose appendages. The exception to this is Southey who, in his later laureate verses, began to incorporate this antagonism into the poems themselves—an observation that Hogg exploits in *The Poetic Mirror* through the textualizing of these poets' paratextual antagonisms, drawing *Edinburgh*-replies into the poems themselves.

Before moving into my case studies, it is worthwhile noting Byron's early genre-consciousness regarding *Edinburgh*-replies in his poem 'To the Earl of Clare'. Added to *Poems Original and Translated* (the 1808 retitled second edition of *Hours*), it was published prior to the appearance of Brougham's review, but, as it was the first edition that fell into that critic's hands, the poem did not come under Brougham's scrutiny. Addressed to John Fitzgibbon, the Earl of Clare, Byron's poem describes the divergence in the careers of himself and his childhood friend, digressing into five stanzas of discussion of his chosen path as a poet, which quickly turns to the subjects of reviews. Defending Moore against the 'dire Reviewers' who had 'branded [him], | As void of wit and moral', he consoles the Anacreonic poet with a reminder of poetry's immortality and periodicals' ephemerality: 'Thy soothing lays may still be read, | When Persecution's arm is dead, | And Critics are forgot' (*BCPW* I, ll. 52-4). Byron then proceeds to praise reviewers before anticipating his own reception and his imagined stoical response to that reception:

> Still, I must yield those worthies merit,
> Who chasten, with unsparing spirit,
>   Bad rhymes, and those who write them;
> And though myself may be the next,
> By critic sarcasm to be vext,
>   I really will not fight them;

[68] A. Bennett, p. 3.

Perhaps, they would do quite as well,
To break the rudely sounding shell,
  Of such a young beginner;
He, who offends at pert nineteen,
Ere thirty may become, I ween,
  A very harden'd sinner.

(*BCPW* I, ll. 55-66)

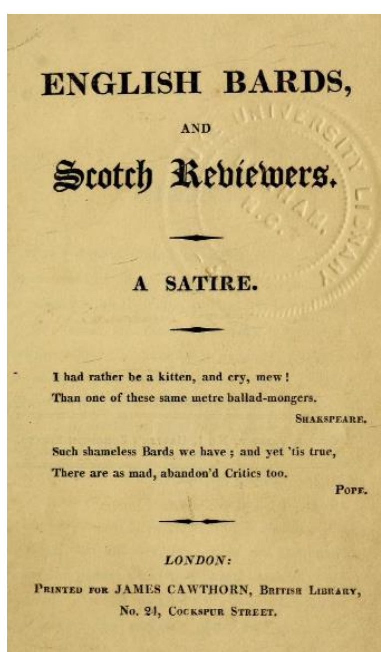
There is a dialectic here of fear and praise. The 'dire Reviewers', who are associated with 'sarcasm', 'Persecution', and violence ('branded', 'break the rudely sounding shell'), are nonetheless 'worthies' to be praised for applying a chastening hand. Despite the subsequent mauling Byron would receive in the review of *Hours*, this passage anticipates the simultaneous affinity with, and antagonism against, reviews that would blossom in *English Bards*, his disagreements with Jeffrey sitting alongside his seeming agreement with him. This is an important step in Byron's evolving relationship to reviews across his career: the shifting stance from unreviewed poet desiring chastening, to reviewed poet willing to fire his 'paper bullets', to finally a satirist who acknowledged his poetic formation at the hands of critics whilst perpetuating the myth of Keats's death at the hands of a review (*BLJ* VIII, p. 102). The irony that Byron did 'fight' the *Edinburgh*, matching its literary violence with his own, speaks volumes about the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply—that repliers do what they claim they will not, and become what they struggle against. As Thelwall puts it, repliers 'sit in judgement upon [their] judges, and review the[ir] pragmatical reviewers'.[69] Reviewer and replier share the same ground.

Having established the overlap and mixing of the genres of satire, reviews, and *Edinburgh*-replies, I now move to my study of *English Bards*, in which Byron embodies in both literal and literary ways, the roles of satirist, poet, and reviewer. Through a reading of Brougham's review of *Hours* and a comparison with *English Bards*, I further examine the generic overlap between reviews and satire, highlighting, on the one hand, the review's use of satiric tropes and, on the other, Byron's similarity to the review in his footnotes. I then discuss Byron's use of the *Edinburgh* throughout *English Bards*, arguing that the *Edinburgh* was a key source upon which Byron drew in the composition of his poem.

[69] Thelwall, p. viii.

3.3 Byron: Bard, Reviewer, Satirist

In the full title of his poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire*, Byron identifies three literary roles. There is, however, an ambiguity regarding the relationships between them. The main title appears to establish national and disciplinary oppositions, and it is tempting to interpret its meaning as English poets *versus* Scottish critics. On the title-page of the first edition, the two groups and their conjunction are divided across three lines (Figure 3.1). 'English Bards' is in roman type and 'Scotch Reviewers' in blackletter, separated by a small 'and', not unlike a modern-day poster for a boxing match, with one fighter's name above the other. The running-head throughout the volume—which places 'ENGLISH BARDS' on the left-hand page and 'AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS' on the right—divides the parties, with the gutter of the page opening up like a gulf between them (Figure 3.2). Yet this is not how the poem unfolds. Far from being an allegorical battle between opposing sides along the lines of Jonathan Swift's *The Battle of the Books* (1704) or Leigh Hunt's *Feast of the Poets* (1811), both sides come under sustained scrutiny, with attacks on poets coming on either side of an attack on reviewers. The way that the two sit alongside one another begins to suggest that the 'and' of the title is most certainly an 'and', not a 'versus' or an 'or'. It unifies rather than divides.


ENGLISH BARDS,

AND

Scotch Reviewers.

A SATIRE.

I had rather be a kitten, and cry, mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.
SHAKSPEARE.

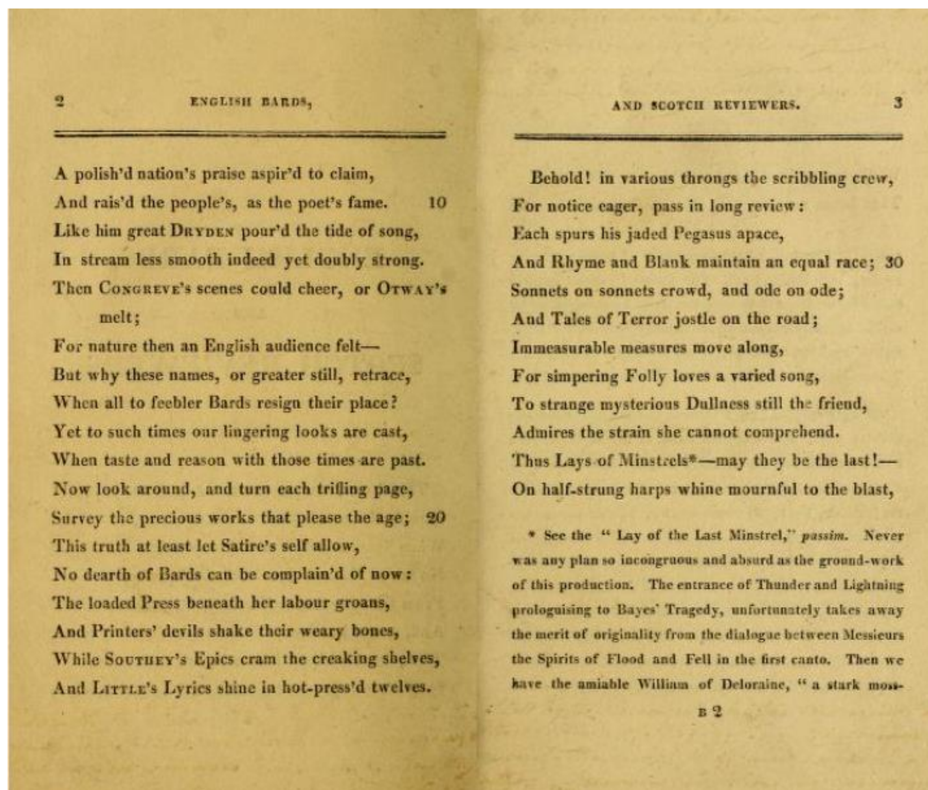
Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics too.
POPE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES CAWTHORN, BRITISH LIBRARY,
No. 24, COCKSPUR STREET.

Figure 3.1. The title-page of the first edition of *English Bards*.[70]

[70] Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (London: James Cawthorn, 1809), p. iii. Digitised by Duke University Library, *Internet Archive* <archive.org/details/englishbardsscot01byro> [accessed 30 August 2022].



2 ENGLISH BARDS,

A polish'd nation's praise aspir'd to claim,
And rais'd the people's, as the poet's fame. 10
Like him great DRYDEN pour'd the tide of song,
In stream less smooth indeed yet doubly strong.
Then CONGREVE's scenes could cheer, or OTWAY's
melt;
For nature then an English audience felt—
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feebler Bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past.
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age; 20
This truth at least let Satire's self allow,
No dearth of Bards can be complain'd of now:
The loaded Press beneath her labour groans,
And Printers' devils shake their weary bones,
While SOUTHEY's Epics cram the creaking shelves,
And LITTLE's Lyrics shine in hot-press'd twelves.

AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS. 3

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And Rhyme and Blank maintain an equal race; 30
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And Tales of Terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along,
For simpering Folly loves a varied song,
To strange mysterious Dullness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels*—may they be the last!—
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast,

* See the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," *passim*. Never was any plan so incongruous and absurd as the ground-work of this production. The entrance of Thunder and Lightning prologuising to Bayes' Tragedy, unfortunately takes away the merit of originality from the dialogue between Messieurs the Spirits of Flood and Fell in the first canto. Then we have the amiable William of Deloraine, "a stark moss-

B 2

Figure 3.2. Pages two and three of the first edition of *English Bards*, showing the running heads.[71]

The divisions drawn on national lines are similarly unclear, and the poem's original title 'British Bards' can linger at the back of the mind of the modern critic (the original title was unknown to Byron's contemporaneous readers). The first of the bards in Byron's parade of literary figures is Scott, and he is also the final poet addressed at the close of the poem, charged with the duty of saving poetry. To borrow a line from Byron, Scott is 'the first and last' of *English Bards*—at least, that is, in the first edition.[72] What is significant about Scott's position as the pre-eminent poet is, firstly, that he is not an English bard and, secondly, that he is a Scotch reviewer, having at Byron's time of writing produced numerous articles for the *Edinburgh*. Indeed, Byron accuses Scott of a transgression frequently directed at that periodical: that he writes for money. Both Copleston and Ring refer to reviewers as 'hirelings', while Thelwall accused the *Edinburgh*'s reviewers of '*hir*[*ing*] *themselves out by the sheet*'.[73] Byron deems Scott a 'hireling bard' whose 'prostituted Muse' is 'yield[ed]' for 'just half-a-crown per line' (*EBSR*, ll. 182, 176). The blurring of the titular roles is only exacerbated by

[71] Byron, *English Bards*, pp. 2-3. *Internet Archive*.
[72] 'Messrs. Jeffrey and Lamb are the Alpha and Omega, the first and last of the Edinburgh Review' (*EBSR*, p. 400).
[73] [Edward Copleston], *A Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review Against Oxford* (Oxford: The Author, 1810), p. 12; Ring, p. 10.

Scott's name, which serves as a reminder of his nationality. In the second edition, no longer anonymous, the increased use of the first person, particularly in the stanzas added to the opening and the close of the poem, makes Byron the first and last of his poem. That Byron referred to himself, in *Don Juan*, as 'half a Scot by birth, and bred | A whole one' continues to blur these national lines (*BCPW* V, X.135-36). Similarly, the stanzas upon the insidious influence of Italian theatre are addressed to 'Degenerate Britons' (*EBSR*, l. 610). Thus, when a new cultural boundary is drawn, England and Scotland are unified into a single nation. Equally, the closing stanzas and 'Postscript' added to the second edition address the poet's decision to 'quit England' for the continent, anticipating *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18) with its national and political homelessness (*EBSR*, p. 263). The second edition closes with the poet abandoning his nationality and his place within his own dichotomy. This is ultimately a matter of unclear allegiances. Originally published anonymously, the vitriol directed towards both poets and critics could confuse a reader as to which side the author is on, if any. The fact that the work is written in verse does not settle the matter. The poem's subtitle, 'A Satire', creates a further remove, separating the poem from the bardic and ballad traditions which were becoming increasingly popular and influential in English poetry since the publication of works such as Thomas Gray's *The Bard* (1757), James Macpherson's Ossianic works (1761-3), and Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), and at a time when satirists such as Pope were being treated with increased scepticism as to their poetic credentials.[74] That Byron includes himself as one of the poem's English bards in the first edition only serves to further complicate this dynamic. In short, Byron's title invokes two distinct poetic traditions, while the poem itself situates him within both.

That Byron fulfils the role of replying bard has already been explored in his use of the judgement *topos*. It is important, in examining the next of the three roles—that of satirist—to emphasise that *English Bards* is a meeting point for numerous satirical traditions. It is a satire in the ancient tradition of the *satura*, being a short poem in an epic metre, utilising irony and humour to attack and criticise. The familiar division between the Juvenalian and Horatian modes of satire is also played out in the various editions of *English Bards*. As McGann observes, the first edition is a more genial Horatian satire, while the additions in the second edition render it more acerbically Juvenalian.[75] A poem addressing one's literary contemporaries is one of the most common trends in satirical literature, dating back to Horace,

[74] Alongside Wordsworth's and Coleridge's criticisms of Pope, Hazlitt also questioned whether Pope was a poet; see: 'On the Question whether Pope was a Poet' (1818), in *Selected Writings* IX, pp. 27-9.
[75] See McGann's notes to *EBSR*, p. 398.

Juvenal, and the Old Comedy of Aristophanes.[76] Addresses to one's critics can be traced back just as far. It is so pervasive a trope that attacks on, and responses to, the author's critics are to be found in satirical works of narrative fiction, such as *Tristram Shandy* and *Don Quixote* (1605-15).[77] *English Bards* also includes passages on the theatre, which draw upon satires such as Charles Churchill's *Rosciad* (1741), and a passage on the Della Cruscans, invoking William Gifford's *Baviad* (1791) and *Maeviad* (1795). It is this generic multiplicity that renders *English Bards* somewhat uneven, making it feel, at times, like a patchwork of various thoughts. It is also this multiplicity that begins to imply the satiric nature of the *Edinburgh*. Its inclusion is another satiric tradition.

Indeed, reviews engage in many of the tropes and conventions of satire as a literary genre. Writers such as Copleston and Lockhart characterised the *Edinburgh*'s reviews as satirical. When these writers mention '*his* [Jeffrey's] satire' and '*his* airy satire', they are referring to the pre-generic spirit of satire that pervades reviews, rather than ascribing periodical reviews to a specific literary genre.[78] There are, however, overlaps between the conventions of the satiric genre and the tendencies of reviewers, particularly those that appeared in the reviewing giant of the period. These include the combination of humour and irony with invective, the use of other literary forms (in this case, book reviews) as a vehicle for political discussion, and the spirit that Hazlitt called 'the pleasure of hating' and Copleston called the 'indulgence of malignant passion'.[79] It would be a mistake to define periodical reviews as a kind of Menippean prose satire, but their shared domains and concerns cannot be overlooked in a discussion of satirical responses to reviews. Indeed, there is more correspondence than the simple overlap of a pre-generic imperative. For example, Brougham's review of Byron's *Hours*—the text which prompted the worst of the poet's ire in *English Bards*—uses ironic epithets, such as those used by Byron whenever he introduces a new poet or critic into his parade of literary figures: 'careless DRYDEN', 'the Ballad-monger SOUTHEY', 'simple WORDSWORTH', 'delightful BOWLES', 'immortal JEFFREY' (*EBSR*, ll. 100, 202, 237, 341, 438). Brougham, taking issue with Byron's statement of his youth and nobility in the preface to

[76] For example, see: Juvenal, 'Satire 1', in *Juvenal and Perseus*, trans. by Susanna Morton Braund (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), ll. 1-30 (pp. 130-33); Horace, 'Satire 1.4', in *Satires*, ll. 1-143 (pp. 48-61); Aristophanes, 'Frogs', in *Frogs, Assemblywomen, Wealth*, trans. by Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 12-235.
[77] In the sixth book of *Tristram Shandy*, the narrator responds to critics of previous volumes, while in the second volume of *Don Quixote*, Quixote and Sancho Panza discuss a history of that knight that has been published (that is, Cervantes's first volume) and its detractors. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. by Melvyn New and Joan New (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 369; Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. by Edith Grossman (London: Vintage, 2004), pp. 473-80.
[78] [Lockhart], I, p. 117, emphasis added; [Copleston], *Reply*, p. 116, emphasis added.
[79] [Copleston], *Reply*, p. 4.

Hours, refers to the poet throughout as 'the noble author' and 'the noble minor'—ironic epithets used as satirical (as opposed to literary-critical) tools.[80]

Another noteworthy satiric trope that Brougham uses is explicit allusions to past satirists. Invocation of satiric precedents has been a convention of satire since the time of the Roman *satura*. Both Horace and Juvenal, like epic poets invoking the Muses, set out their literary ancestors: the Old Comedy of Aristophanes, the *satura* of Lucilius, and (in Juvenal's case) the satires and epistles of Horace.[81] Byron, in *English Bards*, calls on Pope and Gifford as superior antecedents, while, in the second edition, he begins the poem with lines that imitate Juvenal, with a footnote making the allusion explicit (*EBSR*, ll. 94, 1-4). Brougham's allusions appear in the first and the final sentences of the review, so that his analysis of Byron's collection is bookended by satiric invocations. The review begins by stating that 'The poesy of this young lord belongs to the class which neither gods nor men are said to permit'—an allusion to Horace's 'Epistula ad Pisones' (otherwise known as his 'Ars Poetica'), which claimed that 'neither men nor gods nor booksellers' can endure 'poets of middling rank'.[82] At the close of the review, in an irony-drenched statement of thanks to Byron for having deigned to offer the world his poetry, Brougham invokes Cervantes:

> We are well off to have got so much from a man of this Lord's station [...]. Again, we say, let us be thankful; and, with honest Sancho, bid God bless the giver, nor look the gift horse in the mouth.[83]

These are not simple invocations of precedents. They are uses of satirical texts in order to frame a review, beginning and closing that review in a spirit of satire. The Horatian opening announces the tone of Brougham's text, while its ending is a reminder of the spirit in which the review should be read. It is not just writers of the period who characterised reviews in terms of satire. The reviewers themselves establish the connection, no doubt with ambitions to elevate the "low" form of the periodical review into the realms of this more esteemed literary genre.

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[80] [Henry Brougham], 'Art. II. *Hours of Idleness*', *Edinburgh Review*, 11 (1808), 285-89 (pp. 286, 287, 289).
[81] Horace, 'Satire 1.4', ll. 1-13 (pp. 48-9); Juvenal, 'Satire 1'; ll. 1-21 (pp. 130-31); Juvenal, 'Satire 7', in *Juvenal and Perseus*, ll. 53-68 (pp. 302-03).
[82] [Brougham], p. 285; Horace, 'Ars Poetica', in *Satires*, ll. 372-73 (pp. 480-81).
[83] [Brougham], p. 289.

It is not simply that reviews encroach upon the realm of satire. Satires—including *English Bards*—encroach upon the realm of reviews. This can be seen in Byron's footnotes, with those on Southey being a prime example:

> Thalaba, Mr. Southey's second poem, is written in open defiance of precedent and poetry. Mr. S. wished to produce something novel and succeeded to a miracle. Joan of Arc was marvellous enough, but Thalaba was one of those poems 'which, in the words of [Richard] Porson, will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten, but—*not till then*'.
>
> (*EBSR*, p. 403, original emphasis)

> *We* beg Mr. Southey's pardon: 'Madoc disdains the degraded title of Epic.' See his Preface. Why is Epic degraded? and by whom? Certainly the late Romaunts of Masters Cottle, Laureate Pye, Ogilvy, Hole, and gentle Mistress Cowley, have not exalted the Epic Muse, but as Mr. Southey's poem 'disdains the appellation', allow *us* to ask—has he substituted anything better in its stead? or must he be content to rival Sir Richard Blackmore, in the quantity as well as quality of his verse.
>
> (*EBSR*, p. 403, emphasis added)

For readers familiar with the *Edinburgh*, it is not necessary to elucidate the similarity of Byron's prose to that of the periodical. There is the arch, dismissive, and incredulous tone; the apostrophic address to the author; the rhetorical questions; and the echo of Brougham's irony in the quotation from Richard Porson. In the second footnote there is the use of that infamous 'we' attacked by *Edinburgh*-repliers—what George Colman called 'the mighty WE of such publications'.[84] Byron's footnotes are ventriloquising the *Edinburgh*'s reviewers—the tone and language of the *Edinburgh* being easily adaptable to the purposes of satire.

Further, Byron's footnotes adopt stylistic traits and generic conventions associated with reviewing. This can be viewed in the passage on William Bowles and what Byron considers to be his ill-advised attempts at epic alongside his usual sonnets:

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[84] George Colman The Younger, *Vagaries Vindicated; or, Hypocritick Hypercriticks; A Poem, Address'd to the Reviewers* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1813), p. v.

> Now to soft themes thou scornest to confine
> The lofty numbers of a harp like thine:
> 'Awake a louder and a loftier strain'[*]
> Such as none heard before, or will again;
> […]
> Nor this alone, but pausing on the road,
> And gravely tells—attend each beauteous Miss!—
> When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.
> BOWLES! in thy memory let this precept dwell:
> Stick to thy Sonnets, man! at least they sell.
>
> [*] 'Awake a louder strain, etc. etc' is the first line in Bowles's 'Spirit of Discovery'; a very spirited and pretty dwarf Epic. Among other exquisite lines we have the following: –
>
> 'A Kiss
> Stole on the list'ning silence, never yet
> Here heard; they trembled even as if the power, etc. etc.'
>
> That is, the woods of Madeira trembled to a kiss, very much astonished, as well they might be, at such a phenomenon.
>
> (*EBSR*, ll. 349-62, p. 405)

The lines of verse are similar in spirit, if not tone, to Brougham's review of Byron, notably in their imperative to desist in a particular form of literary composition—for Bowles, epic; for Byron, poetry in general. The shift in tone between text and paratext is the product of the shift in form. The versification, rhyme, imagery, and dramatic apostrophe of the text lends a playfulness to the humorous criticisms, an artistry that elevates invective to satire, that is distinctly absent in the paratext. The footnote, while making explicit the text and genre to which the verses are referring, are more sarcastic than satirical, more pointed than playful, more direct than dramatic, and it bears more than a passing resemblance to Brougham's review of *Hours* in the way it introduces the quotation. For example, Brougham prefaces a quotation from Byron with the following sentences:

> As the author has dedicated so large a part of his volume to immortalize his employments at school and college, we cannot possibly dismiss it without

> presenting the reader with a specimen of these ingenious effusions. In an ode with a Greek motto, called Granta, we have the following magnificent stanzas[.][85]

Though Byron's use of footnotes, with his satirical text and discursive paratext, is an inversion of Thelwall's *Letter*, the spirit of satire enters into these footnotes—the form being prone to satire through its inherently critical and commentarial nature. The prose footnotes also allow Byron to do precisely what a reviewer would: provide selections and examples from the text. His wry introduction of 'exquisite lines' which are subsequently mocked recalls Brougham's 'ingenious effusions' and 'magnificent stanzas'. They are also similar in their diminutive genre designations: 'a very spirited and pretty dwarf epic' and 'an ode with a Greek motto'. When Byron explicates his verse in prose, he sounds unsettlingly like the reviewer under whose lash he was smarting.

English Bards, however, contains more than a stylistic and generic resemblance to Brougham's review. Several reviewers noted the similarity between the content of Byron's invective and that of the *Edinburgh*. In an irony-drenched statement, the writer for the *Eclectic Review* noted that 'For equitable dissemination, for devotedness to truth, for gentlemanly deportment, and the genuine Christian spirit of candour, amenity, forgiveness of injuries, and reluctance to inflict pain, the combatants are pretty fairly matched'.[86] The author of an article in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, despite relishing the attack on what they called 'the doughty Scotch champion of the Edinburgh Review', cut short their quotation of Byron's lines on Jeffrey for fear of libelling a libeller—that is, by overusing Byron's libellous lines on the libeller Jeffrey—equating the poet with his antagonist.[87] The writer for the *Critical Review* even went so far as saying that Byron 'blindly followed [the Edinburgh's] authority', comparing the lines on Scott's *Marmion* to Jeffrey's review of that text, suggesting that Byron's 'charge [against Scott] is copied (not indeed in word, but in spirit)' from Jeffrey's article.[88] The correspondence between *English Bards* and the *Edinburgh*, however, is more pervasive than these reviewers realised, with the poet's opinions bearing similarity to numerous reviews contained within the pages of the periodical. There are moments in which Byron follows the word as much as the spirit of the periodical, replicating its language, imagery, and even misquotations. I focus on this

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[85] [Brougham], p. 288.

[86] 'Art. IX. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*', *Eclectic Review*, 5 (1809), 481-84 (p. 481).

[87] '*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*', *Anti-Jacobin Review*, 32 (1809), 301-36 (p. 303).

[88] 'Art. XI. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*', *Critical Review*, 17 (1809), 78-85 (p. 84, 82).

indebtedness in the next section, showing how the satirist and the replying bard also become the reviewer.

3.3.1. Following the **Edinburgh***'s Authority*

Examples of Byron 'following [the *Edinburgh*'s] authority' proliferate in *English Bards*. Earlier I discussed Byron's epithets. One such is the introduction of 'careless Dryden', which bears striking resemblance to the reviewer (possibly Thomas Campbell) of Percival Stockdale's *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets* (1807) who had identified Dryden's 'faults [as being] those of carelessness'.[89] Far from being a simple linguistic similarity, both reviewer and poet identify carelessness as a defining trait of Dryden and his poetry. This reviewer similarly describes Pope's 'Correctness, which […] is united with his shrewdness, his wit, and his common sense'.[90] This enunciation of Pope's chief 'excellence' is matched by Byron, for whom Pope is the foremost poet in an age 'When Sense and Wit with Poesy allied' (*EBSR*, l. 105). Byron also accuses William Hayley's *Life of Cowper* (1803) of 'damn[ing] the dead with purgatorial praise'—a phrase that echoes not only Pope, but Jeffrey who, in his review, described Hayley's 'indiscriminate praise of every individual' (*EBSR*, l. 312).[91] In a review of Anna Seward's *Memoir of the Life of Dr.* [Erasmus] *Darwin* (1804), the writer (probably Thomas Thomson) claimed that Darwin's 'laboured and inverted diction' and 'picturesque style of poetical description [is] sustained by bold personifications and metaphors, addressed exclusively to the eye'.[92] This is replicated in sense and word by Byron: 'The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear' and 'While all his train of hovering sylphs around | Evaporate in similes and sound' (*EBSR*, ll. 896, 899-900). The bodily imagery, as well as the personification and figurative language, suggest a direct line of influence between review and poem.

Alongside these defining epithets of individual poets, Byron repeats characterisations of the literary landscape from Jeffrey's periodical. Perhaps the *Edinburgh*'s most famous contribution to critical discourse surrounding the period is Jeffrey's accusation, in the first issue, that the poets gathered in the Lake District were creating a new poetic 'school' or 'sect', the

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[89] [?Thomas Campbell], 'Art. IV. *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets*', *Edinburgh Review*, 12 (1808), 62-82 (p. 74).

[90] [?Campbell], p. 76.

[91] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. V. *The Life and Posthumous Writings of William Cowper*', *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1803), 64-86 (p. 65).

[92] [?Thomas Thomson], 'Art. XVIII. *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin*', *Edinburgh Review*, 4 (1804), 230-41 (p. 238).

'most distinguishing symbol' of which was 'an affectation of great simplicity'.[93] Less well known, however, is the journal's situating of this school of simplicity in opposition to what Thomson called—in his review of Seward's *Memoirs*—'the *Darwinian school*'.[94] In an article on Darwin's *The Temple of Nature* (1803), Thomson claimed that, like Wordsworth, this poet 'threatened […] to establish a new sect in poetry', which took 'meretricious ornament' instead of 'simplicity' as its guiding principle—an argument taken up by Jeffrey, when he accused William Sotheby of '*Darwinianism*'.[95] In *English Bards*, between the passages on 'Neglected Genius' and the final address to Scott, there are two stanzas in which Byron calls on poets to 'Restore the Muse's violated laws' (*EBSR*, l. 892). The first stanza advises poets to avoid 'flimsy Darwin's pompous chime', and instead embrace 'the simple lyre', but with the addendum, in the following stanza, 'not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop' (*EBSR*, ll. 893, 897, 903). Byron thereby advises writers to navigate a stylistic path between two extremes and, in doing so, frames the literary landscape almost identically to the *Edinburgh*—as caught between the styles of the same two writers.

Byron similarly follows the *Edinburgh* in the ways he situates poets within that framed landscape. One of the central poets in Byron's stanzas on 'Neglected Genius' is George Crabbe, who Byron praises for the 'Truth' and 'Virtue' of his poetry, deeming him 'Nature's sternest painter, yet the best' (*EBSR*, ll. 855-58). Crabbe's *Poems* (1807) had been reviewed by Jeffrey in the April 1808 issue of the *Edinburgh*, with the reviewer's praise being for 'the truth of [Crabbe's] pictures' despite their 'gloom[iness]', and their 'important moral effect'—praise which Byron's lines reflect.[96] However, this review begins with a rhetorical opening in which Jeffrey apologises for 'having been remiss in [his] enquiries after [Crabbe], and somewhat too negligent of the honours which ought at any rate to have been paid to [Crabbe's] memory', describing the poet as 'nearly forgotten by the public'.[97] That Crabbe claims a prominent position in Byron's list of the overlooked and forgotten seems more than coincidence, and raises questions of the provenance of the stanzas themselves. It is tempting to situate the passages on neglect in relation to Wordsworth's 'Essay, Supplementary'. It is also worthwhile acknowledging the satirical imperatives at work. In a satire which takes issue with the degraded

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93 [Jeffrey], 'Art. VIII. *Thalaba*', pp. 63, 64.

94 [?Thomson], 'Art. XVIII. *Memoirs*', p. 238, original emphasis.

95 [Thomas Thomson], 'Art. XX. *The Temple of Nature*', *Edinburgh Review*, 2 (1803), 491-506 (pp. 505, 506); [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. IV. *The Georgics of Virgil*. Translated into English Verse, by William Sotheby, Esq.', *Edinburgh Review*, 4 (1804), 296-303 (p. 297).

96 [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. VIII. *Poems*. By the Reverend George Crabbe', *Edinburgh Review*, 12 (1808), 131-51 (pp. 132, 141).

97 Jeffrey, 'Art. VIII. *Poems*', p. 131.

state of the poetry and the criticism of its age, it is perhaps inevitable that its praises must appear under the heading of such public disregard. This passage on neglected genius, on the one hand, links Byron with a Wordsworthian narrative of poetic neglect created in opposition to the *Edinburgh*, but, on the other, takes that periodical as the starting point for its satiric mission—a potent image of the interwoven roles of bard and reviewer. Indeed, the interest in neglect shared by Byron and Wordsworth, and the inherently satirical nature of that concern in the former, has generic implications on the nature of Wordsworth's *Edinburgh*-reply. Despite his antipathy to satire, Wordsworth participates in the satiric spirit, criticising a degenerate age.

The *Edinburgh* penetrates the satire of *English Bards* to such an extent that the stanza on Lord Viscount Strangford's *Poems from the Portuguese of Luis de Camoens* (1803) is almost the *Edinburgh*'s review in miniature. Both satirist and reviewer accuse Strangford of a deception, attempting to pass off his own poems as those of Camoëns (*EBSR*, l. 302).[98] They share gendered language and images in the description of the 'tinsel' and 'ornament' of Strangford's style, with Byron condemning 'dressing Camoëns in a suit of lace' and the reviewer claiming the so-called translations are 'tricked out in all the tinsel and frippery of the modern poet's effeminate vocabulary' (*EBSR*, ll. 295-6, 304).[99] Both condemn Strangford's licentiousness, with Byron repeating the reviewer's accusation that Strangford has rendered Camoëns in the language of Moore's Anacreon poems (*EBSR*, l. 307).[100] What is most remarkable is Byron's repetition of the reviewer's misreading of a footnote in Strangford's volume, which discusses ideals of female beauty. The reviewer, in what must be his own act of 'wilful misrepresent[ation]' (as he says of Strangford), takes Strangford to be claiming that the poet (as well the woman to whom the annotated poem is addressed) has 'Locks of auburn, and eyes of blue'.[101] Not only does Byron repeat this mistake, his footnote to his description of Strangford ('with thine eyes of blue, | And boasted locks of red, or auburn hue') refers readers 'to "Strangford's Camoens", page 127, note to page 56, or to the last page of the Edinburgh Review of Strangford's Camoens' (*EBSR*, ll. 297-8, p. 404). The only part of Byron's comments on Strangford that suggest a familiarity with the text beyond the *Edinburgh*'s review is that first page reference, as the reviewer only cited the quotation as being a footnote to the fifty-sixth page. More importantly, the directing of readers to the periodical exposes an anxiety about the truthfulness of this claim. Byron is relying on, as well as following, the *Edinburgh*'s authority.

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[98] 'Art. III. *Poems from the Portuguese of Luis de Camoens*', *Edinburgh Review*, 6 (1805), 43-50 (p. 44).
[99] 'Art. III. *Poems from the Portuguese*', pp. 45, 46, 48.
[100] 'Art. III. *Poems from the Portuguese*', p. 48.
[101] 'Art. III. *Poems from the Portuguese*', p. 49.

Alongside such misreadings, Byron replicates the *Edinburgh*'s misquotations. In one of the above-cited footnotes on Southey, Byron interrogates the 'ballad-monger': 'We beg Mr. Southey's pardon: "Madoc *disdains* the degraded title of Epic." See his preface. Why is Epic degraded?'.[102] What is significant is that Byron engages in the kind of misrepresentation alleged against the *Edinburgh*. What Southey in fact says of his poem in its 'Preface' is more tempered: 'It *assumes not* the degraded title of Epic; and the question, therefore, is not whether the story is formed upon the rules of Aristotle, but whether it be adapted to the purposes of poetry'.[103] The substitution of 'disdains' for 'assumes not' misrepresents Southey's anxiety regarding the ways in which a genre designation shapes the reading of a text as antagonism directed towards the genre. Byron then repeats his mistake a few lines later when he states that 'Mr. Southey's poem "disdains the appellation"'—a three-word quotation in which neither the noun nor the verb are present in the source (*EBSR*, p. 403). This is not a simple matter of misremembrance. According to Jeffrey, 'Madoc [is] a poem in two parts, and thirty-five sections, which *disdains* the "degraded title of Epic" and *pretends not to be* "constructed according to the rules of Aristotle"'.[104] Jeffrey's language is misleading, yet Byron exacerbates the misrepresentation by expanding the quotation to incorporate Jeffrey's language. If it is a matter of misremembrance, it is not Southey's text, but Jeffrey's, that Byron is misremembering. Byron shares not just a critical language and literary-critical ideology, but is exposing himself to the same accusations of misrepresentation and misquotation as Jeffrey. He has embodied the role of reviewer to the point of embracing its alleged "crimes".

Where Byron departs from Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh* is in his aesthetic, rather than party-political, focus. This is nowhere more evident than in the lines on Moore, which both evoke and quietly elide aspects of Jeffrey's review of *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems* (1806)—the article which led to the above-mentioned duel between Jeffrey and Moore:

> Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
> Of virgins melting, not to Vesta's fire,
> With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion flush'd,
> Strikes his wild Lyre, whilst listening dames are hush'd?
> 'Tis Little [Moore]! Young Catullus of his day,

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[102] See above, p. 149.
[103] Robert Southey, 'Madoc', in *Poetical Works 1793-1810*, ed. by Lynda Pratt, 5 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004), II, p. 6, emphasis added.
[104] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. I. *Madoc, a Poem: in Two Parts*', *Edinburgh Review*, 7 (1805), 1-28 (p. 9), emphasis added.

As *sweet*, but as *immoral* in his lay!
Griev'd to condemn, the Muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of lust.
Pure is the flame which o'er her altar burns;
From grosser incense with disgust she turns:
Yet, kind to youth, this expiation o'er,
She bids thee, 'mend thy line, and sin no more.'

(*EBSR*, ll. 283-94, emphasis added)

This passage has much in common with Jeffrey's review, which begins by identifying the dichotomy of 'sweetness' and 'immorality' in Moore's verses to which Byron alludes.[105] It shows the same concern for a female readership, which Jeffrey describes and Byron dramatizes as being 'seduced' by Moore—though Byron's sensual and sexualised depiction of that audience, as well as his *double entendres* ('lay'), undermines his moralising.[106] Byron, however, stops short at this conservative morality, while Jeffrey proceeds into more overtly political territory. The 'immorality' of such works, he says, spreads throughout society's upper echelons, between 'the *noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie*, as in old France'.[107] Invoking the image of the *body politic*, Jeffrey states that 'if the head be once infected, the corruption will spread irresistibly through the body', situating the source of France's revolutionary and post-revolutionary corruptions amongst the powerful. As has been said, reviews were often pretexts for political discourse, and this is no less the case in Jeffrey's review of Moore. Byron dispenses with this aspect of Jeffrey's criticism, despite the shared Whiggish leanings of both Byron and his source. Indeed, he is critical of the *Edinburgh*'s party-political associations in *English Bards* (though in a work in which the poet becomes what he condemns, this need not be an argument for its absence). Byron's foremost attack on Jeffrey and his team of reviewers is contained in the image of their attending the 'banquets' at Holland House, home of Lord Holland (nephew of Whig MP Charles Fox) and, as McGann says, 'a centre of Whig society' (*EBSR*, l. 519).[108] The *Edinburgh*'s reviewers are, according to Byron, 'HOLLAND's hirelings' (*EBSR*, l. 521). It would be overstating the point to suggest that Byron is, like Coleridge, seeking an alternative criticism to that of periodical culture—one which dispenses with Whig or Tory affiliations—

[105] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. XVIII. *Epistles, Odes, and other Poems*. By Thomas Moore, Esq.', *Edinburgh Review*, 8 (1806), 456-65 (p. 456).
[106] [Jeffrey], 'Art. XVIII. *Epistles*', p. 458.
[107] [Jeffrey], 'Art. XVIII. *Epistles*', p. 460, original emphasis.
[108] See McGann's 'Commentary', in *EBSR*, p. 409.

but, as a poet-critic, his affinity with the *Edinburgh*, at least as it is expressed in *English Bards*, prioritises the aesthetic over the party-political. Hence Byron's closing line on Moore appropriates a Biblical verse (John 8:11) in order to advise adjustment to his poetics, not his socio-political ideology.

In its borrowings from the *Edinburgh*, *English Bards* embodies a common anxiety amongst writers of the period. As Ring bluntly puts it:

> a large portion of the people of this country [...] have recourse to Reviewers for the sake of saving the expense of money and time, and of abridging their labour. They fondly hope to find in these periodical publications, a succinct account of their contents and merits; and a selection of the most interesting passages which they contain; and thus to avoid the necessity of purchasing the works themselves.[109]

Reviews save a reader the time, energy, and money involved in reading books. It was just such a belief that led Peacock, in his own *Edinburgh*-reply in defence of Coleridge, the unfinished 'Essay on Fashionable Literature' (written 1818; published 1834), to write that there was a 'not innumerous class of persons who make the reading of reviews and magazines the sole business of their lives' (*Halliford* VIII, p. 269). Even the *Edinburgh* intimated as much, with Jeffrey, in his review of Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), claiming that the article left its readers 'now qualified to judge for themselves'.[110] Byron, it seems, felt qualified to judge his age by his reading of the *Edinburgh*, and his poem confirms the commonly expressed anxiety, appearing to be the work of a writer who was fed by the *Edinburgh* to such an extent that one may wonder which of these books he has read.

In his satirical reply to the *Edinburgh*, Byron thus replicates the tone, language, imagery, and critical tenets of the journal he attacked, albeit avoiding much of its party-political biases. The influence of that periodical pervades the poem to such an extent that it is as much review as it is reply. Combining this appropriation of Jeffrey's magazine with his use of the tropes of *Edinburgh*-replies, and his invocation of numerous satiric and poetic traditions, Byron embodies the roles of satirist, reviewer, and (replying) bard, and in so doing, blurs the distinction between these roles. Reviewers and repliers become satirists, repliers become

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[109] Ring, pp. 23-4.
[110] [Francis Jeffrey], 'Art. XI. *The Curse of Kehama*', *Edinburgh Review*, 17 (1811), 429-65 (p. 451).

reviewers, and satirists become Romantic poets. Byron did come to recognise his similarity to his antagonists. This is evident in the closing stanza added to the second edition:

> But now so callous grown, so changed since youth,
> I've learned to think, and sternly speak the truth;
> Learned to deride the critic's starch decree,
> And break him on the wheel he meant for me;
> To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
> Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:
> Nay more, through all my rival rhymesters frown,
> I too can hunt a Poetaster down;
> And, armed in proof, the gauntlet cast at once
> To Scotch marauder, and to Southern dunce.

(*EBSR*, ll. 1057-64)

The additions to the second edition of *English Bards* indicate a growing confidence and self-awareness. Hence the increased use of the poet's first-person singular rather than the reviewer's third-person or first-person plural. In identifying himself as using the tools of the critic (the torturer's wheel), he recognises the shared domains of satirist and reviewer. Further, the simultaneous affinity with ('I too'), and hostility towards, reviewers, as well as the simultaneity with which he depicts being able to attack poet and critic 'at once', indicates his perception of the blurring of his titular roles.

Byron's admission that age—though of course he was still a young man of twenty-one in 1809—has brought him closer to the perspective of a reviewer leads into my discussion of Hogg. This ageing, and this movement towards the tendencies of a reviewer, is precisely what Hogg depicts in his parodies of Wordsworth and Southey in *The Poetic Mirror*—two poets growing 'callous' in their interaction with reviewers.

3.4. Hogg Parodying the *Edinburgh*-Reply

The *Edinburgh*-reply was a recognisable part of the period's literary culture to such an extent that Hogg parodied the genre multiple times within *The Poetic Mirror*, utilising its expectations

in order to highlight the decline of two poets—a Wordsworth who was infected by his enmity with the *Edinburgh Review*, and a Southey who was consumed by that enmity. I begin this section by examining the 'openness' of Hogg's text (in Umberto Eco's sense of the term) in relation to other major parodic works of the period—an openness which blurs the lines between mockery and homage.[111] I then focus on Hogg's self-positioning throughout his work, emphasising his obsession with his literary self-placement which, in *The Poetic Mirror*, is extended to an examination of other poets' navigation of the literary landscape. Concentrating on the parodies of Wordsworth and Southey in Hogg's collection, I examine the manner in which Hogg parodies the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply. By analysing these parodies in relation to the tropes of that genre, I argue that, like Byron in *English Bards*, Hogg implies an affinity, similarity, and overlap amidst the oppositions and antagonisms between bards, reviewers, and satirists. Further, I argue that, by viewing these poems through such a generic lens, Hogg depicts Southey as becoming a Jeffrey-like figure, and Wordsworth as following a path trodden by the Poet Laureate—a path from the universalising gaze of a Romantic poet to the topicality of a satirist.

3.4.1. **The Poetic Mirror*: An Open Parody***

One of the aspects that distinguishes *The Poetic Mirror* from other major collections of poetic parodies in the period—particularly those contained within *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* and Horace and James Smith's *Rejected Addresses* (1812)—is its openness. For Eco, 'open texts' require the reader's active 'cooperation' in the generation of the text and its meaning, while 'closed texts' aim 'at eliciting a sort of "obedient" cooperation'.[112] That is not to say that closed texts cannot be, like all texts, diversely interpreted along ideological, intertextual, and aesthetic lines. What is specific about Eco's open text is that the reader's interpretation is anticipated by the author in order to complete the text. Hogg's openness extends from his sparse and playful paratextual framing of both the work as a whole and of the individual parodies. This is important when it is considered that the muted nature of this paratextual framework has implications within the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply which, as I have shown, often utilises multiple textual spaces—an implication we are encouraged to explore by the openness of Hogg's text.

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[111] Eco's theory of open texts is outlined in *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 3-43.
[112] Eco, *Role*, p. 7.

The individual poems in *The Poetic Mirror* are sparsely introduced and framed, especially in comparison with other notable parodic works. In *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, prefatory remarks in prose explain the parodied works and identify the (overtly political) lens being used to distort the original poems. In the *Rejected Addresses*, each poem is preceded by an epigraph which indicates the central thrust of the parody. The parody of Southey, for example, is preceded by a quotation from Horace: 'per audacem nova dithyrambos | Verba devolvit, numerique fertur | Lege solutis' ('he rolls | new words down the bold current | of his dithyrambs, rushing along in rhythms | that know no law').[113] The focus of the reader is therefore placed upon the lawless form, imitated from *Kehama*, that contains no regularity of line length. Though the quotation does not close off interpretation—the introduction into the narrative of the figure of Yamen (the judge of Hell in *Kehama*) as an avatar for Jeffrey draws the poem into the realms of the *Edinburgh*-reply—it does limit it. Indeed, the stated lawlessness of Southey's verse determines the relationship between the poet and his enemy in the legal profession. Southey is the transgressor. Hogg's parodies, however, lack explicit indications of their satirical direction, and even sometimes of the works being parodied. This is taken to an extreme by the inclusion of 'Epistle to R.S.', which the contents page identifies as being a parody of Scott, but which is in fact a poem submitted by Thomas Pringle for Hogg's original idea for a 'Poetical Repository'. It has no parodic original. Similarly, not all of the poems can be described as parodies—Hogg's preferred term in his 'Memoir' is 'imitations'—and the poems ascribed to Scott and Wilson certainly fall under this category ('Memoir', p. 40). The parodies of those earlier volumes also wear their parodic nature on the surface. The *Rejected Addresses* includes the ghosts of deceased writers amongst its contributors, while the *Anti-Jacobin* often printed its parodies alongside the works they were parodying. *The Poetic Mirror* is presented as a genuine miscellany, and it is left to the reader to identify them as parodies—a point accentuated by their stated purpose and occasion. Far from being framed disparagingly (as poems that have been rejected or as politically aberrant poems), they are presented laudatorily, as the works of major literary figures. The discovery of their parodic nature—which is revealed upon the reading of the poems themselves, not in their paratextual presentation—is indicative of the more complex relationship between praise and condemnation, homage and mockery, that is played out within *The Poetic Mirror*.

[113] [James Smith and Horace Smith], *Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum* (London: John Miller, 1812), p. 32; Horace, 'Ode 4.2', in *The Complete Odes and Epodes*, trans. by David West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ll. 9-12.

This ambiguous relationship between homage and mockery—which should be understood as another embodiment of the dynamic of playfulness and seriousness in Romantic criticism—is evident in the changing nature of the project upon which Hogg originally embarked. In 1814, Hogg conceived of the idea of a periodical 'Poetical Repository' designed to document the poetry of the age, which, though also containing notices of new books of poetry, would primarily feature poems by leading poetic figures (*HL* I, p. 178). By 1816, however, Hogg had only received contributions from Southey and Wordsworth, and he lacked work by the two contributors that he desired most in order to ensure the project's success. Scott refused the invitation to submit (leading to a falling out between the two poets), while Byron, though promising a poem, never delivered. Hogg therefore wrote the contributions himself. In his own words, he 'fancied that [he] could write a better poem than any that had been sent or would be sent to [him]' ('Memoir', p. 40). The work was written rapidly (in little more than three weeks, according to Hogg) and printed within three months, explaining its remarkable contemporaneity.[114] The collection's origins as a celebration of the age's poetry and its final form as a parody of it, embodies the dialectic of praise and condemnation that pervades the collection.

This tension is accentuated by closer engagement with the originals, and by Hogg's refusal to grasp after low-hanging fruit, such as Wordsworth's supposed childishness and simplicity, and Southey's political apostasy and uses of unusual poetic forms. Instead of the jangling rhymes, ballad forms, and rustic narrators of the *Lyrical Ballads* and *Poems, in Two Volumes*—regularly parodied and satirised—Hogg mimics the blank verse and sublime rhetoric of *The Excursion*. In place of the classical metres of Southey's early poetry (parodied in the *Antijacobin*) and the irregular metre of *Kehama* (parodied in the *Rejected Addresses*), Hogg's Southey writes in Spenserian stanzas. Similarly, the Laureate's politics—whether his early radicalism or later conservatism—are only implied, with 'Peter of Barnet' resembling his early 'English Eclogues' and 'The Curse of the Laureate' his later laureate poems. The key overlap, however, between the Southey of the *Rejected Addresses* and the Southey of *The Poetic Mirror* is the focus on his enmity with the *Edinburgh*. By avoiding many of the most recognisable characterisations of the two poets in the public sphere, Hogg continues this playful slippage between mockery and homage, identifying less familiar poetic idiosyncrasies and ultimately necessitating increased familiarity with the parodied works.

[114] Published in December 1816, it contains parodies of works published earlier that year: Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816) and Southey's *Carmen Nuptiale* (1816).

There is, therefore, a more complex and ambiguous comparative input required by the reader of Hogg's parodies. As has been said, parodies in the *Anti-Jacobin*—such as that of Southey's 'Inscription for the Apartment in Chepstow Castle where Henry Marten, the Regicide, was Imprisoned Thirty years'—are printed alongside their original and contain line-for-line re-imaginings of the parodied work. Horace and James Smith, too, present a similar form of passage-by-passage mimicry. With the exception of the final curse in Hogg's 'The Curse of the Laureate', which does use an almost line-by-line parodic method, Hogg does not opt for such strategies, instead utilising more impressionistic imitative styles. Thus his parodies bear a more ambiguous intertextual (or hypertextual) relationship to their originals. Further, the inclusion of multiple poems by the same author denies the possibility of what Eco would call a 'univocal' interpretation of each poet.[115] With Hogg and Byron being the only poets included who are represented by a single work, Hogg's use of multiple poems by single authors encourages comparison not just from poet to poet, but from poem to poem. Thus I explore Hogg's method of implicit comparison, teasing out the combined implications of Southey's changeability and Wordsworth's repetitious self-indulgence in his parodies of them. This comparative strategy is deepened by the length of the poems. While, in the first edition, the three longest poems in the *Rejected Addresses* each fill ten pages, Hogg's three-canto parody of Scott, 'Wat o' the Cleuch', fills seventy-five pages in its first edition. His three parodies of Wordsworth's *Excursion* collectively fill fifty-four pages. This indicates not the quick and precise imitation with an expected outcome, similar to a comedian's swift movement between set-up and punchline, but a more exploratory ventriloquism—a prolonged attempt to embody the voice of another.

If the individual poems are notable for the absence of authorial directions for interpretation, Hogg's framing of the collection as a whole in the 'Advertisement' is equally difficult to pin down. The 'Advertisement' is narrated by an anonymous Editor, who begins by 'claim[ing] no merit' in the work he presents, and closes by reiterating that his 'merits have in no degree entitled him' to the assistance of his supposed contributors (*PM*, pp. iii, iv). This absence of merit only reiterates the almost-absence of the Editor, who is nameless and who refers to himself in the third person, denying the presence-making authority of the first person 'I'. This absence is subsequently situated in relation to the work's contents. Readers are informed that the collection has no real order—being arranged 'simply as the pieces came to hand'—a strategy which draws attention to the possibility of meaningful sequencing, whilst

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[115] Eco, *Role*, p. vii.

denying its existence (*PM*, p. iii). The Editor's claim that his collection aims at presenting 'something original from each of the principal living Bards of Britain' is revoked when he 'regrets that there are many of the living Poets, whom he highly esteems, that have not yet complied with his request' (*PM*, pp. iii, iv). The poets represented, therefore, perhaps are, but also perhaps are not, Britain's greatest living poets—an indication of their uncertain claims to canonical status. Even the Editor's assertions regarding the importance of the collection and its projections for the future are made in negative terms. The work 'could not fail of forming a curiosity in literature', and the contributions that he is 'almost certain' to receive for further volumes will arrive 'he hopes, at no distant period' (*PM*, pp. iii, iv). The anxieties expressed in these negations—that the work may fail and that the contributions might arrive in the distant future or not at all—imply an incompleteness to the text, an ambiguity in its state and purpose, the gaps of which readers are expected to fill. Thus the 'Advertisement' gestures at a series of interpretative lenses only to withdraw them, and arouses the suspicion of a controlling hand through the denial of one. It sets up the poems with nudges and hints in the direction of interpretation, but also the clear authorial expectation that readers perform the substance of that interpretation. It is therefore not only possible, but necessary, to read *The Poetic Mirror* in more complex, comparative, intertextual, and hypertextual ways.

3.4.2. Hogg and Poets' Self-Positioning

Throughout his literary career, Hogg displayed something of an obsession regarding literary coteries, communities, competitions, landscapes, and marketplaces, regularly situating himself in a prominent position within them.[116] In issues two, five, and ten of *The Spy*, Hogg depicted an allegorical parade of the Scottish Muses, with each figure representing a Scottish poet.[117] Hogg placed his own Muse third in the parade, behind only Scott and Campbell, the two most celebrated Scottish poets of the day. In *The Queen's Wake* (1813), a Scottish poetry competition ends with the prize harp being awarded to Gardyn, but a secondary (though, some might argue, more prestigious) harp is bestowed by Mary Queen of Scots upon the shepherd poet from Ettrick—a figure to be interpreted as being both Hogg's avatar and a representation of the

[116] Hogg's negotiation of the literary marketplace forms a significant strand of Hogg scholarship. See: O'Halloran's chapter on 'Hogg's Self-Positioning in *The Poetic Mirror* and the Literary Marketplace', in *A Kaleidoscopic Art*, pp. 16-58; and the essays collected in Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson (eds), *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
[117] James Hogg, *The Spy: A Periodical Paper of Literary Amusement and Instruction*, ed. by Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 12-9, 44-51, 96-104.

literary tradition that he inherits.[118] Similarly, in *The Poetic Mirror*, Hogg identifies, as O'Halloran observes, an emerging Romantic canon that has been, for the most part, vindicated by posterity, including Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Hogg himself, Coleridge, Southey, and John Wilson (the only incongruous inclusion for modern readers), but not popular poets of the moment that are now little read, such as Campbell and Moore.[119] The placement of Byron and Scott first—the two poets whose contribution he most desired to ensure the success of his failed 'Repository'—implies the hierarchical significance of his ordering (despite the claims of the 'Advertisement'). Though situating himself behind Wordsworth, as well as Scott and Byron, Hogg has, by placing himself fourth of seven poets, set himself at the centre of his literary landscape, as O'Halloran astutely notes.[120] The creative, implicative, and often playful nature of these representations should not occlude that this is a literary strategy comparable to those of Wordsworth and Southey in its obsession with canonicity and posterity.

Yet there are distinctions between Hogg's self-positioning and the self-canonising of Southey and Wordsworth. In Wordsworth's recent 'Essay Supplementary', the poet had placed himself within a tradition of literary neglect that included Shakespeare and Milton, while Southey, in his 'Preface' to *Joan of Arc* (1796), had attempted to establish himself as next in line in a genealogy of epic poets that included Homer, Virgil, Lucan, Statius, Tasso, Ariosto, Milton, and Camoëns (*WPW* III, pp. 68, 70-1).[121] Later, as Michael Gamer shows, Southey attempted to elevate the role of poet laureate by invoking, within his laureate poems, his illustrious forbears, such as Dryden and Spenser.[122] Hogg, however, frequently situates himself amongst his contemporaries, and within an emerging contemporary canon. The parade of Scottish Muses in *The Spy* represents living poets (all of whom, except Hogg, are named on the contents page of the collected publication), and the group of poets whom Hogg slips himself amongst in *The Poetic Mirror* are, as the subtitle makes explicit, the *living* bards of Britain. While many figures in *The Queen's Wake* simultaneously represent both a living poet and a regional tradition within Scottish Highland and Lowland poetry, the balancing of tradition and contemporaneity highlights the equal importance granted by Hogg to contemporary self-placement. After all, the poem's narrative is one of competition between contemporaries, even if that competition is historicised. While it is worthwhile remembering that topicality and the

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[118] James Hogg, 'Conclusion', to *The Queen's Wake: A Legendary Tale*, ed. by Douglas Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), ll. 175-245.
[119] O'Halloran, p. 149.
[120] O'Halloran, p. 1.
[121] Robert Southey, 'Joan of Arc', in *Poetical Works 1793-1810* I, pp. 4-5.
[122] Michael Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-Canonization, and the Business of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 185.

use of living referents is a defining expectation of satire—and satire is a central genre in Hogg's work—Hogg frequently prioritises self-canonisation amongst an emerging, rather than an historically established, canon.

In *The Poetic Mirror*, however, Hogg's self-placement and self-positioning is not the central focus. He parodies the self-construction and self-situating of other poets. If *The Poetic Mirror* displays a poet negotiating a literary marketplace, it is with the awareness that his peers are doing the same, albeit through differing methods and with different agendas. Hogg's desire to resituate other poets, particularly Wordsworth, is evident in the incident on Rydal Mount, which he relates in his 'Memoir'. A group including Hogg, Wordsworth, Wilson, De Quincey, and 'several other literary gentlemen', witnessed a phenomenon that Hogg describes as 'a resplendent arch across the zenith […] something like the aurora borealis' ('Memoir', p. 68). Upon Hogg declaring that 'it is neither mair nor less than joost a treeumphal airch, raised in honour of the meeting of the poets', Wordsworth took De Quincey aside to remark: 'Poets? Poets?—What does the fellow mean?—Where are they?' ('Memoir', p. 68). Hogg's obsession with self-placement shows how important it was for him to be recognised by and amongst his contemporaries, and he therefore wrote years later that he 'never can, and never will' forgive Wordsworth for his 'disdainful and venomous words', for the elevation of himself over his peers ('Memoir', p. 68). 'It is,' Hogg says, 'surely presumption in any man to circumscribe all human excellence within the narrow sphere of his own capacity' ('Memoir', p. 68). The careful ordering of the poems in *The Poetic Mirror* thus does more than place Hogg amongst his contemporaries. It puts Wordsworth in his place—which is behind Byron and Scott.

Before turning to the Wordsworth parodies—which, I argue, depict the author of *The Excursion* becoming increasingly like Southey in his enmity with reviews—it is first necessary to examine the depiction of the Poet Laureate in the two parodies of his work: 'Peter of Barnet' and 'The Curse of the Laureate'. While the relationship between these poems implies the familiar image of the changeable Laureate, it is primarily a poetic rather than a political transformation undergone by Hogg's Southey (similar to Byron's elision of Jeffrey's Whiggism in *English Bards*), and one that is prompted by his critical reception. 'Peter of Barnet' resembles the *English Eclogues* (1799) of his radical past, while 'The Curse of the Laureate' resembles his later laureate poems. The former describes the titular rustic character in a warm, conversational manner, while the latter is all about Southey and the attacks he has received from the *Edinburgh*. There is, in this transition from a concern for others to a concern for himself, the implications of his so-called "apostasy". It is a movement from radical social conscience to

conservative self-interest, from poet of the people to poet of the state. However, what acts as the pivot, or perhaps transitional image, between the poems is the *Edinburgh*. 'Peter of Barnet' ends with the poet-speaker sitting 'at board' with Peter, and discussing Robert Burns, of whom the titular character questions whether it was true he was 'a bad man, | A man of a most vicious, tainted mind' (*PM*, p. 239). The speaker responds by saying 'never was man abused | So much as he', before launching into an attack on 'The foes of genius' and 'The foes of humble and inherent worth' (*PM*, pp. 239, 240). This evokes Wordsworth's *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (1816)—a defence of the Scottish poet against his biographers and reviewers which acts as a thinly disguised defence of Wordsworth against the *Edinburgh*.[123] It is curious that this defence is put into the mouth of Southey, but it nonetheless conjures the *Edinburgh*-reply of Wordsworth. The lack of specificity in those 'foes', who attack, not Burns, but 'genius' and 'worth', and the fact that these are epithets shared with his description of Jeffrey in 'The Curse of the Laureate', as 'the 'foe of order', evoke Jeffrey and the reviewers for the *Edinburgh* (*PM*, p. 253). Thus 'Peter of Barnet' ends on a note of irascibility towards criticism and poetic reception, expressed with subtle allusions to the *Edinburgh* and the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, before immediately moving into a poem which is, in its entirety, an attack on Jeffrey. As the Southey of 'The Curse of the Laureate' says: 'From that time [the review of *Madoc*] forth, an independent look, | A bold effrontery I did essay' (*PM*, p. 249).

In 'The Curse of the Laureate', the multivocality that is a convention of the *Edinburgh*-reply is replicated by Hogg in the shift in form and the shift in address that occurs in the final lines of the second Southey parody. The bulk of the poem is in the first-person narrative mode, while 'The Curse' that closes the poem—separated from the poem by its blackletter subtitle, like a new or supplementary text—is an apostrophic address to Jeffrey.[124] This change in address is partnered with a change in poetic form. The first twenty-one numbered stanzas of Hogg's parody are sestets of iambic pentameter, rhymed ABABCC, with the final line often an alexandrine—the form used by Southey in *The Lay of the Laureate* (1816). It is also a form with canonical implications. It is the metrical form utilised by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis*, with the regular uses of a final alexandrine connecting it to the Spenserian stanza (eight lines of iambic pentameter and an alexandrine, rhymed ABABBCBCC). 'The Curse', however,

[123] As John Wilson puts it in his review of the *Letter*, 'It is not Robert Burns for whom [Wordsworth] feels—it is William Wordsworth'; [John Wilson], 'Observations on Mr. Wordsworth's Letter Relative to a New Edition of Burns' Works', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1 (1817), 261-66 (p. 265). This article is cited by Owens and Smyser, who observe that the *Letter* was written only a few months after Jeffrey's review of *The White Doe* (in *WPW* III, pp. 112-3).

[124] In order to distinguish between the 'The Curse of the Laureate' as a whole, and the section of the poem subtitled 'The Curse', I do not abbreviate the title of the full poem.

has irregularly rhymed two-stress lines, most of which are composed of an iamb followed by an anapaest—a replication of the form Southey had used for the curse in *Kehama*. Unlike in Southey, however, in which the metre of Kehama's curse inserts a crude, incantatory regularity amidst the irregularity of the rest of the poem, the transition from iambic pentameter (famous for its similarity to the rhythms of English-language speech) to the stuttering curse represents a descent from an elevated form. The curse was, significantly, a passage which most reviewers quoted in their reviews of *Kehama*, though rarely for the purpose of praise. Jeffrey wrote of this passage: 'We suspect our readers have seldom met with such miserable doggrel [sic]'.[125] Thus the direct address to the figure representing Jeffrey represents a disruption of, and descent, from a traditional, canonical model, and a fall into doggerel. For Hogg, Southey's fight with Jeffrey is destroying the Lake Poet's poetry. Further, that Hogg's Southey addresses Jeffrey by imitating a passage maligned by the critic, implies the inevitability of failure within these remonstrations.

The self-defeating nature of Southey's replies to the *Edinburgh* are reiterated through an understanding of the role that the curse plays within the plot and underlying thematic explorations of *Kehama*. Southey's curse is spoken by the titular character who is the villain of the tale. The curse is unjustly pronounced upon Ladurlad, for the crime of having saved his daughter. The curse, however, is self-defeating. Condemning Ladurlad to a fire in his brain and heart, and unable to have his thirst quenched by water, his hunger satiated by food, his fatigue soothed by sleep, his burning cooled by the wind, nor his sufferings extinguished by death, Kehama inadvertently renders Ladurlad immortal.[126] In short, the curse returns to haunt Kehama and ends up arming his foe against him. As an epigraph on the title page makes clear, 'CURSES ARE LIKE YOUNG CHICKEN, THEY ALWAYS COME HOME TO ROOST'.[127] Hogg's appropriation of this narrative element in order to attack Jeffrey can, to the reader who is familiar with the details (not just the general characteristics) of Southey's poem, appear to be unjust and self-defeating, having brought upon itself its own downfall, as well as arming his foe against him. Horace and James Smith had similarly used plot details from *Kehama* to parody Southey's enmity with Jeffrey, with the Southey of the *Rejected Addresses* depicting Jeffrey as Yamen, the Lord of Hell and Judge of the Dead—a fitting nod to that convention of the *Edinburgh*-reply of distorting Jeffrey's self-representation as a judge of poetry. Hogg's Southey inadvertently makes Jeffrey into Ladurlad, the bedevilled father figure and eventual hero of the

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[125] [Jeffrey], 'Art. XI. *The Curse of Kehama*', p. 440.
[126] Robert Southey, 'The Curse of Kehama', in *Poetical Works 1793-1810* IV, II.144-69.
[127] Southey, 'Kehama', p. 1.

poem, and himself into Kehama, whose plan is to overthrow the gods—just as Southey aims to elevate himself to canonical status. Unsurprisingly, the curse uttered by Hogg's Southey undermines his self-construction as a heaven-inspired visionary 'whose heart beat kind to all' (*PM*, p. 248). His description of his own poems as 'lambs' which are 'to virtue prone' is undone by his damnation of Jeffrey within the bounds of a poem (*PM*, pp. 249). Hogg thus anticipates the Southey of *A Vision of Judgement* (1821), in which the poet depicted divine judgement and damnation—an aspect of that text which, it is worth noting, appalled its reviewers.[128] The image of 'Mount[ing] the tribunal' by Hogg's Southey, in order to 'arraign' Jeffrey for his 'crimes', appropriates the legal rhetoric of the *Edinburgh*—a common trope of *Edinburgh*-replies (*PM*, pp. 251, 253, 252). However, Hogg's Southey does not simply redeploy or undermine a rhetoric. He places himself in the position of judge, taking on the role of Jeffrey and of reviewers. It therefore becomes telling that Hogg's Southey utters a curse, not a judgement, thereby failing in the role that he has assigned himself, becoming the very thing he condemns, and exercising not the dispassionate judgement of a critic, but the vehemence of a reviewer. Hogg's Southey becomes Southey's Jeffrey.

This depiction of Southey reshapes the characterisation of Wordsworth in *The Poetic Mirror*. The transition between an exterior focus on the lives of others, to the interiority of the poet, and from bard to reviewer, is played out in the parodies of Wordsworth, and is once again connected with the increasing prominence of the *Edinburgh*. However, rather than through shifts from poem to poem, the transformation occurs repeatedly within each individual parody. The titles of the Wordsworth parodies imply development and forward movement: 'The Stranger; being a Farther Portion of "The Recluse," a Poem', 'Further Extract from "The Recluse," a Poem: The Flying Tailor', and 'Still Further Extract from "The Recluse," a Poem: James Rigg'. The amusingly developed 'Farther', 'Further', 'Still Further' implies poetic development, an on-going process, even as they refer to the same work. The shift between title and subtitle that occurs between the first and second parodies—'The Stranger' is the title, while 'The Flying Tailor' and 'James Rigg' are the subtitles—imply a diminution of each poem's subject in favour of the larger project, the scope of which remains absent. Similarly, the underlaying structure of the individual parodies indicates an increasing egotism. Each of the Wordsworth parodies is named for a character within the poem, and begins with the third-person narrative of that titular character. Each poem ends with Wordsworth—the 'I' of the poet-

[128] For example, an anonymous article in the *Monthly Review* 'condemned' Southey for having 'dared to place [his] brethren, specified, named, persecuted […] in the *shades* or rather in the horrible *lights* of hell'; 'Art. VII. *A Vision of Judgement*', *Monthly Review*, 95 (1821), 170-78 (p. 172), original emphasis.

narrator. Thus, while the Southey parodies indicate opposite ends of a poetic career, the Wordsworth parodies imply individual moments, but each one of which involves a turn inwards. This is an echo of the movement between the three poems that comprise Coleridge's pamphlet *Fears in Solitude*, which became symbolic in traditional understandings of Romanticism—one of the many ways in which Hogg as satirical critic has anticipated modern characterisations of the spirit of the age. If Southey is shown in two extremes, Wordsworth is shown in the middle ground, transitioning towards the extreme. In short, Southey is what Wordsworth is becoming.

The parodies of Wordsworth are perhaps the most ingenious and most savage of the satires, despite the Lake Poet being one of the few poets to make good on his promise of a poem to Hogg's original 'Repository'. Hogg noted that *The Poetic Mirror* may have 'passed, for a season at least, as the genuine productions of the authors themselves' had it not been for the Wordsworth poems, which had more of the appearance of 'caricature' than 'imitation' ('Memoir', p. 41). Though Hogg's claim for the fidelity of his 'imitations' to their originals should be taken with a pinch of salt, he nonetheless highlights that something more is at work in the Wordsworth parodies, more of mockery than homage. The particular works of Wordsworth's that are being parodied are *The Excursion* and the paratextual prose collected in *Poems* (1815). Hogg draws the rhetoric of Wordsworth's prose into the blank verse of his recent epic, moving it from the margins and the paratexts to the body of the text itself. The division between poetry and prose, between text and paratext, and the multivocal aspect of the *Edinburgh*-reply, are of particular importance to Wordsworthian poetics as they separate the universal ambitions of his poetry from the topicality and personality of his dealings with reviewers. Hogg's situating of Wordsworth's arguments with his critics within the poems implies the temporal relativity of the Lake Poet's verse and its inability to free itself from the petty squabbles of his day. Further, rendering Wordsworth's antagonistic discourse in verse implies the satirical bent of Wordsworth's interactions with Jeffrey. As Greenberg puts it, invective 'Fused to wit or artful expression […] becomes satiric'.[129]

The obsession with reviews displayed by Hogg's Wordsworth is first broached in 'The Stranger', in an incident inspired by the event at Rydal Mount. The poet-narrator (implicitly Wordsworth) is out walking with literary figures easily detectable as Wilson ('he […] of the Palmy Isle'), Southey ('The changeful and right feeble bard now stiled [sic] | The Laureate')

[129] Greenberg, p. 47.

and Hogg ('the poor Shepherd') (*PM*, pp.145, 151). In a conversation 'on books and men', the Hogg character, whose Scottishness is stated repeatedly throughout the poem—he is 'The would-be songster of the Scottish hills'—'Lauded his countrymen, […] | Reviewers and review'd' (*PM*, p. 146). It is a division of the world of letters into a dichotomy similar to that of Byron's bards and reviewers—a similarity emphasised by the association of reviewing and reviews with Hogg's nationality. However, the dialectic proposed by Hogg's Wordsworth has connotations beyond such national debates, as it centres not on the two disciplines of poetry and criticism (as in Byron), but solely on the latter. If reviews are considered a supplementary, even paratextual, literary form (as Christie considers them), this construction reverses those roles, subordinating poetry to the role of critical fodder, the raw material from which reviewers craft their reviews.[130] Hogg's Wordsworth answers the question posed in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*—'what is a poet?'—by its relationship to criticism.[131] To place this characterisation in the mouth of a poet like Wordsworth, whose skirmishes with reviewers were infamous, implies a degradation of poetry by the poet—a degradation dramatised by the repeated digressions of Hogg's Wordsworth from his narratives about the titular characters ('The Stranger', 'The Flying Tailor', 'James Rigg') to himself and to his introspections throughout these poems.

If there is a particular stylistic trait to which Hogg wishes to draw the most attention in the poetry of Wordsworth, it is the use of hyperbole and inflation—Wordsworth's ability, as Hogg says in a letter to Byron in August 1814, to 'make the most out of any scene or incident in nature' (*HL* I, p. 197). There are contradictory implications in Hogg's statement, a blurred line between mockery and praise. While Wordsworth can wring the sublimity and poetry out of any image, he can also make too much of an image unworthy of anything more than passing notice. In his parodies, Hogg accuses Wordsworth of (almost literally) making mountains out of molehills. In 'The Stranger', the poet-narrator describes the approach of 'a form so ominous' that his 'heart was chill'd with horror' (*PM*, p. 152). Coffin-shaped and 'Black as the death-pall', the creature is revealed, after eighteen lines of Gothic description, to be a tadpole (*PM*, pp. 152-3). In that same poem, Hogg's Wordsworth hears 'a solemn and impressive' sound that made his heart quake as though 'heaven in distant thunder had | Spoke words of human breath' (*PM*, p. 140). The cause of the 'gathering boom', exalted in religious terms, is eventually revealed to be a beetle (*PM*, p. 141). In 'James Rigg', the initial introduction of 'a beauteous Ass' by describing its ears as being 'Superb as horn of fabled Unicorn' imputes a tendency to

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[130] Christie, *Edinburgh*, p. 18.
[131] See above, p. 40.

mythologise and fabulise even the most mundane of natural phenomena (*PM*, p. 172). One of the most amusing passages in *The Poetic Mirror* describes the tail of a horse:

> And then his tail, which farrier's hand obscene
> Had rudely maul'd, and sore curtail'd withal,
> And by incision cruel, and the help
> Of pullied cords, made that point up to heaven
> Which God ordain'd should hang towards the earth
> With graceful sweep—O shame! that impious man
> Should in unrighteous pride thus lay exposed
> Unto the stifled winds and eye of day
> That Nature meant to hide!
>
> (*PM*, pp. 139-40)

The description of a horse's rear-end and the exposure of its orifice in a style imitating the highly-wrought blank verse of *The Excursion*, renders the ridiculous sublime and, by implication, the Wordsworthian sublime ridiculous. Though this would appear to be a common satirical trope—utilising a high literary style for a description of the visceral and scatological—the conflation of God and Nature in this passage is remarkably perceptive. It anticipates Abrams's argument in *Natural Supernaturalism* about the defining spirit of the age.[132] Hogg reads Wordsworth astutely whilst mocking him mercilessly.

When it comes to human affairs, Hogg's Wordsworth shifts from descriptions of the natural and terrestrial in terms of the supernatural and religious, to a vapid inflation of language which undermines his own poetics. In 'The Flying Tailor'—a poem which deals with what Wordsworth, in 'Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey' (1798), called 'The dreary intercourse of daily life'—Hogg's Wordsworth describes the titular character's apprenticeship:

> In his tenth year he was apprenticed
> Unto a Master Tailor by a strong
> And regular indenture of seven years,
> Commencing from the date the parchment bore,

[132] See above, p. 8, n. 26.

And ending on a certain day, that made
The term complete of seven solar years.

(*PM*, p. 159)[133]

The triple use of the word 'year', each time stressed by the iambic metre, highlights the repetitiousness of the passage. The insertion of 'solar' into the previously used 'seven years' suggests an expansion of phraseology by the insertion of superfluous words—'solar' doing little to qualify or nuance the word 'year'. The application of this inflated style to matters of the labouring classes has implications in Wordsworth's poetics. (It is also worth noting that a passage quickly follows that goes to unnecessary and patronising lengths to explain how 'The coin from labour's pocket' is often small, but 'when join'd | Mak[e] a good round sum'; *PM*, p. 162). The 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, which had recently been reprinted in *Poems* (1815)—the paratextual prose of this collection being one of the key texts being parodied by Hogg—prescribed not only the depiction of rustic and labouring life but, in one of its most discussed passages (including by Coleridge in the *Biographia*), 'the real language of men'.[134] Hogg's Wordsworth has slipped from this virtue to something more like the 'poetic diction' the real Wordsworth condemned (*WPW* I, p. 131).

Significantly, the identification and repetition of these hyperbolic stylistic traits enter into the passages on the *Edinburgh*:

[…] eternally my name
Shall last on earth, conspicuous like a star
'Mid that bright galaxy of favour'd spirits,
Who, laugh'd at constantly whene'er they publish'd,
Survived the impotent scorn of base Reviews,
Monthly or Quarterly, or that accursed
Journal, the Edinburgh Review, that lives
On tears, and sighs, and groans, and brains, and blood.

(*PM*, p. 170)

[133] William Wordsworth, 'Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey', in *Lyrical Ballads*, l. 132.
[134] See above, p. 61.

The hellish imagery of the word ‘accursed’—a semantic choice which connects Wordsworth’s condemnation with Southey’s ‘Curse’ later in *The Poetic Mirror*—and the parasitic, even vampiric final line echoes the Gothic description of the tadpole, connecting the monstrous hyperbole of the latter with the aggression of the former. By situating the attack on the *Edinburgh* within the text of the poem itself, and by using corresponding generic tropes, Hogg imputes the stylistic traits of hyperbole and inflation to those aggressions which usually appear in Wordsworth’s paratexts, disconnected from his poetry. Yet, despite this imputation, Hogg perceives the anxieties of authorship that permeate such attacks. Due to its position at the end of the line, there is a pause that falls after the word ‘lives’ in the penultimate verse, which can momentarily be misread as the end of the clause or sentence, hinting at fears about the vitality of the *Edinburgh*. This momentary deception follows on from the survival of poets two lines earlier, invoking the dialectic of immortality and ephemerality which permeates discussions of bards and reviewers, and which is a familiar convention of the *Edinburgh*-reply. This dialectic being presented with the wavering pause of the penultimate line attributes a sense of fear to Wordsworth’s professed certainty of both his immortality and the short lifespan of periodical criticism. In Wordsworth’s protestations, Hogg detects an anxiety that Jeffrey’s criticism might have lasting consequences.

Just as he does with Southey, Hogg implies that Wordsworth is more like Jeffrey than the poet realises. This is implied by the expectations of the genre being parodied: the *Edinburgh*-reply. The use and parody of this genre raises (as all uses and parodies of a genre do) certain expectations. A frequent accusation levelled against Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh* is that of a predisposition towards censure and condemnation. Indeed, the *Edinburgh*’s motto (discussed above) implies this as its guiding doctrine. With this genre trope alluded to within the Wordsworth and Southey parodies, the blanket censuring of all of his contemporaries by Hogg’s Wordsworth suggests an unspoken likeness between reviewer and reviewed. In ‘The Stranger’, as has been said, Hogg recreates or reimagines the incident at Rydal Mount, with the poet-narrator (Wordsworth) on an excursion with Wilson, Southey, and Hogg. The comments upon these writers by the Wordsworth figure are marked by ‘impotent scorn’ (to use that later phrase from ‘The Flying Tailor’, and directed at the *Edinburgh*). Hogg is a ‘would-be songster’, a ‘bard obscure | From Scotland’s barren wastes—barren alike | Of verdure, intellect, and moral sense’ (*PM*, p. 145). Southey is ‘the royal tool’ and Wilson the ‘Disgrace of that sweet school, that tuneful choir | Named for these peaceful waters [the Lakes]’ (*PM*, pp. 145, 146). Like Byron’s footnotes to *English Bards*, there is something of the satirical tone of the *Edinburgh* in these comments, and the adaptation of Jeffrey’s Lake School rhetoric whilst condemning two

poets (Southey and Wilson) within that supposed school only serves to emphasise an affinity between Wordsworth and Jeffrey. Like his representation of Southey, Hogg's Wordsworth is becoming like the *Edinburgh*'s editor.

Like Southey's climactic 'Curse' in 'The Curse of the Laureate', the *Edinburgh*-reply of Hogg's Wordsworth is ultimately self-defeating. In the reimagined scene at Rydal Mount, the conversation turns to Scott, whom the Wordsworth character identifies as the 'unknown, inept, presumptuous bard, | The Border Minstrel', a poet who 'Deserves the high neglect which he has met' (*PM*, p. 146). The description of Scott as an 'unknown' and 'neglect[ed]' poet could not have struck readers as anything but absurd, with the Scottish poet's critical and popular success second only to Byron's in the period. There is, however, a twofold interpretation here. On the one hand, the absurdity of identifying Scott as neglected implies the absurdity of Wordsworth's 'Essay Supplementary' and his claim that Shakespeare (who was one of the most popular poets of his day) was little appreciated in his lifetime (*WPW* III, p. 68). Simultaneously, considered within the Wordsworthian construct of literary neglect outlined in the 'Essay, Supplementary'—an argument alluded to by Hogg in the closing lines of 'The Flying Tailor'—it is difficult to imagine any greater endorsement that Wordsworth can offer a contemporary than his having been neglected. Slights and aversions are, as Wordsworth says, the 'proofs [...] that the products of [his] industry will endure' (*WPW* III, p. 80). This is further exacerbated by the implicit likening of Wordsworth to Jeffrey on the grounds of a predisposition towards censure that is as virulent as that of the reviewer whom he condemns. Hogg's Wordsworth therefore undermines his own rhetoric, whilst that rhetoric undermines him. Like Southey's curse, it is self-defeating. The movement from the outward, political gaze to the introspective, self-examining, and universalising stance is shown by Hogg to revert back to an externalising topicality through the nature of its egotism and its egotistical sublimity.

There is a self-implicating irony at work here. Hogg's depiction of obsessive self-positioning amongst periodicals and amongst other poets is a reflection of one of his own obsessions. Hogg had already attempted to situate himself amongst his contemporaries numerous times, and had even participated in the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply. If one of the key features of the prose writings of poet-critics is their self-implications, then Hogg playfully unpicks his own obsession. The sins of Southey and Wordsworth are, to a certain extent, his own. This obsessive self-placement being shared by the Lake District circle and by the satirically-inclined Hogg therefore continues the disruption of the outdated antithesis between satire and Romanticism that has been the subject of this chapter. Juvenal wrote that it was 'hard

not to write satire' and, as I have shown, this was a tendency imputed by Hogg to the poets who were most hostile to that genre.[135] Byron—through his deployment of the tropes and conventions of the *Edinburgh*-reply, his engagement with multiple satiric traditions, and his use of the *Edinburgh* itself—embodies the three roles of his title: satirist, reviewer, and Romantic bard. The pervasiveness of the *Edinburgh*'s language, rhetoric, and critical tenets suggest that the periodical was a primary source of inspiration for Byron's poem. The dividing lines upon which poet-critics separated themselves from their antagonists—dividing lines which were the basis of their constructed public identities—are blurred by Byron in his movement between roles, and that blurring is depicted by Hogg in his parodies of *Edinburgh*-replies. Thus, considering these poetical works in relation to a dominant genre of criticism in the period—the *Edinburgh*-reply—highlights that Byron and Hogg were aware of themselves as poet-critics, even if they absorbed their literary-critical thought into their poems, rather than expressing them in discursive prose works. Further, in viewing these works through this generic lens, the centrality of Jeffrey and his periodical to Romantic-era poetry and poetics is proved to be more complex than the antitheses implied by the poets attempting to negotiate its influence on nineteenth-century literary culture. Romantic poet-critics enter the mire of magazine culture that they claimed to rise above—the 'poet-philosopher' becoming Thelwall's 'Advocate Reviewer'.

In my final chapter, this dynamic of poetry, satire, periodical criticism, and reply, is once more at the forefront, as I move into a discussion of Peacock's satirical essay, 'The Four Ages of Poetry', and Shelley's reply-essay, 'A Defence of Poetry'. However, the dialectic of offence and defence, provocation and reply, takes place between two poets attempting to navigate and find their place within the literary landscape. The lens through which these texts are examined is that of the genre which cuts across all the critical writings of Romantic-era poets: the poetic apologia.

[135] Juvenal, 'Satire 1', l. 30 (pp. 132-33), original emphasis.

Chapter 4

Self-Defence:
Peacock, Shelley, and the Poetic Apologia

Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poetry* (1595) opens with an amusing anecdote. Whilst at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II, Sidney decided to 'learn horsemanship' from 'an esquire in [the Emperor's] stable'.[1] During his demonstrations, the esquire launched into a panegyric 'in praise of his faculty': 'soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers', 'no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman', and horses themselves were 'a peerless beast […] the only serviceable courtier without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage'.[2] So affecting is the esquire's panegyric that Sidney remarks: 'if I had not been a piece of a logician […] I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse'.[3] From this incident, he arrives at a revelation which overshadows his *Defence*: 'self-love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties'.[4] Like the esquire's 'strong affections and weak arguments', the poet will thus enter into a praise of his 'unelected vocation […] with more good will than good reasons'.[5] It is, of course, a rhetorical feint, disarming readers before launching into an argument which Sidney no doubt believes is driven by 'good reasons'. Yet this introduction is disarming for readers precisely because of its apparent honesty. The relationship between poetry and the poet is one of 'strong affections', 'good will', and, ultimately, 'self-love', and any argument in defence of poetry by a poet emerges from the emotional relation of the subject to the self.

Superficially, Sidney's characterisation of an affectionate relationship between a poet and their vocation does much to explain the excesses of Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry', but little to clarify those of a seeming '*misomousoi*' (or 'poet-hater') like Peacock in 'The Four Ages of Poetry'.[6] However, brief consideration of another attack on poetry sheds light on

[1] Sidney, p. 212.
[2] Sidney, p. 212.
[3] Sidney, p. 212.
[4] Sidney, p. 212.
[5] Sidney, p. 212.
[6] Sidney, p. 232.

Peacock's antagonism. W.H. Auden infamously claimed, in his elegy for W.B. Yeats, that 'Poetry makes nothing happen'.[7] This statement is often considered the antithesis of Shelley's pronouncement in the 'Defence' that 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' ('Defence', p. 701).[8] Written in response to Yeats's musing on the influence of his poetry on the Easter Rising (1916), Auden's proclamation is, to a certain extent, a restatement of Peacock's argument for poetry's uselessness in 'The Four Ages'. However, Auden's claim emerges from a stance of 'self-love'. In his concluding lecture on Shakespeare, he writes:

> There's something a little irritating in the determination of the very greatest artists, like Dante, Joyce, Milton, to create masterpieces and to think themselves important. To be able to devote one's life to art without forgetting that art is frivolous is a tremendous achievement of personal character. Shakespeare never takes himself too seriously.[9]

Here Auden gives himself away. His riposte to Yeats reaffirms his sense of self. He publicly represents himself within his own construction of the Shakespearean poet who does not take poetry 'too seriously'. A supposed attack on poetry is in fact a defence of the poet within the bounds of his self-constructed identity.

This chapter examines Shelley's 'Defence' and Peacock's 'Four Ages', situating both texts within the rhetorical and literary genre of the poetic apologia (of which Sidney's *Defence* is the canonical text). This genre is here defined not just as a defence of poetry, but as a defence of the poet. As Coleridge remarks in the *Biographia*, 'What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet?' (*BL* II, p. 15). A poetic apologia is thus a *self*-defence—a defence not just of the self, but an argument emerging from a sense of self and of one's relation to one's vocation. I argue that Peacock's attack on poetry, with its shifting registers of what Joukovsky calls the 'serious' and the 'ironic', and Abrams 'the serious and the playful', is a defence of his own genre choices.[10] Deploying an Aristotelian division of genres in his writing, Peacock's essay, written at a moment of transition in both his life and his literary career, implicitly defends

[7] W.H. Auden, 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats', in *Collected Shorter Poems: 1927-1957* (London: Faber, 1969), II.5.
[8] The antithesis between Shelley and Auden was emphasised in a recent project in which I solicited new defences of poetry from modern poets in celebration of the bicentennial of the composition of Shelley's apologia. After the 'Defence', Auden's was the most cited work in the project. See: David O'Hanlon-Alexandra (ed.), *New Defences of Poetry*, NCLA (2021) <http://nclacommunity.org/newdefences> [accessed 25 February 2022].
[9] W.H. Auden, *Lectures on Shakespeare*, ed. by Arthur Kirsch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 319.
[10] Joukovsky, 'Modest', p. 491; Abrams, *Mirror*, p. 126.

his growing scepticism towards tragedy and his increasing prioritisation of comedy. Peacock's poetry haunts the peripheries of 'The Four Ages', with the essay becoming as much an attack on his own poetic past as on the development of poetry as a genre of literature. In so arguing, I refute simplistic readings of Peacock's literary evolution—that he abandoned Romantic poetry for satiric prose—instead reassessing his development as a more nuanced reprioritisation within the broad generic categories of the comic and the tragic. Further, by examining the relationship between 'The Four Ages' and Peacock's poems, I foreground the less familiar image of Peacock not as a satirist and novelist, but as a poet and a lifelong lover and conflicted interpreter of poetry. Thus I aim to reclaim Peacock, not just into wider discussions of Romantic-era literature, but as a Romantic poet-critic. My reading of Shelley's 'Defence' revisits the familiar perception of the essay as a response to attacks on poetry by both Peacock and Plato. However, I consider these contrasting attacks in relation to each other, showing how Shelley's apologia navigates conflicting dialectics presented by the two texts—between history and philosophy, materialism and idealism, production and reception, and the timely and the timeless.[11] Viewed in comparison to Shelley's earlier reply to Plato, *A Philosophical View of Reform* (written 1819-20; published 1920), the 'Defence' exposes the development, expansion, and hyperbolic inflation of his definition of poetry as he forges a defence which answers both of his antagonists simultaneously. If defensiveness has been shown throughout this study to be a pervading attitude of the era's poet-critics, this chapter highlights, through the genre of the poetic apologia, the shaping influence of that defensiveness on the critical writings of Romantic poets.

This chapter contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the relationship between Peacock and Shelley.[12] Despite the brevity of their friendship within the elder poet's more than eighty years of living, Shelley is recognised as an important figure in relation to Peacock. Joukovsky calls the introduction to Shelley in 1812 'the most momentous event of [Peacock's] life'.[13] The inverse has not been so widely recognised. However, discussions of Shelley's Platonism and his reading in the classics rarely fail to mention Peacock, so influential on Shelley is the classicism of the autodidact that Thomas Taylor affectionately dubbed 'Greeky Peaky'.[14]

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[11] This image of the timely and timeless is derived from Greenberg's discussion of satire. See above: p. 133, n. 28
[12] Mary A. Quinn, '"Ozymandias" as Shelley's Rejoinder to Peacock's "Palmyra"', *English Language Notes*, 21 (1984), 48-56; Bruce Haley, 'Shelley, Peacock, and the Reading of History', *Studies in Romanticism*, 29 (1990), 439-61; Jean Hall, 'The Divine and the Dispassionate Selves: Shelley's *Defence* and Peacock's *The Four Ages of Poetry*', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 41 (1992), 139-63; Suzanne L. Barnett, '"The Great God Pan is Alive Again": Peacock and Shelley in Marlow', in *Romantic Paganism: The Politics of Ecstasy in the Shelley Circle* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 167-213.
[13] Nicholas Joukovsky, 'Introduction', to *PL* I, p. lv.
[14] Quoted in: Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed: A Satirist in his Context* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 20.

As both James Notopoulos and Suzanne Barnett observe, Peacock is responsible for Shelley's rediscovery of Plato and his interest in antiquity in the years of his poetic maturity.[15] This study therefore advances the treatment of Peacock as a major figure in Shelley's life by exploring Peacock's formative influence on Shelley's 'Defence'. Similarly, the satire of 'The Four Ages' has often been reduced within Shelley studies, being viewed as a utilitarian attack in earnest. This is due to what Marilyn Butler calls the 'perfect seriousness' with which Shelley treats Peacock's essay.[16] This chapter, however, first examines 'The Four Ages' in its own right. Read in this way, its ironies and satirical ambiguities come to the fore. I then consider this text with regards to Shelley's response, highlighting Shelley's treatment of it as a sincere discourse. In so doing, I develop the critical work of Joukovsky and Stephen Prickett which attempts to untangle the Gordian knot of satire and sincerity in Peacock's text.[17] 'The Four Ages' is a work which has garnered conflicting and even antithetical readings, and this, I argue, is due to the genre-anxieties both within the text and within Peacock's wider writings.

I also build upon the expanding body of research, beginning with Notopoulos's seminal work, *The Platonism of Shelley* (1949), which explores Shelley's interaction with Platonic texts and doctrines, and his position as a translator, interpreter, stylistic admirer, antagonist, and acolyte of Plato.[18] I compare this ancient author's attack on poetry to Peacock's contemporary one. Although the 'Defence' is recognised as a reply to both Peacock and Plato, the dual nature of this defence is underexplored, with critics focusing on the response to either one or the other.[19] By contrasting the two conflicting attacks on poetry and their influence on the

[15] James Notopoulos, *The Platonism of Shelley: A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1949), pp. 38-42; Barnett, p. 170.
[16] Butler, *Peacock*, p. 290.
[17] Though Abrams calls attempts to untangle these conflicting strands of discourse 'idle' (*Mirror*, p. 126), two notable attempts are made in: Stephen Prickett, 'Peacock's Four Ages Recycled', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 22 (1982), 158-66; and Joukovsky, 'Modest'.
[18] On the influence of Plato's prose style, see: Michael O'Neill, '"The Whole Mechanism of the Drama": Shelley's Translation of Plato's *Symposium*', *Keats-Shelley Review*, 18 (2004), 51-67; Michael O'Neill, 'Emulating Plato: Shelley as Translator and Prose Poet', in *Shelleyan Reimaginings and Influence: New Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 28-44. For Shelley's use of Platonic doctrine, see: Jennifer Wallace, 'Shelley, Plato and the Political Imagination', in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, ed. by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 229-41; Jarrell D. Wright, 'Transcending Law and Literature: Literature as Law in Plato, Vico, and Shelley', *Law and Literature*, 29 (2017), 291-310; Zachary Sng, 'Love Language: Plato, Shelley, Schlegel', in *Middling Romanticism: Reading in the Gap, from Kant to Ashbery* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), pp. 104-26. For Shelley as a translator of Plato, see: Troy Urquhart, 'Metaphor, Transfer, and Translation in Plato's Ion: The Postmodern Platonism of Shelley's A Defence of Poetry', *Romanticism on the Net,* 31 (2003) <ronjournal.org/articles/n31/metaphor-transfer-and-translation-in-platos-ion-the-postmodern-platonism-of-percy-bysshe-shelleys-a-defence-poetry> [accessed 25 February 2022]; Stephanie Nelson, 'Shelley and Plato's Symposium: The Poet's Revenge', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 14 (2007), 100-29; Benjamin Sudarsky, 'The Banquet, Gender, and "original Composition"', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 66 (2017), 160-65; Ross Wilson, 'Shelley's Plato', in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy*, ed. by Piers Rawling and Philip Wilson (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 345-57.
[19] Haley and Hall each focus on the 'Defence' as a reply to Peacock, while Wallace and Urquhart centralise the apologia as a riposte to Plato. See also: Notopolous, p. 346.

development of Shelley's redefinition of poetry from one text (*A Philosophical View*) to the next ('Defence'), I demonstrate that the latter text revises the former's defence of poetry against Plato in light of Peacock's new attack. The 'Defence' thus attempts to create a definition of poetry that withstands both materialist and idealist criticisms. In viewing both texts within the classical genre of the apologia, this chapter introduces a focus on classicism, particularly regarding Peacock's Aristotelean genre-navigating and Shelley's Platonic definition of poetry in relation to other genres and discourses. While previous chapters have examined poet-critics negotiating their place within a contemporaneous marketplace, an emerging disciplinary hierarchy, and a critical landscape dominated by periodicals, this chapter explores Romantic-era poet-critics engaging with historical critical tenets and situating themselves within discourses spanning millennia. Thus this chapter centralises, for the first time in this thesis, poets' direct engagement with their own uses of genre, their theories regarding genre, and their expressions of their genre-anxieties.

4.1. Peacock and 'The Four Ages of Poetry'

I begin by examining the contradictions, antitheses, and tensions which the 'The Four Ages' has presented to critics and readers. As *Ollier's Literary Miscellany*—in the first and only issue of which Peacock's essay appeared—was little read, and 'The Four Ages' was not reprinted in Peacock's lifetime, the only known contemporaneous response is Shelley's. This section, therefore, focuses on modern critical responses to 'The Four Ages', highlighting its elusiveness, and its conflicting interpretations as either a sincere or ironic text. It is important to emphasise that, throughout this chapter, terms such as "seriousness" and "playfulness" do not refer to the author's treatment of a text or genre. Comedy and satire are serious to, and are treated seriously by, satirists and comedians. While these terms are related to the dichotomy of Romantic sincerity and satiric irony explored in the previous chapter (traditions in which Peacock alternately participated in his career), I use them strictly in discussing the discursive genre of the essay or apologia, in which writers are expected to clarify their ideas. The dilemma here is between meaning and not meaning what one says, or between expecting and not expecting readers to take an author at their word. Though there is correspondence between the dialectic of irony and sincerity, and that of the genres of comedy and tragedy discussed in the following sections, such terms become problematic in discussing poetry and novels. In the first section, therefore, cross-genre comparisons within Peacock's oeuvre are to other essays, particularly 'An Essay on Fashionable Literature'. 'The Four Ages' is a text which exploits the conflict

between philosophical and poetical traditions, and which, when situated within the context of its original publication, is all the more elusive. Interpreting Peacock's satiric masterpiece therefore requires careful navigation of its shifting registers, and an understanding of Peacock that is alert to the contradictions in his literary career. Ultimately, the first section shows that the 'The Four Ages' is a site of conflict between genres and discursive modes: mythology and history, poetry and philosophy, irony and sincerity. These oppositions shape the battleground upon which Peacock's personal conflict between comedy and tragedy is fought.

4.1.1. Sincerity and Irony: Conflict in 'The Four Ages'

Peacock's essay slips easily into discussions of the anxieties, personal conflicts, and psychological tensions which characterise poetic production. His view of a retrospective poetics, in which poets are always looking back to a superior past in order to revise or reimagine it, has echoes of Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). Peacock's statement that 'There are more good poems already existing than are sufficient to employ that portion of life which any mere reader and recipient of poetical impressions should devote to them', reads, on the surface at least, like a capitulation to Bloom's influence anxieties ('Four Ages', p. 154).[20] Tellingly, Bate's *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (1970)—Bloom's precursor text—discusses 'The Four Ages' in the introduction to his chapter on eighteenth-century narratives of historical literary decline, using Peacock's essay as a satirical lead-in to that school of thought.[21] Similarly, 'The Four Ages' is a work troubled by the notion of 'the reading public' to whom poets must address their poems, by 'magazine critics, who continue to debate and promulgate oracles about poetry', and by the idea of poetry as a 'trade' which, 'like all other trades, takes its rise in the demand for the commodity, and flourishes in proportion to the extent of the market' ('FA', pp. 155, 156, 137). With its concern for market forces, reviewing, and audience failings typical of the era, Peacock's satire invokes what Newlyn calls the 'anxiety of reception' which shapes Romantic-era discourse.[22] The essay also invokes what Lerner calls 'the hatred of poetry'; for Lerner, poetry is 'An art hated from without and within'.[23] The materialism and historicism of Peacock's satire reflects what Lerner views as the natural antipathy of poets towards their vocation, usually as a result of a disparity between a Platonic ideal of poetry and the material reality of actual poems. For Lerner, poets express a natural frustration with poetry

[20] Bloom, p. 35.
[21] Bate, p. 63.
[22] See above, p. 11, n. 35.
[23] Lerner, p. 9.

as they simultaneously aggrandise it—a Blakean dynamic of innocence and experience that permeates Peacock's time of writing. This sense of conflict is compounded by the fact that Lerner's book is, by its own admission, 'written in defense, and in defense of our denunciation of', poetry.[24] While, on the surface, 'The Four Ages' does not display what Bloom called the 'agon'—every artist's struggle for artistic priority, which is 'the basis of all imaginative literature'—Bate observes that Peacock 'overstat[es] the situation', expressing real artistic concerns 'with distilled irony'.[25] 'The Four Ages' reads as a compound of authorial conflicts and anxieties pushed through an ironic and self-effacing lens.

While such generalised conflicts underlie the essay, more localised tensions arise throughout the 'The Four Ages'. One of the foremost tensions lies in the extent to which Peacock's utilitarian argument against poetry is genuine. Butler argues that, in the 'Four Ages', 'Peacock puts the genuine utilitarian case—though it is in a deliberately provocative and extreme form'.[26] She evidences this point by suggesting that it should be read as such precisely because Shelley interprets it so. Shelley, says Butler, 'is addressing himself with perfect seriousness to a utilitarian'.[27] James Mulvihill puts a similar case, arguing that 'Peacock means what he says', albeit expressed wittily and satirically.[28] Indeed, there is ample evidence for Peacock as a utilitarian, as he had numerous links with this philosophical movement. He dined regularly with Jeremy Bentham, and, in joining the East India Company in January 1819, he worked alongside James Mill before eventually being replaced by John Stuart Mill—three key proponents of utilitarianism in the early nineteenth century. Further, 'The Four Ages' was written little more than a year after Peacock's appointment to the East India Company—a position which brought him not only financial security (his life until then had included debtor's prison, hardship grants from the Royal Literary Fund, and handouts from Shelley), but a sense of usefulness. In a letter to Shelley in January 1819, he described his position as 'an employment of a very interesting and intellectual kind' which allowed him 'to be of great service, not only to the company, but to the millions under their dominion' (*PL* I, p 163). In a letter in October 1821, he expressed a hope that Shelley would find 'some scheme of flesh and blood, some interesting matter connected with the business of life, in the tangible shape of a practical man' (*PL* I, p. 183). Peacock expresses not only the utilitarian focus on "the many"—utilitarianism's guiding principle is the greatest happiness for the greatest number—it reflects the anti-

[24] Lerner, p. 113.
[25] Bloom, p. xxiv; Bate, p. 63.
[26] Butler, *Peacock*, p. 290.
[27] Butler, *Peacock*, p. 290.
[28] James D. Mulvihill, '"The Four Ages of Poetry": Peacock and the Historical Method', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 33 (1984), 130-47 (p. 144).

Wordsworthian celebration of communality shared by the two poets: that a poet should be part of the world, not a recluse from it.[29] While he makes no anti-poetic recommendations to Shelley in these letters, it is noticeable that Peacock's writing across all genres, not just poetry, becomes increasingly sporadic after his appointment to this more useful employment, suggesting that he embraces the spirit of his case against poetry. The argument for Peacock as a utilitarian has strong support.

However, that 'The Four Ages' is ironic, satirical, or, at the very least, exaggerated in its argument, is indisputable. Both Butler and Mulvihill are forced to acknowledge it in their readings. The inescapably satirical nature of the essay therefore raises questions regarding quite how ironic it is. For Butler and Mulvihill, the satirical nature lies on the surface, in its tone and its exaggerations, but does not disrupt the seriousness with which Peacock condemns poetry. Yet 'The Four Ages' begins with an epigraph from Petronius's satirical, picaresque novel, *The Satyricon*: 'Qui inter hæc nutriuntur non magis sapere possunt, quam bene olere qui in culinâ habitant' ('Youngsters who are fed on this fare can no more gain good sense than those who live in the kitchen can smell clean') ('FA', p. 135).[30] As was noted in the previous chapter, announcing one's satirical forebears is a common trope in satire, which can be traced back to the *satura* of Horace and Juvenal, and seen contemporaneously with Peacock in works such as Byron's *English Bards*.[31] The presence of a quotation from Petronius at the opening, even without an understanding of the Latin, serves as an announcement of genre and as an alert to readers that the author is not entirely sincere. Indeed, in opposition to Butler's focus on Shelley's reaction to 'The Four Ages', one might quote Shelley himself. In his poem 'Letter to Maria Gisborne' (1820), Shelley observes the self-consuming ironies of Peacock's humour: 'his fine wit | Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it' (*PBSP* III, ll. 240-41). Shelley here shows an astute appreciation of his friend's ability to disappear in the depths of his irony, to write with such satiric force that his own position is lost. That Shelley responds unironically to Peacock is a testament to the inscrutability of the irony of 'The Four Ages', rather than to the sincerity of its argument.

The tension between the sincere and the ironic, or the discursive and the satirical, echoes the tension between the poetical and the philosophical—that familiar concern of Romantic-era poet-critics. As Bate observes, Peacock's argument is remarkably precedented in philosophical

[29] See: John Stuart Mill, 'What Utilitarianism Is', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. by John Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 136-58.
[30] Petronius, *Satyricon*, trans. by Gareth Schmeling (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020), p. 71.
[31] See above, p. 148.

writings of the previous century. All of Peacock's arguments in 'The Four Ages'—the historicist narrative of literary decline, the belief in a poetical golden age achieved at a time of political apotheosis, the understanding of poetry's position as the origin of other intellectual disciplines, and the ideology of societal primitivism and its relationship to literature—are rooted in eighteenth-century thought, traceable through authors such David Hume, Joseph Priestley, Hugh Blair, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and Joseph Warton.[32] To this list, Butler adds Robert Forsyth.[33] 'The Four Ages' is thus an essay with an impressive philosophical foundation, and Peacock was, as Mulvihill argues, 'neither more nor less severe on the state of poetry […] than any of [his] eighteenth-century models had been'.[34] Yet this philosophical foundation is undermined by its poetical presentation. The pseudo-historical narrative of four ages is derived from classical poetry, namely Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—both of which organise the history of mankind into gold, silver, bronze, and iron ages (with Hesiod adding a fifth age, that of heroes). Mulvihill dismisses this narrative as 'superficial', but its presence on the surface of the work, in its structure, and in its title, undermines the arguments derived from eighteenth-century philosophical writings—none of which are cited in the essay.[35] In a text which argues for the usurpation of poetry's cultural prominence by the intellectual discourses which fall under the title of "philosophy", it is peculiar to have filtered this discourse through a poetic lens, subordinating that philosophy to a poetic framework. It is difficult to shake the feeling that the poetico-mythological narrative is selected for its destabilisation of what Mulvihill calls the 'historicist method'.[36]

A similar conflict lies in Peacock's contradictory depiction of the Lake Poets—a contradiction found across his uses of satirical and discursive genres. Prickett observes that 'The Four Ages' builds 'with a magnificent sense of inevitability' to an attack on Peacock's age, suggesting that it is his contemporaries who are the true target of the satire.[37] Peacock's own time receives a more detailed poet-by-poet scrutiny than is afforded to any of the previous ages, with Byron damned for celebrating 'thieves and pirates', Scott for his 'poachers and cattle-stealers', and Campbell and Moore for 'extracting from a perfunctory and desultory perusal of a collection of voyages and travel, all that useful investigation would not seek for and that common sense would reject' ('FA', p. 151-52). It is, however, 'that egregious confraternity of rhymesters, known by the name of the Lake Poets' who embody the spirit of the modern brass

[32] Bate, pp. 61-91.
[33] Butler, *Peacock*, p. 286.
[34] Mulvihill, p. 137.
[35] Mulvihill, p. 137.
[36] Mulvihill, p. 131.
[37] Prickett, p. 161.

age and who receive the worst of Peacock's ire ('FA', p. 149). They write by 'a new principle (that is, no principle at all)', are 'studiously ignorant of history, society, and human nature', and they cultivate 'phantasy only at the expence [sic] of the memory and the reason' ('FA', pp. 152, 149). Peacock's attacks on this poetic brotherhood are not confined to 'The Four Ages'. The Lake Poets appear as characters, or as topics of discussion, in most of Peacock's novels, with Coleridge being one of the most frequent figures of ridicule. Coleridgean characters appear in the form of Mr. Mystic in *Melincourt* (1817) and Mr. Flosky in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), as well as being hinted at, according to Butler, in characters like Panscope in *Headlong Hall* (1816) and Dr. Folliot in *Crotchet Castle* (1831).[38]

Yet when Peacock writes in more sincere (or less ironic) genres, his admiration, particularly for Coleridge and Wordsworth, is undeniable. In 1818, Peacock began work on his 'Essay on Fashionable Literature'. This unfinished work provides a defence of Coleridge's *Christabel* against Jeffrey's review in the *Edinburgh*. Peacock refutes the charge of 'unintelligib[ility]' levelled at Coleridge's poem by acknowledging the wonder experienced by the poem's third-person narrator: 'The poet relates a tale of magic and mystery, as one who is himself perplexed by the dark wonders which have passed under his own knowledge' (*Halliford* VIII, pp. 279, 281-82). This passage implies that Coleridge's supposed mystification (which Peacock condemns in 'The Four Ages') is precisely the point. It is the poem's power. When this is considered in relation to Joukovsky's argument that the voice of 'The Four Ages' sounds like Jeffrey, the essay can be considered the satiric other to the 'Essay on Fashionable Literature'—the former attacking Coleridge and sounding like Jeffrey, the latter attacking the *Edinburgh* and defending Coleridge.[39] This defence of Coleridge, as Prickett says, 'weakens the general case for Peacock's *consistency* as a utilitarian and historicist critic'.[40] There is also a suggestion in the 'Essay' that, had Peacock continued it, it would have gone on to defend Wordsworth's *The Excursion* against Jeffrey's infamous review beginning 'This will never do' (*Halliford* VIII, p. 271).[41] In Peacock's few autobiographical works—produced towards the end of his life out of, in his own words, 'the general preference of the past to the present, which seems inseparable from old age'—Peacock frequently turned to Wordsworth's poetry, quoting the great poet of subjective experience to explain his relationship with his past (*Halliford* VIII,

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[38] Butler, *Peacock*, pp. 52, 196.
[39] Joukovsky, 'Modest', p. 491.
[40] Prickett, p. 159, emphasis added.
[41] See above, p. 44, n. 49.

p.145).[42] This reliance on Wordsworth is the product of a profound, lifelong engagement with the poetry of a writer he singled out for the worst criticisms in 'The Four Ages'. In his ironic and satiric works, Peacock attacks Coleridge and Wordsworth. In his biographical and discursive works, he praises, engages with, and defends them. That these altered attitudes across genres should be viewed in terms of authorial anxieties, not simply the product of satirical playfulness, is reiterated by Peacock's private correspondence. In a letter to Shelley in June 1821, Peacock wrote that 'the present state of Literature is so thoroughly vile that there is scarcely any new publication worth looking at much less buying' (*PL* I, p. 178). In his private writings—and, unlike many writers of the period, Peacock viewed his correspondence as private, not intended for future or posthumous publication—Peacock expresses sincerely what he only ever expresses satirically in his public works. The dialectic of genres explored in subsequent sections represent not just different modes of expression, but a battle between antithetical opinions in his literary career.

It is those readings which are alert to the shifting boundaries between irony and sincerity that get closest to Peacock's "meaning". One attempt to navigate these ironies, and to locate Peacock amidst them, is that of Prickett, who believed that 'the first [ancient] cycle [of ages] is *not* ironic, but that the second [modern] cycle *is*'.[43] Yet this is still too programmatic a reading, too rigid in its boundaries. Abrams offers what remains, seventy years later, one of the most incisive interpretations of the contradictions of 'The Four Ages':

> It is idle to inquire about the exact boundaries between the serious and playful in this witty essay. Peacock cannot be pinned down. He had the eye of the born parodist, before which everything pretentious writhes into caricature. If he was a poet who mocked poets from a Utilitarian frame of satirical reference, he was a Utilitarian who turned into ridicule the belief in utility and the march of intellect, as well as a critic who derided the contemners of poetry, after having himself derided the poetry they contemned.[44]

Joukovsky, building on Abrams, advances the little-considered argument that Peacock adopts a persona in 'The Four Ages', and for Joukovsky, that persona is a parody of Jeffrey. Joukovsky

[42] For Peacock's allusions to Wordsworth in 'Recollections of Childhood: The Abbey' (1837), 'Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1858-62) and 'The Last Day of Windsor Forest' (1862), see: *Halliford* VIII, pp. 33, 41, 79, 98, 147-8.
[43] Prickett, p. 164, original emphasis.
[44] Abrams, *Mirror*, p. 126.

reads the *Edinburgh* for precedents (much as I did for *English Bards* in the previous chapter) and is convincing with the evidence he unearths. It is thus tempting to locate 'The Four Ages' within the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply. Yet this reading does not account for the final paragraph of 'The Four Ages', in which Peacock turns on reviewers and periodical culture—a contradiction which Abrams had noted. If it is a Jeffrey-like persona being adopted, it is disrupted by Peacock dropping this voice in order to condemn that persona—a conflict between attack and defence which is emblematic of this elusive work.

Considering 'The Four Ages' within its original publication context does nothing to resolve these conflicts. It exacerbates them. When the first and (as it turned out) only issue of *Ollier's Literary Miscellany* was published in 1820, prospective readers can have had little expectation as to the political affiliations, the ideological self-positioning, or the self-constructed identity of the periodical. A brief 'Advertisement' distances the *Miscellany* from such notions:

> There is a common saying that it is not possible to attract attention to a periodical work unless it is identified with some "party" in politics or religion or literature, and unless it have sufficient zeal for its own exclusive dogmas to throw obloquy, by means of scandalous personalities and violations of private life, upon all who may hold other opinions.
>
> That there is piquancy in this and an excitement to some readers cannot be doubted; but the assertion generally applied is a libel on the public. The proprietors of this work think a miscellany may be amusing and impartial at the same time, and the present experiment is made under that impression.
>
> (*OLM*, p. iii)

It is the form of the 'miscellany' that is impartial (though not apolitical), but this is not extended to the contributing authors. Yet the claim of impartiality does little to disguise the oppositional posturing. The 'experiment' is one of challenging the prevailing, ideology-driven method of conducting a literary periodical, no doubt with the major Reviews of the period in mind: the Tory *Quarterly* and the Whig *Edinburgh*. If the *Miscellany* has a 'party' to side itself with, it is that general 'public' whom Ollier does not wish to libel. From there, the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* are recurring antagonists throughout the texts collected, with five of the contributions

containing attacks or snide asides on one or both of the reviewing giants. This context would seem to support Joukovsky's view that Peacock's primary antagonist is the *Edinburgh*. However, what follows from the advertisement is a genuine miscellany, spanning multiple literary and critical genres. It contains: an essay on, and translation from, A.W. Schlegel's Shakespearean criticism; a dramatic monologue in blank verse; a polemical short story on how the poor are driven to crime; a prose retelling of one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; a translation of a German romance; a selection of Josuah Sylvester's seventeenth-century translations from the French poetry of Guillame de Salluste, with introductory commentary; a gothic tale of a woman buried alive; an essay on German theatre; a narrative poem in heroic couplets; a series of fragmentary, satirical reviews of Shakespeare, parodying the style of the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*; a lyric poem addressed to the personification of sleep, dense with mythological allusion; a poem about twilight written in a ballad form; and two sonnets. It is an assortment that is constantly moving between poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction, high and low literary forms; from satiric irony to lyric sincerity, from gothic melodrama to socially conscious sentimentality. It shifts from translation, to adaptation, to original composition; and spans the modern, medieval, and ancient worlds. Far from providing a key to understanding Peacock, these texts set the stage for the shifting registers of the 'Four Ages'. If these other works are thought of as paratexts to Peacock's essay—as 'thresholds' (in Genette's words) that readers must pass through in order to access 'The Four Ages', which is the last piece in the *Miscellany*—the final satire's detached ambiguity can be read as any of a multiplicity of genres: a serious essay, a parody, a persona, a prose-poem, a fiction.[45] Potentially it is all of these.

'The Four Ages' is thus a work which builds to a condemnation of poets that Peacock admired. It utilises the discourse of a philosophical school with which he was associated, yet saturates that discourse in irony and satire. A philosophically supported argument is rendered within a poetic framework, and a modern historical narrative is told using the structures of ancient mythology. It attacks both poets and the attackers of poets. Published amongst writings which straddle multiple disciplines and genres, 'The Four Ages' is a work that offers oppositions and contradictions that are ever in playful conflict. While I agree with Abrams that Peacock is a 'born parodist', I also see Peacock as a writer who was subject to the same anxieties of authorship as his contemporaries, and this includes an anxiety regarding genre. He was not simply a poet who rose above the milieu in order to ridicule it, but part of that milieu. To understand this text, which was written at a transitional period both in Peacock's life and in his

[45] See above, p. 7, n. 21.

literary career, requires readers to be alert to the multiple genres in which he worked across that career, to the contradictions across his writings, to the multiple traditions and disciplines which he explored and exploited, and to the uncertain boundaries between irony and sincerity, satire and Romanticism, and creativity and criticism, in his work. He must be viewed not just in his familiar guise as a satirist, novelist, and occasional essayist, but in his under-scrutinised role as a poet. 'The Four Ages' is as much the work of a poet-critic as of a 'born parodist'.

4.1.2. 'Us Poor Poets': Peacock, Poetry, and the Anxieties of Genre

Peacock is rarely thought of as a poet. He is best remembered as a writer of prose. Thus, while his novels and essays have appeared in numerous popular and critical editions in the past century (including the ongoing *Cambridge Edition of the Novels of Thomas Love Peacock*, begun in 2017), his poetry has not been reprinted since the ten-volume Halliford edition, completed in 1934. Butler's book-length study of Peacock's oeuvre contains little discussion of his poetry, with each of the chapters dedicated to either his novels or his essays. For Butler, Peacock's poetry is 'antique, derivative and insincere', with the novels being 'more faithful to [his] real opinions than his solemn poetry had been'.[46] Even Joukovsky, who reads 'The Four Ages' as the product of a poet, dismisses Peacock's poetic ambitions as a desire for a reputation *as a poet* rather than a drive to write poems.[47] An exception is Carl Dawson, who devotes the first seventy pages of *His Fine Wit: A Study of Thomas Love Peacock* (1970) to considering Peacock's poetry. Yet Dawson still concedes that, while Peacock is 'a creator of brilliant fiction', he only 'wrote competently as [a] poet', and thus, by his own admission, the discussion of his poetry 'serve[s] as introduction' to an analysis of the novels.[48] While such views are not unjust—Peacock, as Butler rightly says, 'is never a major poet'—it does gloss over his early formation as a poet, his voracious reading of ancient and modern writers across poetic genres throughout his lifetime, and his prolific composition and publication of poems in the early years of his literary career.[49] Peacock's poetry regularly conflicts with the views on poetry expressed in his prose, and an examination of Peacock as a poet disrupts prevailing views of him as a born ironist and an impersonal writer. Like his contemporaries, Peacock is a poet navigating his literary moment, situating himself within traditions, and establishing his own poetics. Further,

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[46] Butler, *Peacock*, pp. 26, 29.
[47] Joukovsky, 'Modest', p. 504.
[48] Carl Dawson, *His Fine Wit: A Study of Thomas Love Peacock* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. ix, x.
[49] Butler, *Peacock*, p. 171.

I argue that the tensions evident in Peacock's writings—usually characterised as one between poetry and prose, or (retrospectively) between Romanticism and satire—are, for the classicist Peacock, between the Aristotelian division of tragedy and comedy, and their associated genres. Thus, considered as the work of a poet torn between genres, 'The Four Ages' is an ironised apology (or apologia) for that conflict within himself—one which, far from damning all poetry, makes room for the poet to strike a new path into comedy.

Peacock's poetry-writing was not a brief flirtation, and it should not be treated reductively. The common critical narrative is that Peacock gave up poetry for prose, and for his more important comic fiction. Within that narrative, 'The Four Ages' might be viewed as a manifesto for that change. Yet, as Dawson observes, Peacock 'paid serious court to the muses' for twenty years before writing his first novel, *Headlong Hall*.[50] There survive, from his brief time at school, letters composed entirely in verse—the earliest being a prodigious piece written at the age of nine. These verse missives, written between the years 1795 and 1805, contain regular discussions of his 'muse' and of his reading in poetry (*PL* I, pp. 6, 21). Indeed, the primary excitement that this short-lived schooling imparted—beyond a voracious appetite for learning (albeit not the formal kind)—was an introduction to poetry.[51] From this moment, Peacock cherished the idea of being a poet, referring to himself as such, and placing himself within an imagined fraternity of poets ('us, poor poets', 'I a brother poet') (*PL* I, pp. 5, 22). Through his twenties and thirties he published five volumes of poetry—*Palmyra* (1806), *The Genius of the Thames* (1810), *The Philosophy of Melancholy* (1812), *Sir Proteus* (1813), and *Rhododaphne* (1818)—as well as a poem for children, *Sir Hornbook: A Grammatico-Allegorical Ballad* (1819). *Rhododaphne*, his final public volume of poetry was published the same year as his third novel, *Nightmare Abbey*. (His later collection, *Paper Money Lyrics*, was printed and distributed privately among acquaintances in 1837). Thus there is overlap between his poetry-writing and fiction-writing. Further, to suggest that Peacock gave up poetry for fiction is not accurate. As the publication dates of his final four novels show—*Maid Marian* (begun 1818, completed and published 1822), *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829), *Crotchet Castle* (1831) and *Gryll Grange* (1861)—his novel-writing became equally sporadic after his appointment to the East India Company. Notably, all but three chapters of *Maid Marian* was written prior to his employment, and *Gryll Grange*, published thirty years after the previous

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[50] Dawson, p. 3.

[51] Peacock was sceptical about formal education, particularly as it was represented by the ancient universities. In *Nightmare Abbey*, Scythrop 'was sent, as usual, to a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to University, where it was carefully taken out of him' (*NA*, p. 6).

novel, was not written until after Peacock had retired.[52] In his more than thirty years at the Company, he wrote only two novels. Furthermore, these novels contain short poems and fragments of verse, and continue his close engagement with poetry and poets. As is suggested by the private publication of *Paper Money Lyrics*, it is the ambition of reputational and financial success as a poet, not poetry-writing itself, that is arrested.

Similarly, oversimplification of Peacock's development as a writer needs to be avoided in discussions of his explorations of genre, even in those across the comedy-tragedy divide. While his novels all fall within the genre of the satiric dialogue (part Platonic, part Lucianic), they utilise a variety of genres (treated comically and satirically), displaying an engagement with other novelistic forms. *Nightmare Abbey* parodies the gothic novel. *The Misfortunes of Elphin* is an Arthurian romance. *Maid Marian* is an historical novel. *Headlong Hall* and *Gryll Grange* are country estate novels, participating in the genre of the comedy of manners. This generic diversity is even more evident in his poetry, in which Peacock experimented with numerous genres, from the verse essay *Philosophy*, through the Wordsworthian meditation of poetic reclusion 'Inscription for a Mountain Dell' (1812), to the long narrative poem *Rhododaphne*. His first collection of poetical works, *Palmyra, and Other Poems*, is a testament to his early genre experimentation. The 'Other Poems' alongside his descriptive meditation on the ruined city of Palmyra, include complaints ('Maria's Return to Her Native Cottage', 'The Old Man's Complaint'), a Nordic heroic narrative ('Fiolfar, King of Norway'), two Ossianic imitations ('Clonar and Tlamin', 'Foldath in the Cavern of Moma'), an elegy ('On the Death of Charles Pembroke, Esq'), meditations on deceased women ('Mira', 'Farewell to Matilda', 'Ellen'), translations of classical texts ('Dreams, From Petronius Arbiter', 'Pindar on the Eclipse of the Sun'), a Biblical paraphrase ('The Lord's Prayer, Paraphrased'), an antisemitic satire ('Levi Moses'), a dramatic monologue by Shakespearean character ('Slender's Love-Elegy'), and that quintessential Romantic genre, the fragment ('A Fragment'). As these titles suggest, Peacock was conscious of his generic diversity. It is undeniable, of course, that the later volumes of poetry prioritise comedic genres. *Sir Proteus* and *Paper Money Lyrics* are composed exclusively of satires on, and parodies of, Peacock's contemporaries. Even the last of his "sincere" or non-satiric volumes, *Rhododaphne*, might be considered within the realms of the comic in so far as it is a love story with a happy ending, following the Aristotelian narrative of chaos to order. While there is a greater emphasis placed on comic genres, this does not represent a complete abandonment of more "serious" literary modes. Firstly, his satirical

[52] This timeline for the composition of *Maid Marian* is provided by Peacock in his 1837 'Preface to the Volume of "Standard Novels"'; in *NA*, pp. 103-05 (p. 104).

inclinations were evident early on. Those verse letters to his mother humorously approach topical events, and his first published (or, at least, his first printed) poem, 'The Monks of St. Mark' (1804), is a satirical depiction of the licentiousness of Catholic priests.[53] Secondly, he was still writing poetry in a "Romantic" vein late into his life. One of his greatest achievements in this tradition is his short poem 'Newark Abbey, August 1842, with a Reminiscence of August 1807' (published in 1860)—an autobiographical poem mourning the unchangingness of the titular abbey across thirty-five years in contrast to the mutability of love. Poetry-writing across multiple genres thus remained important to Peacock, and while there is a shift in his generic priorities, it is not a narrative of abandonment.

Early letters display a poet developing a poetics and attempting to situate himself within traditions and amongst his contemporaries. Between August 1807 and August 1810, Peacock wrote letters to his publisher, Edward Thomas Hookham (*PL* I, pp. 23-58). This included the period in which he was writing *Genius*—a poem of great ambition, in which he travelled the course of the Thames, from source to sea, describing its trajectory and reading its history. In these letters, he solicits news of his poetic contemporaries, and discusses his evolving views on poetry. In a letter in March 1810, he wrote that he pursued his poetic subject whilst 'carrying in [his] mind' what he called 'the bardic triad, that a poet should have an eye that can see nature, a heart that can feel nature, and a resolution that dares to follow nature' (*PL* I, p. 47). Derived from Welsh druidic traditions, this letter shows Peacock forming his own "rules" by which to write—rules not unlike the imperatives in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*. In November 1808, he explains his understanding of the nature of the Augustan '*wit*', which, derived from his reading in Shakespeare, is located in '*brevity*' (*PL* I, p. 24, original emphasis). These are the letters of a man who (in Hookham's words, in an appeal on Peacock's behalf to the Royal Literary Fund) 'has chosen literature for his pursuit'.[54] They undermine arguments for an insincere or cynically fame-driven pursuit of a career in poetry. Peacock is, in these early years, a poet earnestly engaged with his vocation.

Indeed, Peacock's poetry complicates familiar images of him as an impersonal writer. Peacock despised literary gossiping and prying into writers' personal lives. His autobiographical writings are few, and those that exist were written late in life and give little away. His 'Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1858-62) is not particularly forthcoming, being

[53] There is some uncertainty as to whether the eight-page pamphlet that contains solely this poem was published or privately printed. See: H.F.B Brett-Smith and C.E. Jones in *Halliford* VII, p. 474; Dawson, p. xiii; Joukovsky in *NA*, p. xxv.
[54] Hookham's letter to Royal Literary Fund in May 1812 is printed in *PL* I, pp. 90-2 (p. 91).

primarily a defence of Shelley's first wife Harriet, who had come under attack by Shelley's biographers. The 'Memoirs' even begins with a defence of biographical reticence:

> No man is bound to write the life of another. No man who does so is bound to tell the public all he knows. On the contrary, he is bound to keep to himself whatever may injure the interests or hurt the feelings of the living.
>
> (*Halliford* VIII, p. 40)

Similarly, in the 'Preface' to the 1837 edition of his novels, Peacock congratulated himself on his 'impersonality', not simply in his treatment of the figures he had parodied—with whom he had not 'taken any liberties but with public conduct and public opinion'—but in his self-presentation through authorial anonymity and the lack of prefatory prose (*NA*, p. 103). The 1837 'Preface' is, after all, the first such introduction to any of his novels. To this might be added the absence of an autobiographical or semi-autobiographical figure in any of his novels. Peacock's sparse autobiographical essays—'Recollections of Childhood: The Abbey' (1837), the Shelley 'Memoirs', and 'The Last Day of Windsor Forest' (1862)—focus on external images and people, centralising anything but the poet himself: an abbey, Shelley, the privatisation of public lands. They do not compare to the narratives of intellectual development that comprise the first volume of Coleridge's *Biographia* or Wordsworth's epic of the self, *The Prelude*. This impersonality penetrates further than this lack of self-representation. Peacock's own viewpoint is absent from his novels, with his Platonic dialogues lacking a Socrates to resolve the intellectual conflicts. There is also a dearth of surviving correspondence by Peacock. His collected letters, published in 2001, is comprised of two short volumes of just over three-hundred missives—a modest number for a writer who lived to the age of eighty and who maintained numerous long-distance friendships. Though there is 'no evidence of a systematic attempt to retrieve his letters, [and] no record of a major conflagration', the only way Joukovsky finds to explain the fragmentary nature of Peacock's correspondence is that he destroyed, or requested the destruction of, much of it in order to prevent posthumous intrusions upon his private life.[55]

Peacock's poetry, however, contains flashes of self-portraiture, passages of autobiographical significance, and metaphors for the poet's experience, albethey brief and often

[55] Joukovsky, 'Introduction', pp. xxxvi-xxxviii.

effaced in later editions. Peacock's absence is one of the strengths of his satirical writing. It is precisely why 'The Four Ages' is so difficult to interpret. If he is "in" his writings, it is difficult to find him. However, in tracing the course of the Thames geographically through England as well as through history, the beginning of *Genius* is rooted in Peacock's life. He grew up in close vicinity to the river—a point which raises questions about the titular 'Genius', and whether Peacock playfully refers as much to himself as the river's source, exploiting the same pun made by Oscar Wilde upon his arrival in America.[56] The historical narrative of the Thames is not one which should surprise readers of Peacock. It moves from a golden to an iron age, beginning with the idyllic pastoral image of a 'shepherd-youth' tending his flocks on the banks, and culminates—as the river meets the sea and, implicitly, the international milieu—in a rumination on the fall of empires and the inevitable fall of Britain (*Halliford* VI, pp. 111, 154). In the first three stanzas, however, the poet-speaker addresses his titular subject in terms of self-expression:

> As when you [the Thames] came, with life and love
>   The day-dreams of my youth to bless,
> And led my sportive steps to rove
>   Through fairy-worlds of happiness.
> Then, while the cloudless morning smiled
>   Along the flower-enamelled shore,
> I watched the waves, that, circling wild,
>   Passed onward, and returned no more:
> […]
> The darkening thought ne'er touched my breast,
> That all my promised joys should fly,
> Swift as those waves were hastening by,
> And fancy's golden dreams be past,
> Like leaves on the autumnal blast!
>
> (*Halliford* VI, pp. 362-63)

These stanzas identify the tragedy-inclined course and history of the Thames as a metaphor for the trajectory of Peacock's life until that point, as well as his fears for the future. (It is worth

[56] Arthur Ransome recorded that Oscar Wilde, upon arriving in New York in January 1882, answered the Customs Clerk's query by stating that 'he had nothing to declare except his genius'. Arthur Ransome, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1912), p. 64.

noting that, around this time, Hookham was writing to the Royal Literary Fund for financial assistance for Peacock, for whom he feared 'the fate of Chatterton'.)[57] Though the subjective 'I' of the poem intrudes little beyond this beginning, these stanzas are enough to entwine the fate of the speaker with the already-interwoven trajectory and history of the river. The autobiographical significance of this passage, of course, should not be overstated. Like the Shelley 'Memoirs', it reveals little about the poet—primarily that the Thames was a site from his youth. There is nothing here that can be called revelation, and, as in the biographical essays, the focus is on the river, not the author. Yet it remains striking that the poem is framed as a narrative of the psychological development of the poet. This flash of self, however, seems to have been too much for Peacock, and the first three stanzas are replaced in the second edition. In the new replacement passage, the first-person pronouns are absent, and a short sentence is removed from the prose argument that precedes the poem: 'Retrospect of early associations' (*Halliford* VI, p. 362). The poem is no longer a metaphor for the experience of the poet.

A similar disruption of a familiar image of Peacock is found in his depiction of a mourned-for past. In *Genius* and *Rhododaphne*, amidst the earnestness of Peacock's poetry, Joukovsky observes a precedent for 'The Four Ages'.[58] In the essay, Peacock describes the poet of the ancient iron age:

> Rocks, mountains, seas, unsubdued forests, unnavigable rivers, surround him with forms of power and mystery, which ignorance and fear have peopled with spirits, under multifarious names of gods, goddesses, nymphs, genii, and dæmons.
>
> ('FA', p. 138)

The 'diminished familiarity with gods and genii' leads poets of the golden age to conclude that 'men are degenerated', and thus they look to the poetry of the past for their materials ('FA', p. 140). The apparent absence of these figures from the world in the subsequent golden age is a source of poetry's retrospective glance. By the iron age of modern poetry, this retrospect has become absurd. 'We know', writes Peacock, 'that there are no Dryads in Hyde-park nor Naiads in the Regent's Canal', yet poets continue 'wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance' ('FA', p. 150-51). The third canto of *Rhododaphne* contains a similar passage:

[57] In *PL* I, p. 91.
[58] Joukovsky, 'Modest', p. 502-03.

In ocean's caves no Nereid dwells:
No Oread walks the mountain-dells:
The streams no sedge-crowned Genii roll
From bounteous urn: great Pan is dead:
The life, the intellectual soul
Of vale, and grove, and stream, has fled
For ever with the creed sublime
That nursed the Muse of earlier time.

(*Halliford* VII, pp. 29-30)

Expressed in terms of regret rather than those of condemnation, these lines nonetheless convey sentiments similar to those in 'The Four Ages'. Joukovsky thus concludes that, in 'The Four Ages', 'Peacock is […] expressing his own views' on this subject.[59] However, Joukovsky overlooks the volta which occurs after a similar lamentation in *Genius*. In the poem's 'Proemium', Peacock writes:

Dyads and Genii wandered then
Amid the haunts of guileless men,
As yet unknown to strife:
Ethereal beings poured the floods,
Dwelt in the ever-waving woods,
And filled the varied world with intellectual life.
Ah! whither are they flown,
Those days of peace and love,
So sweetly sung by bards of elder time?
[…]
Yet where light breezes sail
Along the sylvan shore,
The bard still feels a sacred influence nigh:
When the far torrent's roar
Floats through the twilight vale,
And, echoing low, the forest-depths reply.

[59] Joukvsky, 'Modest', p. 502.

(*Halliford* VI, pp. 101-2)

In contrast to the disruptive effect of the fled spirits of 'The Four Ages', that absence of 'Dyads and Genii' allows for a greater connection between the ideal 'bard' and the landscape. That 'sacred influence' carried on the breeze is reminiscent of that which plays over the lyre in Coleridge's 'The Eolian Harp'—the famous image of the imagination repeated and developed by Shelley in the 'Defence' ('Defence', p. 675). It is significant, however, that, like the autobiographical opening, the 'Proemium' is removed from the second edition of 1812. It is possible to characterise this change as an attempt to revise a disingenuous statement. However, considered in relation to the earnestness with which Peacock discusses his craft, these deletions just as likely represent a writer who is conflicted over the nature of poetry, revising rather than disavowing his beliefs. Thus in his poetry there appears a momentary glimpse of a poet engaging with the sublimity of nature and viewing it as a vehicle for his subjective experience, even if he is to retreat from it in favour of mourning the loss of the 'intellectual life' of the world in *Rhododaphne*.

A prominent tension between Peacock's poetry and his satirical prose is contained within his treatments of the subject of melancholy. *Nightmare Abbey*, a novel which, in Peacock's own words, attacks 'the darkness and misanthropy of modern literature' (*PL* I, p. 122), begins with a short epigraph from Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598):

> *Matthew*. Oh! It's your only fine humour, sir. Your true *melancholy* breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am *melancholy* myself, divers times, sir; and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.
> *Stephen*. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.
> *Matthew*. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study: it's at your service.
> *Stephen*. I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you. Have you a stool there, to be *melancholy* upon?

(*NA*, p. 3, emphasis added)

Like all epigraphs, it focuses readers' attention on narrative or thematic elements deemed significant by the author, and as such it highlights the decided and self-congratulatory nature of ill-humour in poets. Most significant is the triple use of the word 'melancholy', which leaves

little doubt as to the subject and target of Peacock's satire. Though *Nightmare Abbey* was published anonymously, and its contemporary readers would not have connected it with Peacock's earlier poetry, it is difficult for modern readers to disassociate it from his poem, *The Philosophy of Melancholy*. In a 'General Analysis' prefixed to that poem, Peacock identified his subject as an examination of 'philosophical melancholy' and its effects upon society, including the production of 'The finest efforts of art, in painting, music, poetry, and romance'—the stance of decided melancholy that his novel critiques (*Halliford* VI, p. 186). This might appear to be grounds upon which to build a claim for the insincerity of his poetry. Yet it hardly seems likely that Peacock would have written such a poem had he, at that time, been harbouring such strong views against melancholic literature. Indeed, in a letter to Hookham in March 1810, Peacock stated his own melancholic credentials as a poet:

> There is more truth than poetry in the <rem>ark of Wordsworth that "as high as <we> have mounted in delight, in our dejection do we sink as low."—You saw this exemplified in me last summer when I was sometimes skipping about the room, singing, and playing all sorts of ridiculous antics, at others doling out staves of sorrow, and meditating on daggers and laurel water. Such is the disposition of all votaries of the muses, […] for the sensitive and the studious are generally prone to melancholy, and the melancholy are usually subject to intervals of boisterous mirth. Poor Cowper was a lamentable instance, and Tasso, and Collins, and Chatterton—a list that might be prolonged almost *ad infinitum*.
>
> (*PL* I, p. 48)[60]

The letter goes on to include classical poets Cratinus, Democritus, and Horace, with Peacock situating himself within a tradition traced back to the ancients. This is a construction of literary genius that restates Peacock's self-representation in *Genius* in terms of tragic decline. What is most telling is that this passage would not be out of place in one of Peacock's novels, particularly *Nightmare Abbey*, spoken by one of his caricatures. The novel and its subject announced in the epigraph appear as much directed at himself as his contemporaries—a self-implicating irony that is to be found throughout 'The Four Ages'.

[60] The Wordsworth quotation is from 'Resolution and Independence' (1807).

A central site of conflict across Peacock's writing, which is fought beneath the surface of 'The Four Ages', is that between comedy and tragedy. The division of dramatic poetry into two distinct genres was established in the ancient world. It was Aristotle's *Poetics*—the first major work of genre theory—that presents the fullest breakdown of ancient genre conventions and expectations, divided as the work is into two parts: the surviving first part on tragedy, and the lost (or unwritten) second half on comedy. Most significant to an understanding of Peacock is Aristotle's notion of correspondent genres. In the *Poetics*, he describes a history of literature in which 'Poetry branched into two, according to its creators' characters: the more serious produced mimesis of noble actions and the actions of noble people, while the more vulgar depicted the actions of the base'.[61] This is the cause of the two genres of tragedy and comedy. For Aristotle, other genres are a product of this bifurcation, and he associates epic poetry with tragedy, as well as several genres of lyric poetry. These genres share in its subjects, materials, poetic forms, and generic expectations. He states that 'Epic matches tragedy to the extent of being mimesis of elevated matters in metrical language', with the imitation of 'noble' and 'baser' people being a key distinction between the respective genres of tragedy and comedy.[62] He even implies that epic is a subgenre of tragedy: 'whoever knows about good and bad tragedy knows the same about epic, as epic's resources belong to tragedy, but tragedy's are not all to be found in epic'.[63] To comedy, a modern critic might attach the corresponding genre of satire, developed in Rome some three-hundred years after Aristotle's time of writing. Aristotle does, after all, place a comedian's 'invective' in opposition to tragedy's associated genres of 'hymns and encomia'.[64]

It is not surprising that a classicist like Peacock characterises poetry, and situates poetic genres, within this polarisation. While he does occasionally express this division in terms of correspondent genres, he repeatedly constructs a view of poetry divided by a dialectic of tragedy and comedy. A notable example is in the 'Memoirs'. A recurring concern of this late work is Peacock's 'vain' attempt 'to reconcile [Shelley] to comedy', for whom, according to Peacock at least, 'the perversions of comedy excited not his laughter but his indignation' (*Halliford* VIII, p. 82, 113). The importance to Peacock of comedy, as well as its opposition to tragedy in classical poetics, is evident in the structure of these biographical essays. Written in two parts (to which was added a third part in rejoinder to criticisms of the essays)—the first ending in Shelley's marriage to Harriet Westbrook, the second ending with his death—Peacock created a

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[61] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 39
[62] Aristotle, pp. 47, 45
[63] Aristotle, p. 47
[64] Aristotle, p. 39.

dynamic that he identified as comic and tragic. The final line of the first part is a quotation from Richard Payne Knight's *An Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805): 'the same kind of marriage, which usually ends a comedy, as usually begins a tragedy' (*Halliford* VIII, p. 83). The division of Shelley's life into a comic first half and a tragic second is a dialectic which says more about Peacock than it does about Shelley. Framing the life of another writer within these two narratives identifies Peacock as a writer caught between these two genres in the construction of a literary identity, albeit for Shelley, rather than himself. By the time of these late biographical essays, Peacock appears decided regarding the supremacy of comedy over tragedy. Indeed, he had seemed so in the earlier essay, 'French Comic Romances' (1835)—a serious article in which he argues for the utility of comic modes of writing in 'directing the stream of opinion' (*Halliford* IX, p. 259). It is a testament to his eventual belief in comedy that, in response to the controversies surrounding the introduction of paper money, Peacock wrote, not an article exploiting his authority as an employee of the East India Company, but a book of poems, *Paper Money Lyrics*.

He was not, however, always fixed in this belief. Whilst journeying along the river as research for *Genius*, Peacock encountered the steam pump at Thames Head, which pumped water from the Thames into the Thames and Severn Canal. Upon viewing this 'monstrous piece of machinery', as he wrote in a letter to his publisher in June 1809, it dawned upon him that 'The Thames is almost as good a subject for a satire as a panegyric'—genres correspondent to comedy and tragedy (*PL* I, p. 35). Like the diverging path of the canal from the river, Peacock viewed two potential courses for his writing:

> A satirist might exclaim: The rapacity of Commerce, not content with the immense advantages derived from this river in a course of nearly 300 miles, erects a ponderous engine over the very place of it's [sic] nativity, to suck up it's unborn waters from the bosom of the earth, and pump them into a navigable canal!—It were to be wished, after all, that the crime of *water-sucking* were the worst that could be laid to the charge of commercial navigation: but we have only to advert to the conduct of the Spanish Christians in South America, of the English Christians in the East Indies, and of the Christians of all nations on the coast of Africa, to discover the deeper die [sic] of it's *blood-sucking* atrocities.—
>
> A panegyrist, on the contrary, after expiating on the benefits of commercial navigation, and of that great effort of human ingenuity, the Thames & Severn

> Canal, which ascends the hills, sinks into the vallies [sic], and penetrates the bosom of the earth, to unite the two noblest rivers of this most wealthy, prosperous, happy, generous, loyal, patriotic, &c, &c, &c, kingdom of England, might say: And yet this splendid undertaking would be incomplete, through the failure of water in the summer months, did not this noble river, this beautiful emblem, and powerful instrument, of the commercial greatness of Britain, contribute to that greatness even at the instant of it's birth, by supplying this magnificent chain of connection with the means of perpetual utility.—I must again break off for the present, and will send you another letter, if possible, tomorrow.
>
> (*PL* I, p. 35, original emphasis)

The letter ends with no musing upon these two paths, or resolutions to follow either. Yet it is the satiric potential of the river which is the revelation to Peacock. He was, after all, already writing a panegyric to the river. Here, however, the satirist's view is more metaphorical, relying on the analogy of 'water-sucking' and 'blood-sucking' (themselves metaphorical images), connected by the idea of commercial navigation. There is more of the Coleridgean imagination at work—of connection and interconnection—than in the panegyrist's speech. Conversely, the panegyrist's rhetorical division of his speech—'after expiating on […], might say'—presents the introductory remarks as formulaic, with the tired *et cetera*s of that introduction contrasting with the exclamation that closes the first sentence of the satirist. Peacock seems more enthusiastic for his newly discovered satiric sense. It might be too much to read irony into the panegyrical poet ending on a note of 'utility' (rather than, say, beauty or sublimity), as this letter was written a decade prior to the utilitarian 'Four Ages'. Yet the patriotism of the panegyrical—and of the poem that he was in the midst of writing—presages the later essay's attack on the poet as a servant to the state. Despite being ideologically defined, these paths represent divergent literary and generic traditions, expressing a view of poetry caught between familiar oppositions: the Aristotelian dichotomy of tragedy and comedy, or the nineteenth century's dialectic of Augustan and Romantic, Wordsworthian and Byronic. This early genre-consciousness, however, did not take hold immediately. *Genius* remained panegyrical, with this revelation not disturbing the course of the poem. The steam pump at Thames Head, however, represents an early disruption to his poetic faith. The nationalism of the tragedy-associated panegyrical renders the increasing prioritisation of the comic over the tragic almost inevitable for this increasingly radical thinker.

Peacock's wrestling with these genre anxieties manifests itself in *Philosophy.* This work contains a passage that could be termed 'antithalian'—a word coined by Peacock in *Nightmare Abbey*, which, through its reference to Thalia, the Muse of Comedy in Ancient mythology, means 'anti-comedic' (*NA*, p. 25). In the 1812 poem, in opposition to the immortality of 'The tragic muse', 'Thalia's smile […] | Yield[s] the light heart a transitory joy':

> Can the fantastic jest, the antic mirth,
> The laugh, that charms the grosser sons of earth,
> A joy so true, so softly sweet, bestow,
> As genius gathers from the springs of woe?

(*Halliford* VI, p. 201, 200)

The question of immortality and ephemerality with which tragedy and comedy are respectively associated is not an unfamiliar one. The comedic genre of satire thrives on its topicality, and this convention of depicting soon-to-be-forgotten figures can consign a literary work to oblivion, remembered only in the academy. It is those satires which appear, on the surface, the least topical that survive best in the popular consciousness—*Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Gulliver's Travels*. Equally familiar is the association of the physical act of laughter with those parts of society deemed 'grosser' (Aristotle's 'baser' people)—a word which implies not only class, but the pleasures of the body which are transitory, as opposed to the eternity of that which appeals to the soul. As Father Jorge of Burgos says in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980)—a book concerned with the Aristotelian genre binary—'laughter is weakness, corruption, the foolishness of our flesh. It is the peasant's entertainment'.[65] Peacock's rhetorical question emphasises the assumption of assent in his readers, and the fluvial imagery of the final line again implies the poem's author. With a quiet allusion to his own melancholic poem, *Genius*, and to the pun of its title, this passage reads like a defence of Peacock's genre choices at this particular moment—choices in favour of the tragic over the comic.

Peacock's most detailed exploration of the classical genre dialectic is in *Nightmare Abbey*. In the novel, the Shelleyan figure of Scythrop faces a choice between two women: Marionetta, who is 'a dancing, laughing, singing, thoughtless, careless, merry-hearted thing', and Celinda, who is 'a lovely, serious creature, in a fine state of high dissatisfaction with the

[65] Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. by William Weaver (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 466.

world, and everything in it' (*NA*, pp. 22, 23). The choice is characterised by Mr. Toobad (Celinda's father) as one between 'Thalia or Melpomene'—the respective Muses of comedy and tragedy in Greek mythology (*NA*, p. 26). Scythrop swings between both: 'Passing and re-passing several times a day from the company of one to that of the other, he was like a shuttlecock between two battledores, changing its direction as rapidly as the oscillations of a pendulum' (*NA*, p. 68). The familiar association of Scythrop with Shelley obscures a fundamental point here: that the choice between comedy and tragedy is a concern not of Shelley's, but Peacock's. While it would be incorrect to suggest that Peacock oscillated between comedy and tragedy with Scythrop's rapidity, his movement between genres is more complicated than a singular swing from one to the other. There is a back and forth throughout his career. Peacock had been writing comic poems since his school days and was still writing poems in tragedy-associated genres in his dotage. It is significant that, in the novel's ending, Scythrop's inability to choose between the two muses results in him marrying neither. The poet unable to choose between two genres has become, like a Jack-of-all-trades, master of none. Yet the story's attack on a tragedy-inclined era of literature, expressed in the form of a comic novel, still did not represent a resolution to this generic tension. In July 1818, after the completion of *Nightmare Abbey* (and prior to the writing of 'The Four Ages'), Peacock wrote in his Marlow journal: 'Certainly the nature of man is serious. Tragedy precedes comedy. Comedy and cheerful music are results of artificial combinations' (*PL* I, p. 136). Like all of Peacock's notes in this journal, it is brief and not elaborated upon, and is sandwiched between records of his wide reading across time, languages, and multiple genres (comic and tragic, critical and creative, poetry and prose).[66] Peacock, like Scythrop, still has not made a choice. It is not until 'The Four Ages' that the decisive prioritisation of comedy evident in the 'Memoir' and the 'Essay on Comic Romances' begins to take form.

Before turning to the tension between tragedy and comedy in 'The Four Ages', it is important to recognise that, as is suggested by the diverting paths of satire and panegyric (represented by the steam pump at Thames Head), this conflict has ideological underpinnings. Peacock's idolatry of the ancient world was not a fusty conservatism. As Barnett observes, the literature and pagan religion of the classical world represented to Peacock an alternative to a conservative Christianity, with his comedically-structured poem *Rhododaphne* being a 'pagan manifesto'.[67] It is the subversive potential of the past, as Barnett says, that allowed Peacock to

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[66] Peacock's reading in this period includes Wordsworth's poetry, Juvenal's satires, Pindar's odes, *Don Quixote*, Nonnos's epic poem the *Dionysicaa*, Thomas Stanley's *The History of Philosophy* (1655-62), Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620), and Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique Portatif* (1764). See: *PL* I, pp. 134-44.
[67] Barnett, pp. 171, 186.

succeed where Godwin had not: in convincing Shelley to educate himself in the classics.[68] Within this ideology, discussed by the Shelley circle, there is a Platonic focus on love as the driving force behind moral good (a notion familiar in Shelley studies and explored below), as well as on the 'joyful abandon' associated with ancient religious practices.[69] Within this paradigm, comedy represents a challenge to Christian conservatism—the kind represented by Eco's medieval scholar, Father Borges. Comedy can be a form of iconoclastic radicalism.

4.1.3. Striking into a New Path: Comedy and Tragedy in 'The Four Ages'

At the conclusion of the first cycle of ages, those of the classical era, in which the first brass age produces little more than 'the newest of new nothings', Peacock makes one of the few prescriptive statements of the essay: 'It is now evident that poetry must either cease to be cultivated, or strike into a new path' ('FA', p. 144). In this section, I argue that Peacock and his poetry form an oblique subject of his satire, and that, while tragic and panegyric poets face the worst of Peacock's ridicule, comic and satiric poetry are under-scrutinised. It is thus an elliptical poetics. Typical of satire and of this self-effacing ironist, it is more condemnatory than permissive, more "do not" than "do". Peacock's 'new path' is only ever implied, but that path reveals itself precisely because Peacock playfully ridicules his own poetic past. That is, the self-directed attack—the product of Peacock's genre-anxieties—raises the question of precisely what he defends. Thus, while Peacock does not 'cease to cultivate' poetry, 'The Four Ages' clears a 'new path' for him into comic genres and away from the 'imitated and repeated' poets of the tragedy-dominated classical golden age ('FA', p. 144). It is in the ambiguities and elisions of that attack that Peacock's self-defence resides.

Despite the absence of his name and the apparent absence of his own fixed viewpoint, Peacock and his poetry are haunting presences throughout 'The Four Ages'. Unlike Hogg and Byron in their anonymously published satires, Peacock does not situate himself within his own anonymously published survey of contemporary poetry. Yet, despite his absence and his 'impersonality', he maintains a shadowy and peripheral presence. When Peacock, in 'The Four Ages', remarks that 'Poetry is […] in its origin panegyrical', he situates the origin of poetry within the rhetorical and poetic genre that he had identified during his writing of *Genius* and which he had placed in opposition to satire, symbolised by the steam pump at Thames Head

[68] Barnett, p. 170.
[69] Barnett, p. 198.

('FA', p. 137). In 'The Four Ages', panegyrical poetry is a servant of power—being 'brief historical notices, in a strain of tumid hyperbole, of the exploits and possessions of a few pre-eminent individuals' (Aristotle's 'noble' people of tragedy)—and therefore echoes Peacock's anxieties about the ideological implications of his uses of genre ('FA', p. 137). The origin of poetry is therefore linked to his own poetic origins (or genius).

Self-reference and self-criticism are to be found in the overall arguments of 'The Four Ages'. This is particularly so in his attacks on the weight of learning in the latter ages of poetry. Southey 'wades through ponderous volumes of travels and old chronicles, from which he carefully selects all that is false, useless, and absurd, as being essentially poetical' and which he then 'strings [...] into an epic' ('FA', p. 151). Moore and Campbell 'present us with a Persian, and [...] a Pennsylvanian tale, both formed [...] by extracting from a perfunctory and desultory perusal of a collection of voyages and travels, all that useful investigation would not seek for and that common sense would reject' ('FA', pp. 152). It would not have been lost on Peacock that his own name could replace those of Southey, Moore, and Campbell. His *Palmyra* is a description of the ruined city located in modern-day Syria which Peacock had never visited. His physical descriptions and historical details are derived from Robert Wood's *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753), C-F. Volney's *Travels through Syria and Egypt* (1787), Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), and John Lowthorp's *Philosophical Transactions and Collections to the End of the Year 1700* (1716). Though, for *Genius*, his following of the Thames was the product of his observation, it was supplemented by reading on the history and folklore of the area. Both works thus have the extensive, erudite, and Southey-like footnotes to prove that these poems are, as he condemns modern brass age poems of being, the 'disjointed relics of tradition and fragments of second-hand observation [...] woven into a tissue of verse' ('FA', p. 152). *Rhododaphne, or The Thessalian Spell*, was set (as the subtitle suggests) in Thessaly, another region he had not visited and for information on the customs and landscape of which he had to rely on classical writers, including Plato, Theocritus, Pliny, Aristophanes, Homer, Pausanias, Petronius, and Apuleius. Notably, the poem's subtitle, with its geographical genre designation, echoes those alluded to in 'The Four Ages': Moore's *Lallah Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817) and Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming: A Pennsylvanian Tale* (1809). The denunciations of the compositional processes of Southey, Moore, and Campbell surely apply to Peacock. Like Hogg, Peacock ridicules himself.

Similarly, Peacock's attack on the repetitiveness of poetry, particularly its use of commonplaces, has implications within his own work. One of the foremost condemnations that

Peacock has for poetry since the classical golden age is that it is repetitive. Poetry's 'range is limited, and when exhausted, nothing remains but the *crambe repetitia* [repeatedly served cabbage] of common-place' ('FA', p.144). Significantly, in attacking poets of the modern silver age, Peacock identifies some of these 'common-places'. With undisguised irony, he mocks the imagery and phraseology of poets such as Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Gray, William Cowper, James Thomson, and William Collins:

> The changes had been rung on *lovely maid and sylvan shade, summer heat and green retreat, waving trees and sighing breeze, gentle swains and amorous pains*, by versifiers who took them on trust, as meaning something very soft and tender, without much caring what.
>
> ('FA', p. 148, emphasis added)

It is a poetry constructed from stock images, insipid rhymes, and nouns weighed down by clichéd adjectives. While Peacock is free of 'swains' and 'pains', and short on 'retreats', the other images are to be found in abundance throughout his poetry. The rhyme on 'maid' and 'shade' occurs no fewer than ten times in *Rhododaphne*, three times in the draft of *Ahrimanes* (written 1813-14; first published 1909), twice in both *Genus* and *Philosophy*, and once in *Sir Hornbook*.[70] The specific image of 'lovely maid' is used in that rhyme in *Sir Hornbook*, and that of 'sylvan shade' appears three times in *Rhododaphne*, and once each in both *Ahrimanes* and *Genius*.[71] In *Genius*, in what amount to minor variations on these images, 'secret shade' is rhymed with 'sylvan maid', and 'sunshine-chequered shade' with 'sylvan nymphs and genii strayed' (*Halliford* VI, pp. 100, 120). Similarly, 'trees' and 'breeze' are rhymed three times in *Philosophy*, and once in the short poem 'Maria's Return'.[72] The image of the 'sighing breeze', often in interaction with trees, also appears in Peacock's poems. The second edition of *Palmyra* contains the line 'Sad through the palm the evening breezes sigh', while 'Stanzas Written at Sea' concludes with the image of 'the sigh of the breeze' (*Halliford* VI, p. 170, 96). In *Philosophy*, 'The soft breeze waved the light acacia's bower' (*Halliford* VI, p. 213). In *Rhododaphne*, 'So light a breath was on the trees, | That rather like a spirit's sigh | Than motion of an earthly breeze' (*Halliford* VII, p. 25). Also in that poem, 'the breeze's wings | Make music

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[70] For these rhymes in *Rhododaphne*, see: *Halliford* VII, pp. 12, 23, 27, 29, 34, 46, 51, 52, 78-9; in *Ahrimanes*: *Halliford* VII, pp. 267, 273, 280; in *Genius*: *Halliford* VI, pp. 110, 120; in *Philosophy*: *Halliford* VI, pp. 194, 200; and in *Sir Hornbook*: *Halliford* VI, p. 275.

[71] For 'sylvan shade' in *Rhododaphne*, see: *Halliford* VII, pp. 27, 29, 34; in *Ahrimanes*: *Halliford* VII, p. 269; and in *Genius*: *Halliford* VI, p. 118.

[72] For this rhyme in *Philosophy*, see: *Halliford* VI, pp. 189, 194, 195; in 'Maria's Return': *Halliford* VI, p. 43.

in their [the trees] rustling leaves; | But 'tis no spirit's breath that sighs | Among the tangled canopies' (*Halliford* VII, p. 29). Once more, Peacock's condemnations of others could be a condemnation of his own poetic practice. Significantly, these stock images and rhymes are absent from his parodic and satirical poems in *Sir Proteus* and *Paper Money Lyrics*. These are the commonplaces of tragic, not comic poetry.

The self-implications in 'The Four Ages' magnify the genre-consciousness of the essay, and Peacock's anxieties regarding the dialectic of comedy and tragedy. In 'The Four Ages', tragedy receives the worst of his satire, while comedy remains elusive throughout. For Peacock, the golden age of the ancient world is 'the age of Homer', as well as of 'the lyric poetry of Pindar and Alcæus, and the tragic poetry of Æschylus and Sophocles' ('FA', p. 141). That is, it is the age of Aristotle's three correspondent genres (tragedy, epic, lyric). In the silver age, 'poetry is of two kinds, imitative and original':

> The imitative consists in recasting, and giving an exquisite polish to, the poetry of the age of gold: of this Virgil is the most obvious and striking example. The original is chiefly comic, didactic, or satiric: as in Menander, Aristophanes, Horace, and Juvenal.
>
> ('FA', p. 142)

This presentation of comic forms of writing is peculiar not least because, from a purely chronological perspective, Aristophanes was a contemporary of Sophocles, the tragedian who Peacock situates within the golden age. Most significantly, Peacock does not discuss comedy further, with his paragraphs on the silver age focusing on the 'exquisite and fastidious selection of words' associated with the 'imitative' poetry of the era ('FA', p. 142). Therefore, in summing up the four ages of the ancient world, he concludes that the poetry of the silver age can be termed 'Virgilian', focusing on the epic imitator, not his comic and satiric counterparts ('FA', p. 145). If the great sin of poetry is its retrospective, imitative glance—as is the overall argument of 'The Four Ages'—the originality of the comic, the satiric, and, curiously, that abhorrence of Shelley's, the didactic, implies that these genres and these writers 'strike into a new path'.[73]

[73] In the 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound* (1819), Shelley wrote: 'Didactic poetry is my abhorrence' (*PBSP* II, p. 475).

This underexplored treatment of comedy is repeated in the examination of the modern era. The secondary silver era, following on from the golden age of Shakespeare, is described as 'beginning with Dryden, coming to perfection with Pope, and ending with Goldsmith, Collins, and Gray' ('FA', p. 147). Yet, once again, Peacock refuses to focus on the satirists, Dryden and Pope (despite the latter's 'perfect[ing]' of the age), instead dedicating his discussion to the other named poets, and the effect of the progression of history, philosophy, and science upon their descriptions of nature. However, in this period, Peacock places a satirist among the four 'deep and elaborate thinkers' whose 'activity of intellect' is poetry's demise: 'The subtle scepticism of Hume, the solemn irony of Gibbon, the daring paradoxes of Rousseau, and the biting ridicule of Voltaire' ('FA', p. 147). Though not a poet, the elevation of the author of *Candide* (1759) among philosophers and historians implies the use of satire (and its broader genre, comedy) in the progress of thought or 'the stream of opinion' (as he put it in 'French Comic Romances'). Although placed in the ancient and modern silver ages—a reflection of his observation in his Marlow journal that 'tragedy precedes comedy'—comic poetry passes with little criticism in 'The Four Ages', with Peacock leaving room for the development of this genre as a useful mode of poetry and prose. Indeed, the satirical nature of the essay itself—exhibiting the scepticism, irony, and ridicule praised in Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire—is an endorsement of the genre.

Peacock's descriptions of his contemporaries similarly avoids the subject of comedy. Two satirists are named in his summary of the modern iron age, Byron and Moore, yet the author identifies their romances in his explication of his own age's failings. Moore's *Lalla Rookh* is singled out for its use of travel literature, despite Peacock's fondness for Moore's 1818 satire, *The Fudge Family in Paris*, which he recommended, and sent a copy of, to Shelley (*PL* I, p. 130). Similarly, Peacock admired Byron's satirical writings. In a letter to Shelley in February 1822, he called *Don Juan* the best of all Byron's writings: 'I have read nothing else in recent literature that I think good for anything' (*PL* I, p. 186). Thus, when Byron is criticised for 'crui[sing] for thieves and pirates on the shores of the Morea and among the Greek islands'—a reference to *The Corsair* (1814)—the focus on one of Byron's romances appears a telling omission ('FA', p. 151). For the third time, comedic writers are mentioned only for their comic writings to be quietly elided. Further, Byron's characters, along with Scott's 'poachers and cattle-stealers', raise the Aristotelian notion of 'base' people ('FA', p. 151). Peacock identifies these low characters in order to highlight their inappropriateness to tragic modes of writing, thus confirming the degraded state of the genre in the early nineteenth century. When, in the final paragraph, Peacock refers to 'the degraded state of every species of poetry', there is a palpable sense that he has provided evidence of this for only one of the bifurcated paths, that

of tragedy, and left this 'new path' underexplored, providing insufficient evidence for such a claim against comedy. In the glimpses he gives of comedy in 'The Four Ages', it provides originality in opposition to the imitative nature of tragic and panegyric modes; it can be a useful part of what Peacock elsewhere calls 'the march of intellect'; it can be a radical alternative to poetry's panegyrical origins; and, in the essay's use of the comic genre itself, it becomes a tool for self-interrogation and self-criticism (*NA*, p. 104).

Written at a moment of transition in his life and writing—an evolution that should not be oversimplified—'The Four Ages' playfully embodies Peacock's genre anxieties. His generic leanings were evolving from his earlier inclination toward tragedy to a greater reliance on comedy as a creative outlet—though the utility of these two genres remained a source of tension. The contradictions of 'The Four Ages' constructs a site of conflict between ironic and sincere discourses, shaping the arena in which Peacock's genre-anxieties regarding tragic and comedic modes are explored. While his earlier, tragic poetry is mocked, the ever self-effacing Peacock does not explicitly defend his prioritisation of comedy, just as his novels never state his position in an argument. Instead, the implied attack on his past in 'The Four Ages'—combined with its simultaneous tiptoeing around the subject, and excoriating use, of comedy—emerges as a defence of the changes in, and the future of, Peacock's literary career.

4.2. Shelley's 'Defence'

Despite his appreciation of Peacock's 'fine wit' and self-effacing irony, Shelley responds to 'The Four Ages', as Butler says, as though it is a serious attack upon his craft. Yet the seriousness with which he replies is in part due to another attack on poetry that was on his mind throughout his final years in Italy: Plato's infamous banishment of poets in his *Republic*. These two works, I argue, each provoked Shelley into a defence against the other. That is, the desire to defend against Plato's banishment of poets from his ideal society is reignited by Peacock's essay, while the imperative to take Peacock at his word emerges from Shelley's reading in Plato. It is therefore important, when discussing Shelley's 'Defence', to read 'The Four Ages' as though it is a sincere discourse. The degrees of agreement and disagreement between Shelley's two antagonist texts required him to navigate between polarised arguments—between the historical and philosophical, materialism and idealism, the timely and the timeless. The remainder of this chapter focuses on this navigation. This is achieved through comparison with an earlier apologia. Shelley had attempted a defence of poetry in the 'Introduction' to his long

essay *A Philosophical View of Reform*, written little more than a year prior to the 'Defence'. Through the tracing of changes between the *Philosophical View* and the 'Defence', I highlight the evolution of Shelley's thought from one essay to the other, in which, in light of the new attack from Peacock, he expands and inflates his definition of poetry, nuancing its relation to other disciplines. This progression, I argue, is the product of Shelley negotiating the two conflicting attacks of Plato and Peacock, writers who were linked in Shelley's thinking. I begin therefore by considering Shelley as a Platonist; his engagement with the styles, genres, poetry, and ideas of the Athenian; and the influence of Peacock on that Platonism.

4.2.1. Poet-Philosophers: Shelley, Plato, and Peacock

Plato and Peacock were intertwined in Shelley's life. Though Shelley was introduced to Plato at school, he did not embrace the philosopher until he met Peacock, who was showed him the radical potential of classical, pagan literature as an antidote to Christian conservatism.[74] After what Thomas Jefferson Hogg called the 'mere Atticism' that was Shelley's life with Peacock and Hogg at Bishopsgate in the winter of 1815-16—as Peacock remarked of that winter, their 'studies were exclusively Greek'—Plato became increasingly present in Shelley's reading and thought, especially during his final years in Italy, from March 1818 until his death in July 1822.[75] From 1818 onwards, 'Plato remained for him', according to Holmes, 'the nearest thing to his Bible'.[76] In November 1820, a few months prior to composing the 'Defence', he wrote to Peacock: 'I have been reading nothing but Greek and Spanish. Plato and Calderon have been my gods' (*PBSL* II, p.245). In July 1818, three years before the 'Defence', he translated the *Symposium* in its entirety in the course of only ten days; in 1821, only months after finishing his apologia, he produced a complete translation of the *Ion*; in between these two large-scale works, he translated fragments from the *Republic*, *Menexenus*, and *Crito*; and later passages from the *Phaedo* which are now lost. Holmes and Benjamin Sudarsky observe that Shelley's translations of Plato were spurs to his imagination.[77] Translating the ancient writer inspired Shelley to write poetry, and acts of translation precede periods of great productivity. It is therefore significant that Shelley's advice to Peacock upon reading 'The Four Ages' was that his friend read Plato's argument for poetic inspiration as a form of divine madness in the *Ion*

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[74] Barnett, p. 171. For a history of Shelley's engagement with Plato—from his reading in translation at school, through his reintroduction to the Athenian by Peacock, to his reading in and translations from the original Greek—see: Notopoulos, pp. 29-77.
[75] Hogg's phrase, from a letter to Peacock, is quoted by the latter in the 'Memoirs' (*Halliford* VIII, pp. 99-100).
[76] Richard Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), p. 438.
[77] Holmes, *Shelley*, p. 429; Sudarsky, pp. 161-62.

(*PBSL* II, p. 261). Shelley no doubt imagined that this was a text that was guaranteed a sympathetic reading by 'Greeky Peaky', and could be a spur to his friend's imagination.

The shared value that both poets drew from Plato—and which they developed amongst the rest of the Shelley circle at Marlow in the years 1817-18—was the emphasis on love. In Shelley's words in his 1818 essay on the subject, love is 'the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists'—a secular reimagining of Coleridge's 'one life' flowing through everything in 'The Eolian Harp' (*CPW* I.1, l. 26).[78] Shelley's essay 'On Love' was written the same year as his unpublished review of Peacock's *Rhododaphne*—a long, narrative poem on the subject of love, which Shelley admired. This shared Platonic value provides a typical example of Shelley expanding his definition of poetry in order to balance his defences against both writers. In the 1821 apologia, he situates love at the heart of poetry's nature and purpose:

> The great secret of morals is Love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action or person, not our own. A man to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; [...] The great instrument of moral good is the imagination: [...] Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.
>
> ('Defence', p. 682)

By recasting poetry's utility as, not a means to bringing about moral good, but as a stimulant to man's loving nature, exercising the mind's empathetic faculties, Shelley creates an argument that appeals to both Plato's and Peacock's prioritisation of this driving emotion.[79]

However, Shelley was, as with all his philosophical idols, not a slavish acolyte. He was a critical reader of Plato, and his statements on his brilliance are qualified. In the same notebook that contains his translation of the *Symposium*, Shelley wrote: 'The Republic, though replete with considerable errors of speculation, is indeed the greatest repository of important truths of

[78] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'On Love', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 631-32 (p. 632).
[79] The word *empathy* was not in use in the early nineteenth century. The *OED*'s earliest citation for 'empathy' is from 1895. Shelley's argument for love and the imagination as the basis of moral good is thus remarkably prescient.

all the works of Plato'.[80] It is difficult to read that statement without identifying those 'considerable errors of speculation' with the banishment of poets from Plato's ideal society. In a fragmentary preface intended to accompany his translation of the *Symposium*, Shelley similarly tempered his praise, writing of the Athenian that he was 'the greatest among the Greek philosophers', 'exhibit[ing] a rare union of close and subtle logic with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry', but who was 'not always correct'.[81] Plato's 'most remarkable intuitions' were often 'stained by puerile sophisms'.[82] However, this fragment identifies where Shelley's praise for Plato lies: in his prose style—a style which, for Shelley, qualifies Plato as a poet. In this fragment, Plato's union of logic and poetry is 'melted by the splendour and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions'.[83] Plato's 'language is that of an immortal spirit, rather than a man'.[84] This is a presager to the description of Plato in the 'Defence':

> Plato was essentially a poet—the truth and splendour of his imagery and the melody of his language is the most intense that it is possible to conceive. He rejected the measure of the epic, dramatic and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forebore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style.
>
> ('Defence' p. 679)

Despite Shelley's attempts throughout the 'Defence' to divest poetry of a purely formal or stylistic definition, Plato's status as a poet is determined by his literary style, rather than through the use of his imaginative faculty. Mary Shelley's 'Preface' to *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* (1840)—the volume which contained the first publication of the 'Defence' and of the Plato translations—reflects her husband's focus on prosody. Conveying little about Plato as a thinker, she instead praises the 'radiance and delicacy of language', 'the soaring poetry, the grace, subtlety, and infinite variety of Plato', 'the dramatic vivacity, and the

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[80] Quoted in Notopolous, p. 501.
[81] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'On the Symposium, or Preface to the Banquet of Plato', in Notopolous, pp. 402-03 (p. 402).
[82] P.B. Shelley, 'On the Symposium', p. 402.
[83] P.B. Shelley, 'On the Symposium', p. 402.
[84] P.B. Shelley, 'On the Symposium', p. 402.

touch of nature, that vivifies the pages of the Athenian'.[85] The *Symposium* is 'as amusing as it is sublime'.[86] The praise she gives to her husband's translation is that it 'for the first time introduces the Athenian to the English reader in a style worthy of him'.[87] It is telling, therefore, that Michael O'Neill—one of Shelley's most astute modern readers—in his book on Shelley's influences, devoted the chapter on Plato to an analysis of the philosopher's effect on the poet's prose style.[88]

Yet Shelley is alert to the ideas that underpin Plato's stylistic shifts in tone and genre, and his uses of character and narrative. This is on display in his masterful rendering of the *Symposium* (or *The Banquet*, as Shelley titles it) and in his decision to translate the dialogue in its entirety, capturing the drama and poetry of the text. It is a poetic truism that form is content, and thus it is not surprising that O'Neill suggests the genre of Shelley's *The Banquet* is that of a prose-poem.[89] Plato uses narrative to shape his ideas, and this is no different in the layered multivocality of the *Symposium*, in the stories within stories. Apollodorus relates to a friend that he had been walking with Glaucon, and on that walk told Glaucon a story relayed to him by Aristodemus, who was present when Socrates told the narrative of his meeting with Diotima, who explained to Socrates the nature of love.[90] The ideas about love pass from person to person, speaker to speaker, like love itself, and the participants of the dramatised symposium come from multiple disciplines: a philosopher, a physician, a stateman and military leader, a tragedian, and a comic poet. Thus love moves across voices and registers, genres and disciplines. It is a poetic, philosophic, and legislative power. The concept of love as communal, multivocal, shared, and transferred, is embodied in the structure and symbolism of the narrative, and Shelley's treatment of the *Symposium* as a poem—as he said in the 'Defence', 'Love […] found a worthy poet in Plato'—and his decision to translate the work in its entirety, represent his engagement with Plato's writing beyond the aesthetics of style ('Defence', p. 691).

Indeed, Shelley had a complex and nuanced understanding of Plato's ideologies, with his work regularly expanding, developing, and arguing with the Athenian. His reimagining of the philosopher's thought is nowhere more on show than in the 'Defence'. Shelley's image of

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[85] Mary Shelley, 'Preface to *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, 1840', in Notopoulos, pp. 378-80 (p. 378).
[86] M. Shelley, 'Preface to *Essays*', p. 378.
[87] M. Shelley, 'Preface to *Essays*', p. 378.
[88] O'Neill, 'Emulating'.
[89] O'Neill, 'Emulating'.
[90] The numerous acts of translation in *The Banquet*—not just Shelley's, but the transfer of information from speaker to speaker within the text—is discussed by Wilson, pp. 345-57.

the planetary music of poetry is Plato's description of the harmony of the universe in *Timaeus* applied to literary works.[91] This dialogue also contains a description of the revolutions of the heavens as being a model for the revolutions in man, of which Shelley's paralleling of literary and political revolutions is an echo.[92] Plato's divisions of body and soul, of sensation and mind, and of shadow and substance, which distinguishes the two types of love in the *Symposium*—physical, sexual love, and Platonic, intellectual love—is reimagined (under the influence of Coleridge) as a division between reason and imagination: 'Reason is to Imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance' ('Defence' p. 675).[93] Perhaps his most brilliant redeployment of Platonic doctrine is the passage on the failure of individual poems. Discussing the 'divine' influence on poets, which awakens their minds as a wind 'awakens to transitory brightness' a 'fading coal', Shelley laments a failure in the imagination:

> Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results: but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet.
>
> ('Defence', pp. 696-97)

If, as Plato says, the material world is a corrupt image or shadow of an ideal world that can only be hypothesised and imagined, Shelley suggests that poems are the corrupted image or shadow of the ideal of the poem as originally conceived by the poet. The failings of a poem participate within the nature of the world within which human beings (and therefore the poetry produced by them) must exist. Poetry is no more or less imperfect than its related disciplines of philosophy and history must be. This is a brilliant riposte to poetry's antagonists—not just Plato and Peacock, but critics and reviewers who seek out the failings of poems—and one which demonstrates Shelley's imbibing, as well as his expansion and development, of Plato's writings beyond his appreciation of their literary style.

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[91] Plato, 'Timaeus', trans. by Donald J. Zeyl, in *Complete Works*, pp.1224-91.
[92] Plato, 'Timaeus', p. 1250.
[93] Plato, 'Symposium', pp. 491-92; Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'The Banquet', in Notopoulos, pp. 414-60 (p. 447).

Though Peacock is the immediate provocation for Shelley's apologia, Plato too provided a provocation and challenge for Shelley. At the close of his attack on poetry in the *Republic*, Plato expresses an openness to a defence of poetry:

> If the poetry that aims at pleasure and imitation has any argument to bring forward that proves it ought to have a place in a well-governed city, we at least would be glad to admit it, for we are well aware of the charm it exercises. [...] we'll allow its defenders, *who aren't poets themselves* but lovers of poetry, *to speak in prose on its behalf* and to show that it not only gives pleasure but is beneficial both to constitutions and to human life.[94]

Following on from Plato's acknowledgement of 'an ancient quarrel between [poetry] and philosophy'—a quarrel that was not over in the nineteenth century—Plato's exclusion of poets not just from his ideal society, but from the debate about poetry, raises the familiar question of who is qualified to write criticism.[95] Just as poets expect critics to be poets, philosophers, it seems, expect them to be philosophers.[96] To the Plato-worshipping Shelley, this must have appeared as a challenge, and the formal stipulation of prose—surely meant as a provocation to poets—was not a limitation, Shelley being an accomplished prose stylist as well as a philosophically-minded political thinker. Given that Shelley told Peacock that 'The Four Ages' provoked in him a 'sacred rage', it is easy to imagine Plato's condemnation having a similar effect (*PBSL* II, p. 261). The association for Shelley between Plato and Peacock—the latter of whose dialogic novels were reshaping himself as a satirical Plato—no doubt revived in him a desire to defend against the latter when provoked by the former.

Plato thus represents a complex figure in Shelley's literary critical thought. He was both a poet and a philosopher—the dual role that was the aspiration of Romantic poet-critics. He was an inspirer of poetry as well as its enemy; an antagonist to be defended against, but one who is receptive to a defence. He is also a potential defender of poetry against an antagonist like Peacock. The connection between Peacock and Plato in Shelley's life requires an understanding of Shelley's 1821 essay not as a defence against one or the other, but against both. Like the degrees of sincerity and irony in Peacock's 'Four Ages', the intertwining, interaction, and simultaneity of Shelley's fight on two fronts is impossible to untangle. It is

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[94] Plato, 'Republic', p. 1211, emphasis added.
[95] See above, p. 50, n. 56.
[96] Coleridge, as a self-proclaimed 'Poet-philosopher', expected a critic to be both. See above, p. 75.

imperative, therefore, that the two arguments against poetry are considered in relation to each other. The arguments of Peacock and Plato are, after all, as conflicting as they are complementary.

4.2.2. Fighting on Two Fronts: The Cases Against Poetry

Plato's argument is that poetry is harmful to its audience because it does not perceive the truth of things.[97] For the Athenian, it is the duty of philosophers to grasp after the ideals that exist beyond the physical world, and of which the physical world is but a corrupt image. The imitative arts (poetry, drama, painting, music) only imitate the appearances of things in that corrupt world. The example that Plato gives is that a joiner creates a table in imitation of the ideal of a table, while a painter imitates the appearance of the joiner's physical table. Thus poetry is an image of an image of truth, and is two steps removed from the ideal. A poet can therefore imitate medical language—the craft of a specialist aiming at an ideal—but cannot provide medical advice or heal the sick. In the Allegory of the Cave, poetry is the shadows on the walls, at the furthest remove from truth.[98] This becomes troubling for Plato when he considers the ways in which imitators shape their imitations to suit the taste of 'the majority' who, according to the Athenian, 'know nothing'.[99] Poets play to their audiences, and their imitations of imitations therefore drift further and further from the ideal. Truth, for Plato, as represented in his image of the cave, is difficult and even a subject of fear for the general population. The aim of philosophy is not to please, but to break the chains of the mentally enslaved. In its appeal to the majority, poetry peddles pleasing lies. Here Plato is careful to reiterate that the distance from truth and the shaping of an imitation of an image to satisfy an audience may seem innocuous in a painter's representation of a table, but it becomes dangerous when poets write about subjects such as war or political struggle. As he remarks, 'all such poetry is likely to distort the thought of anyone who hears it, unless he has knowledge of what it [poetry] is really like'.[100] Just as the tastes of the audience force poetry to stray further from truth, poetry misleads its audience—corruption leaching into the processes of both production and reception. Thus poetry is inferior to philosophy—the practitioners of the latter being those who seek the truth freed from its earthly image and who should therefore rule Plato's ideal society.

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[97] The argument against poetry, which is paraphrased throughout this paragraph, is made in the tenth book of the *Republic*. See: Plato, 'Republic', pp. 1199-212.
[98] The Allegory of the Cave appears in the seventh book; Plato, 'Republic', pp. 1132-35.
[99] Plato, 'Republic', p. 1206.
[100] Plato, 'Republic', p. 1200.

Like Plato, the foremost issue taken with poetry in 'The Four Ages' (read unironically) is one of perception. Unlike Plato, however, Peacock's argument is with the historical perception of the material world, not with a philosophical perception of truth. In 'The Four Ages', a poet's gaze is retrospective, both in the sense of the two eras of poetry—ancient and modern—and in the individual ages within those eras—those of iron, gold, silver, and brass. In the broader sense, the modern era imitates the ancient era, while within those eras, the golden age imitates the iron age, the silver age imitates the golden, and the brass age once more looks back to the poetry of the age of iron. Poets are ever looking back, while what Peacock calls 'the progress of reason' looks ever forward ('FA', p. 153). Poetry therefore exists within exploded systems, depicting gods no longer believed in, representing societies no longer extant, and building upon philosophical schools long refuted. The difference from Plato here is not simply one between academic disciplines (history and philosophy) but between opposing philosophical ideologies—those of idealism and materialism. As materialism is the value from which Plato seeks to free his ideals, defending against both philosophical schools simultaneously, as Shelley attempts to do, would therefore require a careful, perhaps impossible, navigation of antithetical extremes.

This focus on alternative discourses and disciplines is the key site of agreement and conflict within the two attacks on poetry. Plato devotes much space throughout his dialogues to examining the differences between poetry and philosophy. In the *Symposium*, for example, he includes two poets as speakers, situating their treatises on love—which are eloquent and moving, though lacking in intellectual rigour—in opposition to that of the philosopher Socrates. Though Peacock is similarly concerned with poetry's inferior relation to alternative branches of knowledge, he portrays the epistemological landscape as much broader, including the natural sciences, history, and theology. Similarly, for Peacock, poetry is not other to these disciplines, but antecedent. In 'The Four Ages', poetry precedes (in a chronological sense) all other academic disciplines (history, science, philosophy), and these disciplines emerge out of poetry, with poets being the first historians and philosophers. Poetry is 'the mental rattle which awakened the attention of intellect in the infancy of civil society' ('FA', p. 154). Once awakened, the mind of society no longer needs poetry, just as a child outgrows its rattle, and it would be regressive for society 'to make a serious business of the playthings of its childhood' ('FA', p. 154). For Plato, poetry is other to, and an opponent of, philosophy; for Peacock, it is its ancestor. The spatial relations between the two (one beside philosophy, the other behind it) is what Shelley attempts to revise in the 'Defence'.

Peacock's final condemnation is not as dramatic as Plato's, though both situate their antagonism within the effect on society at large. For Peacock, poetry is not dangerous, merely a waste of time, and while Plato focuses on the corrupting influence on readers, Peacock's focus is upon the poets themselves. Poets cultivate poetry 'to the neglect of some branch of useful study', with their minds 'running to seed in the specious indolence of these empty aimless mockeries of intellectual exertion' ('FA', p. 154). The 'progress of reason' therefore is hampered not by the content of poetry, its methods of perception, or its relationship to truth, but by its potential to distract great minds from more useful work. Poets are not corrupters of society, but obstructers of its progress. However, despite this focus on the poet, Peacock is still troubled by audience, as Plato is: 'poetry […] like all other trades, takes its rise in the demand for the commodity, and flourishes in proportion to the extent of the market' ('FA', p. 137). Peacock's audience-anxieties exist within his materialist philosophy, expressed in terms of the more modern and cynical phenomena of market forces and commodification. Society thus becomes the corrupter of poets—an inversion of Plato's narrative. Both are concerned with an audience's influence on the poetry itself, though only Plato worries what it might mean for the audience to have their views confirmed rather than questioned and destabilised. For Peacock, discourse is neutered by the need to please. A defence that defends against both requires an awareness of both poet and reader, of the relationship between production and reception, one which defends the influence of poetry on the writer, the reader, and society at large.

For Plato, poetry is dangerous and 'distort[s] the thought' of its audience. For Peacock, it is simply useless, wasting readers' time and misusing poets' minds. Both share a concern for the manner in which poets perceive the world, though they differ in their particulars. For Plato, poets are imitators of corrupt images of truth; for Peacock, they are idolators of the past. Thus Plato's argument is philosophical (in the sense that it refers to what Coleridge calls 'first principles'; *BL* I, p. 258), while Peacock's, though grounded in eighteenth-century philosophy, is historical (or pseudo-historical). One argument is timeless, not only in the sense that it has retained relevance across two-thousand years, but because it deals with what poetry *is*. The other is timely, not just because it is contemporaneous with Shelley, but because it is concerned both with what poetry has been throughout time and with what it is *now*. Shelley's 'Defence' is an essay caught between these dialectics. On the one hand, the binaries proposed by the two attacks account for the disjointedness of Shelley's essay; on the other, they are the source of its brilliance, as Shelley reconciles philosophical and historical, and idealist and materialist, views of poetry. However, though the division between the timely and the timeless is straightforward in the sense of the two attacks, it cannot be simplified in Shelley's response. Shelley's focus on

literary timelessness is directed as much at Peacock as Plato, just as his contextual understanding of the evolution of poetry answers Plato as much as Peacock. Shelley's response to Peacock's historicism reverts to a discussion of metaphysical first principles—what is poetry, what is utility—while his response to Plato's philosophy is to situate poetical agency within a historical survey of literature. After all, his initial response to 'The Four Ages', was not to suggest an alternative historical narrative, but to recommend that Peacock read Plato's *Ion*. Conversely, Shelley's first reply to Plato, the *Philosophical View*, makes greater use of historical source material than the 'Defence', situating revolutionary literature in temporal relation to political revolutions. How these dialectics expand and inflate (or hyperbolise) Shelley's views on poetry can be observed in a comparison with the earlier defence of poetry in the 'Introduction' to *A Philosophical View*. The ways in which the ideas in this text are developed and expanded in the 'Defence'—often by minor, though telling, grammatical shifts—highlight Shelley's navigating of two conflicting and complementary attacks on poetry.

4.2.3. Shelley's Defences of Poetry

A Philosophical View of Reform is one of several works by Shelley in poetry and prose written in response to the Peterloo Massacre. The mass gathering of unarmed civilians, led by radical reformers at St. Peters Fields in Manchester on the 16th August 1819, was violently dispersed by the cavalry, killing fifteen people and injuring countless more. This event to many 'looked like the beginning of the English Revolution'.[101] It was this event that led Shelley to encourage his readers, in *The Mask of Anarchy* (written 1819; published 1832), to 'Rise like lions after slumber | In unvanquishable number' and to 'Shake [their] chains to Earth like dew' (*PBSP* III, ll. 372-74). The composition of the *Philosophical View* has been dated by Donald Reiman between November 1819 and January 1820.[102] It thus sits chronologically amongst the cross-generic works of Shelley's political and poetic maturity: his poetical view of reform, *The Mask of Anarchy*; his poetical defence of poetry, *Adonais* (1821); and his philosophical defence of poetry, the 'Defence'. In Shelley's words, *A Philosophical View* was intended as 'a commonplace kind of book […] instructive and readable', 'a kind of standard book for the philosophical reformers' (*PBSL* II, pp. 164, 201). In the 'Introduction', which contains ideas and phrases reused in the 1821 'Defence', he situated poetical and philosophical writers in

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[101] Holmes, *Shelley*, p. 529.
[102] Donald H. Reiman, 'Shelley's Treatise on Political Economy', in *Shelley and His Circle, 1773-1822: Vol. 6* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 945-62 (pp. 951-55).

relation to historical examples of reform, revolt, and revolution throughout the world. In so doing, he planted seeds that would blossom in the 'Defence'. Indeed, as part of his preparation for writing the *Philosophical View*, he read (amongst other works) Plato's *Republic*, with its antagonism towards poetry as an inferior political agent in comparison to philosophy. Considering the focus on poetry and philosophy in the 'Introduction' to the *Philosophical View*, it is difficult not to view this text as Shelley's first defence of poetry against the Athenian.

It is, however, Peacock, not Plato, who provokes within Shelley the 'sacred rage' which produced his 'Defence'. After all, Peacock's argument is more personal. It is an attack not just on poetry, but on his contemporaries. Unlike the previous ages in his narrative, which contain merely a summary of the age, Peacock gives a writer-by-writer breakdown of a Romantic-era canon which, like that of Hogg in *The Poetic Mirror*, is mostly vindicated by history, focusing as it does on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, and Scott, as well as Moore and Campbell.[103] This prolonged enumeration of contemporary literature's sins gives credence to Prickett's argument that 'The Four Ages' is an attack on the poets of the Romantic era.[104] Shelley, as a contemporary, is implicated within this narrative, whilst simultaneously being an omission from it. Though not considered a major poet in his lifetime, there may be something of a sting in Peacock's choice not to place Shelley among the leading lights of the age, even if the purpose of such an inclusion would have been ridicule. In responding to Plato, Shelley had two-thousand years of political and literary history separating him from the Athenian—two millennia of revolutions, the rise and fall of empires, and the extinction and birth of religions, upon which he could draw in a defence against the philosopher. He attempts this feat in the *Philosophical View*. It was no doubt galling for Shelley that this history forms the basis of Peacock's attack. Peacock's historical argument offers a challenge to Shelley's historical justification of poetry in the *Philosophical View*, even if Peacock had not read Shelley's unpublished essay. The depiction of cyclical (or revolutionary) ages of literature offers an alternative to Shelley's argument for the relationship between literary and political revolution. The 'Defence' is thus a revised response, written under the provocation of Peacock, with his friend's antagonism sharpening, deepening, evolving, and hyperbolising his own conception of the nature of poetry.

This is evident in the revision to the most famous pronouncement in the 'Defence': that 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. Typifying the idea of a poet

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[103] See above, p. 164, n. 119.
[104] Prickett, p. 161.

hyperbolising poetry, it is notable that this statement was previously made in the *Philosophical View*, but with poets having peers in their legislative abilities. In the earlier essay, 'Poets *& Philosophers* are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' (*PVR*, p. 993, emphasis added). Significantly, the definitive article—'*the* unacknowledged legislators'—is retained across both texts, indicating their uniqueness and solitariness in their manner of legislating. If Plato's argument is that philosophers, not poets, should legislate in an ideal society, Shelley argues not only that philosophers do already legislate (albeit without acknowledgement) but that they are not alone in this, with poets standing side by side, like Wordsworth's poet and the 'Man of science' walking alongside each other in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*.[105] On the one hand, Shelley elevates philosophy, arguing that it has always legislated within societies, even if philosophers have not held government. On the other, he places poets alongside philosophers as equals—an allegorical personification of the psychological dialectic of imagination and reason that he explores in the 'Defence'.

However, the dynamic of poets *and* philosophers with which Shelley defends against Plato in the *Philosophical View*, gives way in the 'Defence' to the image of philosophers *as* poets. In response to Peacock's argument for the modern supremacy of not just philosophy, but all other intellectual disciplines, Shelley absorbs these other disciplines under the mantle of poetry. It is not just Plato who is a poet, but also Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Lord Bacon, and John Locke—the first four of which were highlighted by Peacock as the great minds of the eighteenth century who have rendered poetry obsolete ('Defence', p. 695). Shelley's thought is expanded beyond the notion of the combined industry of two distinct disciplines, to a more complex interaction between, and an intertwining of, them. Thus it is that the mental faculties of reason and imagination become products of each other:

> the former [Reason] may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced; and the latter [Imagination] as mind, acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light. […] Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known; Imagination is the perception of those quantities, both separately and as a whole.
>
> ('Defence', pp. 674-75)

[105] See above, p. 40.

The two faculties rely upon each other to such an extent that is difficult to disassociate them, with imagination making use of the materials of reason, while reason requires the valuation and interpretation of those materials.

This slight but significant alteration in grammatical relations—between the 'and' and 'as' of the relationship between poets and philosophers—is present in Shelley's change in conjunctions from one text to the other. In the *Philosophical View*, Shelley wrote that 'The most unfailing herald ~~of or~~ companion, *or* follower, of an universal employment of the sentiments of a nation to the production of beneficial change is poetry' (*PVR*, p. 992, emphasis added). That is, poetry either leads, walks alongside, or follows society-changing opinion. This notion is elaborated in the *Philosophical View* in a way that it is not in the 'Defence'. In the earlier text, poets and philosophers are 'the ~~causes~~ effects of [a] new spirit in men's minds, & the cause of its more complete development' (*PVR*, p. 967). Thus Shelley describes the flourishing of the arts in Renaissance Florence as an effect of the city's revolt against Popedom, with that art in turn becoming the cause of Chaucer's revolution in English letters, which is itself characterised as a cause of the Reformation (led by Francis Bacon), of which the English Renaissance is a subsequent effect. In a complex relationship of causality, poets and philosophers shape and are shaped by the opinions and spirit of the age in which they live—much as their texts shape and are shaped by the genres in which they participate. In the 'Defence', however, the statement on poetry's causal relationship to history is revised and redeployed: 'The most unfailing herald, companion *and* follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is Poetry' ('Defence', pp. 700-01). It is a simple change in conjunction—from 'or' to 'and'—but one which renders poetry more all-encompassing, performing the three roles simultaneously. As Peacock had argued that, in the modern era, history changes poetry—or, to put it another way, that poetry is a mere follower of history—but not the inverse, Shelley's 'or' in the *Philosophical View* weakens his idealisation of poetry in relation to Peacock's attack on his contemporaries. Further, Shelley, in the 'Defence', does not support his claim in the same way, and, without the explication contained within the earlier essay, the phrase can appear to mean more than it does: that poetry is the cause of all 'beneficial change' in society, and not, in many cases, the effect of that change.

This expansion and inflation are reflected in Shelley's expanded definition of poetry in the 'Defence'. In the *Philosophical View*, poetry is defined briefly and as a qualifier inserted as a subclause at the close of the statement examined above: 'The most unfailing herald […] of beneficial change is poetry, meaning by poetry an intense & ~~impres~~ impassioned power of

communicating intense & impassioned impressions respecting man & nature' (*PVR*, p. 992). Considering the lengths that Shelley goes to in the 'Defence' to define poetry as anything other than the writing of verses, this definition is remarkably formal. Poetry is a physical act, a heightened form of speech, and a mode of communicating subjective observations, but is not a mode of perception in itself. The pivotal terms in this definition—'impassioned', 'power', 'impressions', 'man and nature'—are Wordsworth's. They can be found throughout his prefatory statements on poetry.[106] To this extent, Shelley inherits a pre-existing vocabulary for describing poetry from the elder poet. In the 'Defence', however, poetry is defined more tentatively as 'in a general sense, […] "the expression of the imagination"' ('Defence', p. 675). With Shelley's inverted commas around what is not a quotation indicating his reservations regarding the limitations of this generalisation, the imagination is given an expanded definition, which prioritises the ideal poet's perception of both the 'integral unity' of thoughts and 'the similitudes of things' ('Defence', pp. 674, 675). Significantly, poets are active agents within these values. They do not just perceive or receive impressions: 'A Poet *participates in* the eternal, the infinite and the one', exposing 'the unapprehended relations of things, *and perpetuat*[*ing*] their apprehension' ('Defence', p. 677, 676, emphasis added). The imagination is then grafted onto Shelley's description of love, creating a definition of poetry which is not the product of, but an agent of and for, man's sensory and moral nature. Love defines the Platonic ideal of the philosopher, and just as love is an intermediary between the mortal and immortal, the material and the ideal, philosophers for Plato are (in Shelley's translation) 'intermediate persons', philosophy an 'intermediate state' between 'ignorance and knowledge'.[107] Thus 'Love is of necessity a philosopher', just as in the 'Defence', Plato is 'essentially a poet', and Milton, Dante, and Shakespeare are essentially 'philosophers of the very loftiest powers' ('Defence', p. 679).[108] The subjectivity of 'impression' is replaced by the objectivity of the 'integral unity'. In this sense, the 'Defence' might be interpreted as a shift from a Wordsworthian to a Coleridgean poetics; from the 'moods of my own mind' in Wordsworth's poetry, to a secular revision of the all-pervading 'I AM' of Coleridge's *Biographia* (*BL* II, p.247).

[106] For example, in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, 'Poetry is […] the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science'; 'the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by […] a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him'; 'Poetry is the image of man and nature'; 'the Incident of SIMON LEE […] plac[es] my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them' (*WPW* I, pp. 141, 142, 139, 127-28).
[107] P.B. Shelley, 'Banquet', p. 443.
[108] P.B. Shelley, 'Banquet', p. 443.

In defending poetry against Plato in the *Philosophical View*, Shelley did not feel compelled to radically redefine the words ‘poetry’ and ‘poet’, instead relying on pre-existing assumptions about its nature in order to argue for its power as an alternative discipline to philosophy. In response to Peacock’s condemnation of poetry as an inadequate alternative to philosophy, Shelley’s definition expands (and not just in the amount of textual space it consumes). Into this expanded definition comes his thoughts on the subject of love, philosophy, and revolution. Faced with ‘The Four Ages’ and its accusations of uselessness, poetry needed to be something more than ‘an intense and impassioned power of communicating’. Subsuming Plato’s concept of the philosopher-king along the way, poetry in the ‘Defence’ becomes what philosophy was for the Athenian: an agent of love, moral good, and intellectual progression in human beings—the ideal legislator.

4.3. Defending Poetry

There are always new attacks on poetry. From Plato’s banishment of poets, to the moralism of Stephen Gosson’s *School of Abuse* (1579) that inspired Sidney’s *Defence*; from Jeffrey’s campaign against Wordsworthian poetics, to Jeremy Paxman’s accusation that poetry has ‘connived at its own irrelevance’, the genre has been targeted for criticism and denunciation.[109] As Lerner observes, poetry ‘has been defined for millennia’ by ‘a rhythm of denunciation and defense [sic]’.[110] Defensiveness lies at the heart of so many of the critical writings of Romantic-era poets, whether it is to defend their own poetics (as in Wordsworth’s prefaces and Coleridge’s *Biographia*), their poetry from reviewers or from prospective reviewers (Wordsworth’s prefaces, Byron’s *English Bards*), their place within the literary landscape (Hogg’s *Poetic Mirror*), their vocation as a subject of academic, scientific, and philosophical enquiry (Coleridge’s lectures), themselves from other poets (Shelley’s ‘Defence’), or themselves from themselves (‘The Four Ages’). When poets defend poetry, the nature of their craft expands in their eyes. Wordsworth’s definition of a poet grew between the first three editions of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798-1802). Coleridge’s defence of his and Wordsworth’s poetry expanded from a short preface to a two-volume autobiography, with his earlier image of poetry as an expression of the ‘one life’ evolving into the annunciation of God. So too Shelley’s definition of poetry expands to accommodate, and reply to, fresh attacks upon his vocation. In

[109] Paxman is quoted in: Alison Flood, ‘Jeremy Paxman Says Poets Must Start Engaging with Ordinary People’, *Guardian*, 1 June 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jun/01/jeremy-paxman-poets-engage-ordinary-people-forward-prize> [accessed 20 May 2022].
[110] Lerner, p. 10.

simultaneously replying to Peacock and Plato, he navigates conflicting arguments, revising his understanding of poetry in relation to other disciplines (particularly philosophy). His claims for his vocation in the earlier *Philosophical View* inflate from situating poetry and philosophy as equals walking side-by-side (a rebuttal to Plato), to an absorption of philosophy into a definition of poetry (a rebuttal to Peacock). Thus in the changes between the *Philosophical View* and the 'Defence', it can be seen that defensiveness does not just produce the satiric spirit of Byron or the forbidding theory of criticism in Wordsworth's 'Essay Supplementary', but a radical redefinition of poetry. Similarly, Peacock's genre-anxieties in regard to comedy and tragedy, result in the production of a text which is a site of multiple conflicts. 'The Four Ages' ridicules tragic poetry, with Peacock's past poetical works implicated, whilst quietly and implicitly clearing a path for his recently discovered preference for the genre of comedy, in which he produced his greatest work. It is at once attack and self-defence; a satire on poetry and a satire on the self. Peacock shows that, just as poet-critics (to borrow a phrase from Pope) 'praise [them]selves in other men', so too they can criticise themselves through their criticisms of others.[111]

[111] Pope, 'Essay on Criticism', l. 455.

Conclusion

The Perfect Critic

In examining the literary-critical writings of Romantic-era poets through the lens of genre, I have shown how these critical texts are not simply supplements to their authors' poetry, or keys to unlocking their significance, but experimental and revolutionary works in their own right which are shaped at the intersections of tradition and the individual, text and context, originality and imitation.

Wordsworth, in his prefaces, presents the image of the ideal critic and, through its material attachment to his poetry, this theory of criticism has a single goal: to shape his own critical reception. Wordsworth's ideal critic is a critic worthy of Wordsworth. The connection between the *Biographia* and *Sibylline Leaves* highlights the uses of poetical techniques—particularly those of interruption and fragmentation—in the crafting of Coleridge's literary-critical prose. Thus the *Biographia* becomes a prose *Sibylline Leaves*. A poet-critic's prose works must be read in light of their poetry as much as their poetry is read in light of their criticism. Coleridge also develops his influential literary-critical methodology, 'practical criticism', through his participation in the genre of the public lecture, shaping his methods in response to the generic conventions of a popular entertainment form, namely the scientific demonstration and its literary equivalent, the textual example. In embracing this popular genre, Coleridge attempts to remove literary-critical discourse from the 'false criticism' of the literary marketplace and the periodical press, and to situate it within scientific and philosophical institutions, elevating not just criticism's epistemological status, but himself into the role of 'poet-philosopher'. In utilising both the genre of the *Edinburgh*-reply, and the authority of the *Edinburgh* itself, Byron's *English Bards* highlights a poet-critic fulfilling multiple roles simultaneously: those of poet, reviewer, and satirist. In so doing, he becomes the thing to which he sets himself in opposition. In replying, the reviewed becomes the reviewer, and the reviewer becomes the reviewed. Hogg, in his parody of the *Edinburgh*-reply, suggests that it is not just the satirist, Byron, who became what he despised. In his depiction of Southey becoming a cursing judge, and of Wordsworth's repeated turns inward and defences against his critics, Hogg suggests that these poets, far from rising above it, debase themselves and their poetry, undermining their self-constructed identities, by becoming a part of the mudslinging. Indeed,

Hogg and Byron show that, even when it comes to ridiculing poets, poet-critics feel compelled to place themselves within their satirised literary landscapes. Even a satirical canon is something worth being a part of. Peacock's 'Four Ages' shows that, even in a work that sounds as if it is authored by a poet's supposed enemies—as Joukovsky says, Peacock sounds like Jeffrey—the author, their work, and their self-image is at the heart of a poet's critical writings. As Peacock attacks tragic poetry and implicitly clears a path for comic literature, he dramatises his genre-anxieties regarding the priority and ideological underpinnings of comedy and tragedy. Tragedy is the poetry of power, and the increasingly radical Peacock distances himself from the conservative panegyrics of his past. Shelley's 'Defence' brings together the writings of Romantic-era poet-critics, not only by revising and developing the critical principles of the first generation, but by explicitly utilising the genre in which all writings of poet-critics participate to some degree—that of the poetic apologia. As this text shows, a poet's defensiveness (which is both an argumentative stance and a genre-convention) shapes and reshapes their critical tenets, with Shelley's definition of poetry expanding to accommodate and reply to new attacks on his vocation. The inherent defensiveness of poet-critics is an intellectual stimulant which can push their ideas into hyperbole and brilliance (sometimes simultaneously).

The recurring image throughout the critical writings of Romantic poets is—not surprisingly for an age that increasingly prioritised subjectivity—the poets' self: self-interest, self-construction, self-positioning, self-promotion, self-canonisation, self-love, self-praise, self-satire, self-defence. Yet, amid the self-love and self-defence—indeed, as a product of it—is the attempt to redefine and redirect the field of criticism. Romantic poet-critics aim to develop a philosophical criticism, associated with the sciences, rather than a satirical criticism, associated with the Augustan poetic tradition and periodical reviews; a criticism suited to appreciating new developments in poetry, not relying on the fixed rules of the past; a criticism that shuns personality and personal malignity; a criticism for appraising, not judging or condemning, literature; a criticism which is not a battleground in which the spoils are money and reputation; a criticism which is connected to poetry (literally and metaphorically) and which serves poetry. If the literary-critical writings of poets are the works of interested parties, that self-interest is a driving force in the development of their critical tenets. As is shown by the influence of Wordsworth's prefaces, Shelley's 'Defence', and particularly Coleridge's lectures and *Biographia*, Romantic poet-critics revolutionised criticism as much as they revolutionised poetry.

Appendix A

Visual Depictions of Lectures

In this appendix are collected visual depictions of scientific lectures. Dating from the Romantic period through to the early twentieth century, they present images of public lecturing in numerous institutions, and covering a variety of media and genres. They are a testament to the visual and spectacular nature of public lecturing as it developed through the Romantic and Victorian eras.

Figure A.1. James Gillray, *Scientific Researches!—New Discoveries in PNEUMATICS!—or—an Experimental Lecture on the Powers of Air* (1802). A hand-coloured etching satirically depicting a lecture in the Royal Institution. Humphry Davy is holding the bellows. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

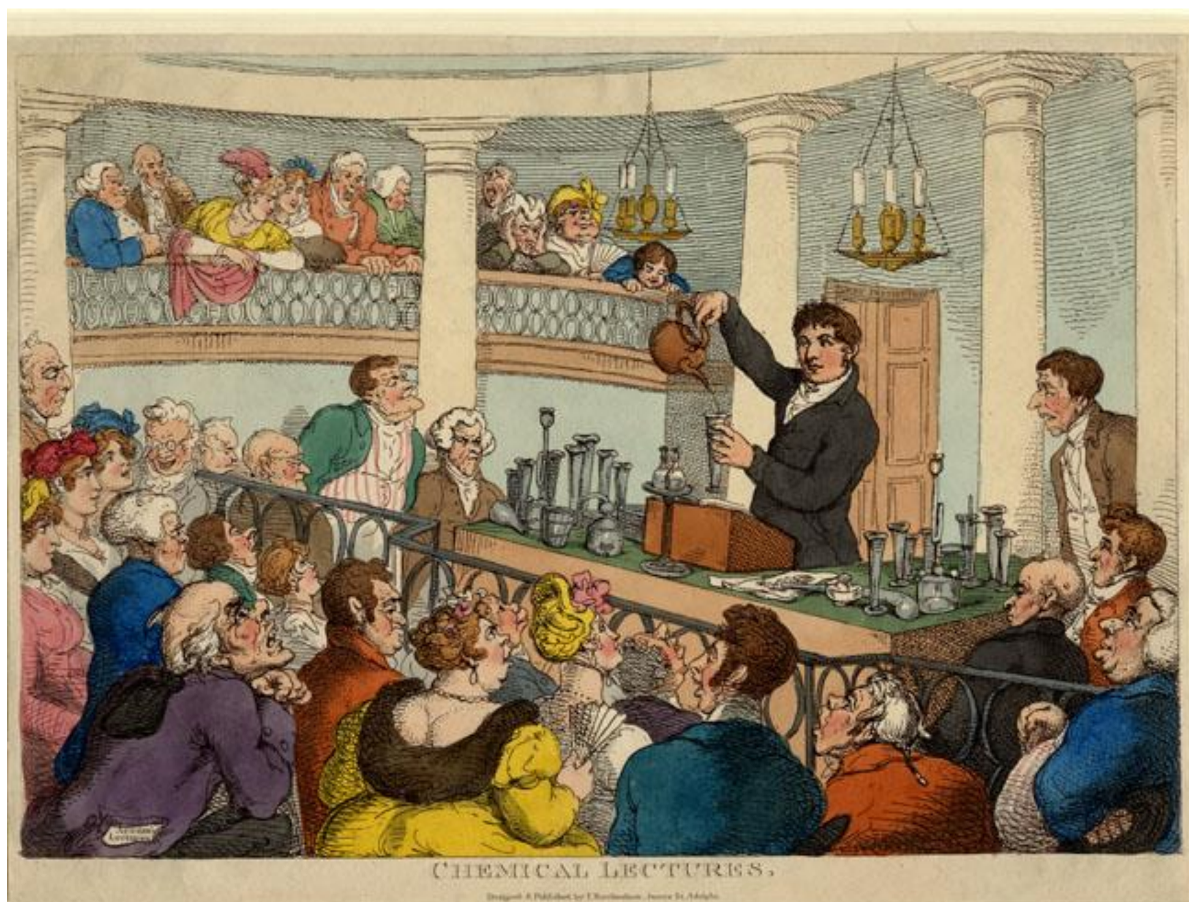

Figure A.2. Thomas Rowlandson, *Chemical Lectures* (c. 1810). A hand-coloured etching showing Davy's former laboratory assistant, Friedrich Accum, lecturing at the Surrey Institution. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure A.3. Auguste Charles Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson, *Surrey Institute.* A hand-coloured etching, originally published in the third volume of *Microcosm of London* (1808-10). Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of Phyllis Massar, 2011.

Figure A.4. Thomas Rowlandson, *Doctor Syntax at the London Institute*. A hand-coloured etching, first published as an illustration to William Combe's satirical poem *The Tour of Doctor Syntax through London, or the Pleasures and Miseries of the Metropolis* (1820). From the author's private collection.

A goodly company they found
The lecturer assembled round,
Philosophers bred in the city
And wives and misses in committee,
Listening to the great doctor's story
Who now held forth in all his glory,
Like quack amid his laboratory,
Putting full many a harmless phial
And spirit to a fiery trial.
[…]
Then he'd varieties of gasses
Which no philosopher surpasses
Some that produced most strange effects
Upon the nerves of either sex

One that if you but take a dose

A sweet delirium bestows

To dullest alderman gives wit

And to despair a laughing fit.[1]

[1] William Combe, *The Tour of Doctor Syntax through London, or the Pleasures and Miseries of the Metropolis* (London: J. Johnson, 1820), pp. 207-08. In a footnote, Combe identifies the 'dose' as 'Nitrous Oxyd.; or laughing gas', indicating that the lecturer is based, at least in part, on Davy.

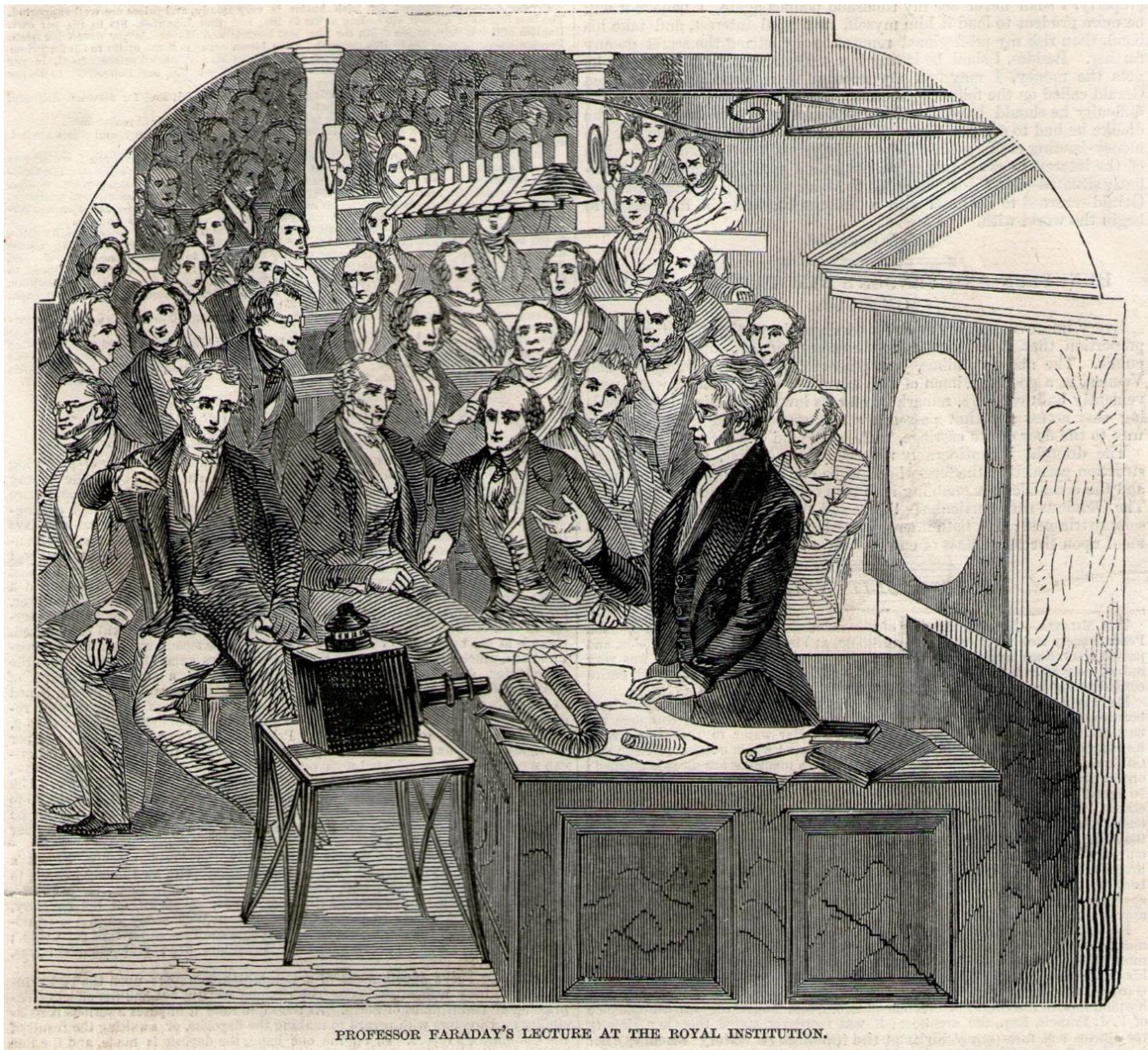

Figure A.5. *Professor Faraday's Lecture at the Royal Institution*. An engraving, published in *The Illustrated London News* (31 Jan 1846). From the author's private collection.

'Professor Faraday prefaced his lecture with a very modest apology for its bareness of experimental interest; adding, notwithstanding the great importance of the subject, the *illustrations* of it were not of that brilliancy which characterises many other scientific demonstrations. Despite this warning, Professor Faraday, by aid of some beautiful experiments, proceeded to invest the subject with very great interest.'[2]

[2] 'Royal Institution. Professor Faraday's Lecture on Magnetism and Light', *The Illustrated London News*, 8 (31 Jan 1846), p. 77, original emphasis.

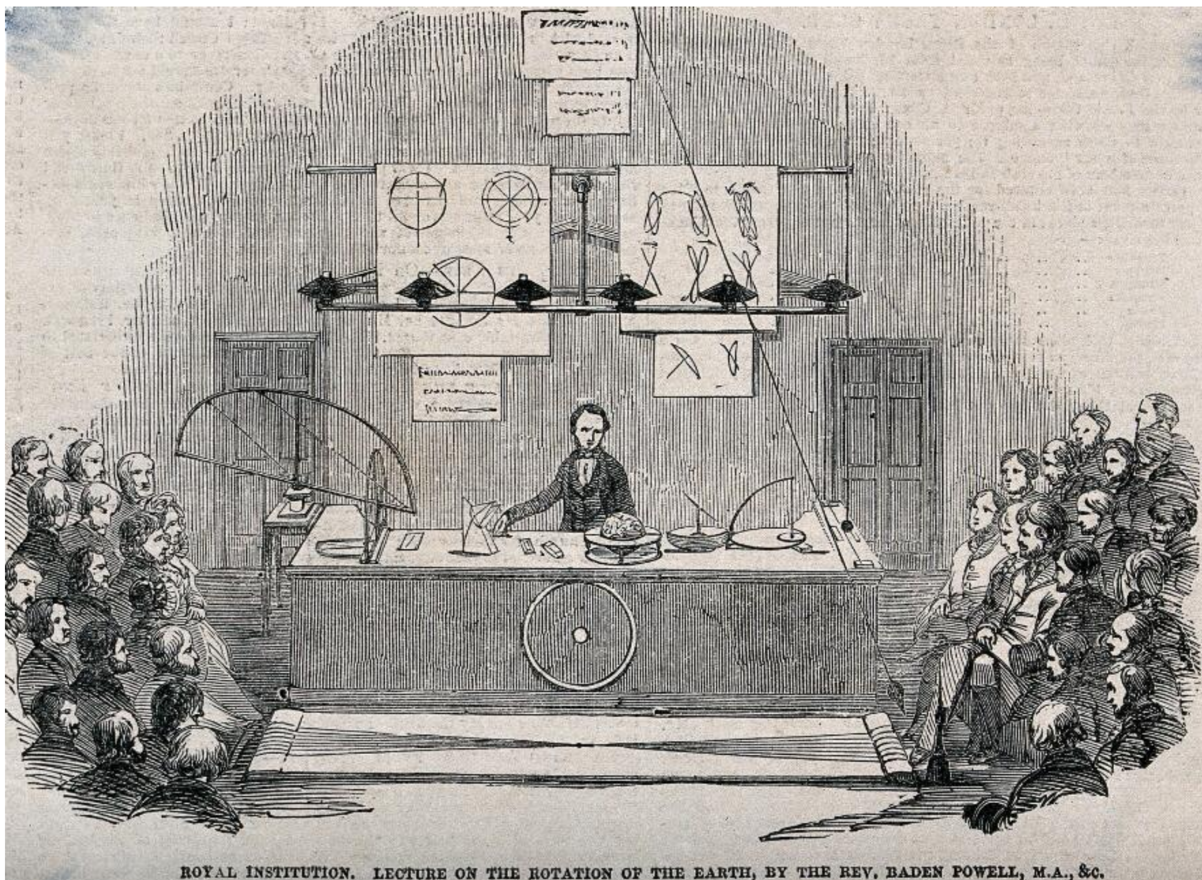

Figure A.6. ***Royal Institution. Lecture on the Rotation of the Earth, by Rev. Baden Powell, M.A., &c..*** **An engraving, published in *The Illustrated London News* (17 May 1851). Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection.**

'A crowded meeting of the Royal Institution took place on Friday, the 9th last, to listen to the observations of the Rev. Baden Powell, Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford, "On the recent Experiment showing the Rotation of the Earth by means of [Foucault's] Pendulum."'[3]

[3] 'The Rotation of the Earth', *The Illustrated London News*, 18 (17 May 1851), p.419.

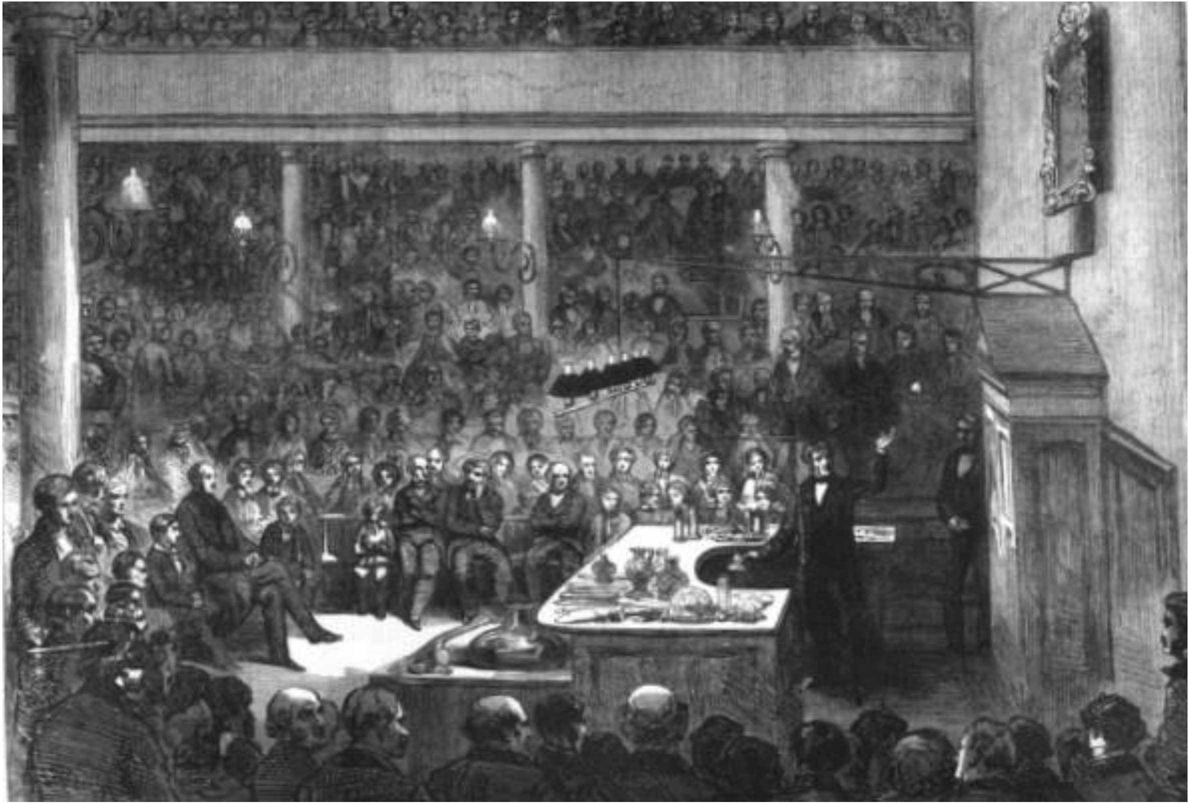

Figure A.7. ***Michael Faraday Lecturing at The Royal Institution*****. An engraving from a sketch by Alexander Blaikley, published in** ***The Illustrated London News*****, 28 (16 Feb 1856) p. 177. Courtesy of HathiTrust**

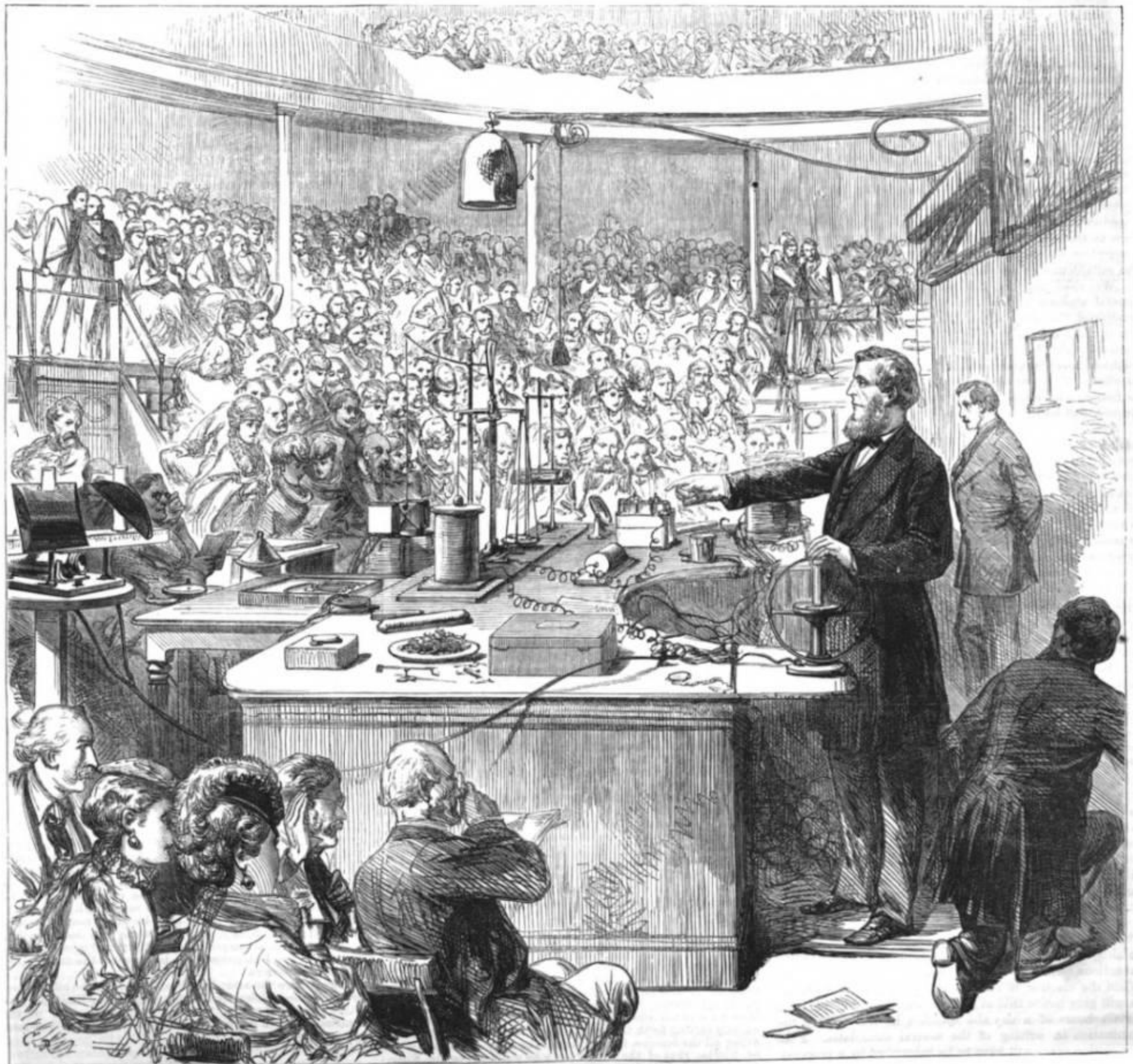

Figure A.8. ***Professor Tyndall Lectures at the Royal Institution*****. An engraving published in** ***The Illustrated London News*** **(14 May 1870). Courtesy of HathiTrust, University of Chicago, and Victorian Web.**

Figure A.9. Henry Jamyn Brooks, *A Friday Evening Discourse at the Royal Institution, 1904. Sir James Dewar on Liquid Hydrogen* (1906). A black-and-white photographic print by Henry Dixon and Sons, Ltd., of Brooks's oil-on-canvas painting. Courtesy of the Caltech Archives.

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'Art. IX. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*', *Eclectic Review*, 5 (1809), 481-84

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