# Romantic Historicism and the Afterlife

TED UNDERWOOD

WRITING ABOUT WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S VISION OF the British past on Salisbury Plain, Alan Bewell has remarked that "Wordsworth believed he had a special sense that enabled him to 'look into past times as prophets look / Into futurity' and to hear in the distant winds 'the ghostly language of the ancient earth' " (43). The observation is also applicable to many of Wordsworth's contemporaries. Romantic-era representations of history often depend on a special sense that sees or hears historical depth in the inanimate world. Felicia Hemans's "Voice of the Wind" (1828), for instance, is premised on the conceit that the wind carries the sounds of vanished civilizations, which merge into a single hollow note as they echo down "the dark aisles of a thousand years" (487). The history that Hemans and Wordsworth hear on the wind lacks dates and footnotes, to be sure, but it is more than a generalized sense of time. Hemans's poem lists sounds systematically enough to suggest the specific social differences (between conqueror and conquered and between public and private realms) that create various ways of life.

> Thou art come from cities lighted up for the conqueror passing by;
> Thou art wafting from their streets a sound of haughty revelry;
> The rolling of triumphant wheels, the harpings in the hall,
> The far-off shout of multitudes, are in thy rise and fall.

At the same time, this list of sounds is random enough to suggest that it merely samples a larger field of historical differences that stretches beyond the poem's ability to discern them. The wind's voice finally has a haunting remoteness (like a "far-off shout of multitudes") because it evokes the enormous range of forms human existence can take.

TED UNDERWOOD, assistant professor of English at Colby College, has published several articles on Romantic poetry and science. This essay is drawn from a new project on nineteenth-century historicism.

© 2002 BY THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

These poems are haunted by historical difference, but they are also more obviously haunted by ghosts. After describing the sounds of ancient and recent history that seem audible on the wind, Hemans's poem finally addresses the wind as a ghost: "Be still, be still, and haunt us not with music from the dead!" Wordsworth, too, represents historical difference as a ghostly presence: aside from the reference to ghostly language cited above, one could examine his sonnets on the Cave of Staffa, where historical consciousness is figured as the ability to see the cave shadows as ghosts of bards and chiefs (sonnets 28 and 30 [*Works* 40–41]). In this essay I argue that the pleasure Romantic poems take in projecting historical difference onto the inanimate world is related to the pleasure of seeing (or imagining that one sees) a ghost. To explain the connection, I begin with a set of earlier works that are alluded to in all the texts by Hemans and Wordsworth considered above: the poems of Ossian, written in the 1760s by James Macpherson.[1]

The international vogue for Macpherson's Ossian poems lasted from 1760 into the 1830s, leaving behind a large number of literary imitations and tributes, as well as a slightly smaller number of French children named after Ossianic heroes (Van Tieghem 28–30). The poems' success is now most often explained by reference to their fictitious byline, since the rediscovery of a third-century Scottish bard lent support not just to Scottish nationalists but to cultural nationalism in general (Trumpener 78). Without denying the importance of nationalism, I propose to pay attention to an underexplored aspect of the poems—the way they imagine history through conversations between ancient bards and yet-more-ancient (but earthly and material) ghosts. Although these conversations pose as a preliterate, and therefore prehistorical, attempt to think about history, they project and combine two late-Enlightenment obsessions. By translating continuous time into a discrete boundary between the dead and the living, they emphasize the otherness of the past. At the same time, they hint at an earthly alternative to Christianity's increasingly doubtful heaven. This connection between historicism and immortality was central to the poems' popularity, as I will show by examining their reception. When writers imitated Ossian's evocative otherworldliness, they were chiefly imitating a way of describing historical difference so that it seemed to promise earthly immortality.

Renaissance texts had already playfully compared posthumous fame to immortality. "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (Shakespeare 1929). But this sort of immortality is simply an extension of the fame enjoyed in life: what lives on in writing is not consciousness but reputation. The historical immortality envisioned by Macpherson's bards, and by early Romantic philosophers of history such as J. G. Herder, is a literal continuation of life after death. Implicitly or explicitly, these texts promise that the constituent parts of human consciousness will survive in the physical realm, just as the body's constituent powers and particles live on inside a worm or a leaf. After exploring the appeal of this promise in Ossian, I examine some of its subsequent transformations. Looking particularly at John Keats and Hemans, I argue that the "historical sense" in Romantic poetry continues to draw its evocative power from the same promise of earthly immortality we see in Ossian—although that promise is transformed, in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, by changes in the British system of class distinction. Finally, I ask whether the pleasures of historicism today may not still derive from a similarly half-acknowledged longing for life after death.

## Historical Difference as Ghostliness

James Macpherson may have set out with the idea that he was reconstructing an enormous epic from fragmentary remains, but his extrapolative zeal was based on such firm preconceptions about the past that it amounted to invention. Though he had access to some genuine Gaelic

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ballads and drew on them for a few passages and outlines of plot, his "translations" take place in a world entirely their own (Thomson 14). But if Macpherson was a bad historian, he became one through an excess of historicist zeal. His fixed desire to recognize the past as something different from the present converted the past into an icon of pastness as such and thus into a model of his historicism.

By describing Macpherson as a historicist, I mean that he sought, not to measure historical moments against a common standard (civility, say, or conformity to nature), but to describe the way standards change their meanings. Early-eighteenth-century historians began to understand these changes as legitimate transformations rather than disagreements to be resolved. In 1735, for instance, Thomas Blackwell defends Homer's seemingly coarse descriptions of Menelaos as "loud-voic'd" (βοην αγαθοσ) by arguing that strong lungs made up a large part of leadership "before the Invention of Trumpets or Drums" (Blackwell 317).[2] Appreciation of this sort of difference grows gradually more articulate in the years that separate Blackwell from Herder and Hegel. When we historicize concepts, we perform an operation learned in this period. Even the inevitable first words voiced over the previews for costume dramas—"In a Time, when X was a Y" (love was a crime or dance an obsession)—would be hard for us to understand without the assumption, borrowed from eighteenth-century historicism, that the meanings of basic concepts are transmuted by time into something unfamiliar. For a historicist audience that transmutation, not the mere number of elapsed years, turns the past into history.

Since Ossian's world is supposed to be largely preliterate, the poems represent historicism in terms of the ghosts of heroes and the songs of bards. But these songs and ghosts, which carefully exclude the superficial anachronism of writing, saturate the poems with a more radical anachronism—an eighteenth-century conception of historical time as otherness. Only the songs of bards can cross the numinous boundary that separates the present from "other times"—a phrase, ceaselessly repeated in the poems, that can refer to the past or to the future. In *Temora*, for instance, one warrior urges another to free captive bards in these terms: "Cairbar! loose the bards: they are the sons of other times. Their voice shall be heard in other ages, when the kings of Temora have failed" (Macpherson, *Poems* 155). Unlike the scop in *Beowulf* "who could recall many of the stories of the old days" (16), these bards represent, not tradition, but radical discontinuity. Sons of the alien past, they also speak to an alien future in which the civilization of Temora will have ceased to exist.

Macpherson's bards, then, are creatures that live outside the present and belong more to the dead or the unborn than to the living. Their self-consciously historical perspective is literalized in the poems as knowledge about ghosts. These ghosts, J. S. Smart has commented, were largely invented by Macpherson; ghosts rarely appear in the Gaelic ballad tradition, and when they do, they lack the aura of mystery and the connection to "the more terrible phenomena of nature" that distinguish them in Macpherson (71, 124). Bards sing, it turns out, mainly about ghosts from an even more ancient past and (projecting the same perspective into the future) about a time when they will have become ghosts themselves. "The War of Caros," for instance, breaks off before the war named in the title is under way, because the speaker (Ossian) is overwhelmed by increasing consciousness of the distance that separates him from "days of other years." The deliberately ambiguous "other" in that phrase refers, first of all, to a past when his son Oscar was alive. But the phrase is simultaneously used to set up reflection on the distant future.

> The sons of the feeble hereafter will lift the voice on Cona; and, looking up to the rocks, say "Here Ossian dwelt." They shall admire the chiefs of old, and the race that are no more: while we ride on our clouds, Malvina, on the wings of the roaring winds. Our voice shall be

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> heard, at times, in the desart; and we shall sing on the winds of the rock. (*Poems* 114)

Two perspectives are at work here. Since the ancient Celts are represented as believing that "ghosts fly on clouds and ride on winds," Ossian is simply and literally envisioning the life he and his interlocutor will lead after death (66). But the eighteenth-century reader is also being asked to imagine a way of listening to winds in desolate places that can hear them as the singing of Ossian's ghost. The speaker's consciousness of "other years" in the past thus smoothly metamorphoses into awareness of the ghostly other he will represent for a future civilization.[3] Ossianic bards are at once experts on the condition of ghostliness and self-conscious ghosts—professional historians who are already aware of the way time is turning them into monuments.

History in Ossian is thus literally an afterlife—it is the place characters go when they die. But the ghosts of the Ossian poems do not represent the past in the way that, for example, the ghost of Hamlet's father does. They are specifically historicist ghosts; they represent, not past events or paternal tradition, but a feeling of historical difference. This is not to say that the poems detail a wide range of anthropological possibilities; they usually envision historical difference by representing its limiting case—the absence of historical memory. For instance, the ghost of Trenmor, an ancestral king, carries marks of its origin in a past even more archaic than Ossian's. "His face is without form and dark. [. . .] Many were his words to Oscar: but they came only by halves to our ears: they were dark as the tales of other times, before the light of song arose" (112–13). As Macpherson specifies in several footnotes to his poems, ghosts only achieve distinct form and ascend to their dwelling in the winds when they are eulogized by bards; without that funeral song they remain inchoate mist drifting over the ground (246, 279, 490, 515). Trenmor's ghost is formless and inarticulate because it represents a time without "the light of song," which is in effect to say that it represents prehistory. A paradoxical logic is at work: the light of song is what allows ghosts to exist, but ghosts also exist in order to adumbrate the darkness of times before song—just as historical difference, for the Enlightenment, is envisioned first of all as the possibility of being unenlightened and ahistorical.

## Spirits in the Material World

If the afterlife in Ossian is about historical difference and therefore in a sense otherworldly, it nevertheless remains surprisingly earthly. Ghosts lose most, but not all, of their physical strength. They can be threatened with weapons; Macpherson explains that this is because the Celts "thought that the souls of the dead were material, and consequently susceptible of pain" (463; see also 426). The innovation here is not simply that Ossian's afterlife is a bodily one. It is—but traditional Christian belief about the afterlife had also included an eventual resurrection of the body. The important point about the Ossianic afterlife is that it manifests itself here and now, as part of earthly nature, instead of waiting for a supernatural hereafter. There is no supernatural realm as such in the poems; for, as Macpherson would argue in his *History of Great Britain and Ireland* ([1771] 178), and as Hugh Blair stressed in his preface to the poems (369), the ancient Celts envisioned their divinities as parts of nature.

By naturalizing the afterlife—moving it out of the graveyard and into the "roaring winds"—Macpherson echoes a project that was becoming central to philosophic thought in the 1760s: an attempt to rob death of its terrors by focusing on its continuity with the natural processes of life. According to Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, "the causes of decline are constantly acting on our material being," so that "old age is perhaps more widely separated from youth than death is from decrepitude." "Since death is quite as natural as life," the article asks, "why do we fear it so strongly?" The answer is that a morbid religion has filled our imagination with "funereal images" (Jaucourt 937–38). G. E. Lessing's essay "How

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Ancients Represented Death" (1769) marshals scores of citations and artifacts to show that the Greeks and Romans never represented death as a skeleton; contemporary artists, he argues, should likewise banish "the terrible skeletons," since "only misunderstood religion can estrange us from beauty" (226). Macpherson's account of the Celtic afterlife, in his *History of Britain* and in the Ossian poems, follows the same agenda. Macpherson stresses that "the ideas of those times, concerning the spirits of the deceased, were not so gloomy and disagreeable, as those of succeeding ages" (*Poems* 497). The Druids are said to have deduced the immortality of individual souls by analogy to the permanence of nature's "active principle." But they envisioned no heaven and (more emphatically) no hell (*History* 187). Instead the ghosts of the deceased persist in the physical world—especially in "lonely unfrequented places"—where they are "supposed to pursue, after death, the pleasures and employments of their former life" (*Poems* 461, 473).

This streamlined natural immortality appealed to late-eighteenth-century readers because it was the sort of afterlife many of them hoped to enjoy. Here I am not speaking solely about neopagans or freethinkers. Though Macpherson described ancient Celtic religion affectionately, he was a professed Christian. But it is not uncommon for human beings to hold several conflicting ideas about the afterlife. If atheists cherish secret hopes, Christians in a secularizing age prepare a fallback position—a way of surviving even if the Gospels turn out not to have been divinely inspired. In the period of Ossian's peak popularity—1760 to roughly 1830—the secret hopes of atheists and the fallback positions of believers tended to converge on a common ground that looked very much like the misty but earthly afterlife enjoyed by Ossian's ghosts. Believers and skeptics alike were tempted to strip the afterlife of its supernatural architecture, and the permanence of nature's active principles offered itself as an alternative model. Diderot fantasized that the particles of his body might retain some power of sensation as they mingled with those of Sophie Volland in the grave (38). Or, if the soul was a subtle nervous fluid, akin to the electric fluid, might it not simply escape into nature at death? Abraham Tucker described such an earthly afterlife in 1768, in a dream vision later admired and edited by William Hazlitt. Tucker imagines leaving his body as a tenuous but material soul, to converse with the souls of his dead wife and John Locke, who explain that this personal afterlife is a temporary stage on the way to union with the impersonal agency that animates nature (220–31).

Traditional views about the afterlife had come to seem implausibly and embarrassingly specific. Hell, with its "strange extra-terrestrial paraphernalia of vengeance," was incompatible with the dignity of God (McMaster 183). Orthodox belief in the resurrection of the self-same body could involve one in grotesque questions: if a cannibal consumes and assimilates part of another person's body, to whom will those particles of flesh belong on Judgment Day (Almond 131–43)? Problems like this offended the Enlightenment's simplifying instincts and, just as important, its growing aversion to death's fleshy contingency. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had exulted in the shrouds and skulls that revealed the body's frailty, because those signs also revealed, as their necessary complement, the unqualified freedom of the soul. Observers less certain of the soul's independence from the body could not gaze quite so frankly at the body's limitations. In *L'homme devant la mort* (1977), a wide-ranging study translated into English as *The Hour of Our Death* (1981), Philippe Ariès points out that late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century witnesses of the deathbed consistently play down its indignities. They begin to represent death, instead, as an affective spectacle that reaffirms bonds of sentiment, by temporarily parting loved ones who are to be reunited in eternity (409–32, 471–72).

Building on the work of Ariès, Terry Castle has argued that sentimental discourse in Gothic

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

novels operates to displace death and deny its corporeal reality. Emily is "haunted" by her memories of Valancourt, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, because "the new sensibility of the late eighteenth century was, quite literally, a growing sense of the ghostliness of other people. [. . .] The corporeality of the other [. . .] became strangely insubstantial and indistinct: what mattered was the mental picture, the ghost, the haunting image" (237). In Castle's account, this attempt to escape the body leads finally to a solipsistic focus on subjective experience: since "we seek to deny our own corporeality [. . .] we have come to cherish the life of the mind over life itself" (250).

Castle is right, I think, to suggest that the figurative hauntedness of late-eighteenth-century writing is a secular way of denying death's finality. But in generalizing this theory I propose two substantial amendments to it. First, it is not quite accurate to say that new Romantic conceptions of the afterlife repress the corporeal as such. On the contrary, the naturalized afterlife tends to be a physical one. Macpherson's ghosts are corporeal beings. Late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century natural philosophers, like Macpherson's Druids, usually argue that life is a physical phenomenon and deduce its immortality from the indestructibility of matter, or of nature's active principles (Diderot 38; Davy 1: 234–35, 9: 239–49). What late-eighteenth-century thinkers object to is not materiality but confining particularity; this is why writers from James Macpherson to Emily Brontë insist on moving the afterlife outside the churchyard gates, into the winds and mists. While assuredly more physical than heaven, these boundless phenomena do a better job of emblematizing universality.

Second, and more important, I suggest that the subjective and spectral afterlife Castle notices in Gothic texts was able to take the place of religious belief only because it was fused with an evocation of public history. The fear of death is in large part a fear of isolation, and the belief in immortality responds to it by affirming a "collective destiny" (Ariès 151). Besides a personal consolation for death, premodern Christian practice had offered a communal one, dramatized by church burial and by public inclusion of "all those who sleep" in the "universal brotherhood" of the church (149–50). The need for this sort of reassurance did not vanish with the advent of early modern individualism; the consolations of Christian collective destiny were merely replaced by those of historical fame. In the late Enlightenment, those consolations were in turn problematized by historicism, which conceived of history as cultural change. To envision radical cultural difference as a reassuringly collective destiny required a considerable effort of imagination, but the effort was made and has left its traces in Romantic writing—in particular, in the period's fascination with the idea that nature has historical depth and echoes with a multitude of voices.[4]

I thus do not entirely agree with Adam Potkay's extension of Castle's theory to encompass Macpherson. Arguing that "each of Ossian's characters is obsessed with his or her own private specters," Potkay reads the ghosts as signs of Romantic subjectivity (216, 208). Macpherson's ghosts are undeniably modern creations, but they are not private specters assigned to haunt particular individuals. They have an insistently social function, because they represent historical difference and because they embody aspirations for communal immortality. In the latter capacity, the ghosts of the dead are usually invoked as, and appear as, a collectivity. "O ye ghosts of heroes dead! ye riders of the storm," Fingal calls out before a battle, "receive my falling people with joy, and bring them to your hills" (*Poems* 85; see also 62, 77, 88). Though it dresses up as ancestor worship, Macpherson's invocation of the ghosts of "other times" is neither ancestor worship nor Romantic solipsism but an attempt to make cultural change serve as a satisfyingly social and believably naturalistic alternative to heaven.

In Macpherson, this attempt took the form of anthropological fantasy, but it was defended more earnestly as eighteenth-century histori-

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

cism grew more articulate. Herder was aware of the threat radical cultural difference posed to existing conceptions of historical immortality. Since "peoples and periods succeed one another in *perpetual flux* like waves of the sea," the consolations of fame are illusory; "no human monument [. . .] can endure intact and eternal, for it was formed in the stream of generations only by the hands of a certain time for that time" (38, 54). But in Herder's view this process of ceaseless change, which makes it impossible for any representation of a mind to survive, also makes the constituent parts of the mind substantially immortal. Herder's explanation of this paradox is stated most fully in "On Human Immortality," a lecture published in 1792 (58–63). There he rejects the assumption that human identity is the organic product of a single culture; what we call our self is really a collage of ideas and practices created by many other civilizations.

> [O]ur understanding along with its powers, the way in which we think, act, and exist, is, as it were, inherited. We think in a *language* that our ancestors invented. [. . .] Each day we enjoy and use thousands of *inventions* that have come to us from the past and in part from the most distant regions of the earth, and without which we would have been forced to lead a bleak and paltry life. We have inherited *maxims and morals* which not only illuminate the natural law that lies obscurely within us, but also inspire and empower us [. . .]. (58–59)

The process by which these elements of identity are handed on is historical, but it has little to do with fame and need not be conscious. It takes place through unconscious emulation, in moments when we "let go of ourselves and open ourselves to others," and it is therefore a process in which every parent, teacher, and friend can participate. This transmission and transformation of human identity is a "chain of effects" with the inevitability of a physical process. More permanent and universal than fame, it reaches back to antiquity and forward into the distant future, and "our short life is lengthened and becomes eternal through this process of participation and sharing" (59, 62). "Therefore," Herder writes in "Ideas toward a Philosophy of History" (48–58), "I am no longer confused by the workings of historical changes: They are as necessary for our race as a current for a stream that prevents it from becoming a stagnant pool. The genius of humanity blooms in ever new forms, and it is regenerated [. . .] as it proceeds" (55). Diderot had argued that the constituent parts of the body survive in the metabolism of nature; Herder argues, in effect, that the constituent parts of the mind survive in the metabolism of history.

Herder was not the first or the only writer to reconceive immortality in these terms. In 1770, for instance, J. H. Remy published *Les jours*, an optimistic reply to Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*. Remy refuses to share Young's melancholy mood. Instead of mourning the dead in graveyards, we should visit them in libraries. Death has no power over man now that we have discovered "the secret of painting thought" (19; my trans.). No one truly dies; instead the planet grows, enlarged by the written contributions of the dead, whose qualities of mind thereby survive in succeeding generations. Past civilizations have not ceased to exist; they have simply changed latitude. "Ancient towns rise up next to modern ones," and Paris has to expand to make room for a swelling population of ghosts (20; my trans.). This model of historical continuity stresses writing, whereas Herder stresses unconscious emulation, but both writers transform posthumous fame into a literal afterlife located in historical transmission. We survive in history, not because we are spoken about, but because our minds live on in a process that has the continuity and permanence of natural law.

The poems of Ossian, as I have shown, were already suggesting the same thing a decade earlier. Ossian's dead want more from bards than mention by name: the dead acquire through song a ghostly form that allows them to live on in the material world. The nature of Macpherson's project gave him a license to literalize, in seemingly

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

archaic form, his era's complex wishful thinking about a secular afterlife. He could invent ghosts, for instance, that are simultaneously natural forces, shadows of other times, and representations of collective destiny. Archaic ghosts could even retain something that philosophic conceptions of the earthly afterlife were often forced to sacrifice: the indivisibility of personal identity. Macpherson's prose poems became an international phenomenon in large part because they so successfully embodied and reconciled these competing fantasies about the afterlife.

To test this claim, we can glance at the way Ossian was reproduced for successive generations of readers. The poems were not just widely read; they were adapted into various verse forms, rewritten, imitated, echoed. This reproduction turns out to have been rather selective. Romantic writers rarely borrowed the contorted plots of Macpherson's epics. They had little to say about the battles. In imitating and reproducing Ossian, they focused overwhelmingly on the ghosts. Ossianic ghosts appear, for instance, in Anna Seward's poems "Crugal's Ghost" (3: 15–20) and "The Ghost of Cuchullin" (3: 21), as well as in her long poem "Alpine Scenery" (2: 352–73; esp. 363–64). Richard Polwhele has a poem entitled "Ossian Departing to His Fathers." Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Imitated from Ossian" (38–39) and "Complaint of Ninathóma" (39–40), Michael Bruce's "Verses on Hearing an Æolian Harp," Byron's "Oscar of Alva" (54–66) and "Death of Calmar and Orla" (112–16), and Wordsworth's sonnets on the Cave of Staffa all focus on Ossianic ghosts.

None of these writers were interested in the generic ghostliness needed for a tale of terror. All reproduce the particular equivocation through which Ossian's ghosts become figures at once for historical otherness and for a personal afterlife. Thomas Gray, one of the first English writers to analyze their enthusiasm for Ossian, marks "the idea that struck and surprised me most" by quoting the following passage in a letter, with added italics:

> Ghosts ride on the tempest tonight:
> Sweet is their voice between the gusts of wind;
> *Their songs are of other worlds!* (686)[5]

As we have seen, there is no supernatural realm in Ossian. The other world that the speaker hears on the wind is the otherness of the past. Goethe's Werther cites a similar materialization of history as the reason for his fascination with Ossian:

> Ossian has displaced Homer in my heart. What a world the magnificent poet carries me into! To wander across the heath, with the storm-winds roaring about me, carrying the ghosts of ancestors in steaming mists through the dim moonlight. To hear from the mountains, amid the roar of the forest streams, the half-dispersed groaning of the spirits from their caves. (264; my trans.)

To say that Werther is attracted to Ossian's melancholy would be too vague. The passage derives its power from the contact of two ideas: awareness of the distance that separates the speaker from his ancestors and a belief that the energies of the soul may continue to live on as natural agency (expressed here as the roaring of streams and storm winds). By conflating those two ideas, the passage reproduces Macpherson's specific magic—which is to saturate the inanimate world with historical otherness, while suggesting that historical processes share in the permanence of nature.[6]

## Historical Sensations and the Catalog Poem

Immediate access to historical otherness, made visible in the landscape or audible on the wind, continues to be one of the central pleasures promised by Romantic poetry; in the early nineteenth century, it even gives rise, as we will see, to a new lyric form. But the pleasure of historical sensation is also related in complex ways to class feeling, and to understand the form the historicist lyric takes we must first examine that connection. Almost fifty years ago, Raymond Williams pointed out that the word *culture* (which had in

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the eighteenth century described a general process of human development) specializes in the early nineteenth century to describe development through "the practice and study of the arts" (42). What Williams described as specialization literary scholars drawing on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu have more recently described as a separation of "cultural" distinction from other forms of prestige (Bourdieu 37–45). Briefly: in the early eighteenth century, it is difficult to disentangle what we would call culture from other forms of symbolic capital (dress, deportment, elocution), because the criteria of cultural taste (e.g., urbanity) are still the same criteria that organize the broader field of class relations. Trevor Ross has persuasively read mid-eighteenth-century polemics for "pure poetry" as attempts to separate cultural distinction from other signs of class and to make indifference to those other signs (indifference to "contemporary manners") the hierarchizing principle of a newly autonomous cultural field (451–52). The Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* makes a new kind of historical sense when viewed as the culmination of the tradition Ross describes.[7] Wordsworth's commitment to the separation of cultural distinction from other social standards is evident in his deliberate choice of "low and rustic" subjects and in his contempt for those who "converse with us [. . .] gravely about a *taste* for poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry" (139). Poetry is not to be one class signifier among others but a realm of distinction unto itself.

By reconceiving antiquity's authority as historical difference, historicism played an important role in the effort to separate cultural distinction from other forms of prestige. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century classicisms had sought to appropriate ancient styles and signs because they were understood as synecdoches for values that continued to regulate the present. Late-eighteenth-century appropriations of the primitive practice a similar synecdochic strategy, but the ancient signs being appropriated now tend to convey prestige by suggesting distance from contemporary life rather than dominion over it. For this reason the past is re-created with deliberately naïve antiquarianism—as seen in Macpherson's style or in the flattening of perspective cultivated by neoclassical entrepreneurs like John Flaxman and Josiah Wedgwood.[8] "[M]odern manners," in contrast, "because they are familiar, uniform, artificial, and polished, are, in their very nature, unfit for any lofty effort of the Muse" (Warton 762). By making a work's cultural prestige depend on its distance from existing social standards, Joseph Warton's judgment on Pope guarantees the autonomy of the cultural field (Ross 451). But in depreciating the uniform and valuing the unfamiliar, it also premises the autonomy of "culture" (in the normative sense) on the plurality of "cultures" (in the descriptive sense)—which is to say, on historicism.

In Regency Britain, the social function of the past undergoes a further change. Instead of appropriating the signs of any particular ancient world, poets increasingly locate prestige in the historicist conception of time: time conceived as a field of potential cultural differences. They fix their gazes not on monuments of the remote past but on the gulfs of estrangement that separate those monuments from each other and from the present—and thereby lay claim to a spaciousness of historical existence that encompasses and transcends all the specific forms of human life. Regency historicism, in other words, turns the cultural field's autonomy from other kinds of class distinction into an argument for its primacy over them.

This Regency argument could even transform a lower-middle-class writer's distance from contemporary sources of symbolic capital into a positive advantage. How is shown nowhere more beautifully than in Keats's sonnet "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" ([1817] 93), which describes not the marbles but the "dizzy pain" of apprehending them across a gulf that is at once historical difference and the cultural marginality of a writer who cannot claim to have visited Greece

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

or to know Greek. For the "sick eagle" the sonnet's speaker imagines himself to be, the marbles are the sky. But his gaze can travel to them only after climbing "each imagined pinnacle and steep / Of godlike hardship," and it is thus infinitely deferred; by the end of the poem, we have grasped only "the rude / Wasting of old time—a billowy main— / A sun—a shadow of a magnitude." The intervening shadow acknowledges the mediatedness of Keats's relation to a cultural icon he cannot fully possess, but at the same time the "indescribable feud" that deranges his senses presses his claim to possess a source of prestige now far more important than Greek or the Grand Tour—an immediate experience of historical time itself. By looking right through the marble into the dizzy gulf of "old time" that lies behind it, the speaker reveals that he is one of the those who live simultaneously in the physical world and on the plane of history. Mediatedness speaks to him immediately.

In the 1820s, this peculiarly oblique historical sense served as the premise for a new genre I will call the historicist catalog poem. Gazing at a natural phenomenon—the moon, sun, or sea will do nicely—the speaker finds his or her consciousness pulled back across the centuries to reflect on the many civilizations that saw the same thing. The form is historicist, not just historical, because it makes clear that each civilization sees something slightly different: history alters and inflects even the eternal forms of nature. But the lyric emphasis falls more heavily on the continuity of the phenomenon than on its metamorphoses, because the point of this genre is less to define the uniqueness of individual historical moments than to evoke the overarching structure of historicist time. Meanwhile, the catalog form dramatizes the power of immediate historical sensation to encompass and transcend other forms of human experience and thereby presses the speaker's claim to belong to what Jon Klancher has called the "cultural class"—a new class that emerges in the late Romantic period and that seeks, through self-conscious reflection on class distinction, to position itself above the category of class (61–68).

The seventh stanza of Keats's Nightingale ode ("Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!" [369–72; line 61]) is a thumbnail sketch of this genre, and it sometimes provided an explicit model for longer versions—for instance, for "A Hymn of the Night" (1827), by Mary Howitt and William Howitt, which gives a nod to the immortal Bird's "self-same song" by asking, "[A]rt thou the self-same moon that rose / O'er the blest Eden" (lines 15–16)? Immortality is still at issue in this genre, and since most of the authors are not just (like Keats) coming from the trading classes and aspiring to belong to the cultural class but also (unlike Keats) professedly Christian, the concept has to do two jobs at once. "Immortality" is first of all the name of a class identity; it is the state the cultural class aspires to achieve by identifying itself with history (and thereby walking "among the immortals"). But it is also life after death, in a sense we have seen worked out by Macpherson. The superimposition of the two ideas produces a kind of historicist magic—for instance, when, after cataloging the Adamitic, Chaldean, and Egyptian experiences of the moon, the Howitts ask Luna to wake the dead of other ages:

> Oh, call back from thy memory's treasury all
> Thou hast beheld;—wake kingdoms past away;
> Image forth deeds of wonder, and recall
> The great ones of the earth from dark decay;
> Give life unto the dust—breathe soul into the clay!
> (38–42)

The poem fulfills its own request imaginatively in the act of making it. Similarly, in Hemans's poem "The Treasures of the Deep" (1823), after cataloging the cities, galleons, and warships swallowed up by the ocean, the poet calls on the sea to make restitution: "Restore the dead, thou sea!" (385–86; line 36). The command is not serious, but the imperative mood of the sentence is: it dramatizes the expansion of the speaker's consciousness by the historical expanse she has

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

glimpsed, and in that way it lays claim to the same immortality it invokes.

Many of Hemans's poems belong to the historicist catalog genre ("The Treasures of the Deep," "The Voice of the Wind," "The Magic Glass," "The Departed") or hinge in some other way on immediate historical sensation ("The Songs of Our Fathers," "The Ruin," "The Image in Lava"). Her contemporaries received these poems as intimations of Christian immortality, which is surely how she intended them. "The Image in Lava" ([1827] 469–70), for instance, infers the immortality of the human heart from the impression of a woman's form, found at Herculaneum:

> Immortal, oh! immortal
> Thou art, whose earthly glow
> Hath given these ashes holiness—
> It must, it *must* be so! (lines 41–44)

Today we are inclined to read the same poems as celebrations of sentiment; we notice the way Hemans always turns from the pomp of public history to the human heart and to what Castle calls "haunted consciousness"—a phantasmatic presence of absent loved ones as mental images (237). Both interpretations make sense, but we can enlarge them by considering the way they relate to each other. The mystery of historicist time—time measured by cultural change—constantly intervenes, in Hemans, between sentiment and immortality. Thus, "The Image in Lava" reads the heart's affections as signs of immortal life, not through a Christian argument, but by allowing the affections to set up awful reverberations in a space constituted by historical alteration.

> Temple and tower have moulder'd,
> Empires from earth have passed
> And woman's heart hath left a trace
> Those glories to outlast! (lines 5–8)

The conjunction is "And," not "But," because the poetic effect is one of association. The poem does not contrast "woman's heart," as something unchanging and timeless, to the transitory shows of public history. Rather, the text deduces the heart's immortality from the impression of a woman's body, a dated relic from a vanished time—"Thou thing of years departed!" (1). The immortality evoked has less to do with religion than with historicism.

## The Desire to Speak with the Dead

The kind of wishful thinking explored in this article twines around historicist conceptions of the past, making them seem to promise a personal, earthly immortality that is at the same time a form of class distinction. The promise is attractive, and it seems likely that the prestige of historicism in the nineteenth century owed something to the belief in earthly immortality it licensed. But it would be easy to overstate this claim. I have not tried to show that the fantasies of immortality associated with early-nineteenth-century historicism vitiate it intellectually or that the nineteenth-century popularity of historicism was solely due to wishful thinking. To demonstrate that, one would need further evidence: though the labels come easily, not all associations between ideas are inextricable, and not all relations are constitutive.

I do want to suggest, however, that the association between historicism and the spiritualist imagination has proved enduring. M. Night Shyamalan's film *The Sixth Sense* provides a recent example. Visually, the work is nearly as haunted by Philadelphia's past as Cole Sears is by the stories of the dead people he sees. Since the film leaves the young boy with a continuing responsibility to decode injustices reaching back to the eighteenth century, it is difficult to imagine that he will grow up to become anything but a local historian—perhaps the kind of erudite bookstore owner who is consulted in *Vertigo* about the meaning of masculine power in nineteenth-century San Francisco. For a theoretical perspective on these movies' attempts to speak with the dead, we could do worse than turn

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations*. I should explain that I am considering this book as an example of late-twentieth-century historicism and not specifically as an example of the critical approach called new historicism. *Historicism* has in the latter phrase a different meaning than it does when used to describe the late Enlightenment. New historicists have not rejected the historicist discovery that the world changes shape—that our most basic concepts are historically contingent—but their return to history has not been a return to that insight in particular. In fact, insofar as new historicism challenges the primacy of the "period" as an organizing conception, in favor of plural and diachronic "discourses," it militates against the Romantic reification of "other times."

But this is not to say that contemporary historicists live (or pretend to live) in a disillusioned world. Quite the reverse: new historicists have deliberately foregrounded the mythopoeic impulses in their work. When Alan Liu comments that "New Historicism in the romantic field is primarily a form of elegy," he means not to demystify the elegiac satisfactions of history but to validate them. "[H]istory considered universally *is* loss. History, as it were, is the perpetuation or retention of the process of loss" ("New Historicism" 559).[9] In *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Greenblatt is equally frank about the emotional rewards of historical study. In the first sentence of the book's first chapter, "The Circulation of Social Energy," he explains, "I began with the desire to speak with the dead" (1). The verb "speak" may understate the reward Greenblatt has in mind, because his goal is less to get the dead to answer questions ("Why the *second*-best bed?") than to recover what he calls "intensity," "social energy," or "lost life." "[W]e do experience unmistakable pleasure and interest in the literary traces of the dead, and I return to the question how it is possible for those traces to convey lost life" (3).

The answer that follows takes a form that will be familiar to readers of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey": a loss is followed by abundant recompense. In the past, Greenblatt explains, we believed that the "lost life" of the past could be sought in a single authority—whether that authority was constituted by the author or by the text. "The great attraction of this authority is that it appears to bind and fix the energies we prize, to identify a stable and permanent form of literary power [. . .]" (3). But, the argument goes, we have to give up that belief, since it turns out that textual energy is collective and social, never contained. There is, however, a "compensatory satisfaction": by tracing textual energy through its social circuit, we can expose the transactions and exchanges that gave rise to it in the first place. This process of circulation and exchange continues to "refigure" the text after it is written and conveys social energy to us across the intervening centuries (6). Communion with the dead is possible, then, but it can only be a collective and hermeneutic communion. "If I wanted to hear one, I had to hear the many voices of the dead. And if I wanted to hear the voice of the other, I had to hear my own voice" (20). Rather like Scottie Ferguson in *Vertigo*, we trace a dead voice back in time only to discover, first, that it speaks about a system of power rather than about an individual experience and, second, that it may be at least partly our invention.

The only thing about this argument I propose to view skeptically is its rhetorical structure, which hinges on a loss followed by abundant recompense. The rewards promised by Greenblatt's conclusion are much greater, and the losses required to reach it much smaller, than that structure suggests. "The Circulation of Social Energy" celebrates a positive immortality that Herder would recognize. In arguing that "our understanding along with its powers, the way in which we think, act, and exist," is transmitted to us from the dead, Herder does for human selfhood what Greenblatt does for the text: he reveals it as a historical construction. What we lose in autonomy is more than made up for by participation in cul-

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tural change, through which we transmit the best parts of ourselves to the future and are assured of a collective destiny. In the late twentieth century, Greenblatt offers his readers the same remarkable bargain. We give up the ability "to bind and fix the energies we prize" in a single authority. But since social energy only lives through negotiation and circulation, we sacrifice nothing of value. To bind social energy would be to destroy it. Meanwhile, in exchange for acknowledging the social construction of textual agency, we are promised the right to participate in the refiguration of the text and thus to become part of the process by which lost life forever lives on.

## Notes

Scholars are no doubt drawn to theses about the social construction of writing because scholarly writing is constructed so very sociably. This essay is indebted to conversations with Eleanor Courtemanche, Reeve Parker, Elizabeth Sagaser, Harry Shaw, and David Suchoff. Thanks also go to Nanora Sweet and Paula Feldman, who provided the dates of first publication for Felicia Hemans's poems, and to Adam Potkay and John Richetti. Work on the essay was supported by a Humanities Research Grant from Colby College.

[1] Hemans's epigraph to "The Voice of the Wind" is taken from Gray's correspondence about Ossian.

[2] Of the many mid-eighteenth-century writers one could cite to illustrate the period's incipient historicism, I mention Blackwell simply because he happened to teach at Aberdeen University. Macpherson was taught there by Blackwell's students and absorbed many of his ideas about history (Stafford 28–33).

[3] Ossian's proleptic awareness of a future that will view him as the past has a rich subsequent history in Romanticism. James Chandler has recently discussed this kind of double vision in connection with Anna Barbauld's "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" (114–20); see also Andrew Bennett's account of the structure of "posterity" in Shelley as "a kind of haunting of the present by the future" (170).

[4] Esther Schor has shown, for instance, how *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Excursion* find consolation in a collective history suggested by natural images (117–25, 149–50, 186–95).

[5] Gray is quoting from manuscript; the poem he quotes appears in a revised form in Macpherson, *Poems* 190.

[6] The steaming mists and roaring streams in this passage from Goethe may evoke Wordsworth's description of the sea of mist atop Snowdon, which he similarly interprets as the emblem of a mind "prompt / To hold fit converse with the spiritual world, / And with the generations of mankind / Spread over time, past, present, and to come [. . .]" (Prelude [1850] 14.107–10). The phenomena that Romantic writers choose as emblems of imaginative power—such as the sound of the sea (see Auden) or of the wind (see Abrams)—are used so often as sources of historical sensation as to hint that the pleasure of Romantic imagination is founded on historicism. Certainly in *The Prelude* the "under-presence" that exalts the imaginative mind involves an awareness of other biographical moments superimposed on present experience, so that the speaker feels "two consciousnesses—conscious of myself, / And of some other being" ([1805] 2.32–33). As Kevis Goodman has suggested in discussing the fifth book of *The Prelude*, it is difficult to separate these meditations on autobiographical otherness from a "meditation on historical experience" (567–68).

[7] In *Cultural Capital*, John Guillory presented Wordsworth's attack on poetic diction as a failed attempt to reestablish a cultural distinction between the languages of verse and of prose (124–33). Guillory's argument broke ground on this topic, but I would argue that Ross's recent contributions significantly advance our understanding of it, because Ross avoids the anachronism of describing all class distinctions mediated by literature as "cultural" distinctions. In describing the cultural politics of the Preface, I therefore extrapolate from Ross's account of mid-eighteenth-century poetry.

[8] Albert Boime points out that the neoclassical flattening of perspective had an industrial as well as an antiquarian rationale (273, 370–89).

[9] See also Liu's epilogue to *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (500–02).

## Works Cited

Abrams, M. H. "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor." *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism*. New York: Norton, 1984. 25–43.

Almond, Philip C. *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Ariès, Philippe. *The Hour of Our Death*. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Knopf, 1981.

Auden. W. H. *The Enchafèd Flood; or, The Romantic Iconography of the Sea*. London: Faber, 1951.

Bennett, Andrew. *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

*Beowulf*. Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson. New York: Norton, 1966.

Bewell, Alan. *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Blackwell, Thomas. *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*. 1735. New York: Garland, 1970.

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Blair, Hugh. "A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian." *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*. Ed. Howard Gaskill. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1996. 345–99.

Boime, Albert. *Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750–1800*. Social History of Modern Art 1. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.

Bruce, Michael. "Verses on Hearing an Æolian Harp at Midnight, by Mr. C——, a Young Gentleman, Who Died of a Consumption a Few Days after Writing Them." *Poems on Several Occasions*. Edinburgh: Paterson, 1796. 173–75.

Byron, George Gordon. *Complete Poetical Works*. Ed. Jerome J. McGann. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980. 7 vols.

Castle, Terry. "The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*. Ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown. New York: Methuen, 1987. 231–53.

Chandler, James. *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge. Vol. 1. London: Oxford UP, 1912. 2 vols.

Davy, Humphry. *Collected Works*. Ed. John Davy. 9 vols. London: Smith, 1839–40.

Diderot, Denis. "To Sophie Volland." 17 Oct. 1759. Letter 17 of *Diderot's Letters to Sophie Volland*. Trans. Peter France. London: Oxford UP, 1972. 35–40.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers. Sämtliche Werke*. Vol. 1. Munich: Hanser, 1987.

Goodman, Kevis Bea. "Making Time for History: Wordsworth, the New Historicism, and the Apocalyptic Fallacy." *Studies in Romanticism* 35 (1996): 563–77.

Gray, Thomas. "To Richard Stonhewer." 29 June 1760. Letter 315 of *Correspondence*. Ed. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley. Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971. 684–86.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

Guillory, John. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.

Hemans, Felicia Dorothea. *Poetical Works*. London: Oxford UP, 1914.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Against Pure Reason: Writings on Religion, Language, and History*. Trans. Marcia Bunge. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.

Howitt, Mary, and William Howitt. "A Hymn of the Night." *"The Desolation of Eyam": "The Emigrant, a Tale of the American Woods": and Other Poems*. London: Wightman, 1827. 77–81.

Jaucourt, Louis Chevalier de. "Mort." *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers*. Ed. Denis Diderot and Jean D'Alembert. 1757. Elmsford: Pergamon, 1969.

Keats, John. *Poems*. Ed. Jack Stillinger. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978.

Klancher, Jon P. *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987.

Lessing, G. E. *Selected Prose Works*. Trans. E. C. Beasley and Helen Zimmern. Ed. Edward Bell. London: Bell, 1890.

Liu, Alan. "The New Historicism and the Work of Mourning." *Studies in Romanticism* 35 (1996): 553–62.

———. *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989.

Macpherson, James. *An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*. Dublin: Williams, 1771.

———. *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*. Ed. Howard Gaskill. Introd. Fiona Stafford. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1996.

McMaster, John. *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981.

Polwhele, Richard. "Ossian Departing to His Fathers." *Poems*. Vol. 3. London: Cadell, 1806. 216–24.

Potkay, Adam. *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.

Remy, Joseph Honoré. *Les jours, pour servir de correctif et de supplément aux* Nuits d'Young. London, 1770.

Ross, Trevor. "'Pure Poetry': Cultural Capital and the Rejection of Classicism." *Modern Language Quarterly* 58 (1997): 435–56.

Schor, Esther. *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994.

Seward, Anna. *Poetical Works*. Ed. Walter Scott. 3 vols. London: Longman, 1810.

Shakespeare, William. *Sonnets*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: Norton, 1997. 1923–76.

*The Sixth Sense*. Dir. M. Night Shyamalan. Perf. Bruce Willis, Tony Collette, Olivia Williams, and Haley Joel Osment. Hollywood, 1999.

Smart, J. S. *James Macpherson: An Episode in Literature*. London: Nutt, 1905.

Stafford, Fiona. *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1988.

Thomson, Derick S. *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's Ossian*. Edinburgh: Oliver, 1952.

Trumpener, Katie. *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997.

Tucker, Abraham. *An Abridgement of* The Light of Nature Pursued. Ed. William Hazlitt. London: Johnson, 1807.

Van Tieghem, Paul. *Ossian en France*. Vol. 2. Paris: Rieder, 1917. 2 vols.

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press

*Vertigo*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, and Tom Helmore. Paramount, 1958.

Warton, Joseph. "An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope." *Eighteenth-Century Critical Essays*. Ed. Scott Elledge. Vol. 2. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1961. 717–63. 2 vols.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*. New York: Columbia UP, 1983.

Wordsworth, William. *Poetical Works*. Ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire. Vol. 4. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1947.

———. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. Ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1974. 118–58. 3 vols.

———. The Prelude*: 1799, 1805, 1850*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.

https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202X61386 Published online by Cambridge University Press