Selfhood, Boundaries, and Death in Maritime Literature, 1768-1834

James Andrew Robertson

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of English

September 2016

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

© 2016 The University of Leeds and James Andrew Robertson

The right of James Andrew Robertson to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Acknowledgements

There are many people whose help I am grateful for. I must start by thanking the School of English for awarding me the Inga-Stina Ewbank scholarship, without which this project would not have been possible. Also, Lawrence Publicover, who first introduced me to the possibilities of studying the sea in literature, and has offered enthusiasm and encouragement in tackling this project, thank you. I would like to also thank Stuart Murray, who took me through my first engagement with the voyages of encounter in the South Pacific, which helped plant the seed of my first idea. For the many cups of tea and slices of cake, the sage wisdom and invaluable support, I must thank David Fairer. To all my friends who have tolerated my nautical obsessions, sparred with my ideas, or provided insight into this thesis, thank you. To my sisters, Kate and Jen, thank you for being there, supporting me, and selflessly offering help when I needed it. To all my parents, Alex, Sandra, Jean, and Pat, thank you. I could not have done this without your tireless support, guidance, and belief, both in me and this project. It has been a long journey to this point, and I sincerely thank my supervisor, David Higgins, for the inhuman levels of patience, endless tolerance, and resolute support. Finally, to Tansy, my companion through it all, who has given me help and direction at every turn, I will never be able to thank enough. I wouldn't have got here without you.

In memory of my grandfather, Jim Robertson, who loved the sea as much as I do.

Abstract

This thesis interrogates the role of the sea's agency in the construction and mediation of selfhood in travel narratives and poetry from the period 1768-1834. The sea in these texts functions to challenge and modify selfhood, both of seafarers and those mourning the loss of someone at sea. Its instability and inherent hostility to human life positions it as a threat, requiring a response in order to preserve the self. These challenges to selfhood are presented as a series of boundaries that are either crossed or reinforced. The sea facilitates travel that literally crosses boundaries – longitude, latitude, and nation, for example – as well as reaffirms them, such as the need for the solid footing of ship or shore to survive. Present in all these engagements with the sea is death, positioned as the final boundary to be transgressed. In chapter one the journals of Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks are interrogated to expose the influence the sea has on selfhood during voyages of exploration, and how it influences Cook's legacy. It also explores the potential connection between the journals and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'. Chapter two explores the sublime in the narrative of John Byron, before looking at its function and the agency of the sea in the nautical poems of Lord Byron. Chapter three investigates the topic of elegy in the poetry of William Wordsworth, looking at whether, as a poetic form, the elegy can function as a grave for those who are lost at sea. Chapter four continues this interrogation of elegy in the works of Louisa Stuart Costello and Charlotte Smith. In the conclusion, I draw together these threads, using the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Shelley to demonstrate the effect the sea's agency has on selfhood.

Contents

Introduction

As she silently surveyed the vast horizon, bending round the distant verge of the ocean, an emotion of sublimest rapture struggled to overcome a sense of personal danger. […] Blanche continued silent, now agitated with fear, and now with admiration, as she viewed the grandeur of the clouds, and their effect on the scenery, and listened to the long, long peals of thunder that rolled through the air.

Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1795)

He began, in a tone of great taste and feeling, to talk of the sea and the sea shore— and ran with energy through all the usual phrases employed in praise of their sublimity, and descriptive of the *undescribable* emotions they excite in the mind of sensibility. The terrific grandeur of the ocean in a storm, its glassy surface in a calm, its gulls and its samphire, and the deep fathoms of its abysses, its quick vicissitudes, its direful deceptions, its mariners tempting it in sunshine and overwhelmed by the sudden tempest, all were eagerly and fluently touched.

Jane Austen, *Sanditon* (1817)

'I want to know what it says,' he answered, looking steadily in her face. 'The sea' Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?'

Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1848)

The agency of the sea and its impact on selfhood is at the centre of this study. I am concerned with how the sea modifies selfhood, its action identified in literature as a compelling but indecipherable dialogue between it and those nearby. What these quotations all share is an unsettled compulsion to understand and engage with the sea, to understand its agency. To unpack this agency, the term selfhood has been chosen to avoid the philosophical issues that

surround the concept of identity.[1] The quotations above demonstrate how, in slightly different variations, the sea engages with and challenges the way authors write selfhood. Blanche's attitude towards the sea perfectly encapsulates the interaction between the self and the sea. The immense scale of the vista is overwhelming, evoking 'an emotion of sublimest rapture'. She has engaged with the sea on an aesthetic level that, we shall see, Addison was discussing at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The delight with which this sublime seascape strikes Blanche does nothing, however, to deaden the hostility the sea embodies. The 'sense of personal danger' is in conflict with the aesthetic enjoyment of the scene, highlighting the tension within her selfhood between self-preservation and the alluring yet indecipherable nature of the sea. The inner turmoil is evidenced by her shifting agitation, from 'fear' to 'admiration', as the sea challenges her selfhood. Sir Edward's diatribe to Charlotte in Austen's *Sanditon* exemplifies the relentless yet illogical lure of the sea. The aesthetic beauty is similarly placed in tension with the 'terrific grandeur of the ocean in a storm', and the 'deep fathoms of its abysses'. The hostility of the sea is in conflict with its attraction within 'the mind of sensibility', as Sir Edward attempts to mediate these opposing emotions. Paul, in the Dickens quote, emphasises that alluring yet indecipherable nature of the sea. He knows there is a dialogue existing between the sea and himself, yet he does not have the knowledge to understand it. Rather than ignore the inability to engage successfully with the sea, he demonstrates a desire to understand. His selfhood is modified by the lack of ability on his part created by the sea's agency, but it also shows a desire to rectify that perceived failing.

This study looks at how the agency of the sea is evoked in a selection of texts during the period of 1768-1834, and the role this agency has in the creation and mediation of selfhood. The timespan in question begins with the first voyage of Captain James Cook in 1768, and ends with three important events in 1834: the death of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

---

[1] I adopt a similar approach to what James V. Morrison calls 'a common sense approach, based to a great extent on how we speak about ourselves' in his work *Shipwrecked: Disaster and Transformation in Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, and the Modern World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2014), p. 5.

on the 25th of July; the launch of HMS *Tartarus*, believed by some to be the Royal Navy's first first-class steam gunboat, signalling the decline of the age of sail in maritime warfare (although for merchants sail would be dominant until the 1900s due to the cost of fuel); and on the 1st of August 1834 the coming into force of the Slavery Abolition Act 1833. The thesis begins with Cook's first voyage as a point in British literary history where the maritime travel narrative, and associated questions of selfhood, became part of mainstream consciousness. As Kathleen Wilson writes, 'late eighteenth-century thinking about Englishness and national identity was articulated through representations of Captain Cook and the South Seas'.[2] She goes on to state that 'through the figure of Cook and the widely circulated stories of his and his followers' voyages to the South Pacific, an important component of English ethnicity […] was authorised and renewed as central to British national identity and imperial mission'.[3] The centrality of Cook to late eighteenth-century notions of British identity are echoed in his narratives which are integral to understanding how pressures of national interest become manifest literary formations of selfhood. Establishing the foundation for this study, 'the years surrounding James Cook's three voyages […show] a convergence of political, cultural and imperial crises [that] had raised urgent questions about empire, "race" and their relationship to national identity'.[4] What made these voyages of Cook so important to British culture was that they 'were widely heralded as providing "facts" about new nations and races of peoples that would allow natural historians "to establish permanent truths in the history of Man"'.[5] Furthermore, the voyages of Cook sparked a national surge in interest in maritime narratives. Carl Thompson writes how, during the period of this study, there was

> a dramatic upsurge in the number of accounts of tours being published and
> consumed; an upsurge equally in the number of exploration narratives appearing in
> the wake of Captain Cook's seminal expeditions; and […] the appearance of many

---

[2] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 55.
[3] Ibid., p. 55.
[4] Ibid., p. 56.
[5] Ibid., p. 9.

multi-volume anthologies and collections that made widely available accounts of voyages and travels from earlier eras.[6]

The saturation of the public readership with literary accounts of voyages led to, particularly with relation to shipwreck, an 'increasing emphasis on the subjective experience'.[7] The voyages and their narratives can therefore be understood on some level as expeditions into understanding the relationship between national identity and individual selfhood. Harriet Guest notes that this was a time of 'major reassessment and reconfiguration of British national and imperial identity […where] encounters between islanders and voyagers prompt reflections on the progress and nature of civilisation in the metropolis as well as in the island cultures of the South Pacific'.[8] Whilst these were ostensibly journeys looking to bring light to the places of the world not yet seen by white civilisation, they were also journeys into notions of selfhood.

In this context the sea can be seen as the ultimate vehicle for expeditions and the expansion of the Empire. Wilson writes that the Empire was 'the frontier of the nation, the place where, under the pressure of contact and exchange, boundaries deemed crucial to national identity – white and black, civilised and savage, law and vengeance – were blurred, dissolved or rendered impossible to uphold'.[9] In this way, although the topographical lines of nations both discovered and colonised are literal marks of frontiers, the sea was a space that was resistant to all forms of mapping and control, figuring as a permanent frontier to all notions of empire – what Wilson terms the 'British "empire of the sea"'.[10] Concepts of

---

[6] Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 13.

[7] Carl Thompson, *Shipwreck in Art and Literature: Images and Interpretations from Antiquity to the Present Day* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), p. 13.

[8] Harriet Guest, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilization: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 6.

[9] Wilson, p. 17.

[10] Ibid., p. 15. For more on notions of specifically British identity see: Peter Mandler, *The English National Character* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2006); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); and Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London and New York: Longman, 1998). For more on the Royal Navy and its part in the growth of Britain's Empire and sense of self see: N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London: Penguin Books, 2005); and Ben Wilson, *Empire of the Deep: The Rise and Fall of the British Navy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014).

identity surrounding nation and nationhood have been discussed in many works, with Peter J. Kitson writing in 2007 that 'there has been a proliferation of studies that focus on Britain and Europe from the early modern period onwards that are concerned with questions of identity'.[11] Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) is one such seminal work, which posed the boundaries of nation as those based on community and a willingness to die for a collective identity, noting that 'it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly die for such limited imaginings'.[12] Arnold Weinstein provides some grounding for this concept of national boundaries formed by community when he states that the term '"self" […] is not a nostalgic, arrogant relic of a human-centred world […but] a supreme fiction, a necessary generous, eye-opening rather than soporific fiction. The centrality of one's own life is unarguable […and] defined this way, [life] is a colonizing enterprise'.[13] The perception of life as 'a colonizing enterprise' suggests a legitimisation of colonialism itself, something I argue that Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Lord Byron challenge in their poetry. But it also exposes how selfhood is a construction of multiple voyages of discovery, each adding a new element to the self as a whole. The self as a literary function is central to the ability to believe a fiction as much as it is a tool with which to create one's own self. The literary construction of selfhood helps explain that 'survival and affirmation [are seen] as the most powerful and coherent drive[s] known to man'.[14] During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the South Pacific became one of the locations where people were putting their lives on the line in the name of national interests. Jonathan Lamb has identified that between the dates 1680 and1840 there was, for the British, an 'evolution of the self guarded by certain political rights and duties'.[15] Critics like Wilson and Guest have focused on the idea of identity and the complex philosophical

---

[11] Peter J. Kitson, *Romantic Literature, Race, and Colonial Encounter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 1.

[12] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn (London; New York: Verso, 2006), p. 7.

[13] Arnold Weinstein, *Fictions of the Self: 1550-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 7.

[14] Weinstein, p. 7.

[15] Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 3.

debates that surround the term.[16] Instead, I follow the lead in this study of Lamb by focusing instead on the self and selfhood.[17]

These terms are integral to studies of the South Pacific as, according to Lamb, 'the uncertainties that troubled the stability of the European self were intensified in the South Pacific', demonstrating that 'on both sides of the line of encounter, people became directly interested in the issue of self-preservation'.[18] This notion of 'self-preservation' is a core part of how selfhood functions in this study. The way in which selfhood forms is in relation to perceived threat, something which the sea's agency does in the texts that are the focus here. The concept of self used in this study is informed by Lamb as 'although […] capable of considerable reflexive agility, it is not constituted by reflection, interpellation, or language. It is merely that bundle of immediate and remembered impressions acquired by an embodied mind on which a sense of personal identity depends'.[19] This 'bundle of immediate and remembered impressions' is at the centre of selfhood. However, this construct of the self needs to be understood in relation to the two paradoxical halves of the self that are exposed by the act of self-preservation: 'the first paradox of self-preservation is that a propensity asks to be obeyed like a duty, the second is that the self is preserved only by being changed'.[20] There is an inherent tension between these halves, which Lamb notes is

> evident in the "law" of self-preservation, paradoxically construed as the most urgent of instincts and the most imperative of social duties. The self is therefore required to study two different phases of its being, and to see itself at once as the source and product of its own desires. To be fully constituted, it is expected to knit these

---

[16] This is noted by Duncan Redford as a point of contention within literary and philosophical debate, and something that the term selfhood mitigates. See Duncan Redford, *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 1-4.

[17] For more on the issues and philosophy of identity and the self in the Romantic period see: Vincent Newey, *Centring the Self: Subjectivity, Society and Reading from Thomas Gray to Thomas Hardy* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995); Sheila M. Kearns, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography: Reading Strategies of Self-Representation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995); Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Andrea K. Henderson, *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[18] Lamb, p. 5.

[19] Ibid., p. 5.

[20] Ibid., p. 12.

divisions […] into a sensually ethical entity, a self spontaneously obedient to a natural and a social law.[21]

The tension between these two conflicting pulls of preservation are exposed and challenged by the sea in the texts in this study. In its simplest form, selfhood can be understood as that central entity which is typically the focus of concern in defending against all threats of harm, both mental and physical.[22]

What places the South Pacific, and in similar ways all other seas, at the centre of these challenges to selfhood is described by Lamb. He writes:

On top of the many factors that made the odds of survival for a sailor so poor – wounds, worms, fevers, constipation, hernia, and all the afflictions incident to overwork, overcrowding poor ventilation, extremes of temperature, and contaminated water – there was a rottenness that caused the bodies of the mariners to grow "foul and degenerate".[23]

Lamb's 'rottenness' referred to here is scurvy. But what his list of challenges to self-preservation is missing is the larger issue of shipwreck and disaster, and the notion that if anything went wrong during the voyage, then there was a significant chance that none would survive. Shipwreck intensifies the struggles of selfhood within maritime literature, the representations of which have 'a key intention […] to convey the suffering of those caught up in these tragedies and to mobilise the sympathies of readers and viewers'.[24] The moment of shipwreck is, as will be discussed later in this study, one of simultaneous liberation and destruction for the self. The disintegration of the ship as a symbol of constraint and surrogate society provides those on board, especially with regards to a Royal Navy ship, with a chance to break free from the rules and oppressive convention that had previously dictated their

---

[21] Lamb, p. 6.
[22] For the sake of clarity, I have attempted to use "self" or "selfhood" throughout, but where it has been necessary to use "identity" I have done so with the same concepts used here in mind.
[23] Lamb, p. 116.
[24] Thompson, *Shipwreck in Art and Literature*, p. 13.

every action. For the survivors of shipwreck there can often be a brief period of freedom and revelry in the destruction of societal norms. These are short-lived, however, when typically, the scarcity of food and water brings the reality of imminent death too quickly into view. The aftermath of shipwreck presents an ideal situation for interrogating the restructuring and subsequent assault on selfhood that occurs. The period of this study is therefore ideal for the consideration of selfhood under stress due to the proliferation of voyage narratives (as discussed above) and shipwrecks.[25]

Key to understanding the importance of selfhood as it is challenged by the sea is the concept of boundaries: the boundary of the individual; the collective boundary of society; the boundary of a nation. These boundaries are all limited by the finality of death, acting as the agent that designates the end of selfhood as a living construct and the beginning of a dead non-self. Therefore, I use death as the ultimate constraint to selfhood, which in this sense I understand as ipseity, or the distinct facets of a person that go to make up their character. I take selfhood to be defined by distinct categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, profession, but in this study more complex sub-categories such as mourner, colonialist, zombie, or sympathiser are relevant. The idea of selfhood is enacted upon multiple planes at one time: the sailor on a ship interacting with the officers, who in turn engage with the captain. The ship itself poses a series of boundaries which in turn affects the environment within which selfhood is mediated: those between the relative dryness and safety of the wood and the sea; between itself as an extension of its home nation and all other nations; as a precarious extension of life over a fatal element. There are also the considerable boundaries that run irrefutably between the land and the sea, in the middle of which lies the liminal space of the beach – a place where land and sea mix in a confusion of states. I attempt to expand the idea that the sea has the ability to influence human thought and perception. It can permeate someone ideologically, manifest in the way a sailor or fisherman becomes societally

---

[25] For more on the centrality of shipwreck narratives in literature and the public readership see: Thompson, *Romantic-era Shipwreck Narratives*, pp. 5-14; and James V. Morrison, *Shipwrecked: Disaster and Transformation in Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, and the Modern World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2014).

displaced by those members of society that are land bound – 'the way sailors dressed and the language they used set them apart from their counterparts ashore' – or it can permeate someone artistically, altering how they see and interact with the world.[26] How these boundaries shift and change, and how they ultimately affect selfhood is another part of what is being studied here.

There have been a limited number of studies into the cultural impact of the sea, and none specifically addressing the British relationship to it. In 1994 Alain Corbin's seminal work, *The Lure of the Sea*, was translated into English, profoundly altering the way the sea is viewed in literature.[27] His work maintains a broad scope, choosing not to focus specifically on any one nation. Corbin does, however, identify a distinct shift in the British public's perception of the sea over the course of the 18th century. During the first half of the 18th century there remained a consensus that the sea was a place of decay, epitomised by the putrid smell and rotten detritus that was washed up each day by the tide. By around 1750 'cure-takers began rushing toward the sea-shore […] to combat melancholy and spleen'.[28] Corbin suggests that the shift towards viewing the sea as medically beneficial prompted in part the love of beach holidays. Towards 'the end of the 1750s, crowds came to Brighton to enjoy the pleasures of bathing', with the sea being 'viewed as a recourse against melancholy and the harmful effects of unhealthy city life'.[29] Such a shift in public perception is important to understand, particularly with the literary importance of Cook's narratives as mentioned above. Combined they emphasise the point at which British society started to connect more positively with the sea, setting off a reinvigorated and expansive, maritime focused, national identity. From this point in time onwards Britain enacted a more outward looking policy,

---

[26] Duncan Redford, *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), p. 4.
[27] Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (London: Penguin, 1995). For more on the cultural impact of the sea on civilisation see: Lincoln Paine, *The Sea and Civilization: A Maritime History of the World* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015).
[28] Ibid., p. 57.
[29] Ibid., p. 163.

contrasting the fear of the sea that Corbin highlights existed earlier in the eighteenth century, that embraced all the aspects of maritime life, economically, militarily, as well as artistically.

Siobhan Carroll's interrogation of "atopias" – spaces that resist colonisation, habitation, and accessibility - in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in *An Empire of Air and Water* is fundamental to the concept of boundaries in this study.[30] She asserts that these atopias can be seen as a potential subset of Michael Foucault's "heterotopias", and as such can provide an interesting dialogue between the atopia of the sea and the heterotopia of the ship.[31] A key aspect of Carroll's work is the societal connection between language and the sea. What is exposed is how sailors (both real and literary) could use language to promote and secure the notions of identity and nationhood whilst traversing an atopic space. Carroll highlights a tension within the work of William Falconer between the expansive colonial desires of Britain and the limits to ruling the waves. This provides a useful platform from which to engage with the later authors of my thesis who, I argue, can be seen to expose similar tensions. Carroll's study emphasises the need for further interrogation into the revelation and construction of Britain's sense of maritime selfhood on both a local and global level. As Carroll suggests, there is an overwhelming amount of scholarly work that has been done on the role of British identity with regards to colonial (and specifically land-based) actions and engagements. But what is missing from reaching a more complete picture of British selfhood during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a cemented understanding of the 'new spatial axis [of the sea] to theories of British identity formation, calling attention to the ways in which Britain was imagined, not only in opposition to a continental or colonial Other, but also in relation to supposedly empty spaces'.[32] Where Carroll provides an introductory line of enquiry into this topic, my thesis goes further into understanding the

---

[30] Siobhan Carroll, *An Empire of Air and Water: Uncolonizable Space in the British Imagination, 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).
[31] Ibid., n. 13, p. 206.
[32] Carroll, p. 11.

relationship between notions of selfhood and the sea during the period in a range of British literatures.

Providing a useful way into the topic of the maritime and concepts of identity is Duncan Redford's edited collection of essays in *Maritime History and Identity* (2014), which demonstrates the lack of any comprehensive study of the relationship between the sea and identity.[33] He notes the important work that has been done in terms of identity studies in recent years, but highlights that no studies have considered the polarising and binary roles the sea and land play in understanding individual, local, national and global identities. He remarks that most current studies of identity 'do not really get to grips with what at its simplest is a bilateral relationship between land and sea, sea and land but which can be a far more complex and multi-layered relationship'.[34] Redford goes on to note how

> The question of identity in relation to the sea is […] more than just a realisation of the importance of time, change and continuity. […] The sea can be a frontier, a barrier, a livelihood, a place of adventure, a medium of political, diplomatic, cultural or economic exchange, even, in today's climate-obsessed world, a threat. […] At the same time, the sea could be seen as an 'other' – something that caused society to unite against it.[35]

There are remarkably few studies that look to interrogate the role of the sea in framing notions of selfhood when looking at British history during the golden years of the Royal Navy and Empire. Critics such as Redford that do acknowledge the key role the sea has in understanding historical notions of selfhood concentrate only on those sailors who served in the Royal Navy, neglecting the huge numbers of people who worked with and on the sea in conjunction with the navy, supporting and furthering Britain's colonial goals. This study looks to address that gap through the lens of the literary representations of a diverse range

---

[33] Duncan Redford, *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014).
[34] Ibid., p. 3.
[35] Ibid., p. 5.

of maritime people: sailors in the maritime industries including the Merchant Navy and Royal Navy; explorers; poets with an aesthetic connection; and poets with a mourning connection. The idea is to see how a diverse selection of texts from Britain during the years of 1768-1834 each construct selfhood and in turn respond and interact with the sea.

This thesis is split into two halves, the first looking at the challenges to selfhood posed by the sea during voyages of exploration and shipwrecks, and the second interrogating the role of death at sea and the nautical elegy in modifying British identity during the period. The unifying notion is how both sections present a challenge to selfhood that stems from engaging with the sea and pushing at, or breaking, boundaries in the process. The sea acts as both a divisive and uniting force for identity. In one sense it unites all strands of society as a body that stands against the unrelenting force of the sea, a force that people actively strive against. Yet on the other hand it divides and compartmentalises society into those who work with or on the sea and those that do not. The sea in this sense becomes, in these texts, an agent that either one understands and respects, or else stands as something one fears and avoids. In this way the sea fragments and erodes various bonds that exist between people in society.

In chapter one I interrogate how both the threat and actuality of death causes maritime professions to become liminal. I do this by looking at key works by Captain James Cook, Sir Joseph Banks, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and a selection of Romantic poets. A key concern for this chapter is the notion that the sea was seen as a place of death. The sublime and relentless nature of the ocean, coupled with humanity's lack of knowledge of its depths, edges, and composition, resulted in it being seen as a dangerous and malevolent agent. The journals of Cook and Banks aptly demonstrate the day to day life of a sailor and highlight how the profession existed in a liminal place within society. The death of Cook, coupled with the eulogies that are studied in this chapter, underscore the idea that death has a very central role in the identity and existence of sailors during the time. In this chapter I look at the role of the ship as a place of multiple boundaries – between sea and land, life and death, home

and Other, known and unknown – building on Michel Foucault's concept that a ship is a 'floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea'.[36] The ship exists as a voided space, there primarily for its own sake but also utterly entwined with the reality of the endless sea.

I use Carroll's investigation of the use of language in literary engagements with the sea in this chapter to interrogate the dehumanising language in the works of Cook, Banks, and Coleridge. The interest here is in how the authors use particular language in order to void or Other the sailors, making them actors of colonialism detached from their status as members of British society. In this regard the use of zombie imagery and cultural history is under consideration as, particularly in the case of Coleridge, zombies are used as a form of dehumanisation. The connection between zombies and soulless, identity-less beings is employed most famously in 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere', with the effect, I argue, of criticising British colonial expansion. Coleridge, a well-known critic of slavery and colonisation, uses the zombie to make a statement, using recognisable imagery from the Cook voyages in 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'. In doing so Coleridge uses one of the most prominent and high profile proponents of colonisation as a tool for criticising an action he deplores. What becomes apparent is that through both the factual and fictitious representations, sailors in this period are written in ways that remove their humanity and forces them into roles of servitude; in many ways evoking the slavery that they were seen to facilitate.

In chapter two I look at how the action of shipwreck dramatically changes the dynamic of the sailors' world. The narrative of John Byron's journey around Cape Horn and subsequent shipwreck on the coast of Patagonia clearly shows how the controlled and strictly bounded lives of sailors on board a ship become fragmented and without order once the ship ceases to exist. The breaking of the ship's boundaries frees those on board of the rules

---

[36] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16:1 (1986), pp. 22-27 (p. 27).

that typically govern them, resulting in the reclamation of the sailors' identities that are removed in the ways examined in the previous chapter. The chapter considers how this transformation explains the complicated view of sailors for those back home, and aligns the poetry written by Lord Byron with John Byron's shipwreck narrative that influenced it, as a further tool of analysis into this identity construction. The role of death plays a significant part here as both a threat against identity as well as a promise of relief. During a shipwreck, in both factual and fictitious representations, sailors are depicted as struggling for life and desperately searching for ways to maintain the boundaries that they know and are used to. Considering the liberation that they experience upon surviving a shipwreck, there is little evidence of them contemplating a better life outside of the oppression of life on board. In this sense death acts as the universal leveller, challenging those on board to consider whether life without an identity on board is preferable to the potential for existence off the ship. After the fact of shipwreck death becomes a looming presence due to the threat of starvation and, in some cases, attacks by indigenous populations or even other shipmates. We then see how death becomes a duality, presenting yet another challenge to their newly reclaimed identities, as well as an avenue of escape.

A helpful tool in understanding these shifting dynamics is the role that cannibalism plays in these scenarios. The narrative of John Byron was reputedly one of the first to suggest such a practice from such a high ranking source. Whilst he does not confirm that it happens, he does relate how it was stopped whilst trapped on the Patagonian coast. Lord Byron takes this scenario and includes later instances of cannibalism in sailors' narratives to paint a picture of the costs of Britain's colonial aspirations. For John Byron the act of cannibalism is depicted as the utter destruction of all humanity in the offender. This is intensified because these same sailors are seen to have only just reclaimed their identities (and so their humanity) due to the shipwreck itself. This results in what Geoffrey Sanborn terms as a 'negative mode of identification' whereby the sailors have the choice to choose not to die (by eating other

sailors) but lose their identity, or to die and lose their identity.[37] Lord Byron takes this notion and uses it to further criticise British society at the time, in a manner similar to Coleridge in the previous chapter. Lord Byron utilises the historical context of cannibalism, such as its links to slavery and black culture, to again represent the dehumanising of the sailor class. For Byron the sea becomes a tool that strips away the identity of those who are forced to enact the will of the nation. Yet it can become the haven of those who seek to refute the constraints of society. What this chapter exposes is how the sea seems to offer a duality of potential outcomes depending on how those in question interact with, and conform to, the boundaries set by society. The sea can liberate sailors from their oppressive ships, and it can free the creativity of poets who rail against societal conventions. But the sea can also destroy those same people if the morality of their actions can be seen as questionable. The sea becomes a cleanser.

Chapter three marks the second half of the thesis, which deals with a distinctly different topic. The last two chapters look at the role of elegy and death in the mourning process, and whether the sea can act as a surrogate grave for those whose bodies are never recovered. Building on previous studies of the elegiac form, my work seeks to understand how the sea challenges the function of an elegy. The language of mourning is important here, particularly the limits that are found when dealing with death. In these instances, it becomes apparent that the sea either subverts the power of language, resulting in silences and voids of meaning, or enhances a poet's ability to convey meaning and emotion. The function of the sea within the elegy highlights the complex relationship that exists between identity and mourning, where the boundary between life and death erodes notions of selfhood for both the living and the deceased. What becomes apparent is that the elegiac form is uniquely suited to dealing with maritime grief, and facilitates questioning whether the sea can replace the grave when there is no body to bury.

---

[37] Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 41.

In chapter three I look at how William Wordsworth deals with the death of his brother John, and how he addresses the loss and his grief through poetry. Western convention, supported by Wordsworth, is that the grave is an important and central part of the grieving process, the implication being that without one, in our culture, mourning becomes a much harder task. What makes Wordsworth a useful subject here is that John's body was left at sea for six months before being found and buried. As such, Wordsworth had to process the loss initially with the knowledge that there would not be a grave for his brother, before having to reassess the situation and re-grieve for his brother once he was buried. What becomes evident in the poetry is that Wordsworth turns away from the sea as a companion in grief, focusing on the "spots of time" on land that connect to his memories of John when he was alive. I argue that because of his burial Wordsworth projects his anger onto the sea, often indirectly, whilst returning to the pastoral in order to appropriately remember John. This, I feel, is indicative of the mourning process whereby the presence of a grave removes the need to associate with the agent responsible for the death.

We see in the poetry of Wordsworth an intriguing elision of discussions about the sea, where voids of language imply the sea's presence and culpability, but silences have to carry the weight of the meaning. What occurs seems to be a realisation of the limits of language and its capability to convey meaning appropriately for such a delicate subject. The silences and aversion to directly talking about John's death and the sea's complicity highlight the point where language breaks under the weight of meaning. Silences become more powerful than words, and allow readers to supplicate their own griefs into these spaces. What these poems become are a tool for others who have suffered a similar fate to use in order to come to terms with their grief. In many of the poems there is an obvious return to the pastoral that shows a rejection of the destructive freedom the sea offers other poets. Unlike Coleridge and Byron who use the sea as a symbol of political or moral liberty, for Wordsworth the sea becomes an active agent of uncertainty. The pastoral therefore offers a mode of poeticism that is familiar and stable. It can be used in a conventional way to

immortalise the dead, much in the same way John Milton does in his poem 'Lycidas' (1637). Whereas, I argue, Milton looks towards the sea as a method of better representing poetic angst, Wordsworth seems to defy Romantic convention and return to the pastoral in his elegies about John.

Chapter four continues the investigation of the elegy form by looking at the elegies of Charlotte Smith and Louisa Stuart Costello. These poets share a similar *oeuvre* in terms of nautical elegies. They both utilise a speaker who suffers from a melancholic situation, mourning either the loss of a loved one or a challenge to their selfhood. Costello strikes an interesting comparison to Wordsworth as she also lost a brother at sea whilst he was serving on board the HMS *Tweed* in 1813. Yet her brother's body was never found, which results in Costello presenting a bond between the speaker and the sea in her elegies. The sea becomes a surrogate for her brother, an agent to which she is able to direct her expressions of grief. But the sea also embodies a duality of function with the representations of the brother running alongside the active agent in her brother's death. This duality exposes a complex relationship between the poet and the sea. Unlike Wordsworth, the sea remains for Costello the only connection she has to her brother. As such it functions in the same way as a grave; offering a physical place of mourning and somewhere to anchor memories of the deceased. The instability of the sea, however, becomes manifest in the instability of the mourning in the poetry. This suggests an unsuccessful processing of grief through the elegy, making the form itself ineffective. Consequently, an analysis of Costello's elegies facilitates an evaluation of the elegiac form's role in presenting and facilitating mourning.

Unlike Wordsworth or Costello, Charlotte Smith never suffered the loss of someone at sea. Yet her *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) strike a similar tone to Costello. Numerous poems within the collection deal with loss and mourning directed towards the sea. What Smith seems to strike upon is a useful convention of using the sea's connection to death and loss to intensify the melancholy depicted in her poems. In some instances, it is a lover lamenting the loss of their partner, spending time staring out to sea or actively seeking death in a similar fashion.

In others, the sea acts as a place of loss that is understood as both a dangerous and a liberating space, much like the attitudes found in the work of Coleridge and Byron. What Smith does, however, is challenge the male-centric domination of the sea by presenting a powerful feminine trait in its agency. Whilst it remains the domain of male power and economic and territorial expansion, and in violence the sea she depicts is masculine, upon reflection and mourning the sea becomes a space of feminine purity. But in all instances, as with Costello, the sea becomes a force that challenges and strips away identity. Those who are lost are no longer remembered as they were when they were alive. They become parodies of themselves, embodied by the sea. Those who remain to mourn are unsettled and infiltrated by the sea until they also question and adapt their identities. In all cases the sea can be seen to facilitate the breaking down of boundaries, challenging the binary of living and dead.

Chapter One: The Death of Captain Cook and the Trope of the (Un)dead Liminal Sailor

The landmark voyages of Captain James Cook signalled the start of Britain's rise towards naval domination, and marked a significant chapter in Britain's pursuit of discovery and exploration. He came from a humble background to become a lasting national hero, ranked in the period amongst figures like Vice-Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson and Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington. Yet unlike these two, Cook's prowess was exploration, not war, embodying the peaceable aspects of masculinity that the subsequent conflicts with America, France, and Spain challenged in the public consciousness. Cook's voyages expanded geographical knowledge beyond what was ever previously believed to exist by British society, and his seemingly non-violent behaviour gained him the reputation of being a champion of the equality of humanity and a benevolent man of feeling. His narratives, which recorded the details of each day on board his various commands, influenced subsequent representations of nautical travel and the lives of sailors due to their popularity. The depth of detail and pragmatic approach to each trial and disaster affirmed his reputation as a stoic, resourceful, and as some would go on to claim after his death, god-like man. He embodied the ideal image of Britishness and extolled the character of the Jack Tars who would become the men at the front line of the Empire's defence, commerce and network of influence. What is of most interest here, though, is how Cook, through his journals, death and legacy, demonstrates the image of the sailor whose profession displaces him from society, causing him to inhabit a space on the threshold between life and death. This chapter looks initially at the central figure of Cook in literature that focuses on maritime themes, tropes, and settings, using his influential image as a way into interrogating representations of the undead and liminal sailors, and the deathly nature of the sea.

The chapter moves from the poetry on his death through to his voyage journals. I look at how Cook embodies the idea of a liminal seafarer, displaced by society because of

the close relationship they have to the sea. This negative view of sailors arises from the hostile and unsettling nature of the sea, which challenges the stable and supportive land. In the texts in this chapter the sea acts as a threat to selfhood, forcing those involved to fight for survival. The chapter interrogates the poetry written in memory of Cook, using it to demonstrate how his legacy exposes a different and fractured selfhood to the one found in his own narratives. The poets studied show, through their eulogising of him, the very aspects of the undead sailor and the deathly sea that Cook's journals helped pioneer in the maritime literature of the time. It is important to note that the wider reading public's first engagement with the journals of Cook and Banks came from the heavily edited and notorious "official" edition published by John Hawkesworth in 1773.[1] This version was widely criticised for its incorrect representation of actual events, the detailing of the sexual practices of the South Sea islanders, and the direct challenge to the notion of providential intervention.[2] Yet it existed as the only widely available version of Cook's voyages, although there were smaller run publications of all three voyage narratives around 1784-86.

Later in the chapter I turn to 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' (1798), in part an interpretation of events described in Cook's and his companion Sir Joseph Banks' journals, to demonstrate this trope of the liminal sailor further. I expose how, in comparison to the eulogies of Cook, the 'Ancyent Marinere' deals with a more concentrated reimagining of the deathly nature of the sea and imagery of the life and (un)death of sailors. The poem also provides an important critique of the colonial project for which Cook was a figurehead. Coleridge's use of the figure of the zombie connects the poem to Cook's legacy as a colonialist, and his inadvertent connection to slavery. Coleridge is able to utilise the zombie in order to condemn slavery, whilst also providing a defence for the sailors involved. He

---

[1] John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and Successively Performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: Drawn up from the Journals Which Were Kept by the Several Commanders, and from the Papers of Joseph Banks, Esq.*, 3 vols (London: printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1773).
[2] See John Hawkesworth in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

does this through the idea of the zombie being one who is no longer in control of their own actions. As such, Coleridge equates the profession of seamen to slavery, negating their complicity in the slave trade that he campaigned forcefully against.

While depictions of life, death, and the return from the afterlife are easily located in the 'Ancyent Marinere', they are harder to find in Cook's journals. Yet the journals are crucial not just because they are part of the genesis for Coleridge's poem, but because of how they expose life at sea. Importantly, Cook's journals provide a representation of himself, which, most likely through Hawkesworth, become in some part the sources for the poems which eulogise his life. The chapter aims to show how the notion that the sea was a place of death was a central trope of maritime literature, and that those who sailed upon it were transformed into undead versions of themselves: an agency which challenges the nature of being human. Cook's narratives function as a benchmark for subsequent maritime literatures, with his legacy as a treasured example of the British sailor cementing the image of the hostile and deathly sea.

Cook's Paradoxical Legacy

Captain Cook died on the 14th of February 1779 at Kealakekua Bay on Hawaii. It was a disaster for the voyage, and his 'death was mythologized' from the very instant it happened.[3] Previously, his ship had taken heavy damage after leaving Hawaii for the first time, and he was forced to return to refit for the rest of the voyage. The details of his death are not entirely clear, and will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter. Suffice it to say that a boat belonging to the *Resolution* was stolen during the refit by a group of Hawaiians, driving Cook to remonstrate with the local king in order that it should be returned. Cook had been received like a king himself on their first visit to the island, but his return and show of force in desiring the boat to be brought back resulted in high tensions and aggression between Cook's force and the locals. Cook convinced the king to return to the ship with him, wanting to use the

---

[3] Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 23.

king as a hostage, and to better plan a method of getting the boat back. But upon reaching the beach, his small force was attacked and surrounded by locals, and Cook killed. At the time of his death, he was nearly two and a half years into his third voyage, and had already failed to find the sought after North West Passage that would connect the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic and all of northern Europe. Cook's Admiralty orders for the voyage stress he was 'to find out a Northern passage by Sea from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean' for 'His Majesty's Pleasure'.[4] The Admiralty's desire for Cook to find the passage was such that were he to 'be satisfied that there is no Passage through the abovementioned Bays', those bays found on the 'Coast of New Albion', he was to continue 'Northward as far as, in prudence, you may think proper, in further search of a North East, or North West Passage'.[5] The huge economic benefits that would have come from finding the Passage meant that the voyage was seen in many ways a failure, despite the extensive tracts of the North American shoreline and new Pacific islands Cook had mapped out.

This was also the case for his previous two voyages. His first, on board the *Endeavour* between 1768 and 1771, was intended to facilitate the observation of the transit of Venus, as well as to confirm the theory of the Great Southern Continent. The secret instructions for this voyage state that they were to 'observe the Passage of the Planet Venus over the Disk of the Sun on the 3rd of June 1769' as their primary concern, and 'cultivate a friendship with the Natives' when the opportunities arose.[6] The '*Additional Instructions for Lt James Cook*' make note of 'a Continent or Land of great extent, [which] may be found to the Southward of the Tract lately made by Captn Wallis'.[7] Cook was ordered 'to proceed to the southward in order to make discovery of the Continent', and to 'proceed in the search of it to the Westward [...] until you discover it, or fall in with the Eastern side of the Land discover'd by Tasman', such

---

[4] Captain Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook: III, The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776-1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1967), I, ccxx. Hereafter cited as Cook, *Resolution and Discovery*, followed by volume and page number.

[5] Ibid., I, ccxxi-ccxxii.

[6] Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society, 1955), cclxxx. Hereafter cited as Cook, *Endeavour*, followed by page number.

[7] Ibid., cclxxxii.

was the eagerness of the Admiralty to be the first to prove its existence.[8] In both of these Cook was unsuccessful. As Paul Carter notes, 'The chief discovery of the *Endeavour* was its discovery of nothing or, rather, of the non-existence of a great southern continent: from an empirical point of view, this can only be construed as a failure'.[9] The records of the transit of Venus contained large discrepancies nullifying the results, and the lack of evidence of a continent created the assumption that Cook had not travelled far enough south.

His second voyage, on the *Resolution* between 1772 and 1775, was commissioned to explore even further south than had been achieved already, in order that the Great Southern Continent be finally found. The instructions for this voyage are persistent in the belief that the Continent does exist despite the evidence Cook brought back from the last voyage. The Admiralty states that he was to 'discover Cape Circumstance [...] and satisfy yourself whether it is a part of that Southern Continent which has so much engaged the attention of Geographers & former Navigators', encouraging Cook to succeed where previously he had not, using the opinions of former explorers as pressure, as they were certain that the Continent existed.[10] The instructions press the point, commanding him to

> stand on to the South ward so long as you judge there may be a likelyhood of falling
> in with the Continent [...] and then proceed to the Eastward, in further search of the
> said Continent [...] prosecuting your discoveries as before directed as near to the Pole
> as possible.[11]

Despite Cook's almost irrefutably conclusive evidence that no such continent existed, this went against the theories of the most respected scholars of the time. The tone of the instructions suggests the Admiralty's disbelief that such a Continent did not exist, and although they suggest that Cook use his own judgement, they still command that he should

---

[8] Cook, *Endeavour*, cclxxxii.
[9] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay* (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 23.
[10] Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772-1775* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society, 1961), clxvii-clxviii. Hereafter cited as Cook, *Resolution and Adventure*, followed by page number.
[11] Ibid., clxix.

proceed into the most dangerous seas on the planet; those of the Antarctic. Thus, by the conclusion of the voyage, it was yet again seen as an overall failure, despite the colonial gains and scientific discoveries that he made.

Cook's legacy during the years after his death did not, however, include the failings of his famous voyages; his death in fact 'became the founding event of colonial Pacific history'.[12] Harriet Guest remarks that 'From the late 1770s, and with increasing energy after his death, Cook's extraordinary achievements were repeatedly celebrated, though they could also be difficult to quantify'.[13] The difficulty experienced in quantifying his 'extraordinary achievements' was down to the perceived failure of his voyages which added a seeming elegiac quality to his image as a man of feeling. But the fact that he had explored further and in more detail than any who had gone before resulted in a complex paradox of a legacy: on the one hand the unsuccessful completion of Admiralty's orders and, on the other, the hugely important discoveries and territorial acquisitions made in the name of King and country. This paradoxical legacy was determined in many ways by the nature of his death. Being killed in action meant that it became a 'public tragedy – [a] matter for general mourning', precisely because his life was sacrificed for the betterment of the nation. His failures had to be overlooked, meaning that the national grief 'was diluted with and soon overwhelmed by national self-congratulation for Cook's successes'. The need to assimilate Cook's legacy into the national consciousness was because the 'voyages were enormously important achievements for Britain', aiding 'National confidence, [which was] still weakened by the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, and further shaken by the advent and progress of the American war'. The lack of anything else to celebrate, made harder because the 'results [of his voyages] were difficult to imagine positively', meant that 'Cook's posthumous reputation tended to focus on celebrations of his character almost at the expense of his achievements'. This made the paradox of Cook's legacy even more complex. Because his death was at the

---

[12] Edmond, p. 23.

[13] Harriet Guest, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 9.

hands of "savages", on the other side of the world, he was cast as a martyr, cut down in the

pursuit of knowledge by people identified by the "civilised white man" as ignorant and

primitive. These 'Representations of Cook as martyr were complemented by images that

apotheosised him', so 'the idea of Cook as godlike hero and martyr went hand in hand with

the perception in his three voyages of a satisfying narrative structure of heroic endeavour,

exceptional adventure, and tragic resolution'.[14]

Cook was remembered as a 'hero' and a 'dedicated servant of humanity' because,

whilst trying to bring the truth of knowledge to the unknown places of the planet, he was

killed, and, as far as the public knew, without retaliating with force to the aggressive

indigenous population.[15] The lack of military success around the time of Cook's death, as

noted by Guest above, can be seen to have encouraged the need for the nation to acquire a

'new kind of national hero' whose fame was the result of 'an alternative masculinity' which

did not come from prowess on the battle field.[16] In the eyes of the public he 'demonstrated

English pluck and humanity, sense and sensibility, to best advantage – the explorer's "man

of feeling" who died on the altar of national service with more blood brothers than

bloodshed to his credit'.[17] Yet herein lies another level to the paradox of Cook's legacy: Cook

was 'lionized by the English public in ways that few figures of the era could match', but only

through the conscious act of forgetting the blood of the indigenous populations that he did

spill.[18]

Stuart Murray has astutely explored the nature of this paradox through the

methodology of interrogating the textuality and authority of Cook's journals.[19] He notes how,

through the use (both actual and implied) of the phrase "notwithstanding our signs to the

contrary" in the journals, Cook was able to rationalise and avoid condemnation for his

---

[14] Guest, pp. 8-9.
[15] Ibid., p. 9.
[16] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 62.
[17] Ibid., p. 62.
[18] Ibid., p. 59.
[19] See Stuart Murray, "Notwithstanding our signs to the contrary': textuality and authority at the Endeavour River, June to August 1770', in *Captain Cook: Explorations and Reassessments* ed. by Glyndwr Williams (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 59-76.

various violent engagements with the indigenous people he encountered. This becomes, as Murray presents it, a problem of communication. In making the violence and occasional deaths a consequence of the natives' lack of "western" education, demonstrated through their inability to understand the words of the educated explorers, the bloodshed is relegated to the unfortunate results of misunderstanding, rather than Cook's and his men's violent tendencies and notions of superiority. In one of the first bloody encounters, Cook casually records that

> some of them ['the natives'] came off [the shore] to the boat in a Canoe and had some nails and Beeds given them but with these they were not satisfied, thinking that they had a right to every thing in the boat, and at last grew so troublesome that in order to get clear of them our people were obliged to fire some musquets, but with no intent to hurt any of them; however it so happen'd that one man was *slightly wounded in the head*.[20]

Cook's only answer to the growing unrest from the islanders was to fire upon them, with the result that someone is accidentally shot in the head, 'slightly'. There is little display of remorse for having defaulted to violence to resolve an issue of poor communication, only that 'the fireing had the desired effect and they thought fit to retire'.[21] Yet it must be noted that, not only is it probable that Cook did not give the direct order as he would have had to note that in the ship's log, he also makes it clear that he had 'no intent to hurt any of them' and was only acting in what we would deem a self-preservative manner. Cook, the man of feeling, is recording how he strives to avoid the sort of conflicts that previous explorers have been associated with. He is already struggling with the legacy of those who have gone before, his image as the man of feeling under threat. However, only a month later, Cook relates on Monday the 9th of October

---

[20] Cook, *Endeavour*, p. 155. My italics.
[21] Ibid., p. 155.

leaving four boys to take care of the yawl, which we had no sooner left than four men came out of the woods on the other side the river and would certainly have cut her off, had not the people in the pinnace discover'd them and called to her to drop down the stream which they did being closely pursued by the Indians; the Coxswain of the pinnace who had the charge of the Boats, seeing this fire'd two musquets over their head, the first made them stop and look round them, but the 2d they took no notice of upon which a third was fired and killed one of them upon the spot just as he was going to dart his spear at the boat.[22]

At this point in the voyage, Cook and his crew could be seen by the locals as an invasive force challenging the native islander's control of the land. There is remarkably little done to attempt a friendly introduction and brokering of peace by the crew of the pinnace and the other party considering this was the first encounter between the discoverers and islanders, leaving Cook again in the position of control over a band of men who appear to be fulfilling the stereotype of a violent western colonial force. Cook's legacy is one of upholding the notions of equality amongst all mankind, yet here again we see violence being used as a first response, but poignantly, not Cook's own. The fact that the islander was in the process of throwing his spear appears as legitimate reason for retaliation, but the imbalance of force between muskets and spears is an image indicative of the underlying colonial attitude of the crew which Cook must attempt to control or risk losing the peaceable image he strives to embody. Murray shows that these episodes are a telling commentary on the modern failures of communication. The violence of Cook's men is obscured by the belief that their actions were justified by being in the pursuit of knowledge and scientific discovery. These were not conflicts of colonial oppression but the self-defence of those seeking to better humanity. Cook and his men escaped vilification it seems in part because he was eventually killed by the same natives they had been trying to study and document. He was martyred in the pursuit

---

[22] Cook, *Endeavour*, p. 169.

of science and therefore could not be castigated or else all his discoveries would have to be incorrectly branded with the same brutal colonialism that those by Cortez and Magellan suffered. Ultimately, the comparatively peaceful nature of Cook's voyages did in fact cement this image of the "gentleman explorer" in the public consciousness.

Nowhere is Cook's legacy better emblazoned than in the elegies and odes to his memory. The most famous of these is Anna Seward's 'Elegy on Captain Cook', first written in 1780, and later extended in the 4th edition of 1784.[23] Her poem eulogises Cook as one whom nature and humanity simultaneously 'sung divine' (14). The bravery in 'his dauntless breast' (15), which led him to 'quit imperial London's gorgeous domes' (17) for 'The scorch'd Equator and th' Antarctic wave' (30) is firmly attributed to 'Benevolence' (35), the term which tolls throughout the poem as the essence of Cook's greatness. She claims that it is this aspect of Cook's humanity that drove him to 'Unite the savage hearts, and hostile hands, | In the firm compact of her gentle bands;' (41-42). She even goes so far as to label him a 'mild Hero', aptly summarising his supposedly gentle and peaceably, non-violent manner when it came to the wild pursuits of the voyage and encountering the native people of the far side of the world. But his mantle of 'mild Hero' is lost for a more fitting embodiment of his legacy – 'firm on the deck the great Adventurer stands; […] the gallant Wanderer's dangerous way' (88-100). Here she strives for the image of Cook as not the self-serving, glory seeking hero whose only quest is to further their own reputation. Instead she depicts him more aptly as an 'Adventurer' who seeks only to discover, and one who is not tied down to anything, much as his ship is free to roam the globe: he is 'the gallant Wanderer'. Whilst evoking ideas of aimlessness, the fact that he is 'gallant' betrays that his quest-like voyage is one which he enacts with gentlemanly honour.

Upon Cook's death, Seward laments the 'smiling Eden of the southern wave' (211) and how 'vain thy gratitude, thy wishes vain!' (214). The islanders' part in the killing of the

---

[23] Anna Seward, 'Elegy on Captain Cook', in *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), pp. 33-46.

benevolent Cook reduces them to 'human fiends' (216) as each 'Poises with ghastly smile the darts of death' (218). Their debasement is increased due to their killing of the man who had come to help them in good faith. In her eyes, despite the circumstances surrounding the incident (which we shall return to later), they have voided any potential they had for cultural and moral redemption through the unjust act of murdering Cook. But what at first glance seems a diatribe on the savagery of the islanders does in fact reveal itself to be a more poignant lament that Cook's body is so far removed as to make any attempt at mourning futile. The bitterness of the event is that Cook is left to be mourned (and as is described later, in great ceremony) by those "savage" people who killed him in the first place. 'His bones now whiten an accursed shore!' (256) as opposed to his body being rightfully allowed to rest when instead there is 'the bright wreath, and […] th' immortal bust' (268). What in fact does happen, however, is that the sea immortalises him, with 'The attendant Power, that bade his sails expand, | […] Now raptur'd bears him to the immortal plains' (271-73). The 'attendant Power' which is the cause of all his fruitful voyaging is now the force behind his imagined transcendence to 'the immortal plain' – the reward for his benevolence. As if to highlight the humanity and grounded nature of his legacy to the very end, the last line of Seward's 'Elegy' remarks how, whilst 'angels choir him', he in fact only 'waits for Thee'; his wife. Despite the fame of his voyages, the great show of feeling his attitude towards the native islanders displayed, and his heroic legacy, in heaven he is concerned with only the simplest of things, which in the end is the love of his wife. Seward's remembrance of Cook normalises his exotic life, bringing his worldly travels and experiences back from the global to the familial and local.

Despite being written nearly fifty years after Cook's death, William Crowe's poem, 'On the Death of Captain Cook' from the 1827 edition of *Lewesdon Hill*, demonstrates the lasting influence of Cook's legacy on British society, and his prominence in literature of the

Empire. In the poem, Crowe demonises Magellan in order to emphasise the peaceful nature of Cook's voyages.[24]

> O how unlike Magellan! he who bent
>
> His daring sail to untried winds, and first
>
> The world encompass'd – save in sad event
>
> Of timeless death by savage hands accurst.
>
>
> The Arts of Peace He cared not to extend;
>
> For gold th' untravel'd sea his bark explored,
>
> For lust of gold he rashly strove to bend
>
> The free-born Indian to his lawless sword. (13-20)

The only action joining Magellan and Cook together is the 'sad event | Of timeless death by savage hands accurst'. Magellan was killed by a force of Filipinos and his body lost to them in a similar fashion to Cook's, whose body was taken from the beach by the force of Hawaiians who killed him. But unlike Cook, who was only on the beach to have his stolen property retrieved, Magellan had been in the process of attacking the local population in order to convert them to Christianity. Hence, for Crowe, 'The arts of Peace He [Magellan] cared not to extend'. Crowe 'was known for his radical and pro-republican sympathies', his politics having been shaped by the American War of Independence and the French Revolution.[25] He was known to be 'deeply suspicious of the morality of imperialism highlighted by the colonial crisis', which is emphasised by his challenge and condemnation of the image of Magellan due to his apparent avarice, and the murders he committed on the voyage.[26] Despite his criticism of 'imperialism', Crowe attacks the image of Magellan in order that Cook can be shown as his imperial antithesis. Interestingly, Crowe describes Magellan

---

[24] William Crowe, 'On the Death of Captain Cook', in *Lewesdon Hill* (London: John Murray, 1827), pp. 75-79.
[25] David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker: Inspiration and Revelation* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 30.
[26] John Williams, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry and Revolutionary Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 10.

as suffering 'timeless death'. In doing so Crowe adopts a common trope of the liminal sailor in maritime literature by emphasising the aspects of immortality, and therefore timelessness, of Magellan. The image of Cook celebrated by Crowe becomes a figure of inspiration through the memory of his deeds and life, his story being told through his death rather than by his own words. The binary perceptions of Cook, split between his actual identity at sea and his perceived image back at home, enforces the idea that the lives of sailors are fragmented from those they leave behind. Death allowed Cook to transcend from displaced sailor to national hero, whilst his inadvertent challenge to the perception of white colonial explorers being violent meant he could avoid castigation despite the evidence of violence to be found in his journals. The fact that the journals document his obvious attempts at remaining peaceable nullify the actions capable of destroying his fame, and as such were responsible for keeping the idea and image of Cook alive long after his death. Cook's 'timeless death', shared by Magellan, is such because of his journals, written in his own hand, cement his voice in the maritime literature of the period.

Magellan's death is depicted as 'timeless' which, considering the images of violence and greed with which he is associated, suggests he will be remembered for his barbaric actions in perpetuity. That Cook is tied to the same 'timeless' exposes the tension between the two explorers. Crowe is raising the memory of Cook to heroic levels, but not without drawing some parallels to the episodes of violence in Cook's voyages. Following his critique of Magellan, Crowe writes of Cook:

> Not such the generous purpose of thy will;
>
> With zeal untired and patient toil it strove
>
> To make th' untutor'd savage learn thy skill,
>
> And the fierce-manner'd tribes embrace thy love. (21-24)

We see Cook's humanitarian legacy coming through here, with Magellan's 'untried winds' and 'th' untravel'd sea' becoming Cook's 'untired' zeal and 'th' untutor'd savage'. Cook's

voyage is one of education and betterment for those unfortunate enough, in the eyes of Crowe, to live in the Pacific. Magellan was only interested in fame and riches, therefore his legacy is one of 'wind' and 'sea', a selfishness emphasised by Cook's selfless desire 'To make th' untutor'd savage learn thy skill'.

The desire on Crowe's part to evoke in Cook's life an image of the "man of feeling" followed earlier representations of him, such as in *Slavery* (1788) by Hannah More.[27] Towards the end of the poem More names both Cortez and Columbus as perpetrators of slavery and unjust killers of indigenous people. She writes that

> All Cortez murder'd, all Columbus found;
>
> O'er plunder'd realms to reign, detested Lord,
>
> Make millions wretched, and thyself abhorr'd'. (220-22)

Here both explorers are tarred with the same brush of religious conversion which disguised other actions such as murder, oppression and theft. She states that 'Conquest is pillage with a nobler name', thereby implying that these early explorers were interested only in material gain and the acquisition of glory. Similarly to Crowe, she sets up these previous voyagers in order that she can use Cook to attack war and the slave trade, inadvertently positioning him as the saviour of the profession: 'Had these possess'd, O Cook! thy gentle mind', she laments, 'Thy love of arts, thy love of humankind' (235-36). More foreshadows Crowe's use of comparison, and does so to emphasise Cook's loving and sensible nature. She ignores the violent interactions previously mentioned, seeing them as unfortunate events, instead focusing on how she and the nation want to remember him. Here More fractures Cook's posthumous selfhood by using his image to argue for causes his journals do not directly address. Yet his obvious anti-violence stance means that his image as a humanitarian allows him to become an anti-slavery icon by proxy. This becomes a method of improving the national image which, as noted above, had been diminished due to successive military losses.

---

[27] Hannah More, *Slavery, A Poem* (London: T. Cadell, 1788).

Cook's image can restore national pride, but only through looking at him as embodying a different type of masculinity. Therefore, had the previous maritime explorers

> pursued thy mild and liberal plan,
>
> DISCOVERERS had not been a curse to man!
>
> Then, bless'd Philanthropy! thy social hands
>
> Had link'd dissever'd worlds in brothers bands;
>
> Careless, if colour, or if clime divide;
>
> Then, lov'd, and loving, man had liv'd, and died. (237-42)

Cook becomes the hero figure of discovery, reversing the 'curse to man' that previous 'Discoverers' had been. He is the first, in More's eyes, to journey to other lands with no ulterior motives, only the desire to bring all of humanity together. Yet the contrast between Cook's actual life at sea and the actions of his men in his name (as described by his journals) with that of the memory of him back home is mirrored in the broken-down nature of More's world. The sea separates Cook from home, just as the sea in her poem severs the native people from everyone else, forming the boundaries of their world. Importantly, it is Cook's death which facilitates the transgression of these boundaries created by the sea. Because he became a martyred hero for Enlightenment science, and the national pride, through dying at the hands of those who, according to More, are severed from the rest of the world, this ideological image can be attached to his legacy. Were he to have returned home he would not have become such a national hero because it was the nation's grief that allowed the more negative aspects of his encounters to be ignored. As such it was the journals that outlived him, and which allowed for an imagining of Cook in a way more suited to not only the needs of the nation, but also the needs of those writers, like Crowe and William Cowper, who wished to most avidly speak out against violent state sanctioned colonialism.

Cowper uses Cook in a similar way to both More and Crowe in his poem *Charity* (1782); as a vehicle for sensibility, and a symbol of the benevolent and humanitarian

possibilities of colonial expansion.[28] As with More and Crowe, Cowper needs an opposite

against which to portray Cook in order that his point is made. As before, understanding the

reality of the violent and oppressive encounters from the journals, Cook's legacy is shown to

be cemented as the rare example of an explorer who sits outside the expected boundaries of

behaviour of his peers and predecessors. Cowper introduces him in the poem at first without

the comparison to another, debased, explorer, outlining his praiseworthy attributes that make

him a symbol for 'Charity':

> When Cook – lamented, and with tears as just
>
> As ever mingled with heroic dust,
>
> Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
>
> And in his country's glory sought his own,
>
> Wherever he found man, to nature true,
>
> The rights of man were sacred in his view;
>
> He sooth'd with gifts and greeted with a smile
>
> The simple native of the new found isle;
>
> He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
>
> The tender argument of kindred blood,
>
> Nor would endure that any should control
>
> His freeborn brethren of the southern pole. (23-34)

Initially Cowper's description of Cook seems similar to those of More and Crowe. But the

phrase 'heroic dust', burdened with Biblical connotations, and at first seeming innocent and

praiseworthy, betrays a more troubled undertone. The intention on the part of Cowper is

positive: Cook is lamented with tears that are as just as any that have ever been spilled on

'heroic dust'. The connection here between Cook's 'tears' and the dust of heroes from the

past is a strong affirmation of Cowper's initially positive depiction of Cook. But the notion

---

[28] William Cowper, 'Charity', in *The Works of William Cowper: Comprising His Poems, Correspondence, and Translations. With a Life of the Author, by the Editor, Robert Southey* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1835-1837), pp. 233-53.

of dust being heroic is itself unsettling. The tears spilled for Cook are tied not to heroic deeds or indeed heroes themselves, but to the religious and primal remains of mankind, the deathly remains of those now forgotten, people not even named by Cowper. The heroism is not tied to anything that can meaningfully be heroic. In unsettling the heroism by not attaching it to Cook in a manner we would expect, and in drawing attention to the dust, we are drawn back to the 'just' tears. But here Cowper's image of Cook becomes slightly troubled, and an uncertainty enters his lines. Just as 'heroic' is not attributed to Cook, so the justness of the tears spilled for him seem to challenge the purity of the nature of his legacy. The ambivalence found in the twenty-sixth line continues this unsettling account of Cook. What it is, in fact, that Cook sought 'in his country's glory' is not readily apparent. The line on its own would suggest he 'sought his own' glory from within the glory he gained for the country. Yet the rhyme of 'unknown' with 'own' allows a reading of Cook seeking his own world under the cover of 'his country's glory'. But this idea is in turn rectified when shown in comparison to the image of Cortez who created a new world for himself through violence where he was the supreme ruler, all for the glory of his nation. Again, in the next two lines, the meaning of the subclause of 'to nature true' is unclear. One reading is that Cook, 'Wherever he found man' who was 'to nature true', would act with honour as 'The rights of man were sacred in his view'. Yet this suggests that not all men could be viewed as 'to nature true', and that arrogantly Cook was able to decide who was and who was not. A conflicting reading presents Cook more positively, as someone identified as 'to nature true' *because* of his view that 'The rights of man were sacred', and that this applied to 'Wherever he found man'. In this sense all of mankind are entitled to their 'rights'. The ambivalence in these lines leads to questioning the aspects of 'to nature true'. Is it that Cook can be seen to allow himself the liberty of judging those he met as to whether or not they counted as being 'to nature true', thus allowing him to treat those he did not in any manner he chose without fear of moral criticism? Or is Cook being shown as submitting to the laws of nature, the effects of which cast a more positive light on his legacy? It is this kind of ambivalence to Cowper's writing that (and it is

important to note), rather than challenging the image of Cook as a national hero *per se*, in fact offers an unsettled commentary on the state of affairs concerning Britain's part in global colonisation.

In language of the very colonisers Cook was used to defame, Cowper writes that he 'sooth'd with gifts' those he encountered, which although it seems to suggest a less worthy manipulation of the indigenous people, in fact references the seeds and animals that Cook brought to aid the people he encountered. The last lines again unsettle this image of Cook as the hero of the discoverers and nation, despite Cowper's message being on the face of it a positive one. He would not 'endure that any should control | His freeborn brethren of the southern pole', but in doing so sets himself up as the figure who has control over the 'brethren of the southern pole'. No one should control these 'freeborn brethren', but they are 'His' all the same. He controls them, and will see no one challenge that control. Through ownership, Cowper seems to suggests that on some level Cook was more similar to Cortez and Magellan than previously believed. But importantly, it seems Cowper is not suggesting Cook's affinity with Cortez and Magellan, but more suggesting how any interpretation of encounter and territorial acquisition done in the name of the state can be seen in oppressive and controlling terms. In these lines, it is not Cook who is implicitly accused of wishing ownership of the native people, but Britain represented through Cook's selfhood, achieved through deliberately phrasing the lines ambiguously and therefore making it seem that Cook is morally under fire. When Cowper finally compares Cook to 'Cortes' (40), what is evoked dispels this unsettled image of Cook.

> But though some nobler minds a law respect,
>
> That none shall with impunity neglect,
>
> In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
>
> To thwart its influence and its end defeat.
>
> While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
>
> See Cortes odious for a world enslaved! (35-40)

Cowper deliberately outlines that there are 'some nobler minds' which 'a law respect | That none shall with impunity neglect', which he directly ties to Cook and his attitude of benevolence. There is a parallel construction with some lines, where Cowper matches Cook to lines 35-36, and places in between him and the 'nobler minds' the depiction of the 'baser souls' which is tied to 'Cortes'. Cowper's approval of Cook is affirmed by the differentiation created by the 'While' at the beginning of the final couplet. Cook is different to 'Cortes' because 'While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved' the figure of 'Cortes' is 'odious for a world enslaved'. In the final couplet the image of Cook returns to the common trope of the heroic and saintly discoverer. Yet it does offer a troubled and unsure depiction of a man whose profession does not match completely with the legacy he left behind. Cowper contrasts the image of Cook with the poets above by challenging the morality of his actions. Cook is not seen in the same light as 'Cortes', but his voyages were part of Britain's larger colonial project. Cook's small part in the sanctioned subjugation of other races is enough for Cowper, a staunch critic of slavery, to challenge his status as a national hero.[29]

Helen Maria Williams' poem 'The Morai' (1823) poses as troubling a reading of Cook as Cowper's does in many ways.[30] The word morai was coined by Cook first in 1769 to describe the courtyard of a Maori meeting house (*OED*), but following his last voyage the term also came to refer to the Polynesian sacrificial altar or sacred enclosure (*OED*) coined by Cook in 1777. Geographically locating the poem in the first line in 'Fair Otaheite' (1), we are drawn to the conclusion that the morai of Williams' poem is that of the Polynesian ceremonial space, as Otaheite denotes what is now called Tahiti. Otaheite is again a word first coined by Cook and Banks from the voyage of the *Endeavour* in 1769 (*OED*). Williams' use of these two terms in the title and first line of the poem connects the topic to Cook and

---

[29] Peter Gillen and Devleena Ghosh note that 'a common criticism of colonialism charged that it was morally corrupting for the colonisers', which they state is seen in 'some stanzas' of 'the fervent evangelist' Cowper's poem 'Expostulation' (1782), *Colonialism & Modernity* (Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales, 2007), p. 100. See also: Matthew Wyman-McCarthy, 'Rethinking Empire in India and the Atlantic: William Cowper, John Newton, and the Imperial Origins of Evangelical Abolitionism', *Slavery & Abolition*, 35:2 (2014), 306-27; and Cowper's poem 'The Negro's Complaint' (1788).

[30] Helen Maria Williams, 'The Morai', in *Poems on Various Subjects, With Introductory Remarks on the Present State of Science and Literature in France* (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823), pp. 145-55.

his voyages, but he is not mentioned by name until line 145. He is, however, alluded to in the first three lines of the poem, where Williams writes

> Fair Otaheite, fondly blest
>
> By him who long was doom'd to brave
>
> The fury of the Polar wave (1-3).

This is a reference to Cook's second and third voyages where the ships were impeded and in some instances trapped by the ice of the north and south poles. In this case, the inclusion of the 'Polar wave' suggests that Williams is referring to the second voyage, and the Shrieking Sixties (the 60th parallel) where the Antarctic waves are at their most brutal. Through not referencing Cook obviously, Williams uses his nationally accepted image as the figure of colonial discovery and exploration to resonate throughout the poem: in signposting a sacrificial altar and Cook in a poem set in 'Otaheite', the expectation is that it will discuss his death in relation to the practices of sacrifice and cannibalism that was associated with Pacific islands at the time.

Williams focuses on what, without any context, would seem to be the death of a local on the island. Yet with the knowledge of Seward's earlier poem, the mourned can be identified as Cook himself – a reinterpretation of Seward's poetic visioning of Cook's death and burial. Williams strives to geographically locate Cook's body in order to successfully mourn him through amalgamating Cook's burial with the imagery of the Polynesian ceremonies found in the journals. Initially she sets up the comparison of 'Nature' (11) who is simultaneously responsible for both 'the storms unbind | In all the madness of her power' (15-16) and 'the sweet perennial smile | That charms in Otaheite's isle' (21-22). The awful power of the ocean is the same as the beauty of the island, for 'Nature' can 'dress in melting grace, | [...] The awful terrors of her face' (18-20). Williams brings such a comparison together as it allows the poem's tone to focus on the underlying horror and normality of death inherent in nature. Combined with the earlier allusions to Cook and his colonial legacy,

the poem becomes not a lament to a fallen discoverer, but rather a study in death. The mourning woman

> wildly scatters o'er the bier,
>
> And frantic gives the frequent wound
>
> That purples with her blood the ground! (90-92)

This matches what Joseph Banks notes as the burial custom of the South Sea islanders, writing in August 1769:

> The women (for the men seem to think lamentations below their dignity) assemble Led on by the nearest relation, who walking up to the door of the House swimming almost in tears strikes a sharks tooth several times into the crown of her head, on which a large effusion of blood flows, which is carefully caught in their linen and thrown under the Bier.[31]

From this reimagining of the savage burial rites of the South Sea Islanders blended with the imagined ceremony for Cook, Williams goes on to introduce him as 'the friend of human race' (142). He is described as being 'Not like that murd'rous band [...] | Who stain'd with blood the new-found West' (149-50), and celebrates how his actions were not the same as those later sought to 'load with chains a brother's frame' (155). She praises how he avoided 'Ambition's lofty flame' (159) which is 'So oft directed to destroy' (160), attributing him instead with 'The smile of love, and hope, and joy' (162). His greatness in bringing 'Philanthropy's connecting zone' (147) to the island of the 'proud Morai' (140) is sanctified by his avoidance of ambition and the image of succumbing to its flame. His end comes not from being burned by 'Ambition's lofty flame', and the lament is even greater when Williams remarks that 'where the hero's ashes rest' (167) 'No lavish flowers were ever strew'd' (174): an allusion to the burning of Cook's body by the Hawaiians after his death. Through

---

[31] Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journals*, 2 vols (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962), I, 377. Hereafter cited as Banks, *Endeavour*, followed by volume and page number.

intertwining Cook's death and his unceremoniously conducted funeral with the emotive and highly graphic burial rituals of the Tahitians, Williams offers a critical perspective of the dangers and miseries associated with exploration despite the best attempts at seeming averse to ambition and seeking national glory. Cook gains a 'marble tomb, the trophied bust' (190) at home, but he missed 'her whose faithful sighs | A husband's trackless course pursue' (182-83). His colonial ambition leaves him mourned through hollow remembrance whilst 'His mangled limbs [...] | Were cast upon the raging waves' (177-79).

For poets such as More and Crowe, therefore, Cook can be used as a figure against which other explorers (and therefore other nations) can be shown as inferior and base. But rather than transcend his earthly image and become saint-like, he in fact becomes more human and alive in the public imagination. These poems written in his memory transform him into an immortal aspect of maritime literature from the period. He has become the most influential undead sailor whose legacy and writings allow the trope of the undead profession of sailors to emerge. But for Cowper and Williams, the legacy of Cook is more complex, and often not as directly flattering as More's and Crowe's. The paradoxical legacy of Cook is that his own narrative, either through Hawkesworth's account or the later untampered version of his own, is used in a way which splits his character to fight causes he and his profession were never directly associated with. He was not, in the public imagination, the oppressive colonialist that his exploring predecessors were. But his life away from the constraints of British rule undoubtedly allowed him more freedom to strive after 'Ambition's lofty flame', colouring his reputation despite his condemnation of such follies. Cook as a man of feeling set himself against everything the earlier discoverers became known for. On board he had a god-like belief in his selfhood, brought about by the position of power as captain (crucial for the success of any such voyage). But his benevolence and attempts at cultural exchange are exposed in those moments of encounter with people, both violent and peaceful, who were ultimately ill equipped to defend themselves against his technological superiority. As we shall go on to see, Cook's influence was far reaching. Despite the tampering of the source material

by Hawkesworth, this influence came largely from his journals. To understand how Cook

became such a powerful figure in the imagination of the British public, we must investigate

his own narrative. But in order to do so in a way that exposes the tropes of the deathly sea

and liminal sailor, we must come at Cook through the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,

and specifically the work which is most famously influenced by the journals: 'The Rime of

the Ancyent Marinere'.

Coleridge and the (Un)Dead Marinere

John Livingston Lowes and Bernard Smith have written comprehensively on the relationship

between Cook's journals and Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'.[32] It is from their

work that I have based my own enquiry into the portrayal of death and sailors in the work

of both Cook and Coleridge. The dialogue between the work of Cook and Coleridge exposes

the trope of the deathly sea as a place of timelessness and the undead, emphasising its uses

in maritime literature as a way of exploring the life of the sailor. Central here is how Coleridge

responds to the perceived threats to selfhood that are also implicit in Cook's narratives. By

understanding the influence of Cook, either directly or indirectly, on Coleridge's poem, I can

extend the critical debate around the ties of influence between the two texts, and introduce

a fresh perspective on how they can be read together.

Neither Lowes nor Smith state outright that Coleridge had read any version of the

journals of Cook. There is no direct evidence to prove that he had a copy, nor any notes to

suggest that he had read it. However, Smith notes the interesting circumstances around

William Wales, 'the astronomer and meteorologist on the *Resolution*' for Cook's second

voyage.[33] After returning from sea, Wales 'taught mathematics at Christ's Hospital when

---

[32] John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (London: Picador, 1978); Bernard Smith, 'Coleridge's Ancyent Marinere and Cook's Second Voyage', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 117-54; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere', in *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. C. Mays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) [*Collected Works*, XVI], pp. 365-419. All references are to the 1798 version unless otherwise stated.
[33] Smith, p. 117.

Coleridge was there'.[34] According to Smith, Coleridge had a reputation for being a prolific reader who was especially interested in travel narratives. He therefore would have undoubtedly known of, and read, the journals of the greatest voyager of the age, Cook, even if he hadn't known Wales, most likely through the Hawkesworth account. For Smith, it is obvious that Cook's narrative formed the basis of the 'Ancyent Marinere' due to the fame of Cook's voyages, as well as the close proximity of Wales to Coleridge during his formative childhood years. Lowes, on the other hand, suggests more generally the influence of eighteenth-century voyages on Coleridge's poem, specifically naming Cook on several occasions based upon the close relation between sections of the poem and the journals. The most striking of these occurs with the lines:

> The very deeps did rot: O Christ!
>
> That ever this should be!
>
> Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
>
> Upon the slimy Sea. (119-22)

Alain Corbin notes that 'well before Coleridge's famous text ['The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'] [...] the fantasy existed of a coagulated ocean and a thick, rotting sea teeming with creatures born out of decay'.[35] Although Corbin insists that the 'imagery for this fantasy drew a wealth of material from the descriptions of the Sargasso Sea', he fails to provide any textual examples; neither for the earliest examples of a rotting sea, or even for Coleridge's poem.[36] Lowes quotes from Cook's final voyage to demonstrate the link between the two, highlighting the section where Cook writes that 'During a calm, on the morning of the 2d, some parts of the sea seemed covered with a kind of slime; and some small sea animals were

---

[34] Smith, p. 117.

[35] Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 16.

[36] Ibid., pp. 16-17. The Sargasso Sea is the convergence of four different currents in the North Atlantic off the coast of America, forming a gyre which collects all the detritus that the currents have picked up en route.

swimming about'.[37] Importantly, Smith also finds reference to a similar occurrence in the second voyage, where John R. Forster writes,

> It is likewise a well established fact, that the ocean, itself after a long continued calm, becomes stinking and highly putrid, arising probably from the putrefaction of a great many animal substances, that die in the ocean, float in it, and in hot calm days frequently and suddenly putrefy.[38]

The link between these occurrences on board the *Resolution* and the 'Ancyent Marinere', suggests that they are the source, potentially mediated by Hawkesworth, for Coleridge's poetic imagery, and exposes how such factual travel narratives as Cook's and Forster's would have impacted upon Coleridge enough to become reimagined in his work.

Peter Heymans identifies these lines from the 'Ancyent Marinere' above as the 'first confrontation with the snakes [which] produces a nameless feeling of disgust'.[39] Confusingly, his interpretation mutates the legless water-snake into 'slimy things [that] did crawl with legs': a potential misreading of the lines from the poem.[40] Only arthropods or incorrectly identified cephalopods, rather than snakes, could plausibly be seen to walk across putrid water. The attempt by Heymans in reading over Coleridge's identification of legs on the animals crawling 'Upon the slimy sea', typifies the critical tendency to see the later wonderment of the water-snakes – 'I watch'd the water-snakes: | They mov'd in tracks of shining white' (265-66) – as a redemptive process whereby the mariner has changed his view of nature. It is noted in the gloss that Coleridge added to the 1817 version of the poem that it is the opening of the eyes of the Ancyent Marinere to the natural world that redeems his soul and therefore saves his life. It seems logical, therefore, that these creatures with legs would be one of the large numbers of arthropods found on the dead and putrefying remains of animals that happened

---

[37] Cook, *Resolution and Discovery*, II, p. 257.
[38] John Reinold Forster, *Observations made during a Voyage Round the World* (1778), pp. 66-67.
[39] Peter Heymans, *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 50.
[40] Heymans is not the only critic to read the creatures as sea snakes: see, for example, James McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 35-52.

to die in the doldrums, and which fail to sink to the sea bed. The addition of legs by Heymans to the 'water-snakes', however incorrect, can be read as an inversion of normality in the nature world, which resonates with the lines preceding this section of the poem. This, I will show, is symptomatic of eighteenth-century voyages of discovery and the lives of sailors.

The lines of the poem preceding the legged creatures create the image of a world where the order of things has been reversed. Coleridge depicts 'a painted ship | Upon a painted ocean' (113-14), evoking Cook's description of the doldrums. But this image is one that, whilst suggestive of the natural event of ships becoming becalmed, is at odds with the notion of a ceaseless, turbulent and sublime ocean that is presented before the killing of the albatross. It is followed by the frequently cited lines

> Water, water, every where
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water, every where,
> Ne any drop to drink. (115-18)

Here, the inverted scenario progresses, with the sailors surrounded by water beyond where the eye can see, yet dehydrated to the point of death. Cook notes on one occasion the use of sea water to accompany meals in the South Pacific Islands, but also points out the fact that sea water is deadly, especially when there is no freshwater equivalent. Yet for the purposes of the poem, the sailors, and the ship itself, are drying out whilst suspended and surrounded by water. Here, we have a ship and ocean so still that it resembles a painting, and a situation where water is the sole need for crew and ship, but all that surrounds them is useless. So when we move to the next stanza where 'The very deeps did rot' (119), and 'slimy things did crawl with legs | Upon the slimy Sea' (121-22), the strangeness of the rotting and slimy sea and the creatures walking about on the surface is reduced. As such, Heymans' 'slimy things'/water-snakes, exhibit the inverted world that the ship currently inhabits, having grown legs and walked atop the sea. By unsettling the expected through a succession of images, Coleridge poetically reimagines how life at sea, and the extreme trials of endurance

inherent in voyaging, must seem to the sailor. Yet the inspiration behind this attempt at unsettling reality does not necessarily originate in fiction. We can find glimmers of the unsettling effect of life at sea on the minds of sailors in the *Endeavour* journals.

Banks notes one such example in his journal. It aptly demonstrates how the voyage, for the readers, acted as a catalyst for ideas such as concepts of inversion and destabilisation. Later on in the voyage, Banks ponders the issue of 'Theoretical writers' and their thoughts on the nature of the unknown regions of the oceans.[41] He interrogates the idea of uncharted territory, where there is no recognisable land nearby from which those on board the *Endeavour* can orientate themselves. These 'Theoretical writers' are those responsible for the ideas of a Southern Continent, a land mass which supposedly counterbalances Europe, Asia and America, as the Earth, to their minds, is balanced by matching masses on either hemisphere. Banks writes, therefore, that

> It is however some pleasure to be able to disprove that which does not exist but in the opinions of Theoretical writers, of which sort most are who have wrote any thing about these seas without having themselves been in them. They have generaly supposd that every foot of sea which they beleivd no ship had passed over to be land.[42]

As the *Endeavour* is sailing through the Pacific they are, in the minds of those 'writers', on land yet to be discovered. The sea at this point is, in reality, recognised as the inversion of how it is imagined back in Europe. By sailing across hypothetical land, the crew of the *Endeavour* have inadvertently and simultaneously crossed and reversed a boundary, literally inverting the understanding of the world as they knew it. They have changed what was land into the sea, breaking the division of water and earth, as well as redefining the boundaries of geographical knowledge.

---

[41] Banks, *Endeavour*, I, 239.
[42] Ibid., I, 239-40.

Such events help us to ground in reality Coleridge's notions of inverted imagery and the destabilising effect of deep sea voyaging might have originated. It is episodes such as this that Coleridge uses to slowly and progressively manipulate the reader into seeing the world of the Mariner as an inverted place, where what would be considered normal or logical can seem strange and opposite to the natural. Thus, the introduction of the reanimated corpses of the crew already fit the themes of the poem due to the previous build-up of bizarre but, as the journals show, known and documented maritime occurrences.

The trope of the deathly sea and the idea of the liminality of sailors, blurring the boundary between life and death, is found as early as 1682. In a text detailing the inherent madness of professional sailors because of their choice of working environment, the minister John Flavel creates the origins of the displaced sailor that resonates through into the Romantic period. *Navigation Spiritualized* (1682) is a Proto-Romantic text in how it engages with a trope that is not returned to until Coleridge's 'Ancyent Marinere'.[43] It is 'the work for which he is most remembered' (*ODNB*), and is shown to have been most widely read after his death in the eighteenth century. It was reprinted numerous times, reaching its eighth edition by 1740, and continuing to be published up until 1825, which all coincided with the increased interest in maritime exploration from the early 1700s onwards.[44] In it he notes 'that Seamen are, as it were, a third Sort of Persons, to be numbered neither with the Living nor the Dead; their Lives hanging continually in Suspense before them'.[45] This quotation aptly demonstrates the close relationship between death and sailors that was widespread at the time. Flavel uses his text to argue that, like existence at sea, life is a voyage which is beset by unsettling surroundings and the power of nature. He uses the notion of the undead seaman as a vehicle for spiritual redemption. But where his concern for the safety of sailors and their souls is tangential to this study, his fixation on the displaced image of the sailor resonates with the imagery in the 'Ancyent Marinere'. This connection continues, as Flavel's text is

---

[43] John Flavel, *Navigation Spiritualized: Or, a New Compass for Seamen* (Leeds, 1788).
[44] See the British Library catalogue.
[45] Flavel, *Navigation Spiritualized*, iii.

mirrored by the added gloss to the 'Ancyent Marinere' in 1817, both of which instigate a moral and spiritual voyage through the metaphor of travel narratives. The spiritually redemptive nature of Flavel's nautical compass echoes the narrative of the Ancyent Marinere, who begins the journey as naturally and religiously unaware, but who finishes the voyage as spiritually enlightened and appreciative of the phenomenal world around him. For both Coleridge and Flavel, the transgression of the boundaries of life is what allows this spiritual reawakening, for only the sailor's closeness to, and journey into death can facilitate religious, moral, or intellectual transcendence.

Accordingly, whilst the arrival of the undead crew marks a departure from the reality of shipboard life, the effect and purpose behind their rising can be seen in a similar way to that of the inclusion of strange events at sea: to aptly display and re-imagine the liminal life of those at sea, and their constant struggle against the seemingly unbounded world of the deep ocean. It is useful here to consider Heymans' comments on the 'slimy things'. To Heymans, they are evocative of 'what Bill Brown has called "Thing Theory" [...] [which relates] that moment when physical objects (including human and non-human bodies) are stripped of their conceptual significance and become mere forms without content, surfaces without soul'.[46] He connects this to the 'water-snakes', noting that they

> similarly, assert their independent material existence through the display of their ugliness and uselessness. Their power is a non-power, their activism a passive defiance. They look too alien to have divinatory meaning, too fluorescent to be edible, too ephemeral to be recuperated as junk art and [...] not even threatening enough to trigger a self-preservative and self-empowering sublime.[47]

If we look from this description of Heymans' water-snakes, to the dead crew, and the time up until and including their reanimation, we can read in the response of the Mariner a similar loss of 'conceptual significance [...] [a becoming of] mere forms without content, surfaces

---

[46] Heymans, p. 50.
[47] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

without soul'. When the 'Four times fifty living men' (208) are told as having 'dropp'd down one by one' (211), they are described as each being 'a lifeless *lump*' (210: my italics). Like the water-snakes they have lost their 'conceptual significance' and become lumps rather than men, devoid of use. Their lack of shape ties them, through Heymans' reading of Brown, to the 'slimy things'. It is now the crews' 'ugliness and uselessness' which define them. They become literally 'surfaces without soul'; Coleridge writes that 'Their souls did from their bodies fly,– | [...] And every soul it pass'd me by' (212-14), thereby emphasising the crossing of the boundary between life and death, becoming 'mere forms without content'. Through this process of degradation of being, from useful human to 'lifeless lump', the crew are marginalised, their deaths making them liminal entities in the world of the poem, where their presence is used only to contrast with the Mariner who survives. Their death emphasises his life, their inability highlighting his ability, like the hollow presence of 'theoretical writers' who reinforce the success and meaning of the voyage for Banks and Cook.

Upon the crew's reanimation, 'They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose, | Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes' (323-24). The dead crew's reanimation acts to blur the distinct boundaries between the living and the dead. This develops as they are positioned in challenge to the Mariner's usefulness and their previous uselessness. The Mariner loses his role as the sole master of the ship, having instead to join the ranks of the undead crew who resume the duties they had before dying. The Mariner recalls that

> The body of my brother's son
>
> Stood by me knee to knee:
>
> The body and I pull'd at a rope. (333-35)

He emphasises the fact that his nephew has lost his corporeal identity and has become just a 'body'. In doing so, he places himself and the crew in a liminal place, where the living and the dead coexist and share duties, thereby challenging the notion of life as necessary to existence on board the ship.

According to *Navigation Spiritualized*, a sailor is neither dead nor alive, which resonates with both the image of the crew in the 'Ancyent Marinere' who die but come back to life, and the Mariner who survives, but from the trials he suffers at sea, his appearance becomes like that of the dead. Coleridge notes in his gloss, that the Ancyent Marinere's life was won at a game of dice by 'Life-in-Death': a very literal interpretation of the simultaneous layering of life and death present in the nautical world.[48] The crew and Mariner simultaneously embody the essence of being 'a third Sort of Persons', dead but not dead, living and yet trapped in almost death. This liminality can be seen again at the end of the poem when the Mariner returns home.

> Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
>
> My body lay afloat:
>
> But, swift as dreams, myself I found
>
> Within the Pilot's boat.
>
> […]
>
> I mov'd my lips: the Pilot shriek'd
>
> And fell down in a fit.
>
> The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes
>
> And pray'd where he did sit.
>
>
> I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
>
> Who now doth crazy go,
>
> Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
>
> His eyes went to and fro,
>
> "Ha! ha!" quoth he—"full plain I see,
>
> "The devil knows how to row." (585-602)

---

[48] Coleridge, p. 73.

Again, note the use of the term 'body' here by the Ancyent Marinere, a signal that he has lost his corporeal identity, his spirit and body having been split. Confirming the idea that the ordeals that the Mariner went through left him more dead than alive, he narrates how he looked 'Like one that hath been seven days drown'd'. He appears as the opposite, drowned and bloated, to the expected image of him as skeletal, blurring the boundaries between real and surreal. In surviving, the Mariner has upset expectations and transgressed the boundary of the logically expected. His look is so convincing that the Pilot, boy and Hermit all assume that he is dead, hence their hysterical reactions to his moving lips. Poignantly, 'the Pilot's boy' strengthens the idea of the sea being the realm of the dead when he cries that '"The devil knows how to row."' Whilst still on the sea, in the Pilot's boat, the Mariner is more akin to the devil and death than to a saved sailor. But once 'in mine own Countrée | I stood on the firm land' (603-04), the Hermit is able to address him, and the Mariner relate his story. By leaving the grip of the sea, the Mariner reclaims his identity as a living man and rejects his guise as the 'devil'. He crosses back from the liminal space that is the realm of the life of a sailor, and returns within the boundaries of the living and the grounded. In returning home, the Ancyent Marinere takes it upon himself to pass on the word of his trials at sea, making each person he tells 'A sadder and a wiser man' (657). The Ancyent Marinere's suspension over death has caused him to turn his back on the maritime world to warn others of the perils out at sea, and the fragility of mortality.

Marina Warner notes that in a British Library copy of Robert Southey's *History of Brazil* (1810-19) there is an annotation by Coleridge, who owned the text.[49] Southey's *History of Brazil* is the first known reference to the word zombie, according to the *OED*.[50] In it he relates the connection between the word zombi and the Angolan word for Devil.[51] In his annotation to this, Coleridge writes that 'Ergo, Zambi is the name of the Devil. – The logic

---

[49] Marina Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 150.
[50] Robert Southey, *History of Brazil*, 3 vols (London: Longman, etc., 1810-1819), III, xxxi, 24.
[51] Ibid., p. 24

limps in the article 'the', instead of 'a'".[52] Therefore, when Coleridge remarks that the Ancyent Marinere appears to the rescuers as the 'Devil' there is actually a connection here to the origins of the word zombie, and Coleridge's philosophical grappling with its theological grounding. The Ancyent Marinere by this point has traversed the realms of life and death, existing with the undead as well as becoming one himself. His eventual recognition as the Devil, therefore, resonates with his previous identity as a zombie, a member of the undead.

What is crucial here is the connection the term zombie has to Coleridge and the fluid identity of sailors at the time. There are several comprehensive studies of the zombie, including its place in Haitian folklore and literature.[53] The characteristics of zombies, whilst diverse in contemporary forms, are remarkably similar in their origins. The zombie that we know today can see its roots, as the *OED* also notes, in Haitian Voodoo/Vodou. As Ackermann and Gauthier emphasise, there are two types of zombie – the body that has no soul, and the soul that has no body. There is no inherent evil in the origins of the zombie, they were not a force of violence, but rather an extension of slavery. Zombies were those who were incorrectly buried and therefore able to be risen back up into a semblance of life. Yet it is the act of continued servitude that connects the notion of the zombie to that of the slave. The origins of the word are tightly linked to the rise in slavery of Africans by white colonisers, stemming from those Africans removed from the continent and taken to the West Indies.

Tim Fulford and Michael E. Horlstein have both demonstrated that Coleridge knew of the practices of the Haitians.[54] Fulford notes how Coleridge had read accounts of

---

[52] Southey, p. 24

[53] See Hans-W. Ackermann and Jeanine Gauthier, 'The Ways and Nature of the Zombi', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 104:414 (1991), 466-94; Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry, 'The Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism', *Boundary 2*, 35:1 (2008), 85-108; Jessica Hurley, 'History Is What Bites: Zombies, Race, and the Limits of Biopower in Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*', *Extrapolation* 56:3 (2015), 311-34; Kerstin Oloff, "Greening' The Zombie: Caribbean Gothic, World-Ecology, and Socio-Ecological Degradation', *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, 16:1 (2012), 31-45; and Jennifer Rutherford, *Zombies* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013).

[54] Tim Fulford, 'Slavery and superstition in the supernatural poems', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 45-58; Michael E. Horlstein, 'The Writer as Shaman', *Phenomenology of Life in a Dialogue Between Chinese and Occidental Philosophy*, 17 (1984), 309-21.

witchcraft in slave colonies by Bryan Edwards and Samuel Hearne, the result of which was Coleridge's belief that everyone was susceptible to be affected and controlled by superstition: it was not something that just affected slave populations.[55] Coleridge's knowledge of Southey, Edwards, and Hearne all indicate that he was engaged with the concept of witchcraft and voodoo/vodou (what we would now call Haitian folklore), and particularly the function and role of the zombie in these cultures. This, I would argue, provides compelling evidence as the basis for the undead in the 'Ancyent Marinere'. These sailors can therefore be seen as a proto-zombie, coming before Robert Southey first records the term zombie in the English language. The image of the undead sailors is directly attached to the concept of slavery and the cultures of those displaced and oppressed by the colonial expansion of Britain and other western powers.

We know from his lecture 'On the Slave Trade' (date) that Coleridge was strongly opposed to slavery, and how it functioned as an economic basis for the colonial enterprises of the country.[56] In his lecture there are two notable instances where Coleridge alludes to events that will occur in his 'Ancyent Marinere' poem. He remarks that, in contradiction to Thomas Clarkson, 'the West-India trade is more often a losing trade than a winning-trade [… and] It is likewise asserted to be the grave of our Seamen'.[57] This we can clearly see in the 'Ancyent Marinere' as the ship and the sea literally become the grave of the seamen on board. Coleridge goes on to claim that 'after having been crammed into the hold of a ship with so many fellow-victims, that the heat and stench arising from your diseased bodies, should rot the very planks'.[58] This is seen with the 'Ancyent Marinere' both in the rotting of the sea and the image of the spectre ship that is nothing but the bare ribs of the hull. Slavery acts as a putrification and its influence can be felt within the poem.

---

[55] Fulford, pp. 46-7.
[56] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose* (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), pp. 287-99.
[57] Ibid., p. 293.
[58] Ibid., p. 297.

William Empson has argued that the 'Ancyent Marinere' 'appeals to a proud national tradition and evokes a major historical event, the maritime expansion of the Western Europeans'.[59] In doing so he confirms one aspect of the poem as being directly related to the maritime events of the period. This makes sense when considered alongside Coleridge's knowledge of zombie folklore and his well-known hatred for the slave trade. He returns to the subject in 'Fears in Solitude', directly linking maritime expansion and the British Empire to the actions of the enlisted sailors.[60] He writes

> We have offended, O my countrymen!
>
> We have offended very grievously,
>
> And have been tyrannous. […]
>
> The wretched plead against us […]
>
> Ev'n so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
>
> And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs (42-51)

The 'countrymen' are the facilitators of this tyranny and we see in the 'Ancyent Marinere' those same 'countrymen' receiving punishment for their actions. The Ancyent Marinere himself is only saved by chance, and is used as a mouthpiece for the argument against folly and immoral actions.

What this demonstrates is how Coleridge connected the folklore of slaves to the zombie, and used this to criticise the practices of Britain in colonial expansion. He does this by exploiting the threat to selfhood that occurs with the loss of identity in the object. What Coleridge does follows Heymans' use of Brown's 'Thing Theory', with the threat to selfhood being constructed as an extension of the zombie, as early work by Slavoj Žižek demonstrates. Žižek states that

---

[59] William Empson, 'The Ancyent Marinere', *Critical Quarterly*, 6:4 (1964), p. 298.
[60] Coleridge, 'Fears in Solitude', *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, pp. 108-16.

At the most elementary level of our human identity we are all zombies and our "higher" and "free" human activities can only take place insofar as they are founded on the reliable functioning of our zombie habits; being zombie is a zero level of humanity, the inhuman/mechanical core of humanity.[61]

What Žižek is stating here is that, outside of the contemporary notion of the zombie, the brain eating corpse, there is another zombie which is the base level of all humanity. As Haitian folklore points out, their zombies are not inherently evil but rather an extension of slavery that occurs when evil people use others for their own gain, or immoral people receive punishment. Haitian folklore, and therefore Coleridge's understanding, matches Žižek and Brown's understanding of voided humanity. The state of being undead is one of enslavement to an absolute power. In the case of the 'Ancyent Marinere' this higher power is symbolised by the spirits that follow the ship and direct the event in the middle section of the poem. The undead sailors are slaves to the ship, which itself is a slave to the direction of the spirits. Through proxy these spirits are the masters of the ship and indicative of those profiting from the expanding trade possibilities due to colonialism. They are representations of the slavery the men of the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, East India Company, and others, are forced to carry out. The sailors are slaves to the maritime industry. In all respects they lose their identity because of this, and their life. Wordsworth alluded to this connection, perhaps unwittingly, when he noted in the 1800 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* that 'he [the Ancyent Marinere] does not act, but is continually acted upon'.[62] He presents the Ancyent Marinere as a slave to the events of the poem: he is not the master of his own direction. He is directed and moved by forces outside of his control. This, ultimately, is a poem about the loss of control and identity.

---

[61] Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 100.
[62] William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 318-19.

Unsettling the Voice in Captain Cook's Journals

We see in the character of the Ancyent Marinere how occurrences sourced indirectly in the journals of Cook and Banks are reimagined, showing the intriguing and stimulating nature of voyage narratives. Coleridge's engagement with the idea of the undead sailor and the liminality inherent in life at sea is perhaps the best known example of the trope of the deathly sea in literature of the time. Yet the risk of death in the life of a sailor can also be found in the journals of the *Endeavour*. After only sixteen days at sea, Banks makes a small joke embodying the tension and fascination surrounding the voyage. On the 10th of September 1768, he writes, rather bleakly, how 'Today for the first time we dind in Africa, and took our leave of Europe for heaven alone knows how long, perhaps for Ever'.[63] His capitalisation of 'Ever' emphasises for the reader the reality of death and the risk they are all taking. This morbid pondering is entwined with the knowledge that they have entered the realm of the displaced, having left the safety of 'Europe' for the exotic dangers of 'Africa'. Banks would go on to support many trips to explore Africa as President of the Royal Society, most famously perhaps that of Mungo Park, who drowned in a boat wreck whilst exploring the river Yauri. At this point, however, Banks had very little knowledge of the exploration of Africa, yet it was still a powerful symbol for the unknown, used here as his projection of the unknown ahead in the Pacific. The idea of exploration, as will become apparent for the sea, is closely entwined with death and concepts of mortality. Banks highlights here the powerful undercurrent of death that goes with discovery, and the costs of committing to an expedition at this time in history.

He continues on the 10th of September:

that thought [of never seeing Europe again] demands a sigh as a tribute due to the memory of friends left behind and they have it; but two cannot be spard, twold give more pain to the sigher, than pleasure to those sighd for. Tis Enough that they are

---

[63] Banks, *Endeavour*, I, 158.

remembered, they would not wish to be too much thought of by one so long to be separated from them and left alone to the Mercy of winds and waves.[64]

Banks expands his joke of dining in Africa, despite being several hundred miles off the African coast, with a discussion of sighs as an economy of remembrance. The tone of the entry suggests that the fear of the 'winds and waves' is real. But the satirical element embedded in the 'sighs', evocative of the eighteenth century preoccupation with sensibility, allows a more nuanced reading of Banks' concern for his own life. The romanticised notion of his own sorrow at leaving the safety of friends and Europe suggests that he is also mocking his own voice in the journals. A 'sigh', suggesting sorrow, would be a fitting 'tribute [...] to the memory of friends left behind'. But that two 'give more pain to the sigher, than pleasure to those sighd for' implies that two sighs errs on the side of unhealthy melancholy, a feminine wallowing in loss not expected in the character of an explorer. To give two sighs does not seem a proper 'tribute' precisely because it is a gesture towards sensibility. Banks challenges the language of sensibility as though, whilst on board the *Endeavour* and detached from British society, the framework and language of sensibility is unnecessary. Yet he appears as a man of feeling, his writing betraying an elegiac quality due to his consideration of memory and suffering. The unsettling nature of writing afloat, made more intense for one who is unused to such a mode of travel, destabilises emotions to the point of blending the absurd with genuine fear. Despite having sailed to Labrador and Newfoundland 1766, for Banks, the reality is a fearful apprehension and contemplation of life which overrules, for the moment, his genuine curiosity. By attempting to blend the philosopher with poet, he can seek to conceal this reality by including aspects of the absurd and overly sensitive. His 'sighs' are genuine, but in knowing they will be read, and through hoping to heighten his reputation, he uses his honest fear to heighten the impact of his narrative.

---

[64] Banks, *Endeavour*, I, 158.

Banks demonstrates here a simultaneous blending of the aspects of mortality that the journey has provoked (the reality that he may die) with the asynchronous method with which he writes. It is styled like that of a correspondence, and is similar to what David Higgins identifies in the letters between Charles Lamb and Barron Field that formed the basis for Lamb's 1821 essay 'Distant Correspondents'. Higgins relates Lamb's reflection 'on "the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe [...] to another," which is that correspondents are separated by time as well as space'.[65] The effect of this, Higgins notes, is that 'half its truths will have become lies' by the time it is read by the recipient.[66] Banks' journal entries are isolated points of time, created as though in dialogue with someone else, emphasising the 'difficulty' of which Lamb speaks. But in being recorded, they fall out of time with the eventual proposed reader: i.e. the people who will read the journal in several years, if the voyage returns, will be disconnected from the events and subjects of which Banks writes. In this way, as Lamb writes

> The weary world of waters between us oppresses the imagination. It is difficult to conceive how a scrawl of mine should ever stretch across it. It is a sort of presumption to expect that one's thoughts should live so far. It is like writing for posterity.[67]

Yet if for Lamb the difficulty is how the 'weary world of waters' and act 'writing for posterity' challenge his ability to write a letter, then for Banks the troubles are far greater. Lamb's letters in and of themselves suffer no real threat other than a failure to arrive. Banks has to contend with the knowledge that his own life is at risk in the pursuit of writing his narrative, and that the vast and 'weary world of waters', which 'oppresses the imagination' to the point of

---

[65] David Higgins, 'Writing to Colonial Australia: Barron Field and Charles Lamb', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 32:3 (2010), p. 219. Charles Lamb quoted from *The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are added those of his sister Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas, II (London: J. M. Dent & Methuen, 1935), p. 210.
[66] Higgins, p. 219.
[67] Charles Lamb, *Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, ed. by Percy Fitzgerald, III (London: Navarre Society, 1924), pp. 299-300.

melancholy, not only separates his writing from its reader, but also stands in between himself and home.

Lamb's points here about the difficulty facing someone whose written word has to contend with the oppressive forces of the ocean are useful in understanding why the journals of Cook and Banks themselves are objects worthy of interrogation. Higgins points out that Lamb's 'writing strains to cross an ocean that marks the boundary between life and death', just as the writings of both Cook and Banks are challenged daily by the threat the sea poses to their existence.[68] Because their survival is uncertain their journals become strained by the ocean. Their correspondences are with readers who are as yet unknown. Therefore, the sea simultaneously threatens to silence their voices, as well as to destroy the narratives already recorded. As Banks remarks upon this morbid prospect with a contemplation of sighs, so too does Lamb, writing in comparative safety, note that to send a letter to someone in Cumberland 'is only like whispering through a long trumpet', contrasted with 'a tube let down from the moon, with yourself at one end and *the man* at the other' that represents communicating with someone across the ocean.[69]

In this way, to return to the quotation from Banks earlier, the either/or, neither/nor scenario of reality and fiction in Banks' journal entry is reminiscent of Flavel's remarks and of Lamb's connections between mortality and the sea. The deadly nature of the sea is understood to destabilise the boundaries between life and death for those upon it. The sea becomes a dual boundary; between land masses as well as one which breaks down the natural boundaries of mortality. On board the *Endeavour*, Banks has come to inhabit that liminal space between life and death which the sea creates. This representation of the ship as embodying the liminality of the sailors is explained by the work of Michel Foucault. He remarks in 'Of Other Spaces', that the ship exists as a 'floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to

---

[68] Higgins, p. 219.
[69] Lamb, *Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, p. 300.

the infinity of the sea'.[70] The boat is neither land nor sea, just as Banks, and all the crew, are neither dead nor alive. In such a space the written word becomes disjointed from reality, affected like the letters sent around the world, fragmented from their meaning and intention by the fracturing of time caused at sea. Therefore, Banks' extended correspondences with an unidentified reader void of selfhood, are, for those on land and alive, also hollow: words representing the absence of vocabulary, or 'sighs'. His not-dead-not-alive state renders him impotent and between boundaries. He is unable to effectively communicate his emotions on paper nor to the readers at home due to the vast stretches of time between them and his words.

The breakdown in communication emphasised by Banks and Lamb here, reminding us of what Murray notes about Cook's engagements with the indigenous people, is reimagined in the 'Ancyent Marinere'. Upon the arrival of the Spectre Ship in 'Part III', the reader is presented with Death, and his companion, Life-in-Death. She is simultaneously life and death, a juxtaposition of terms embodied by sailors who occupy the 'Ancyent Marinere'. As such, her affinity with the Ancyent Marinere, based upon their joint natures of being alive in death, results in her winning of his life with dice. Death is then depicted as having 'A gust of wind' which

> whistled thro' his bones;
>
> Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
>
> Half-whistles and half-groans. (195-98)

Death here highlights the empty and difficult nature of communication that Banks' 'sighs' and Lamb's 'trumpet' whispers portray. Death's exhalations are themselves impotent as they are enacted by the wind rather than by his own efforts, and his inability to effectively talk to the Ancyent Marinere or the crew mirrors the crew's lack of speech in the preceding lines,

> With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd

---

[70] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16:1 (1986), pp. 22-27 (p. 27).

Ne could we laugh, ne wail:

Then while thro' drouth all dumb they stood. (149-51)

The duality of Banks' writing emphasised by the passage on sighs, the fact that he can write but it cannot be communicated to any audience other than himself until his return, rendering it an impotent form of dialogue, is here in the 'Ancyent Marinere' imagined through the narrator and Life-in-Death. The crew, excluding the Ancyent Marinere, are all destined for death and as such are unable to talk, mirrored by Death's own inability to do so. We are reminded of this when 'With never a sigh or groan | [...] They dropp'd down one by one' (209-11). Their deaths are as voiceless as their lives, these lines also bringing us back to the poignant use of sighs in Banks' contemplation of failing to return home. The Ancyent Marinere and Life-in-Death are the living survivors of their own respective voyages, and are able to continue to use their voices. Banks' own voice in the journals is blocked by his unknown fate because his audience will only exist upon his return. But in the fictional world of the poem the Ancyent Marinere is introduced through the telling of his story to the Wedding Guest. This affirms his survival and elicits his reclamation of his own voice where the rest of the crew remain silent.

Looking towards the end of Part V of the poem, the reanimated crew are given back their voices in an act which mirrors Banks' sighs. The narrator states that

The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,

Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes. (322-24)

Compared to the lines quoted above we can see how the crew 'with never a sigh or groan' die. But when they are brought back to life they are given a parody of a voice. The Ancyent Marinere notes how 'The body of my brother's son […] said nought to me' (333-36), emphasising the undead sailor's inability to communicate. He continues 'I quak'd to think of my own voice | How frightful it would be!' (338-39), fearful of the thought of their being

undead and what it means for himself. He remarks 'How frightful it would be' to hear his own voice, sympathising with their silence by noting that either they cannot speak, or they have chosen to remain silent, both of which condemn their new undead state. The silencing of the undead sailors confirms their liminality, displacing them from society though their inability to actively engage with anyone else. They remain able to function as a crew through the unwritten and silent rules governing shipboard actions, effectively remaining in communication with each other and the Ancyent Marinere despite being unable to talk. In fact, this point is highlighted by the passive nature with which the noises emanating from the undead crew are described. When the crew 'cluster'd around the mast' the Ancyent Marinere remarks on the 'Sweet sounds [which] rose slowly thro' their mouths', which in the 1834 version of the poem, are attributed to 'a troop of spirits blest' (1834 version, 349). The crew's hollow voices mimic the passive nature of Death's voice from earlier, where it is described as coming from 'A gust of wind [which did] sterte up behind' (195), and 'whistled [...] | Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth' (196-97).

Lacking a voice is an integral aspect of the zombie myth that resonates with these passages from the 'Ancyent Marinere'. Ola Sigurdson remarks how Slavoj Žižek is led to question

> […] why [do] the dead return at all? [… It is] because they are not properly buried [… as such] the dead return because their deaths are not properly inscribed in the text of tradition, and because of this, they have to haunt us instead of living in our memory.[71]

The fact that the companions of the Ancyent Marinere rise up is a product of their failed burial. This is unsurprising due to their sudden death and the Ancyent Marinere's inability to do anything about it. But their return can also be seen in light of 'their deaths […] not being properly inscribed in the text of tradition'. The Ancyent Marinere has, at this point, not

---

[71] Ola Sigurdson, 'Slavoj Žižek, the Death Drive, and Zombies: A Theological Account', *Modern Theology*, 29:3 (2013), 361-80 (p. 370).

learned the lessons of his journey. He is not yet the wise old man of the poem's end. His 'text of tradition' – the tale he must tell in order to pass on his wisdom – is not complete until his own rebirth at the sinking of the ship. The crew are therefore unable to be a part of a text that does not yet exist, so their return functions as a haunting of the Ancyent Marinere. Their return is a reminder of his actions that have progressed the plot of the narrative to this point.

Speaking and the dissemination of knowledge is central in the interplay of zombie, slavery, and literature. This is explained by Robert Yeates who interrogates the necessity of speaking in the role of zombies in his study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1988).[72] He notes how it is through the loss of names that a zombie is able to transition from the undead back to the dead. Whilst there is someone who remembers the dead alive then the undead cannot rest. Considering that the sailors on board with the Ancyent Marinere are shorn of identity, becoming voids of humanity, we can see a paradox forming. In the poem, the sailors are unable to speak and can be considered the hollow forms of their previous humanity. They have lost all of their identity and are only known by pronouns. The loss of their names, as signified by the Ancyent Marinere being unable to use them, should force them into death. Yet, contrary to what Yeates notes, they continue in undeath as conflicted nameless forms that should die but cannot. This resonates with a further point by Yeates that 'slavery has corrupted the process of naming'.[73] The undertones of the zombie that connect back to the enslavement of African people enacts a losing of names within the text. The sailors on board are both perpetrators of the colonial project and victims of it. They are depicted as undead slaves of their colonial masters and actors of slavery who are prevented from finding peace through death.

The passivity displayed by both Death and the undead crew underlines one of the central motifs connecting the journals to other maritime literature of the time. In having no

---

[72] Robert Yeates, "'The Unshriven Dead, Zombies on the Loose': African and Caribbean Religious Heritage in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 61:3 (2015), 515-37.
[73] Yeates, p. 523.

role other than that of working the ship, both the crew and Death are relegated and therefore defined purely by their professions or work (note that Life-in-Death is described as being 'far liker Death than he' (189), and is the victor of the game of dice, therefore the superior of the two in this scene as she usurps his role by being the more deathlike of the two). Death's role is to kill the crew despite being less deathly than Life-in-Death, and the crew have no other point for which to exist other than serving the ship. In being defined by their work, they confirm the notion that their profession denies them acceptance into society: their titles of "seamen" designate them as liminal and displaced from everyone else.

Where we found Banks unable properly to give voice to his narration, mimicked somewhat by the ghostly groans and whispers of the undead crew in the 'Ancyent Marinere', in Cook we find a figure whose obligation (to the Admiralty) is to bring back and present his journal, and therefore his narrative, in a manner similar to that of the Ancyent Marinere. Coleridge's manifestation of Flavel's liminal sailor is through the image of the undead crew. Complementing this view, in Cook's journals we see the difference between his and Banks' attitudes towards the sea. The journals are almost entirely devoid of literary devices; there are no metaphors, allegories, analogies, or overly poetic language of any kind.[74] As Margaret Cohen has noted, Cook's style of writing has a 'completely workmanlike adherence to plain style' which is emphasised by his compressed narration.[75] She uses the incident where the *Endeavour* strikes the Great Barrier Reef for the first time in the voyage to demonstrate this. Cook writes, on June 11th 1770

> In standing off from 6 untill near 9 oClock we deepen'd our water from 14 to 21 fathom when all at once we fell into 12, 10 and 8 fathom. At this time I had every body at their stations to put about and come too an anchor but in this I was not so

---

[74] The more creatively poetic side of Cook's narrative is demonstrated in the first chapter of Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay*, which studies the process of choosing and revising the place names that the journals show Cook went through. Carter writes how 'Cook's names served to preserve the space of exploring [...] [because] What they named were individual moments', for 'It was not Banks' imperial gaze, passive and static, that later explorers and settlers borrowed when they made their way to Australia, but the open-ended, imaginative vision of Cook', pp. 32-33.

[75] Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 114.

fortunate for meeting again with deep water I thought there could be no danger in stand^g on. Before 10 oClock we had 20 and 21 fathom and continued in that depth untill a few Minutes before a 11 when we had 17 and before the Man at the lead could heave another cast the Ship Struck and stuck fast.[76]

Cohen points out that there is

> no description of emotion or landscape, and no figures of speech or thought dramatize the danger. No psychological details summon up the feelings of captain or crew in desperate circumstances; no descriptions of landscape stress the sublimity or terror of the scene.[77]

There is only 'technical language' and a bare mention of events, as such that 'Cook has gotten the *Endeavour* off the reef before the reader has had time to process the heroism of the deed'.[78] Here we see the antithesis of the man of feeling, the opposite of Banks' 'sighs' and a more direct challenge to sensibility. The drama and the terror one would assume to exist around such an event is missing from Cook's narrative. His mariner's experience means that the details of depths and precise timings of what happened are of more interest and importance than documenting the physiological impact of striking the reef. There is a similar instance some months before: Cook plays down the arrival of a hurricane, writing that 'it began to blow very hard and increased in such a manner that by 8 oClock it was a mere hurricane attended with rain and the Sea run prodigious high'.[79] His trivialising of occurrences shows how little regard he has for his own life, and aptly demonstrates how different his attitude is towards seafaring. Whereas Banks is concerned with never returning to England, commemorating his friends with sighs, Cook focuses on his profession, and neglects to remark on his own concerns other than the wellbeing of the ship and crew.

---

[76] Cook, *Endeavour*, pp. 343-44.
[77] Cohen, p. 161.
[78] Ibid., p. 161.
[79] Cook, *Endeavour*, p. 227.

Cohen notes one instance of Cook straying into hyperbole: 'Cook uses a vocabulary of sublimity to emphasize the failure not just of the craft but of thought confronting the hitherto unimagined danger'.[80] Whilst it is unlikely Cook had not imagined there was potential danger present when nearing unknown islands, his narrative does take an unexpected turn into towards the poetic:

> A Reef such as is here spoke of is scarcely known in Europe, it is a wall of Coral Rock rising all most perpendicular out of the unfathomable Ocean, always overflown at high-water generally 7 or 8 feet and dry in places at low-water; the large waves of the vast Ocean meeting with so sudden a resistance make a most terrible surf breaking mountains high especially as in our case when the general trade wind blowes directly upon it.[81]

The use of sublime imagery here is marked. Cook's narrative voice changes at once from one of 'workmanlike' simplicity to using adjectives like 'unfathomable', 'vast', 'terrible', and the specifically nautical adverb form of "mountains", used here to describe the massive height of the breaking surf, and coined in *Robinson Crusoe* (*OED*). The break from the typical style of the narrative 'shows us how [...] the sublime has returned from the realm of aesthetics [...] to the mariners who practice these forbidding spaces in the physical world', and in doing so forms a useful tool because 'By the time Cook drafts his journals, the sublime offers the discourse to express those aspects of modernity's fascination with going beyond the limits that cannot be explained by instrumental yields'.[82]

In an attempt to explain this marked break from the normal style of discourse in the journal, it becomes evident that this section of prose, perhaps miscited by Cohen, is taken from Banks' journal in a similar way to how the sections describing the various groups of

---

[80] Cohen, p. 114.
[81] Cook, *Endeavour*, p. 378.
[82] Cohen, p. 115.

indigenous people are borrowed by Cook.[83] In Banks' journal, the dates initially appear not to line up with Cook, his rendition of events seeming to come the day before Cook's. However, with Cook keeping his journal according to nautical time, and Banks using civilian time, the events line up. Banks records that:

> A Reef such a one as I now speak of is a thing scarcely known in Europe or indeed any where but in these seas: it is a wall of Coral rock rising almost perpendicularly out of the unfathomable ocean, always overflown at high water commonly 7 or 8 feet, and generaly bare at low water; the large waves of the vast ocean meeting with so sudden a resistance make here a most terrible surf Breaking mountain high, espeicaly when as in our case the general trade wind blows directly upon it.[84]

The very few differences suggest an almost complete copy from one to the other, with only the generalisation of 'indeed anywhere but in these seas' seeming not to have made it into Cook's version. This challenges Cohen's assertion that the passage is Cook's first foray into writing the Sublime. But it helpfully demonstrates how Cook's displacement from normality due to his profession renders him unable to contemplate the sea as anything other than his place of work. His sublime passage seems to have been taken from Banks, but he maintains his fearless attitude towards the sea. Embodying the essence of Flavel or Coleridge's sailor who is neither dead nor alive, one who has no life to fear for, Cook does not respond to the terrific power of the sea because he does not worry about his own mortality. What Cook is also doing here is preserving his literary selfhood against the hostility of the sea. The legacy of Cook's voyages discussed above is evidence of the importance for Cook to appear steadfast and unafraid in how he represents himself. Cook's narrative suggests a concern that looks beyond his own existence. In reality his life is suspended before him as he cannot foresee potential disasters, however probable. Cook cannot express his fear of death because

---

[83] This is noted by both J. C. Beaglehole in his introduction to the *Endeavour* journals, as well as by Stuart Murray, 'Notwithstanding our signs to the contrary': Textual Authority at the Endeavour River, June to August 1770', pp. 59-76.

[84] Banks, *Endeavour*, II, 105.

he is in limbo between the two states for the duration of his time on board the ship. Banks, on the other hand, remains timid of maritime life because he is not at any point fully included in the band of sailors. He stays a landsman for the duration of the voyage, and as such he contemplates the deathly nature of the sea, as we have seen, but he also cannot look past the awesome and sublime power of the sea, an agency which forces him to consider his own mortality. Cook's narrations are solid and dependable, mirroring the directions he gives and the role he plays on board.

The death of Cook on the 14th of February 1779 during the third voyage to the Pacific aids our formation of the image of the undead sailor. The circumstances of his death at Kealakekua Bay are still debated. It is believed that one of the *Resolution*'s boats had been stolen, and Cook therefore landed on the beach and attempted to take Terre'oboo, the monarch of Hawaii, hostage until the boat was returned. Some reports state that Cook was rebuffed by the men around the king and, on retreating to the shore to return to the ship, was subsequently attacked from behind without provocation. Other reports document that some of the Marines fired upon the king's consort, provoking a violent response. There are even beliefs that the Hawaiians thought Cook was associated with the god Lono, the season of which had just ended, and therefore his godly presence was unwanted on the island and was needed to be returned to the other gods by killing him. What is agreed upon by all accounts is that Cook was struck on the back of the head by a cudgel, and then repeatedly stabbed to death as the crew and Marines on the beach attempted to fight back and protect his body. They failed, and Cook's body was taken and reportedly eaten by the king and his people. Apparently, Beaglehole notes, his 'body, in fact, had been given the treatment properly due to that of a high chief', but the effects were the same: complete devastation of the crew and voyage, and the desire for a massive and brutal attack of retribution.[85] Matters were made worse by the arrival of Car'na'care, 'a friend of Mr Kings', who

---

[85] Cook, *Resolution and Discovery*, I, 542, n.4.

came onboard [the evening of the 16th] and brought with him a large piece of Flesh which we soon saw to be Human and which he gave us to understand was part of the Corpse of our late unfortunate Captain, it was clearly part of the Thigh about 6 or 8 pounds without any bone at all – the poor fellow told us that all the rest of the Flesh had been burnt at different places with some peculiar kind of ceremony, that this had been deliver'd to him for that purpose, but as we appear'd anxious to recover the Body he had brought us all that he could get of it, he likewise added that the Bones which were all that now remain'd were in the possession of King Terre'oboo.[86]

The responses from those on board were barely restrained. Roberts notes that 'It is impossible to express, the feelings, that every Officer, & Seaman, suffered, on this occasion, a sight, so horribly shocking; distraction & madness, was in every mind, and revenge the result of all'.[87] Harvey adds to this that 'This shocking vestige with a degree of Madness dictated revenge among all'.[88] There was, however, no revenge. The numbers of indigenous people were too great for the small band of sailors from the two ships to contemplate an attack. With no real chance of successful retribution, or even of finding the remains of Cook, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* left, under new command. What we are left with is a poignant reminder of this event in Cook's own journal. Mirroring Banks' hollow words from the voyage of the *Endeavour*, there is a month's gap between Cook's last entry and his death. He last wrote on the 17th of January 1779, and obviously had not had the time to set down the next few weeks' events to paper. But the journal, shorn of its author, stands as the continuation of Cook's life beyond his death. His narrative, different from fictional works because of its factual content, and in being the record of Cook's constant running narrative, still possesses his authority and voice. Rod Edmond notes that 'Since at least the moment of his [Cook's] death he has become a floating signifier who does not exist' except in his journals

---

[86] Cook, *Resolution and Discovery,* I, 542-43. This extract is taken from King's journal.
[87] Ibid., I, 542, n. 3.
[88] Ibid., I, 542, n. 3.

and in 'multiple identities' they allow others to create.[89] Edmond continues 'While he lived […] there were limits to the number of different ways he could be described […] [but] From the moment of his death at Kealakekua Bay these limits were washed away'.[90] He is maintained through the life-in-death of the journal, but his absent presence draws us back to the hollow voice of the Ancyent Marinere, silent throughout the trials of his voyage until he returns to land and lives on to retell his tale. Bizarrely enough, one cannot help but notice that the death of Cook, so stoical and fearless at sea, happened on land. His liminality, based upon his literary rejection of the binary of life and death, was revoked when he stepped onto the beach, and with his life no longer in suspense before him, he succumbed to the mortality which his profession typically suspends.

Notwithstanding any private fears, how Cook represents himself in the narratives indicates a sustained refusal of the threats perceived against his selfhood and the rest of the ship. The journals of Cook and Banks identify what was fundamentally a national narrative at the end of the eighteenth century about global expansion. Whereas for them the expansion is seen as progress and the improvement of Britain, Coleridge's response in the 'Ancyent Marinere' shows a different layer to this dialogue between morality and expansionism. The intertwining of death with the maritime experience is perhaps what makes it such a powerful narrative tool. Cook's death makes his journal a form of prosopopoeia, the represented speech of a dead person (*OED*), whilst also cementing his role as a martyr and leader of British colonial enterprise. The Ancyent Marinere provides a similar role, the poem becoming what Sara Guyer describes as survival literature, writing that the Ancyent Marinere's 'self-referential verse leads seamlessly to a description of the survivor's experience'.[91] The Ancyent Marinere is the survivor in Coleridge's poem; his literature formed by the poem that makes up his retelling of the tale to the Wedding Guest. For Cook his tale is told through the narratives and his legacy. But these two figures occupy different ends of the narrative. Cook

---

[89] Edmond, pp. 49-51.
[90] Ibid., p. 51.
[91] Sara Guyer, *Romanticism After Auschwitz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 7.

embodies the hope that expansion will benefit and drive the country forward, but without contemplating the cost. He is, much like the Ancyent Marinere, a slave to the larger narrative of the empire. His role in the Navy places him in a position where he does not question his direction or actions. He is at the beginning of the process whereby those in the maritime industry, whether military of economic, can be seen to become enslaved to the national mission of colonial expansion. It is through this process that we see the profession of the sailor become liminal. Their loss of accountability and subsequent identity displace them from society. Coleridge's poem stands as a direct criticism of this process, as he tries to force some responsibility onto those who perpetrate tyrannies against humanity. The zombie, in this way, is the ultimate tool in connecting those who facilitate slavery to the slaves themselves. By layering Haitian and West Indian folklore onto the characters of the ship Coleridge is demonstrating the similarities between those known as slaves and those unsuspectingly enslaved.

Chapter Two: The Byrons, the Ocean, and the Sublime

> Of all Objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affects my Imagination so much as the Sea or Ocean. I cannot see the Heavings of this prodigious Bulk of Waters, even in a Calm, without a very pleasing Astonishment, but when it is worked up in a Tempest, so that the Horizon on every Side is nothing but foaming Billows and floating Mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable Horrour that arises from such a Prospect. A troubled Ocean, to a Man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest Object that he can see in Motion, and consequently gives his Imagination one of the highest Kinds of Pleasure that can arise from Greatness.[1]

Joseph Addison's 1712 description of the 'agreeable Horrour that arises from […] A troubled Ocean' is one of the very first to relate the notion of the sublime with the ocean in a manner which does not relegate any seascape to the category of monstrous or repulsive. Heralding the beginning of a new way of thinking about the ocean, Addison's thoughts bring the 'troubled Ocean' and the 'Man who sails upon it' to the forefront of the sublime, and fixes the notion that 'a Tempest […] gives his Imagination one of the highest Kinds of Pleasure'. The sea is at the centre of the conflict between humanity and the sublime, with Addison specifically noting that to attain these 'highest Kinds of Pleasure' one must be 'upon it', not on shore observing it. This places the ability to access and experience the oceanic sublime in the domain of the sailor, both professional and amateur. Contrary to what Edmund Burke will later write, it seems that Addison believes only those who experience the ocean at first hand can understand the oceanic sublime, leaving the rest to experience what they can from maritime literature.

Margaret Cohen argues that it is the terror that the ocean brings which provides for Addison's belief in the mentally expanding powers of the ocean: 'oceans were theatres of

---

[1] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* 489 (September 20, 1712), p. 84.

sublime terror, in contrast to mountain landscapes, associated with elevation toward God'.[2] This, Cohen seems to suggest, means that those exposed to the ocean experienced a more primal, visceral aspect of the sublime than those who encountered the sublimity of the mountains. The utilitarian nature of the sea in public consciousness relegated it to some degree from the same aesthetic considerations of the mountainous sublime. This, however, did not take away from the real-life peril of those who experienced (and survived) the terror of a storm at sea, adding a uniquely horrific fascination to their narratives for the reader.

This chapter will examine John Byron's narrative of the wreck of the HMS *Wager* and his use of the sublime, derived in part from Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), and his attempt to reconfigure the unknown surroundings of the Patagonian coast into a more familiar space.[3] This narrative, and John Byron's use of the 'natural sublime' demonstrates a construct of selfhood that, in the face of substantial threats and in attempting to preserve the self, rejects the breaking of boundaries that the shipwreck and subsequent events symbolise. There is an attempt to project his sense of duty onto the humbling power of the sublime ocean, and in surviving, demonstrate the resilience needed to preserve the self.

In the latter half of this chapter we will see how these pressures on the narrative of John Byron and his defence of empire become utilised by his grandson, George Gordon, Lord Byron. In his rendition of shipwreck and the sublime nature of the sea, there is a pervasive attack on the establishment, showing, as Blackmore writes, how the shipwreck narrative 'stands as an emblem of the dire cost of empire, and represents not so much a tragic heroism as the conviction that empire contains disaster at its core, that it is built on the seeds of its own undoing'.[4] Lord Byron in fact returns to the narrative and figure of his grandfather in order to better undermine the image of empire. His use of shipwreck affects the notion

---

[2] Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) p. 113.
[3] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).
[4] Josiah Blackmore, *Manifest Perdition: Shipwreck Narrative and the Disruption of Empire* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002), xxiii.

of the fragility of colonial expansion. Byron's engagement with the sea reverses the projections of empire that his grandfather John Byron's narrative forces upon it. Byron evokes the unrestrained power of the oceanic sublime to emphasise the ultimately futile attempts by mankind to control the ocean.

In *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747), Dr. John Baillie added the caveat to Addison's proposals from the start of the century, that 'the *Grandeur* of the *Heavens* seldom affects us, it is our daily *Object*, and two or three days at *Sea* would sink all that elevated *Pleasure* we feel upon viewing a vast *Ocean*'.[5] Baillie's suggestion is that only those who are inexperienced at maritime travel can find anything sublime (and therefore mentally pleasurable) from the sea, and that those whose profession requires them to work out at sea lose all mental capacity to feel and be exposed to the oceanic sublime. According to Baillie, therefore, the professional sailor would lose the ability to appreciate the sublime aspects of the ocean which, as we will see explained by Immanuel Kant, would result in sailors only feeling terror when danger was imminent. A sailor's ability to withstand the terror of the ocean, alongside 'the way sailors dressed and the language they used set them apart from their counterparts ashore'.[6] It also increases their image as insane or recklessly brave, as Flavel notes, in the eyes of the readers of maritime literature. The sailors' stoicism towards the sublime ocean, we will see later, is a trope used by John Byron in his narrative of his experiences of being shipwrecked.

To understand the sailors' engagement with the sublime it is important to consider the ideas suggested by Immanuel Kant in *Critique of Judgement* (1790). He wrote that:

> as to the prospect of the ocean, we are not to regard it as we, with our minds stored
>
> with knowledge on a variety of matters [...] are accustomed to represent it in *thought*
>
> [...] for in this way we get nothing beyond teleological judgements. Instead of this we
>
> must be able to see sublimity in the ocean, regarding it, as the poets do, according to

---

[5] John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime* (London: 1747), pp. 11-12.
[6] Duncan Redford, *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), p. 4.

what the impression upon the eye reveals, as, let us say, in its calm, a clear mirror of water bounded only by the heavens, or, be it disturbed, as threatening to overwhelm and engulf everything.[7]

The importance of Kant to understanding the oceanic sublime originates in his philosophical differences to Burke. These are aptly surmised by Philip Shaw, who writes that 'where Burke links sublime delight with the psychological relief at having survived and managed a life-threatening experience, Kant looks towards more rarefied horizons'.[8] Burke's focus on the physical input of the sublime is challenged by Kant's belief 'not to focus on the sensuous or empirical aspects of human existence, for knowledge, in the strict sense, is derived not from the world of experience but rather from the *a priori* conditions of experience'.[9] Kant's approach is centred on the mind that apprehends the sublime, not the object causing the sublime. As he writes 'true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the judging subject, and not in the object of nature that occasions this disposition by the judgement formed of it'.[10] This is not to downplay the role of the phenomenal in the sublime, but rather to refocus the critique of it onto the self.

> As such we are to understand the sublime according to Kant as
>
> at once a feeling of displeasure, arising from the inadequacy of imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason, and a simultaneously awakened pleasure, arising from this very judgement of the inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense being in accord with ideas of reason, so far as the effort to attain to these is for us a law.[11]

We experience the sublime as, at first, a feeling of pain or displeasure at a perceived inability to aesthetically comprehend something we see, such as the vastness of the ocean. A feeling

---

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 100.
[8] Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 79. See also: Timothy M. Costelloe, ed., *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[9] Ibid., p. 79.
[10] Kant, p. 86.
[11] Ibid., p. 88.

of pleasure follows this upon the realisation that our inadequacy to comprehend what we are seeing in fact activates a higher plane of thought that is able to make sense of the conceptual totality of the object we are viewing. The sublime occurs in our realisation that we can 'comprehend ideas which exceed direct empirical presentation', that we have the 'capacity to think beyond the bounds of the given'.[12] Therefore, in the original quote from Kant, we are asked not to just 'regard' the ocean 'with our minds stored with knowledge', but to do so 'as the poets do'. The sublime of the ocean is not, in a Burkean sense, borne out of a threat to self that does not press close enough to cause a defensive response. It is, for Kant, a reflection of the cognitive ability of the selfhood exposed to the sublime. Whilst Burke's sublime, as we shall see, features heavily in the narrative of John Byron, an understanding of the Kantian sublime is useful in interrogating the interaction of selfhood and the sublime constructed 'as the poets do'.

Those who wish to observe or understand the oceanic sublime must therefore remove the mental shackles that a professional understanding of the sea provides, and view the world 'as the poets do'. To understand the sublime at sea, we need to consider things aesthetically rather than logically. This resonates with the ideas of John Baillie, because if over-exposure to the sea means we are not receptive to its sublimity, then similarly, viewing the sea as a sailor does, renders the sublime powerless and void. It is only those who are not used to the sea who can feel the 'pleasure' that Addison describes.

Thanks perhaps in part to the attention of Addison and Baillie, and later Kant, poets increasingly attempted to understand and portray the oceanic sublime over the course of the century, as the plethora of shipwreck narratives from the start of the eighteenth century until the death of James Cook show. The work of Addison, Baillie, Kant, and, as we will see, Burke, demonstrates that in the eighteenth century the sea becomes the *de facto* milieu of the terrific sublime, surpassing all land based objects in its ability to impact upon the viewer (and

---

[12] Shaw, p. 83.

as a result, the reader). It becomes, to use the term Cian Duffy takes from Addison, the "classic ground" of the sublime.[13]

Duffy discusses the merits of various locations as being the classic ground of the sublime, each one being remediated to reflect the intentions of those who were viewing and commenting upon the sublime. Classic ground is, as he states, 'not just blank physical features, but spaces whose cultural values were already highly determined, that is, spaces, both natural and artificial, which had been inscribed with a rich layer of historical and cultural associations'.[14] Yet the scope of Duffy's investigation does not cover the sea as classic ground for the sublime. His omission brings us to question whether the sea can act as a classic ground for the sublime, as his argument that the Alps is the original classic ground stems from the idea that they can be reimagined, for example, in other mountains, or great cliffs of ice, and the cultural and aesthetic connotations of the Alps can be passed onto the new object that is being viewed. When one views the sea (note, not the sea shore but an open body of water) it is a vista that is in a constant state of change, with no lasting identifiable shape with which to compare it to. Yet despite its instability the sea can engage and affect an observer the same way regardless of which sea can be seen. If the Alps are classic ground in how they can be reimagined in any mountain range, then the sea must qualify too as it is a ubiquitous ground of the sublime. It is, perhaps, the original classic ground of the sublime. The sea, or any remote coast, whilst seemingly devoid of any cultural inscription, becomes remediated through the cultural and aesthetic idea of shipwreck or maritime disaster, its prominence strengthened from every previous report of disaster. Every witnessed or reported calamity at sea can be reimagined anywhere that the ocean can be seen. Due to its indiscriminate hostility, its ability to 'overwhelm and engulf everything', the sea can embody all the maritime successes or failures of the time, and as such, becomes the meta-classic ground of the sublime, operating at the base level of our understanding of the sublime.

---

[13] Cian Duffy, *The Landscapes of the Sublime, 1700-1830: Classic Ground* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[14] Duffy, p. 9.

It is therefore the sailor, explorer, or shipwrecked survivor whose account is read that projects a 'rich layer of historical and cultural associations' upon the seascape they are presented with. Carl Thompson suggests that some at the time saw the explorer operating 'as an instrument of British imperialism and colonialism', and any narrative by such a figure would ostensibly have imperial associations attached to the seascapes.[15] The sublime sea becomes an extension of, as well as a connection to, the colonial interests of the time, no matter the country of origin. The narrative of John Byron presents a sublime sea that is the projection of British imperial concerns, but more importantly, one that is not concerned with exploration, but with war and conquest. Byron's narrative, we will see, evokes the violent struggle of colonialism devoid of the usual feelings of expectant of success and anticipation for the unknown.

Despite this, one of the results of the shipwreck that befalls John Byron's voyage is that it 'exposes and promotes breaches in the expansionist mentality and in the textual culture associated with that mentality'.[16] Blackmore notes in his work on the shipwreck narratives during the rise of the Portuguese and Spanish empires in the sixteenth century that these narratives of destruction, whilst 'born of conquest/expansionist historiography', are more readily seen as 'a type of counter-historiography that troubles the hegemonic vision of empire evident in the accounts of the canonical actors of colonialism'.[17] Whilst Blackmore's focus remains on the early growth of European empires, there is substantial crossover to be seen between the shipwreck narratives of that point in time and those of the British Empire during the eighteenth century. Much like the narratives of the Portuguese and Spanish colonial explorers, John Byron's voyage is a consequence of the desire in Britain to expand and conquer. But the eventual wrecking of the ship is a symbolic breakdown of the power and reach of the British Empire. John Byron becomes a victim of rapid colonial expansion, and

---

[15] Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 152.
[16] Blackmore, xxi.
[17] Ibid., xxi.

his narrative could be seen to expose this empirical hubris for the reader. In fact, however, what we will find in the narrative of this wreck is a subtle and steadfast defence of empire, hierarchy, order, and morality.

The Wreck of HMS *Wager*

Duffy notes that 'the invention of the 'natural sublime' played a vital role in the development of [...] professional or semi-professional pursuits [... and] the development of the new technology of writing'.[18] In other words, the 'natural sublime' attracted a public fascination with texts that explicitly engaged with sublime occurrence, and favoured the most terrible of circumstances as prime topics for literary consumption. Thompson has written how 'all the evidence suggests that the shipwreck narrative was a staple element in that culture [Romantic-era], a form of popular literature that must have featured prominently in the reading experience of a significant portion of the literate population'.[19] As he suggests, 'over the course of the eighteenth century, the number of factual shipwreck narratives in circulation increased dramatically. This reflects the increasing maritime activity, and the increasing ideological investment in myths of British maritime prowess'.[20] In many ways John Byron's eventual publication of the narrative demonstrates an investment into the 'myth of British maritime prowess' as it seeks to counter an account written to the discredit of the Royal Navy. Byron's narrative exposes the desire on his, and the Royal Navy's part, to disprove the narrative of regular seamen Bukeley and Cummins who, as we shall see later, returned home before Byron under accusations of mutiny and murder, and therefore wrote a pre-emptive narrative as a form of defence for their actions. For honour's sake, Byron is writing to defend the institution of the Royal Navy, and by extension, the British Empire. His decision to embrace the literary techniques used by Burke and other writers of the sublime in his narrative presents him as 'the individual [who] is often troubled precisely by the cultural

---

[18] Duffy, p. 5.
[19] Carl Thompson, *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives: An Anthology* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007), p. 3.
[20] Ibid., p. 10.

blankness of the landscape or environment which they encounter and [their] struggles to impose values upon it'.[21] Byron clearly depicts his struggle to impose values upon the coast of Patagonia upon which he is wrecked in an attempt to preserve his selfhood.

The voyage of the *Wager*, as noted by scholars such as Thompson and Philip Edwards, was particularly unfortunate.[22] John Byron writes how, having observed the unsuitability of the ship and its being over-laden, 'it is not then to be wondered, that Captain Kid, under whose command this ship sailed out of the port, should in his last moments presage her ill success'.[23] The *Wager* was destined for the Pacific, commissioned as the store ship for Commodore Anson's squadron, which was sent to destroy or capture as much of Spain's Pacific territories and shipping as possible, because of Britain's recent declaration of war (known as the War of Jenkins' Ear).[24] The squadron was notably ill-equipped and poorly manned, and a late start to the voyage (the intention being to leave during summer to avoid the worst weather for rounding the Horn) meant that the situation from the start was bleak.

They embarked on the 18th of September 1740, and immediately after Byron narrates the prophesy of 'ill success', he notes the death of Captain Kid within the first week of sailing, who was 'succeeded by Captain Cheap'.[25] This was the first of many unfortunate events to befall the squadron before they even made it to the Pacific. Their delay in embarking was caused by late orders that Anson received to escort a large fleet of merchants out of the Channel, before being able to sail directly for Portuguese controlled Brazil. The delay and slow sailing (due to the autumn conditions) in humid latitudes meant that much of the stored food was rotten and attacked by flies. This resulted in many cases of illness amongst the

---

[21] Duffy, p. 10.

[22] Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination*; and Philip Edwards, *The Story of the Voyage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[23] John Byron, *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (London: 1788), p. 13.

[24] This was a war long in the making due to increasing tensions between British shipping in the Pacific and Spain who had dominion and control over the areas surrounding the New World. Captain Robert Jenkins, a merchant seaman, claimed to the House of Commons that his ear had been amputated by Spanish coast guards in the West Indies, which resulted in outcry from the British public. The anger of the public was such that the Government decided to declare war, which after several years was eventually subsumed into the larger War of the Austrian Succession.

[25] John Byron, p. 13.

sailors and the soldiers they were transporting, hampering their eventual departure from Portuguese waters when they finally arrived. In a poor condition and with tensions raised between the hard-driven men and their captains, who in turn were being overworked by Anson, they sailed through the Magellan Straits into the South Pacific, where almost immediately the squadron was scattered by a large storm. By this point Byron notes how the men were resentful and angry towards the figure of Captain Cheap, who had been brutal in driving the men to keep up with the rest of the ships. The *Wager* was poorly constructed – a commissioned merchantman rather than a warship – and so she struggled to keep sail with the rest of the squadron. In the panic after the *Wager* lost Anson's squadron, orders were ignored and the sailors forgot their duty to work towards a solution to save the ship and themselves. In the confusion and panic of the storm, on the 14th of May 1741, the weather-beaten ship was driven against the rocks off the shore of Patagonia, because of negligent navigation which was primarily the fault of Captain Cheap and his insistence that the ship was not in the position that better navigators claimed. Unable to convince Cheap otherwise, the ship was left on a course that resulted in it becoming stuck fast on rocks a short distance from the shore.

In fact, the *Wager*'s wrecking was not the result of just one encounter with the rocks, but several terrifying instances of collision, interspersed with tense periods of attempts to sail to safety with an increasingly damaged ship. During this period, and shortly after the final encounter with rocks which destroyed the ship's ability to sail entirely, the crew were seen to go mad – some driven to drinking, others to violence, and some to despair and attempts to end their lives early – a section of the narrative to which we will return shortly. After the wreck, those left alive managed to make it ashore in groups, where for some months a tense truce existed between those now in redundant positions of authority and the men who felt they had a right to act on their own desires. Eventually, after much conflict, the majority of survivors managed to escape the island on which they were trapped, and attempted to sail back to England via the Magellan Strait. From this party of roughly seventy men, only six

managed to make it back. Of the small party left on the island, which included Byron and Captain Cheap, only four made it home after a harrowing journey north with the help of some native Patagonian "Indians", which culminated with their capture by Spaniards, and eventual release home.

As noted at the start of the chapter, Byron did not write or publish his narrative until twenty-seven years after the wreck. The reasons for this are unclear, but Edwards notes that perhaps it was in response to the narrative of Bulkeley and Cummins, two of the men to mutiny once the *Wager* was wrecked, and who led the journey to the south and back to England. As Edwards writes, their narrative, published soon after the return of all the surviving crew members, was written 'for justification and vindication, 'to clear our Characters' as the preface puts it, against the charges of inciting mutiny which it was believed Beans had laid in Lisbon and repeated in his testimony to the Admiralty'.[26] He continues that

> The importance of their narrative [Bulkeley and Cummins] is not in their attitude to the Indians, but in their attitude to the naval hierarchy. Basically, their story is of the re-creation of authority after its collapse and disintegration in the wreck of the king's ship. […] In England the grateful lieutenant [Beans] attempted to re-erect the structure of naval discipline which he had helped Bulkeley to overturn. But the book which the gunner [Bulkeley] and the carpenter [Cummins] wrote served as a shield against the treachery of Beans [who testified against them], the outrage of the Admiralty and the vengeance of Cheap. Not only that, but it became *the* text of the events on Wager Island, which those who wished them ill could qualify or amend but not destroy. The hack who wrote the *Affecting Narrative* [another version of events published after the crews return to England] tried to throw their story into their faces; his lack of success may be judged by the need which Byron felt seventeen years later

---

[26] Edwards, p. 63.

to undermine and denigrate them and their threat to right thinking about conformity and obedience.[27]

Naval discipline was at the very core of British society and the Empire. It is widely accepted that, without the Royal Navy, the British Empire would not have succeeded in its global campaign for economic and military domination, a campaign which accelerated in the eighteenth century. The responsibility for maintaining and expanding the Empire was on the shoulders of the sailors and their officers, and as such, any breakdown in obedience and trustworthiness was a huge problem for the nation. The mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in April and May of 1797, caused by a perceived inequality of pay and bounty system by the men, demonstrated that the consequences of not dealing with suspected mutiny swiftly and hard were dire.[28] The mutinies only occurred because earlier attempts at raising the issue were ignored or discounted as unimportant. Whilst 'obliquely and privately did authority admit that the men had real grievances', in both cases, at Spithead and the Nore, violence eventually broke out because of a perception that action by the Admiralty was not forthcoming.[29] Inaction of authority and an inability to perceive a growing threat were the root causes of disobedience. Therefore, considering Byron's elevated rank in the Navy at the time of his publication, it is likely he desired to get on the right side of the fiasco so as to avoid any potential embarrassment.

We cannot view the narrative of John Byron as we would that of Captain Cook. The immediacy of Cook's entries (despite the gap of sometimes several months between periods of writing) comes from both his continued time at sea whilst writing, and the use of the formal ship's log to compile his own narrative. In addition, the help given by Sir Joseph Banks and his journal meant that Cook was provided with an extensive and accurate basis from which to build his own writing. Byron, on the other hand, as has been noted, was

---

[27] Edwards, p. 79.

[28] See: N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 442-51; and Ben Wilson, *Empire of the Deep: The Rise and Fall of the British Navy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014), pp. 408-09.

[29] Ibid., p. 448.

coming to this with a substantial gap of time between events and writing, with no official or accurate text to use as a reference. By the time the text was being written, Captain Cheap was long since dead, having passed away in 1752. Midshipman Alexander Campbell and Lieutenant Hamilton were the only two other survivors from the party that decided not to join the journey of the *Speedwell* southwards. Whilst there is no information as to Hamilton's whereabouts after his return to England, Campbell was dismissed from the service on grounds of his change in religion, although the main accusation was his attempt to join firstly the Spanish Navy, and then subsequently, the Portuguese Navy – both offences worthy of a court martial. The importance of this information is to explain how Byron was left to his own mind to recreate and produce the entire series of events involving those few who attempted a northward route to safety after the wreck. With Byron's strong sense of loyalty and distinguished career in the Navy after his return, it would be unlikely that he would have contacted such a dishonoured figure as Campbell to corroborate his story.

Byron's narrative can be questioned with regards to the accuracy of events, especially when his motives, as outlined by the preface, suggest he was trying to undo the legacy of Bulkeley and Cummins. Despite this, however, Edwards notes that 'the reverence for authority and discipline which inspires Byron's preface does not carry through into the body of his narrative. Nor does he follow up on his initial onslaught on Bulkeley and Cummins'.[30] It is the fractured and slightly disjointed nature of Byron's narrative that makes it so remarkable and interesting. He lends conviction to the narrative when he describes various events or traumas suffered, which in itself is typical of the genre of travel narratives as a whole because of issues of subjectivity inherent in writing from memory. But this conviction means that even if the narrative cannot be used as an accurate barometer of events, it does stand as a dramatic insight in the understanding of a man's character when it is put under severe stress. Byron's idea of self remains cohesive and strong throughout, despite the numerous boundaries that were shattered and crossed throughout the ordeal.

---

[30] Edwards, p. 75.

Turning to the narrative of the shipwreck, we are given a description of events that displays a Burkean approach to the sublime, alongside what will remind readers of Cook's level-headed and emotionless descriptions – a mix evoking perhaps most closely the writings of Joseph Banks during the *Endeavour* voyage. Byron's first act is to assign blame and guilt to Captain Cheap for their situation. This may seem unfair, given the poor state of the ship and the unknown shore they were sailing alongside, yet the captain was the law of God and King on the ship, and none could overrule or challenge him without facing charges of mutiny. As Byron describes it, the ship's crew were in a state of helplessness due to the ignorance of Cheap and his unwavering resolution to follow the orders of Anson to the letter: Cheap was directing the ship towards what quickly became obvious as certain catastrophe. Byron's style requires that I quote at length.

The knowledge of the great importance of giving so early and unexpected a blow to the Spaniards, determined the captain to make the shortest way to the point in view; and that rigid adherence to orders, from which he thought himself in no case at liberty to depart, begot in him a stubborn defiance of all difficulties, and took away from him those apprehensions, which so justly alarmed all such as, from ignorance [16] of the orders, had nothing to present to their minds but the dangers of a lee-shore.

We had for some time been sensible of our approach to the land, from no other tokens than those of weeds and birds, which are the usual indications of nearing the coast; but at length we had an imperfect view of an eminence, which we conjectured to be one of the mountains of Cordilleras. This, however, was not so distinctly seen, but that many conceived it to be the effect of imagination: but if the captain was persuaded of the nearness of our danger, it was now too late to remedy it; for at this time the straps of the fore [17] -jeer blocks breaking, the fore-yard came down; and the greatest part of the men being disabled through fatigue and sickness [scurvy], it was some time before it could be got up again. The few hands who were

employed in this business now plainly saw the land on the larboard beam, bearing N. W. upon which the ship was driving bodily. Orders were then given immediately by the captain to sway the fore-yard up, and set the fore-sail; which done, we wore ship with her head to the southward, and endeavoured to crowed her off from the land: but the weather, from being exceeding tempestuous, blowing now a perfect hurricane, and right in upon the shore, rendered our endeavours (for we were now only twelve hands fit for duty) entirely fruitless.[31]

The tone of Byron's writing does not suggest any blame against the captain, even as his single-mindedness plunges the crew straight into danger. Recalling Edwards on 'the reverence for authority and discipline', Byron does in fact reaffirm the necessity of obedience and order in his refusal to castigate Cheap. He suggests understanding that 'the great importance of giving so early and unexpected a blow to the Spaniards' would cause Cheap to lose 'those apprehensions' that the rest of the crew were experiencing. So sympathetic is Byron to Cheap's situation that he does not lament the fact that even 'if the captain was persuaded of the nearness of our danger, it was now too late to remedy it'. His resignation to the inevitable is in part most likely due to the fact that this was written having survived the storm. But while he shies away from blame, his passionate descriptions of the situation insinuate that there should be blame placed here, but that he is not in a position to do so himself. With the conclusion of the wreck in mind, the fact that both he and Cheap survived and returned together would undoubtedly mean that a close bond would have been formed. Despite the trials of endurance during their escape to home, Byron's survival would likely negate most of his ill will towards the man who led them. Yet Byron does not jump to Cheap's defence, leaving open the possibility of the reader appointing blame throughout the events of the wreck.

---

[31] John Byron, pp. 15-17.

The sense of inevitability that Byron displays in this passage is fundamental to the horror of the situation. The crew knew what was coming, as they had been 'sensible of our approach to the land, from no other tokens than those of weeds and birds', and the 'imperfect view of an eminence'. There is also what Byron notes earlier as the opinion of the master and other navigators on board that they were much closer to the coast than the captain was willing to accept. The combination of these factors suspends the existence of the sailors (as Flavel would consider it), with their almost certain deaths in front of them as they near ever closer to the rocks of the shore. Because we know the outcome and the details of those who died, at this stage of the text there is a situation akin to the Schrödinger's cat experiment as the crew exists as neither living nor dead, but both simultaneously. There was nothing they could do to prevent the wreck short of mutinous action, resulting in an irreversible destruction of the boundaries of rank and order, and as such there is a hollowness to Byron's description of the events, created by the knowledge of what is to come but delayed by the formal process of describing each event as it happens. With the ship being, as Blackmore states, a 'unit of form over formlessness, an artifice or construct over that which cannot be contained or structured', there is a continual sense of the importance and sanctuary attached to it during a voyage. It is the only refuge, the sole residence of familiarity, during the time away from home. But when this 'unit of form' is heading steadfastly towards inevitable and irreversible destruction, the 'artifice' of its 'form' is exposed, and it becomes a meaningless 'unit of form'. What was once a haven of security and comfort becomes a coffin or a trap from which the crew cannot escape without facing death. Yet if they remain they are ultimately destined for death anyway. This emotional and psychological hollowing out of the ship's place in the minds of the crew, matching the physical hollowness of the ship which is about to be forcefully filled by rock and sea, becomes a symbol for the hollowing out of the substance and meaning of societal conventions upon which the crew operates. In the emotionless contemplation of the ship heading towards finality, Byron matches the void of meaning the ship now holds in his emotionless and hollow words. Fixating on the shore, he

becomes a spectator of his own and everyone else's presumed death. The knowledge of such an eventuality is a further cause of the vacancy of emotion in Byron's narrative at this point.

The narrative continues to detail the very moments of the end of the *Wager*.

> The night came on, dreadful beyond description, in which, attempting to throw out our topsails to claw off the shore, they were immediately blown from the yards.
>
> In the morning, about four o'clock, the ship struck. The shock we received upon this occasion, though very great, being not unlike a blow of a heavy sea, such as in the series of preceding storms we had often experienced, was taken for the same; but we were soon undeceived by her striking again [18] more violently than before, which laid her upon her beam-ends, the sea making fair breach over her. Every person that now could stir was presently upon the quarterdeck; and many even of those were alert upon this occasion, that had not shewed their faces upon deck for above two months before: several poor wretches, who were in the last stages of scurvy, and who could not get out of their hammocks, were immediately drowned.[32]

Byron's inability to aptly describe the events of the night heightens the sublime sense of the situation. The elision of events surrounding the wreck causes that period of the night to become a dark and unknown agent in an otherwise well detailed account. The vagueness adds to the horror by increasing the grandeur and power of the night-time hours to a point where the writer admits to the limitations of words and language to express what happened. It is in exactly this way that Burke notes the power of 'Obscurity' in scenes and descriptions of the sublime.[33] He writes how 'when we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes'.[34] This we see when Byron relates 'The day now broke, and the weather, that had been extremely thick, cleared away for a few moments, and gave us a glimpse of the land not far from us. We now thought of

---

[32] John Byron, pp. 17-18.
[33] Burke, p. 58.
[34] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

nothing but saving our lives'.[35] Once clarity of sight is restored the crew are able to fight back

some of the panic and act in a direct and purposeful manner: they are spurred into action.

But whilst during the night, for Byron and the crew, the darkness becomes the root of a

sublime terror. Burke writes that 'in utter darkness, it is impossible to know in what degree

of safety we stand; we are ignorant of the objects that surround us; we may every moment

strike against some dangerous obstruction', and as such, the inability to directly discern

danger allows the darkness to take on a sublime essence.[36]

From this unknown we are thrust straight back into specific detail – 'about four

o'clock' – the juxtaposition of the two manners of writing again heightening the tension and

power of the description. The long, multi-clausal sentences help build up a sense of urgent

rhythm in the text, which matches the repeated striking of the ship against the rocks. The

point that the sick at this moment dragged themselves up onto deck is reminiscent of the

sailors' belief of rats jumping overboard when a ship is about to sink. Their illness debases

them to 'poor wretches', who are only a bit more fortunate than those unable to 'get out of

their hammocks [who] were immediately drowned'. The dehumanising effect of this deflects

pity from the sick, directing it onto those who are still struggling for life. In sickness they

have already transgressed across the boundary of life into death: they are no longer able to

be saved.

During these events, Byron displays unquestionable loyalty to those he has offered

to serve (i.e. Cheap), and his writing displays an attitude of conflict and rebellion: he is happy

to allow the captain to continue on his course as he is the one rightfully in charge, but he is

also inclined to point out the flaws in this path of action and that he in fact knows more than

the man who holds the power. He has a fascination with the power of the sea and unbridled

nature. His narrative does suggest the horror that it induces, but, whether through

retrospection or not, the narrative demonstrates his calm observation and the ability to take

---

[35] John Byron, p. 21.
[36] Burke, p. 143.

in all that is going on: panic has not struck him down or his senses. And when we come to his view of the crew around him, his detached and emotionless commentary resonates with a man whose view of larger society (here confined to the ship as a whole) is one where he cannot quite fit himself in successfully. He is separated from the rest, here emphasised by his role in watching the events in an isolated bubble of calm.

We can see this evoked clearly when Byron discusses watching the men panic on deck.

> In this dreadful situation she [the *Wager*] lay for some little time, every soul on board looking upon the present minute as his last; for there was nothing to be seen but breakers all around us. However, a mountainous sea hove her off from thence; but she presently struck again, and broke her tiller. In this terrifying and critical juncture, to have observed all the various modes of horror operating according to the several characters and complexions amongst us, it was necessary that the observer himself should have been free from all impressions of danger. Instances there were, however, of behaviour so very remarkable, they could not escape the notice of any one who was not entirely bereaved of his senses.[37]

Byron notes, in Burkean fashion, how 'to have observed all the various modes of horror [...] it was necessary that the observer himself should have been free from all impressions of danger'. The scene was too terrifying for any normal man to be able to comprehend what was going on with the other members of the crew. Again, here we see a close tie to the Burkean sublime: 'when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible'.[38] The similarities of Byron's descriptions of distance from pain with Burke's suggests he was familiar with Burke's work. Byron then finds himself able to contemplate events without fear of the dangers presented. However implausible his suggestion that anyone could be 'free from all impressions of danger' – as it would necessitate

---

[37] John Byron, p.18.
[38] Burke, p. 40.

that they were not in a 'terrifying and critical juncture' where 'every soul on board [was] looking upon the present minute as his last' – the retrospective narration allows him to 'observe all the various modes of horror operating according to the several characters and complexions amongst us'. This is further emphasised by his recording of several instances where various members of the crew acted irrationally. If he can notice them, then he is not fearful of death, or the sea. He is already beyond the regular emotions of men, and has transcended to a state where he is no longer akin to those around him. He is a survivor, but one who is distinct from the others as he is not at all 'bereaved of his senses'.

Because, in Byron's narrative, the sea and the Patagonian coast are 'resistant to the imposition of European aesthetic categories',[39] the sublime is used to force some sort of known or familiarity onto the otherwise bare and desolate scene with which the survivors are confronted. In many instances Byron uses culturally accepted notions of the sublime to allow the reader to imagine the unknown coast. Furthermore, as is the case with Byron's narrative, the events of the engagement with the 'natural sublime' take place 'at some remove from the familiar domestic space', and as such further compound the effects of the experience of which he writes.[40] Because of the distances involved in travelling to the Pacific, the ship becomes a surrogate domestic space, a 'unit of form over formlessness, an artifice or construct over that which cannot be contained or structured', and the crew an integral part of its society.[41] The ship binds everything together into a parody of normal society, but one that maintains strength of bond due to every crew member's life being in the hands of everyone else. Naval discipline exerts such indomitable forces of control and regulation that volatile mixtures of men who would normally quickly descend into violence and anarchy are kept toeing the line. But 'a shipwreck thus constitutes, in diverse ways, a violent irruption of formlessness into human existence, [and] all subsequent accounts or images of that wreck

---

[39] Duffy, p. 22.
[40] Ibid., p. 24.
[41] Blackmore, p. 2.

are at one level attempts to re-impose some degree of coherence and control'.[42] Therefore, the wrecking of the *Wager* on the Patagonian coast is a dual wrecking, a double loss, both of the ability to return home to England, and of the interim domestic space of the ship. The further difficulties encountered in attempting to build a makeshift home and society on the shore, and its continuous erosion by violence and nature up until its inevitable destruction and abandonment, further extends the wounds of loss and exaggerated distancing of John Byron and the crew from any sense of a safe domestic sphere.

Underlining the effects of obscurity but also the pressing too close of actual pain and terror, he writes how one man 'was seen stalking about the deck, flourishing a cutlass over his head, and calling himself king of the country, striking every body he came near'.[43] Another, 'one of the bravest men we had could not help expressing his dismay at it [the sight of the situation], saying, It was too shocking a sight to bear; and would have thrown himself over the rails of the quarterdeck into the sea, had he not been prevented'.[44] The complete loss of reason displayed on deck is set in contrast to the collectedness of Byron, who is then able to note the perverse nature of their deliverance:

> It is natural to think, that to men thus upon the point of perishing by shipwreck, the getting to land was the highest attainment of their wishes; undoubtedly it was a desirable event; yet, all things considered, our condition was but little mended by the change. Which ever way we looked, a scene of horror presented itself; on one side, the wreck (in which was all that we had in the world to support and subsist us,) together with a boisterous sea, presented us with the most dreary prospect; on the other, the land did not wear a much more favourable appearance: desolate and barren, without sign of culture, we could hope to receive little other benefit from it, than the preservation it afforded us from the sea.[45]

---

[42] Thompson, *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives*, p. 14.
[43] John Byron, p. 19.
[44] Ibid., p. 19.
[45] Ibid., p. 23.

The land has become as fatal as the sea, offering no life-giving potential other than less exposure to the sea's violence. But this realisation elicits no emotional response. The language is controlled and measured, which in turn heightens the impact of the events through comparison. The deadpan delivery of the fatal news heightens the sense of horror, with the dejection of the report emphasising the severity of the situation. The incongruity between image – 'a scene of horror' – and voice – 'most dreary prospect' – unsettles the reader. The sea and the wreck, whilst dangerous, are the only sites of possible salvation in terms of food, tools, and a possible escape route to the safety of either civilised country or the rest of the squadron. The only reasonable place to go to stave off the immediate threat to selfhood is the shore. But as Byron points out, this is away from their only hope of ultimate survival. Put in this situation, there is a suggestion that there is no better option and they are doomed either way. This idea is further emphasised after they reach shore, written as though it were an easy feat, and they find a small 'Indian hut'.[46] This shelter proves too small for the large number of men attempting to get out of the storm, and by the morning many more are dead from either exhaustion, the cold, or injuries received from the wreck.

From this point in the narrative after they have made it to shore, the focus shifts to survival and almost exclusively the search for food. In a parody of the image of the *Wager* as their recently destroyed home and sanctuary, 'the gunner, carpenter, and some more, turning the cutter, keel upwards, and fixing it upon props, made no despicable habitation'.[47] The *Wager*, after its transformation into a hollow trap for the crew, yields up a second boat to act as a home, with its literal hollow providing the shelter and living space for the survivors. The profound effect this has is noted, whereby 'having thus established some sort of settlement, we had the more leisure to look about us, and to make our researches with greater accuracy than we had before'.[48] Because of the new creation of a 'settlement', alleviating the feelings of desolation and helplessness to a certain degree, the men can begin to think more logically,

---

[46] John Byron, p. 23.
[47] Ibid., p. 39.
[48] Ibid., p. 29.

as they would had they still been at sea. The crew set about rescuing what they can from the cargo of the *Wager* that washes up on shore, and their diet consists almost entirely of 'wild sellery'.[49] They find nothing but this onshore, and only occasionally manage to find and kill seals that live nearby. Due to their lack of experience, these prove difficult to hunt as they turn out to be elephant seals, rather than the seals typically found around the Arctic (as reported by past exploration), and the crew possess little in the way of weaponry. These seals range in size between ten and twenty feet long, weighing anything from one to four tonnes, and their disinclination to running away due to their size and lack of fear of predators means when they are attacked by the crew, they fight back. The seals prove to be a poor food source for the starving crew, who only have a couple of muskets and cutlasses and a small amount of powder and shot. The tough skinned and violent seals quickly become an unrealistic target. The men swiftly turn to the sea as the only real source of sustenance, searching for mussels when the tide is out, attempting to fish, and hunt the docile sea-birds that inhabit the bay where the men are stranded. Even these sources prove to be short-lived, as the inhospitable nature of the Patagonian coast means that not even wildlife can survive easily, and not at all when a crew of hungry men is taking everything they can just to survive. The ship yields some consolation on calm days, and the men spend many hours attempting to rescue barrels of food from the hold. But again the ship becomes a menacing figure as it constantly challenges their will to continue. During these periods of calm when the sailors attempt to rescue supplies, Byron notes how

> The difficulties we had to encounter in these visits to the wreck cannot be easily described; for no part of it being above water except the quarter-deck and part of the fore-castle, we were usually obliged to purchase such things as were in reach, by means of large hooks fastened to poles, in which business we were much incommoded by the dead bodies floating between decks.[50]

---

[49] John Byron, p. 25.
[50] Ibid., p. 31.

It is as though the ship becomes a presence that exists only to torment them, reminding them all of what they no longer have. The potential of starvation quickly becomes their main concern on a daily basis, and the crew who are alive each morning spend the day searching for anything edible. They do build up a large store of victuals from the ship, but the plan of sailing to either the squadron or a friendly port means that they attempt to save it for the journey. This proves futile, as the *Speedwell*, once constructed out of the ship's cutter, only brings ten men back alive of the eighty-one that embarked, despite all the food stored on board. And those who stayed on the Patagonian coast were left with none of the stored food, suggesting that it might in fact have been more successful for most of them if they had kept starvation at bay by eating what they had. Thompson notes how, in the progression of the *oeuvre* of shipwreck literature in the eighteenth century,

> There is a growing preoccupation [...] with the dreadful horrors that could occur during the aftermath phase of a wreck, as survivors became emaciated and well-nigh cadaverised by hunger and thirst until, in the most desperate cases, they resort to cannibalism [... and] from the eighteenth century onwards it becomes an almost obsessive point of interest and stock part of the myth of what might happen during a shipwreck.[51]

In testament to the horrific ordeals the men went through, Byron relates how cannibalism, recognised as the pinnacle of terror in the shipwreck narrative genre, was only barely prevented on one occasion. This is an important moment in the narrative, as the implications resonate throughout the rest of the narrative. In *The Man-Eating Myth* (1979), W. Arens relates the origins of the word cannibal as coming from the conquest of the 'Carib' people by Cortez and his contemporaries in the Caribbean.[52] He relates how there were originally two distinct groups of indigenous people found in the Caribbean, one they called

---

[51] Carl Thompson ed., *Shipwreck in Art and Literature: Images and Interpretations from Antiquity to the Present Day* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 13-14.
[52] W. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 49-51.

the Arawaks, the others the Caribs. The Arawaks were seen as meek, passive people who submitted readily to the colonial invaders, as well as to their faith. They were easily converted to Catholicism and "civilised". The Caribs, however, were war-like and resistant to this civilising process, and were known to practice anthropophagy. Initially the 'official [Spanish] royal policy […] prohibited the enslavement of inhabitants of the islands, since their spiritual welfare was considered paramount over the economic interests of the colonists'. This, however, did not last, for it was deemed that "'a certain people called Cannibals'" if they continued to resist conversion, could 'be taken into my [the king's] service and obedience, they may be captured […] and sold'. As you would expect, suddenly areas known before as Arawak lands were found to actually belong to the Caribs, and 'their enslavement legalized'.[53] The history of colonial cannibalism originates from the desire for profit, and the designation of a people as being unable to be helped or civilised. It was therefore just a short move from this to designating anyone with dark skin as being a cannibal, or at least capable of becoming one, and 'the racist axiom that one's character approaches humanity as one's colour approaches whiteness' which dictated colonial encounters in the South Seas was born.[54]

Later, in the eighteenth century, it was recognised that cannibalism was not perpetrated solely by those who were deemed racially inferior. White cannibalism came to the attention of the public as a direct consequence of colonial endeavours. Long journeys at sea would often lead to disaster, and the narratives of the struggles of the survivors in some instances reported them turning to cannibalism in order to survive. This was termed "survival cannibalism", or white cannibalism, with some holding to the belief that if it was the last resort it did not constitute a breach of white civilised ideologies. Geoffrey Sanborn describes how

> The sailors in these stories [of white cannibalism] are agonizingly stripped of the range of choices necessary to a human identity understood in terms of the freedom

---

[53] Arens, pp. 49-51.
[54] Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 26.

of the will: they are left with only one, purely negative mode of identification: to choose against death.[55]

This defence of white cannibalism furthers the condemnation of the colonial attitude that relates all other non-white forms of cannibalism as being base and indicative of a "dark-skinned" savagery. Through the process of colonial oppression and subsequent slavery, those native islanders are stripped of their 'range of choices'. But yet in a situation that is the consequence of white European greed, white sailors trapped on a boat drifting on the open sea, or stuck on an inhospitable shore, it is morally forgivable to eat another man's flesh. The hypocrisy, however, was not lost on some, who believed that

> humanity does indeed flicker out at the moment when the *thought* of eating human flesh first crosses the white person's mind. Even among white people, in other words, eating human flesh could be said to entail the deformation or annihilation of the eater's moral nature […] when humanity flickers out, a deeply embedded savagery flames up.[56]

Sanborn indicates here that simply considering cannibalism causes 'humanity' to 'flicker out'. For those left with no other choice they become Othered just by thinking. Any moral uncertainty over cannibalism is enough to show that the 'deeply embedded savagery' we all contain is too close to the surface to be tolerated. Tellingly, 'the racist axiom that one's character approaches humanity as one's colour approaches whiteness' becomes realised as in many of the cases where white sailors resort to cannibalism there is also a literal darkening of the skin caused by the relentless exposure to the sun. As such, Byron's confrontation with cannibalism is presented as a strong moral dilemma. If the crew eat and survive, then they will be ostracised by the society to which they sought so hard to return. If they do not, they may die anyway, but cannibalism might even be understood as necessary and therefore

---

[55] Sanborn, p. 41.
[56] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

forgivable. We can see this dilemma played out in the actions of the crew during one sad affair where

> A boy, when no other eatables could be found, having picked up the liver of one of the drowned men (whose carcase had been torn to pieces by the force with which the sea drove it among the rocks) was with difficulty withheld from making a meal of it [...] Those who were less alert, or not so fortunate as their neighbours, perished with hunger, or were driven to the last extremity.[57]

The image evokes disgust and revulsion, but also sympathy for the child who has been driven to such lengths. All of the grisly world which they inhabit seems tinged with a sublime and grotesque appearance, where a mangled carcass provokes no shock, but provides a potential meal for one who is now too far removed from normal sensibility and response to know any better. In a reimagining of the shipwreck itself, the body of the man who has 'been torn to pieces by the force with which the sea drove it among the rocks' offers up his cargo for the boy to eat. Like the casks of rotten and damaged food the survivors drag out of the belly of the ship, the boy has turned to this other wreck for the same source of sustenance. He has undergone the process of becoming a savage, but is prevented from doing so fully due to the moral grey area of white cannibalism. His descent into savagery would be irreversible if he were to be allowed to eat the liver, and the suggestion is that neither Byron nor the rest of the crew are able yet to consider sacrificing their humanity.

Another factor at play here is that when Byron eventually meets some of the inhabitants of the coast, despite being constantly referred to as savage, they at no point seem to engage in cannibalism. Writing retrospectively, therefore, Byron would have been making a great claim against the white natural superiority if they were driven to cannibalism whilst the "savages" were not. Perhaps most telling is that Byron notes how 'those who were less alert, or not so fortunate […] were driven to the last extremity'. The line 'the last extremity'

---

[57] John Byron, p. 32.

here suggests a dual meaning, neither of which being positive. It seems to allude to the act of cannibalism, it being the last resort of those who are starving, whilst also evoking the actual process of Othering, whereby men who are unable to sustain themselves are excluded not only from the coastal community, but from white society in general, for committing such a morally unforgivable crime. Without directly stating it, Byron hints at the breakdown of the society of the survivors through the dark practice of cannibalism. This would stand, therefore, as a direct challenge to the notions of order and authority that Byron writes to defend. As we will see, from this moment on, Byron isolates himself further from the majority of the survivors, and eventually decides to stay with the few remaining officers who are, in terms of cannibalism, morally unimpeachable, rather than attempt a return voyage with those men he believes have reached 'the last extremity'.

Neither the sea nor the land offer any real salvation: 'the coast, as far as our eye could stretch seaward, a scene of such dismal breakers as would discourage the most daring' strongly mirroring Burke's ideas on the effect of infinity and vastness in the sublime. The sea becomes for Byron the only real source of hope; both of food and escape, but its unyielding nature makes the possibility of survival remote. At one point, in a graphic display of the sea's violent and dangerous potential, 'the bodies of our drowned people [were] thrown among the rocks, some of which were hideous spectacles, from the mangled condition they were in by the violent surf that drove in upon the coast'.[58] Spewing up the detritus of the wreck, the sea seems to continually display a dominant identity as a place the men should avoid.

Byron sets himself apart from the rest in a hut of his own making, through a desire to remain separated from the politics of the crew and the strife which comes with it. He chooses to ostracise himself from their society, preferring the company of nature (initially in the form of a stray dog), and the simplicity of the sea during his attempts to find food. He notes that 'liking none of the parties, I built a little hut just big enough for myself and a poor

---

[58] John Byron, p. 30.

Indian dog I found in the woods'.[59] Byron again becomes a spectator of life on the coast, segregating himself from the rest of the crew, mirroring his actions when the ship was heading for the rocks, or later when group rivalries escalate into violence. When he is eventually compelled to eat his dog by the rest of the crew, he is forced out of his solitude and driven into engaging with the crew again.

> One day when I was at home in my hut with my Indian dog, a party came to my door, and told me their necessities were such, that they must eat the creature or starve. Though their plea was urgent, I could not help using some arguments to endeavour to dissuade them from killing him, as his faithful services and fondness deserved it at my hands; but, without weighing my arguments, they took him away by force and killed him; upon which, thinking that I had at least as good a right to share as the rest, I sat down with them, and partook of their repast. Three weeks after that I was glad to make a meal of his paws and skin, which, upon recollecting the spot where they had killed him, I found thrown aside and rotten.[60]

Byron had obviously preferred the company of the dog to that of the crew whilst isolated in his hut as he had not chosen to eat the animal himself. His love was greater for the dog than the crew, due in part because his dog 'could shift for himself along shore, at low water, by getting limpets', but also because of it 'grew so fond of me and faithful, that he would suffer no body to come near the hut without biting them'.[61] By including the dog Byron forms his own small society outside of the majority. His ambivalence towards the community that had formed is obvious by his specification of '*my* hut' (my emphasis). The men in the passage are unknown and faceless, the kind who will not be remembered when they drown as there is no one left on the shore with the energy or presence of mind to record or help anyone who gets into trouble. Death now looms over the daily events, adding to the survivors'

---

[59] John Byron, p. 37.
[60] Ibid., p. 45.
[61] Ibid., p. 37.

desensitised and dehumanised condition. In the world the survivors now inhabit, individuality becomes marked only though actions that are so impacting as to resonate with the onlookers.

It is therefore understandable that Byron displays admiration and envy when he meets the native people of the coast who live well on what they can catch in the sea: 'it seems as if Providence had endued this people with a kind of amphibious nature, as the sea is the only source from whence almost all their subsistence is derived'.[62] This affinity with the sea is shown by their ability to dive for long periods of time in the freezing water, and provide Byron with fish, as he notes

> the youngest of the two women [...] jumped overboard, and diving to the bottom, continued underwater an amazing time: when she had filled the blanket with sea-eggs [urchins], she came up to the boat side [...] then, after having taken a short time to breath, went down and up again with the same success; and so several times for the space of half an hour.[63]

Succeeding where the Europeans cannot, the women highlight the ineptitude of Byron and those remaining, emphasising the point that, despite Britain's ever growing command of the world stage, they are more powerless than they may wish to acknowledge. The realisation of their own limitations comes after the point in the narrative when the majority of the crew have taken the repaired and lengthened ship and sailed away, leaving just Byron, Cheap, Campbell, and Hamilton behind. Byron subsequently describes a night spent in a tent with two native women who, taking pity on him, feed and shelter him for several days.

> In this wigwam, into which I took my liberty to introduce myself, I found only two women, who, upon first seeing a figure they were not accustomed to, and such a figure too as I then made, were struck with astonishment. They were sitting by a fire,

---

[62] John Byron, p. 103.
[63] Ibid., p. 103.

to which I approached without any apology. However inclined I might I have been to make one, my ignorance of their language made it impossible to attempt it. One of these women appeared to be young, and very handsome for an Indian; the other old, and as frightful as it is possible to conceive any thing in human shape to be. [...] Soon after the two women came in again, having, as I supposed, conferred with the Indian, our conductor; and appearing to be in great humour, began to chatter and laugh immoderately. [...] They soon comprehended my meaning, and the younger beginning to rummage under some pieces of bark that lay in the corner of the wigwam, produced a fine large fish; this they presently put upon the fire to broil; and when it was just warm through, they made a sign for me to eat. [...] What I had hitherto eat served only to sharpen my appetite; I could not help, therefore, being earnest with them to get me some more victuals. [...] After an hour's absence, they came in trembling with cold, and their hair streaming with water, and brought two fish; which having broiled, they gave me the largest share; and then we all laid down as before to rest.[64]

The two women, old and young, care for Byron, and their attention allows him to revive some of his strength. The lack of communication between Byron and the women, with only hand gestures and intuition proving of any use, is indicative of Byron's, as well as the entire group of survivors', attempts to understand and ultimately survive off the local flora and fauna. They only attempt to manipulate and force what they find into being helpful and restorative, but there is no real connection between the surroundings and themselves as the indigenous population have, nor between Byron and the women. Their care for him is dependent on the approval of the chief who is taking them to a settlement for a promised reward. Later in the narrative, the women's attention towards Byron results in severe

---

[64] John Byron, pp. 99-101.

punishment from a more senior chief who returns to the group, resulting in the women ignoring Byron for the rest of their time together. He relates

> Breaking out into savage fury, he [the chief] took the young one up in his arms, and threw her with violence against the stones; but his brutal resentment did not stop here, he beat her afterwards in a cruel manner. I could not see this treatment of my benefactors without the highest concern for her, and rage against the author of it; especially as the natural jealousy of these people gave occasion to think that it was on my account she suffered. I could hardly suppress the first emotions of my resentment, which prompted me to return to him his barbarity in his own kind; but besides that this might have drawn upon her fresh marks of his severity, it was neither politic, nor indeed in my power, to have done it to any good purpose at this time.[65]

It is only the younger of the two women who, in Byron's narrative, gets beaten for her part in his care. Even more strikingly, John Byron himself notes how the younger of the two women seemed more like the chief's daughter than wife (despite in fact being his wife), and remarks that he treated her as such. Notably, this series of events resonates clearly with Canto II of *Don Juan* and the care of Don Juan by Haidee and her maid, which will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

The remainder of Byron's journey becomes simply a trial of surviving starvation and attempting to keep up with the indigenous people who, for hopes of a reward, agree to take the small party to the closest settlement that had government officials. Resolutely, Byron remains the same level-headed character as when he begins the journey. He remains loyal and non-judgemental of Cheap throughout, and displays admirable levels of civility to the guides despite their often brutal treatment towards him. After five years of travel and survival, Byron returns to London, where he finds his family all moved from where he called home, and those still around unable to recognise him. Despite all of this, in a manner

---

[65] John Byron, p. 108.

evocative of the Ancyent Marinere, he returns to home and spreads the story of his somewhat miraculous escape from death.

The mundane nature with which the narrative is delivered is, for the most part, a consequence of its being retrospective. The reliability of this text is called into question by the long gap between the events and its publication. This in some ways challenges whether the account is factual and reliable. The retrospective nature of the text can be seen to remove a layer of emotion and sensibility from the actions of Byron. Yet this same reserve functions to alleviate any questions over the truthfulness of his recollection as no moments read as greatly exaggerated or hyperbolic. Importantly, the accuracy of recall in the narrative is not a major concern as the focus is on the constructs of, and challenges to, selfhood. The gap between events and publication can in fact be seen to help the interrogation of selfhood due to the removal of exaggerated recollection. Without the distraction of feeling compelled to accurately record the details of all those who were on the voyage means we are presented with a direct view of the selfhood Byron created in the text. The lack of sensationalism highlights those moments where the threats to Byron's selfhood are at their most powerful.

Lord Byron and the Creative Liberation of the Sea

In his 'Epistle to Augusta' (1816), Lord Byron is clear about the connection he has with his grandfather.[66] It is one that resonates through much of Lord Byron's poetry, due to their shared bond with the sea.

> A strange doom was thy father's son's and past
>
> Recalling—as it lies beyond redress—
>
> Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore
>
> He had no rest at sea—nor I on shore.

---

[66] Lord Byron, 'Epistle to Augusta', *The Complete Poetical Works*, IV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 35-40. All subsequent references to line numbers are in the body of the text.

> If my inheritance of storms hath been
>
> In other elements—and on the rocks
>
> Of perils overlooked or unforeseen
>
> I have sustained my share of worldly shocks (13-20)

These lines are laced with familial language, heavily emphasising the connection between Byron and his grandfather. He uses the possessives of 'father's', 'son's', 'grandsire's', 'my inheritance' to encourage the reader to see his professed connection to the 'other elements' as being as strong as his bond is to his family. It stands as a test for the reader, questioning their knowledge of his family background, especially that which relates to his grandfather, whilst assuming Augusta does herself. The stanzas ask how familiar the reader is with the poet, showing Byron playing with his celebrity status, but they also attempt to build a connection between poet and audience.[67] The allusions to personal issues are a play on the sensibilities of the reader, whilst cultivating the image of the poet as an ostracised, mysterious traveller. The relative fame of his grandfather, John Byron, and his notoriety for relishing extreme weather (hence his nickname of "Foul-weather Jack") resonates in the reoccurring engagements with ocean storms and shipwrecks in his poetry. The wreck off the Patagonian coast, as well as his first circumnavigation of the globe in 1731 with George Anson, and subsequent circumnavigation as captain of the HMS *Dolphin* between the years 1764-66 (the first time such a journey was ever achieved in under two years), undoubtedly positions him as an influential figure in the various engagements with the nautical in Byron's poetry. The popularity of shipwreck narratives throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries seem to be reflected in Byron's interest in maritime topics, resonating with the nautical travel and disasters that are reoccurring themes in his work. Yet the self-reflexive awareness of Byron to directly refer to his grandfather, as shown in the lines from 'Epistle

---

[67] See, for example: Clara Tuite, 'Tainted Love and Romantic "Literary Celebrity"', *ELH*, 74:1 (2007), 59-88.

to Augusta', is indicative of what I believe to be his concern with connecting himself to his grandfather's history, and sharing in this familial bond with the ocean.

Byron's poetic imaginings of the sea can be seen to resonate with the concept of survival literature that was highlighted in Coleridge's 'Ancyent Marinere' at the end of the last chapter.[68] The survival of the Ancyent Marinere facilitates his ability to retell the tale of his trials at sea. For Byron, the survival of his characters is often demonstrative of a wider political concern which centres on his own criticisms of British society and those that he sees as being set against him. His poetics indicates a development of self as an attempt at qualifying his own personal development. Jock Macleod notes that 'a considerable part of his mental energy at this time [of writing *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto III] was devoted to making people realise he was hurt, and that his feelings were genuine'.[69] Byron, according to Macleod, uses writing as a method of developing the self in a manner unavailable in real life. Thanks in part to the control he can have over his poetry, 'Byron writes in order that he may be believed', relying on its potential longevity and persuasive power.[70] Byron attempts to use 'writing as a vehicle for truth', which his poetic characters become part of.[71] Thompson notes shrewdly that 'because sea travel is intrinsically dangerous and uncomfortable, it becomes for Byron a mode of travel especially associated with this opening-up of the self'.[72] He is well known for the blurring of his main characters with the speaker, with his texts becoming autobiographical as they progress.[73] According to James A. W. Heffernan, Byron can be seen 'explicitly lining the melancholy, alienated temperament of his narrating self with the personality of the title figure in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*' and yet we must recognise that 'Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is not autobiography but autobiographical […] a poem in

---

[68] See: Sarah Guyer, *Romanticism after Auschwitz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[69] Jock Macleod, 'Misreading Writing: Rousseau, Byron, and *Childe Harold* III', *Comparative Literature*, 43:3 (1991), 260-279 (p. 273).

[70] Ibid., p. 274.

[71] Ibid., p. 278.

[72] Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 240.

[73] For more on this see: Paul A. Cantor, 'The Politics of the Epic: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Romantic Redefinition of Heroism', *The Review of Politics*, 69:3 (2007), 375-401; and James L. Hill, 'Experiments in the Narrative of Consciousness: Byron, Wordsworth, and Childe Harold, Cantos 3 and 4', *ELH*, 53:1 (1986), 121-140.

which he projects himself at once as the first-person narrator and as the third-person pilgrim'.[74] The complex intertwining of Byron with his literary creations extends beyond *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, I argue, with aspects of his political and aesthetic selfhood filtering into his other poetic speakers. This close link between writer and speaker demonstrates the need for a character to survive and achieve some moral absolute, in order to highlight the cost when others fail to do so. This, perhaps, comes from the appreciation that Byron displays towards the work of his grandfather, even if their ideological views differ because of their opposing ideas concerning the role of government and authority. The final section of this chapter will interrogate Byron's use and manipulation of the tropes of shipwreck, sublime, and death at sea in his poetry, and will explore the methods he uses to form a critical argument against the political oppression of the British Empire. We can see parallels running through the work of both Byron and his grandfather that demonstrate how questions of morality are challenged by the sea, and how survival, as read in the dialogue between their works, seems to hang on the actions of those who are forced to play a part. The vindicated survive, whereas the morally debased are (poetically) sacrificed.

The work done by Thompson to demonstrate the link between Byron's use of the shipwreck trope and his political attacks is key to my interrogation here. Thompson has written extensively on the strengthening connection between concepts of Providence and shipwrecks, and 'the religious lessons frequently extracted from these accounts of dreadful human suffering', throughout the eighteenth century.[75] He argues that 'Religious parodies had become in the late 1810s a key weapon in liberal attacks on the repressive post-war administration in Britain', which is a key topic for much of Byron's poetry. Therefore, he suggests that the 'shipwreck in *Don Juan* […] should thus be understood as an indirect attack on the conservative ideology promulgated by many Romantic-era shipwreck narratives'.[76]

---

[74] James A. W. Hefferman, 'Self-Representation in Byron and Turner', *Poetics Today*, 10:2 (1989), 207-241 (pp. 211-12).

[75] See Thompson, *Romantic Era Shipwreck Narratives* (p. 29.) and *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* for more on this.

[76] Thompson, *Romantic Era Shipwreck Narratives*, p. 30.

This engagement between Byron and the ocean can be extended in order to consider how he 'represents the chaos of his present emotional condition' with particular focus on his political and colonial views of the time. As with John Byron's engagement with the sublime as a method to project images of order and adherence to naval doctrine, so Byron in his poetry uses the sublime in shipwreck disasters and maritime travel as a whole to reflect his own criticisms of society. Byron displays an understanding of the cultural and social attachments that already exist concerning the sublime in shipwreck literature. The connotations of the sublime have become providential and demonstrate the British man's need to conquer the ocean as much as the need to conquer the colonial world. Byron intensifies his literary critique of society by incorporating the trope of triumph over nature's resistance to colonial expansion, evidenced by the British belief in their "ruling the waves". He turns this triumph into a mockery of colonial expansion whilst highlighting the futility of such endeavours. The shipwreck in literature became, thanks in part to John Byron, a classic ground of the sublime, which, in turn became incorporated into the colonial, oppressive, post-war British government. What we see in the nautical poetry of Byron is a manipulation of this in order to better express his political ire in a familiar form for the reader, but with a subversive message.

Byron, in the lines above from 'Epistle to Augusta', indirectly addresses his infamous affair with his half-sister, 'A strange doom was thy father's son's', as they had shared paternity through John "Mad-Jack" Byron – the son of John Byron, author of the narrative. Byron refers to himself in the third person, noting 'Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore', meaning that he believes he has the opposite destiny to his grandfather John Byron, before switching back to the first person in the final line 'He had no rest at sea—nor I on shore'. John Byron earned the name "Foul-weather Jack" due to the frequency of storms he sailed through, and the apparent pleasure he found in surviving even the most horrendous ordeals. He died Vice-Admiral of the White, the fifth highest rank in the Navy, second in command of the second most prestigious fleet, and a highly respectable achievement. His grandson, in

comparison, sought fame and fortune within the confines of higher society in Britain, but in contrast to his grandfather, suffered infamy and disrepute depicted by the emotionally turbulent life he compares to the nautically turbulent life of his grandfather. The melancholy tone in these lines to his half-sister, typical of Byron's self-dramatisation, suggest that the connection he feels to his grandfather offers no redemption, and whilst he can sympathise with the harshness of a life at sea, he cannot see a positive ending for himself.

This melancholic image of Bryon as one of the 'wanderers o'er Eternity | Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be' (III, 669-70) resonates with the idea of a dislocated and isolated poetic persona which can be seen as the result of a disbelief in the societal and cultural values of the time.[77] Simultaneously embodying Coleridge's Ancyent Marinere and Flavel's liminal sailor, Byron's nautical poetic persona is one who is profoundly aware of his own mortality but who seems endlessly beset by trials of conscience. These events are depicted in the poetry through a fascination with the sublime and destructive power of the sea, and with its ability to wreck the ships he uses to escape from whatever haunts him. As such the sea becomes a metaphor for Byron. Ships often figure in Byron's poetry as vehicles for escape: but in allowing them to be wrecked, he actually creates new beginnings, a redemption, after the boundaries of each ship are obliterated. Thompson notes that the wreck, for Byron, denotes 'a release of sorts, a breaking-up [...] of the more constraining social structure embodied by that ship, and, symbolically, of existential constraints'.[78] In this way 'so life and travel should proceed by an endless series of such wrecks', and as such the ship becomes a figure firstly of what Byron as the lonely sailor needs in order to be free, before secondly manifesting itself as the very constraints of society he needs to destroy in order to start again.[79] Therefore, in doggedly pursuing the scenarios of shipwrecks in his poetry, Byron is able to maintain the image of the eternally wandering sailor

---

[77] Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Complete Poetical Works*, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). All subsequent references to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are in the body of the text with the canto number followed by line number.
[78] Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 248.
[79] Ibid., p. 248.

who can feel no connection to the land as it embodies all the rigidity and constraint that he seeks to escape.

The eternal wanderer, in his various manifestations throughout Byron's poetic *oeuvre,* resonates with the Ancyent Marinere. He appears as someone with no fear or reluctance at being trapped at sea, unable to return to land, forever enduring the storms and power of the ocean, as if trapped in purgatory for crimes of which the reader is only ever partially aware. In such a way does Byron highlight the lack of Providence to be found in much of the shipwreck and maritime literature of the time. Whilst some survived, most were left to aimlessly (and helplessly) drift across the sea, or sit trapped on a beach. Like the Ancyent Marinere, Byron suggests that to make it home alive requires less help from God and more than a little good luck and help from the fates that roam the seas. Yet in these literary examples of shipwrecks, we will see that a desire to speak out against folly and hasty expansion can lead to a miraculous survival. In this light one of the most intriguing survival figures of all is Julian, from the unfinished fragment of the poem 'Julian'.[80]

This fragment of a poem tells the beginning of a story about a sailor whose ship is engulfed by a storm that kills everyone on-board except him. Like Don Juan, he is washed ashore on an unknown beach.[81] But in this case Julian awakes to find himself alone and, battered by the storm, attempts to stagger to refuge further up the beach only to collapse. Upon regaining his senses, he realises he has been joined by a stranger who berates Julian's apparent loss of zeal for life due to the ravages of the storm, and convinces Julian to join him on another boat which is about to set sail to a haven unknown.

Compared to Byron's other very graphic poetic descriptions of shipwreck, in 'Julian' he skips over the act of the wreck, moving from the build up to the aftermath in quick succession.

---

[80] Lord Byron, 'Julian [A Fragment]', *The Complete Poetical Works*, III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 461. All subsequent references to line numbers are in the body of the text.
[81] Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, in *The Complete Poetical Works*, V (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). All subsequent references to *Don Juan* are in the body of the text with the canto number followed by line number.

The Night came on the Waters---all was rest

On Earth---but Rage on Ocean's troubled Heart.

The Waves arose and rolled beneath the blast;

The Sailors gazed upon their shivered Mast.

In that dark Hour a long loud gathered cry

From out the billows pierced the sable sky,

And borne o'er breakers reached the craggy shore---

The Sea roars on---that Cry is heard no more. (1-8)

Byron polarises the 'Earth' and the 'Ocean' as two distinct and separate entities, forcing the view of the 'Earth' as a calm and peaceful haven in comparison to the 'Ocean's' 'Rage'-filled and 'troubled Heart'. He uses caesuras to break up the two, the 'Earth' being isolated from 'the Waters' and the 'Ocean', whilst 'The Sea' is divided from 'the craggy shore'. The fragment was written in 1814, before *Don Juan* and shortly after the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, but we can see the formation of the concept that recognises the ocean as a pseudo-living, organic entity here, with its agency being controlled by an emotional 'Heart'. The second half of this stanza alludes to the ship being 'borne o'er breakers' until it 'reached the craggy shore'. The events of the shipwreck are omitted, contrasting with the vivid portrayal of disaster in his later poems. Instead, Byron focuses on the audible aspects of the wreck, noting 'the blast', 'a long loud gathering cry', 'The Sea [which] roars on', and a 'Cry [which] is heard no more'. The result of taking the visual out of the description of the scene is that the obscurity and disorientation caused by 'The Night' and 'that dark hour' is heightened, adding to its sublime nature. The death of the sailors is evoked in the silencing of the 'Cry', which becomes all the more affecting because there is no vivid pictorial representation, leaving the mind to grapple with the obscured and sublime ideas of a shipwreck at night during a storm.

After the dramatic climax of the wreck, Byron moves the narrative onto the scene of the following morning:

> There is no vestige, in the Dawning light,
>
> Of those that shrieked thro' shadows of the Night.
>
> The Bark---the Crew---the very Wreck is gone,
>
> Marred---mutilated---traceless---all save one. (9-12)

After the lack of imagery from before, where we relied on 'those that shrieked thro' shadows of the Night' to evoke or suggest the procession of events, we are given two lines of brief yet graphic description of the events of the previous night, facilitated by 'the Dawning light': it is as if we were only able to see what those in the poem could see, and therefore we were left with only the sounds of the night until the dawn arrived. The ship has been transformed instantly to nothingness, from 'Bark' to 'Wreck' to 'gone', without a trace in a matter of hours. The same goes for the crew, who are imagined to have been 'marred---mutilated---traceless', subsumed back into the sea so that the 'one' remains alone without any tokens with which to remember the wreck. The isolation of the 'save[d] one' is intensified by the surroundings into which he is deposited, thanks in part to the unpredictable and inconsistent nature of the elements. This isolation is heightened in the stanza by the increased use of caesuras, which fractures the lines, breaking them up into isolated islands of meaning.

Byron evokes a sense of predestination around the 'lone survivor' (16) by giving agency to the 'Wave that dashed' (13) in depicting him as 'its helpless Prey' (15), and 'the withering Gale' (17) which 'left [him] unpunished to record their Tale' (18). Julian is set up as the 'Prey' for the indiscriminate and hungry 'Wave', suggesting either a need for the 'Wave' to gain sustenance from sailors, or a malevolence in its hunting out ships to destroy. The same goes for the 'Gale' that is attributed a judgemental role in being sent to punish those who, we are to assume, have transgressed in some way. Why the ship and the men on-board were singled out for such treatment is left unknown. All we are told is that Julian is spared death so as 'to record their Tale'. The sea here is given agency that matches the image of an Old Testament God who rules with fear and destruction, allowing some to escape so as to inform others of the fate that awaits them if it so pleases Him. This notion of sparing one of

the crew for the task of spreading the message of the sea is one that strikingly resembles the drama of the Ancyent Marinere. He is spared the fate of his crew so as to return to land and pass on the messages of, depending on the reading of the poem, protecting nature and animals, the abolition of slavery, or a purer connection to God. The connection between 'Julian' and 'The Ancyent Marinere' is stronger still when we consider that in both poems, the ship is wrecked and sunk without a trace, leaving just one man to pass on the tale. With this connection in mind we are reminded of the use of sound during the Ancyent Marinere's trials which is strikingly similar to the use of sound in these lines from 'Julian'. The events of the wreck occur between caesuras, causing the flashes of moments fragmented by silences. The narrator asks 'who shall hear' (19) of the tale, directing the reader towards the lack of sound within the poem. The rest of the poem seems to exist within a bubble of silence, where Julian focuses on the internal struggle of being shipwrecked, rather than his surroundings. This recalls the events of the dying of the Ancyent Marinere's crewmates. Their inability to speak, and the imprisonment of the icefields and later doldrums demonstrate the way silences can be used effectively to heighten the impact of maritime disasters. There is certainly an element of dialogue between the two poems, with Byron offering a contrasting reading of a survivor of a shipwreck who, not being spared out of an act of benevolence, is rather spared from cruelty, to pass on the message of the existence of the sea's malevolence, somewhat undermining the prevalent ideas of Christian Providence found in many shipwreck narratives from the period.

Although Julian has escaped the fate of his crew mates, he is troubled upon regaining consciousness by something in the past. He spends the 'first moment passed in silent prayer' (26), contrasting with the earlier imagery of malicious non-Christian deities, but suddenly finds that such belief in faith is no use.

Alas! the sound---he sunk into Despair---

He was on Earth---but what was Earth to him,

Houseless and homeless---bare both breast and limb?

Cut off from all but Memory he curst

His fate---his folly---but himself the worst.

What was his hope? he looked upon the Wave---

Despite---of all---it still may be his Grave! (27-33)

The continued use of caesuras here maintains the sense of fracture, isolation, and instability. It is unclear whether his 'Despair' is caused by being 'on Earth' (recalling line 2 of the poem) and not the sea, or because he finds himself 'Houseless and homeless---bare both breast and limb'. The repeated formulation of 'Houseless and homeless' is striking particularly as it emphasises the disconnect between the two. The point is that a house does not equate to a home, but that in having neither, Julian is presented as being the most destitute he can be. Here 'Earth', for Julian, without the commodities of society such as food, companionship, clothing, and property, is a bleak place to exist. The sea's destructive nature has broken the bounds of domesticity and economic culture. The sea has freed him, however unwillingly, from the consumerist nature of life within society. There is an implication that his choice to go to sea was an attempt to better his life. The sea, an emblem of global trade and commerce, is the agent that now offers no greater prospect than a potential grave. Julian is left questioning what 'Earth' means to him if he is 'Houseless and homeless', directly linking his loss of a home and clothing to his situation on 'Earth', and not more generally: tying the 'Earth' to his loss suggests that were he at sea he would not 'Despair', for he would be either dead and beyond mortal cares, or able to maintain the illusion of rescue and a return to normality. The coast he finds himself on offers neither. Interestingly, it is 'the sound' which alerts him to his miserable situation that resonates with the first stanza, where all the action is decoded through sound and not sight.

We see that Julian's resolution upon finding himself ashore is to commit suicide and throw himself back into the sea. He remarks how 'the Wave--- | [...] still may be his Grave!', after which 'He rose and with a feeble effort shaped | His course unto the billows' (34-35). With no other option he is forced to seek the help of the agent which caused his current

predicament in order to find complete liberation. The stranger who then arrives without warning exclaims to Julian, who fainted just before the waves,

> "Is thy Cup so full
>
> "Of bitterness---thy Hope---thy heart so dull
>
> "That thou shouldst from Thee dash the Draught of Life,
>
> "So late escaped the elemental strife! (42-45).

In this segment Julian is lambasted by the stranger for throwing away the life he has so luckily won back from the sea. The passage recalls Manfred's contemplation of suicide during Act I Scene 2, and his inability to see the beauty in the world. The stranger's incomprehension of Julian comes from the belief that there cannot be anything more terrifying than death at sea during a storm. For Julian to throw himself back can only suggest, to the mind of the stranger, that he has such a depth of misery and untold suffering that an end like that is preferable to remaining on the beach. The suggestion is that, because he has done nothing worthy of being saved, that there is a part to Julian that believes he is not worthy of life. He considers his survival to be indicative of his bad luck, rejecting the stranger's belief that it was good luck that brought him to the beach, convincing himself that suicide is the only option. There is an inherent irony in relating Julian's life to that of a 'Draught'. The image of Julian as being made up of a 'Cup' which holds 'the Draught of Life' connects him to the sea (which just tried to kill him) through the shared embodiment of existence in water. Although the stranger challenges Julian's desire to go back into the sea after only just having 'escaped the elemental strife', he informs Julian "'But come---The bark that bears us hence shall find | Her Haven, soon, despite the warning Wind'" (50-51). The stranger may wish to remonstrate with Julian for his folly in seeking death by drowning, but his command is for them both to set off back to sea on a ship which is searching for an unknown 'Haven'. The 'warning Wind' is yet another suggestion of the active and malevolent agency of the sea in this poem, which adds a quest-like dimension to the idea of the stranger and Julian setting sail together.

Unfortunately, the poem is unfinished, leaving the action with the stranger who, apparently wielding magical powers, revitalises Julian at a touch, leaving him staring in disbelief. It is a great loss to Byron's nautical *oeuvre* that we do not find out what happens to Julian. Yet the fragment we have is reminiscent of the narrative of his grandfather's, the shipwreck in *Don Juan*, and the endless travelling of Childe Harold. Byron, evoking the deserted beach in *Robinson Crusoe*, describes the shore in 'Julian' as

> on that barren Sand

> None comes to stretch the hospitable hand.
>
> That shore reveals no print of human foot,
>
> Nor e'en the pawing of the wilder Brute;
>
> And niggard vegetation will not smile,
>
> All sunless on that solitary Isle. (19-24).

This we can see bears a striking resemblance to how John Byron described the Patagonian beach where the remainder of the *Wager* crew lived, a place without vegetation to eat, animals of any kind except some birds and the occasional seal, and somewhere only rarely visited by locals. There is a further connection between the character of Julian, being one who seeks nothing but a life at sea, to the story of Childe Harold. However, Julian's hopelessness in solitude, resonating with the universal fear of shipwreck, stands at odds with the desire for solitude that we find in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

At the beginning of Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron touches upon the framework of authority for those whose lives are spent at sea. The captain of the ship on which Harold is a passenger is a 'lone chieftain, who majestic stalks, | Silent and fear'd by all' (II, 166-67). Byron writes how this feared 'chieftain'

> not oft he talks

> With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
>
> That strict restraint, which broken, ever balks

Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve

From Law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve. (II, 167-71)

The figure portrayed here is one of unbending authority and an attitude of superiority. The 'chieftain' of the ship is the archetypal 'Briton' whose main function is 'Conquest and Fame'. This 'majestic' man is framed in comparison to the image of Harold, 'the gloomy wanderer […] [with] No lov'd-one […] No friend […] Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave' (II, 137-42). The placing of two such figures so similar in their hardness towards others acts only to highlight more vividly their differences. Harold, like the 'lone chieftain', admires 'the little warlike world within!' (II. 154), and yet whereas this exemplary Briton has purpose and direction, Harold is the wanderer who 'left without a sigh the land of war and crimes' (II, 144). Harold is presented as a disillusioned ex-naval officer, associated with having been on board a warship previously. We are told that he 'has sail'd upon the dark blue sea' (II, 145), and 'Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight; | […] The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight' (II, 146-48), with the image of the 'gallant frigate' connected to 'the little warlike world within! | The well-reev'd guns, the netted canopy' (II, 154-55). He is experienced in naval warfare, and identifies 'the Boatswain' (II, 158), 'Midshipman' (II, 160) and 'Lieutenant' (II, 164) as evidence of his knowledge of naval hierarchy. He therefore embodies the Briton who at least used to 'rarely swerve | From Law', but who now has abandoned duty and obedience to the Empire in preference for listless wandering. He is one who has 'balk[ed]' from 'Conquest and Fame'.

Harold begins Canto III in a similar vein to the previous, once more embarking on a new journey across the sea. The gap of four years between the publication of Cantos II and III has developed the character, which has become more apparently the voice of Byron himself. Harold appears several stanzas into the Canto, but not before an unnamed voice rejoices in the freedom of being at sea again.

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!

> And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
>
> That knows his rider. Welcome, to the roar!
>
> Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
>
> Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
>
> And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
>
> Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
>
> Flung from the rock, on Ocean's form, to sail
>
> Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail. (III, 10-18)

The repetitive exclamations are obvious indicators of the jubilance of this narrative. The power and sublimity of the scene resonates into a joyful terror much as Burke writes that it should. There is a connection between the voice and the sea that utilises the imagery of aristocracy with relating the sea to a horse, with the voice the rider. Exposing a paradox in Byron's vision of an uncontrollable sea allows the fancy to remain that he himself might be able to exert mastery over the sea where all the rest of mankind fails. But this image is swiftly developed with the caveat that he is no different from the

> weed,
>
> Flung from the rock, on Ocean's form, to sail
>
> Where'er the surge may sweep.

He does not embody the image of the master riding the horse, but rather a rider who has no control over his own direction. In the image of the constant struggle between mastery and savagery, the folly in the belief of mastering the waves is highlighted by the more apt analogy of his floating aimlessly, with the sea as master over his direction. Byron has taken an image embraced by the public of the British rule over the waves, and subverted it into the submission of man in the face of natural power. This idea is reinforced when, later in the Canto, Harold is described as resenting the common trappings of life within society, because

> in Man's dwellings he became a thing

> Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
>
> Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing. (III, 127-29)

The traditional elements of life on shore are undesirable surroundings for Harold, creating the sensation of being 'a wild-born falcon with clipt wing'. He prefers the freedom to wander the sea, and yearns to be 'Once more upon the waters! yet once more!'. Admitting that his emotions are forced, he writes that 'Despair a smilingness assume' (III, 140). But the falsity of his appearance means that he would 'inspire a cheer, which he forbode to check' (III, 144), despite being

> on a plundered wreck
>
> When mariners would madly meet their doom
>
> With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck. (III, 141-43)

The coldness which was apparent in Canto II has not left, and despair is clearly still the prevailing emotion. But the freedom that his travelling allows, free from the oppressions of social or colonial concerns, allows the despair to be masked by 'a smilingness'. Yet the melancholic truth is the thought that perhaps it is exactly his refusal to conform and to join back in with society that is part of the cause of his misery. Despite his clarified reduction of the issues in society, ignorance in this case could bring him comfort.

Later, in Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron constructs a view of the ocean as a haven from humanity, a utopian location that facilitates escape, which also runs through much of *Don Juan*. The restlessness and constant need for moral vindication that he displays in these poems when regarding the ocean or nautical travel is at odds with the proliferation of the message of Britain's proclaimed dominance over the waves. The work of N. A. M. Rodger and Ben Wilson has shown that the British Empire was quickly becoming the supreme power at sea during the period, and chapter one has highlighted how the voyages of exploration and discovery aided in cementing the ideology that the ocean was the domain

of humanity.[82] Yet its lure for Byron was in the unimpressionable nature of the ocean. It is ambivalent towards the egocentrism of man, despite fanfares of "rulers of the waves" becoming a part of British society at the time. Man's inability to exert mastery over the sea becomes the subject for the profound and revealing lines found in stanzas 178 and 179 of Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

> There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
>
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
>
> There is society, where none intrudes,
>
> By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
>
> I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
>
> [...]
>
>
> Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean – roll!
>
> Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
>
> Man marks the earth with ruin – his control
>
> Stops with the shore; - upon the watery plain
>
> The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
>
> A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
>
> When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
>
> He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
>
> Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown. (IV, 1594-1610)

Many of the images presented here resonate strongly with those narrated by his grandfather off the Patagonian coast: 'the pathless woods', 'lonely shore', and a 'society, where none intrudes' all fit with how John Byron described his experiences. But here Byron is not

---

[82] See: N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 327-574; and Ben Wilson, *Empire of the Deep: The Rise and Fall of the British Navy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013), pp. 348-480.

struggling with starvation, despite the fact that he is enjoying the same kind of solitude that John Byron chose when stranded on the shore. Byron's statement that 'There is society where none intrudes | [...] I love[s] not Man the less, but Nature more' is very similar to the attitude John Byron displays before being forced to eat his own dog. It echoes John Byron's exclusion of himself from society, and how his narrative posits him as being more of a spectator than an active participant. Even when he is forced to be involved with the action, especially during the journey north with the indigenous tribes, he narrates the events as though his body were engaged with the task, but his mind left free to observe with a detached impartiality (albeit with some laments as to his own physical trials).

These lines are heavy with suggestion, as though spoken by Byron himself. The voice of Chile Harold seems overwhelmed by Byron's outpouring of desire for solitude and exile in a remote part of the world, where he can sit and contemplate nature, mankind, and the sea. It is as if he envies his grandfather's time spent on the tip of South America. The solitude that Byron seeks in the conclusion of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is not to the disadvantage of the rest of society, but comes as his admission that he either cannot or does not wish to conform to cultural norms. In these stanzas Byron utilises the sublime imagery that his grandfather also used to describe shipwrecks, but he manipulates the preconceived notion that the sublimity of a shipwreck is evidence of Providence and of man's blind and careless attitude towards expansion and discovery. Byron's challenge to the sublime exposes the man who falls into the ocean, dropping 'with a bubbling groan', losing all selfhood. The cost of attempts to control the expanse of the globe where 'Man marks the earth with ruin' is an erosion of selfhood, and figures as an attack on the patriotic urge to conquer.

Extending beyond the desire for solitude is Byron's fascination with an autonomous and untouchable ocean, where 'Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain'. The sea, similar to how it appears in 'Julian', is the dominant force. His enjoyment comes from man's apparent inability to direct or destroy it, with this enjoyment continuing to the point of claiming:

> upon the watery plain
>
> The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
>
> A shadow of man's ravage. (IV, 1605-07)

Just as with the wreck in 'Julian', the sea here has a malevolent agency that actively destroys ships, which leaves nothing, not even 'A shadow of man's ravage'. Byron displays a fascination with the idea of the drowning sailor who 'sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan, | Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown' (IV, 1609-10), reinforcing the notion of the sailor lost at sea being someone who will never be found, never remembered. The series of negatives reinforces the notion of the sailors becoming voids of themselves, the result of the shipwreck stripping them of their selfhood as they sink. Perhaps it is the action of not being remembered that Byron here wishes to reiterate again from 'Julian': there the protagonist was seeking to escape something, either at sea or through death, and that was linked to his 'memories'. Here again the fixation is on ideas of unimpressionability, a state where you cannot be anything to anyone.

Several critics have commented on the provocative and outrageous nature of the shipwreck scene from Canto II of Byron's *Don Juan*.[83] This is a consequence of Byron's jocular yet bleakly realistic engagement with the traditional literary trope of shipwreck narratives that went against everything the contemporary readership expected and wanted. Among the many sources Byron and others have claimed were important to *Don Juan*, the narrative of his grandfather is the only one to be directly referenced in its body, and subsequently forms part of the intermingling of the narrative voice with Byron's own. He directly alludes to John Byron's text, writing

> The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still

---

[83] See: Frederick W. Shilstone 'A Grandfather, a Raft, a Tradition: The Shipwreck Scene in Byron's *Don Juan*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 25 (1956), pp. 94-109; Andrew M. Cooper, 'Shipwreck and Skepticism: "Don Juan" Canto II', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 32 (1983), pp. 63-80; Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 248-258, and *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007), pp. 21-30.

Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd upon

His rest; the rushing of the neighbouring rill,

And the young beams of the excluded sun,

Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;

And need he had of slumber yet, for none

Had suffer'd more—his hardships were comparative

To those related in my grand-dad's narrative. (II, 1089-96)

However, the playful, comedic tone of Byron's verse is at odds not only with the expected register of a poetic rendition of a shipwreck narrative, but also with the sentiment behind John Byron's narrative. Neither 'the rushing of the neighbouring rill' nor 'the young beams of the excluded sun' are able to 'Trouble him', as the toll of the shipwreck causes the 'need he had of slumber'. His comfortable, uninterrupted sleep is representative of a holiday in paradise rather than a shipwreck. The connection to John Byron's narrative is used to comedic effect. At no point in the text does John Byron relate an easy or restorative 'slumber'. In fact, for the most part it seems that no one slept at all during their time on the beach. The only night of rest that John Byron gets that is in any form close to being easy is after the small meal provided to him by the two native islander women.

There is an obvious allusion here to John Byron's narrative, as the two women who cared for John Byron and the two women who find and restore Don Juan are parallels of each other. Byron describes the two women who find Don Juan on the shore as, in Haidee's case, being beautiful, and her maid, who was 'more robust of figure' (II, 916), a pairing reminiscent of John Byron's two kind women; one old and weathered, the other young and pretty. Haidee and Juan are similarly hampered by language as 'Juan could not understand a word' (II, 1201), although her sweet voice makes understanding possible, albeit mainly through gestures. They, like John Byron's carers, provide food for Don Juan, rising early each morning to cook for him, and bringing food as often as they could. They are also similarly oppressed by the men in their society: where the women from the narrative are

beaten and forced to work by the men encountered by John Byron, the women in the poem are controlled by the malevolent pirate (Haidee's father) who controls the island. The comparisons between these women are more apparent again when it is noted in the poem that Haidee's father leaves the island for a short while.

> At last her father's prows put out to sea,
>
> [...]
>
> Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
>
> So that, her father being at sea, she was
>
> Free as a married woman. (II, 1389-95)

The freedom that they feel allows the two lovers (Juan and Haidee) to strengthen their bonds with each other. This is similar to the freedom enjoyed by John Byron, and the bond he builds with the two women, until the men arrive back which results in an altercation where the younger of the two women gets beaten.

As in John Byron's narrative, Juan finds himself earlier in the poem having to watch his dog being eaten, in this case by the survivors of the wreck whilst trapped in a small boat rather than on shore. Byron writes

> hunger's rage grew wild:
>
> So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
>
> Was kill'd, and portion'd out for present eating. (II, 588-60)

This matches the narrative in all but location (John Byron's dog was killed and eaten on shore). Recalling the instance with John Byron's dog and his decision that 'thinking that I had at least as good a right to share as the rest, I sat down with them, and partook of their repast. Three weeks after that I was glad to make a meal of his paws', the parallels to Juan's narrative continue. Juan states that 'With some remorse received (though first denied) | As a great favour one of the fore-paws' (II, 565-66) of the spaniel's remains.[84] The tension in the

---

[84] John Byron, p. 45.

scene is undermined by the clear indication of Don Juan's survival, there being two more cantos at the time of writing in 1821, and fifteen more upon completion of the poem. For John Byron, the decision to eat the remains of the dog was caused by hardship and the desperation to stay alive. What is evident is that if he had chosen not to eat the remains the decision could have been fatal. For Don Juan, with a whole poem stretching ahead of him, the choice to eat the dog is irrelevant, and functions only to increase the credence of the story by the obvious connection to his grandfather's narrative.

Aside from the more obvious ties to the narrative, Juan's behaviour on the ship during the wreck is reminiscent of John Byron's own account. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that John Byron stated in the narrative that 'to have observed all the various modes of horror operating according to the several characters and complexions amongst us, it was necessary that the observer himself should have been free from all impressions of danger', resulting in the concept that John Byron himself was such an 'observer' for he noted all of the events with the level of clinical detachment required to facilitate an apparently accurate recollection. In this way Juan is seen during the wreck:

> 'Give us more grog,' they cried, 'for it will be
>
> All one an hour hence'. Juan answer'd, 'No!
>
> 'Tis true that death awaits both you and me,
>
> But let us die like men, not sink below
>
> Like brutes:'—and thus his dangerous post kept he,
>
> And none liked to anticipate the blow;
>
> And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
>
> Was for some rum a disappointed suitor. (II, 281-88)

In these lines Thompson suggests Juan is copying the actions of John Wordsworth's (William Wordsworth's brother) midshipman of the *Earl of Abergavenny*.[85] It is reported that 'the gallant

---

[85] Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 249.

Midshipman' during the wreck of the ship said 'let us die like men' when he confronted by the sailors who wanted access to the liquor store he was guarding so that they could die drunk.[86] The importance comes here from both his detached and observant attitude, and his strict adherence to naval conduct. Juan is akin to the John Byron of the narrative: resolute, calm, sober, and attempting to retain some sort of control over the situation. However, comparing Don Juan to the image of the midshipman, whose demonstration of bravery and the understanding of naval order are exemplary, is to attack and debase an image of naval perfection. At the time in the poem this comparison is made, Don Juan has shown similar qualities, having 'sense beyond his years' (II, 274) when he 'Got to the spirit-room, and stood before | It with a pair of pistols' (II, 275-76), challenging the crew to 'die like men, not sink below | Like brutes'. But his rendering of the colonial myth through the sublimity of the shipwreck, coupled with the perversion of a real-life heroic figure like John Byron, results in a satirical critique of the nature of the maritime voyage with the goal of expansion.

While similarities exist between *Don Juan* and John Byron's account, the story of Juan's existence on shore after the wreck again moves the message a world away from the reality of the narrative. Warm sandy beaches, a beautiful woman, and care and food are found on Juan's waking. It seems as though the wreck, unlike for Julian, has landed Juan in a place that no one would wish to leave. Yet the lure of the sea, as in all of Byron's nautical poems, proves too strong. Despite the passionate relationship of Juan and Haidee, and the state of captivity in which he is taken off the island, he never manages to return, and the sea becomes in many respects the substitute for what he has lost in Haidee. As a lonely wanderer he travels, forever unable to connect with anyone enough to settle and exist in stasis. He needs to continue, like the bark that is driven continually onwards, and 'anchor'd ne'er shall be'. As with all of Byron's nautical protagonists, there is something missing that prevents them from

---

[86] Thompson ed., *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives*, p. 152.

being able to stop. The sea becomes the other part, fulfilling the role of the embracing and soothing female presence. As he notes in stanza 71 of Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

> It is not better, then, to be alone
>
> And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
>
> By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
>
> Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
>
> Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
>
> A fair but froward infant her own care,
>
> Kissing its cries away as these awake;-
>
> Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
>
> Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear? (III, 671-79)

The 'nursing lake' (here describing the Rhone Glacier), feeds the river Rhone as if it were a child needing milk. The 'lake' becomes an image of the mother, the water being the source of health and life. The river itself is alike to a 'fair but froward infant', and the simple relationship between the two evokes the desire in Byron to contemplate life as better if simplicity and solitude are prioritised. The image of the maternal body of water is repeated again at the close of Canto IV in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, where he writes:

> And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
>
> Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
>
> Borne, like they bubbles, onward. (IV, 1648-50)

Here again is the emphasis of his youth and the supportive 'breast' suggesting a mother figure.

Byron utilises this idea of the supportive and life-giving quality of the 'Ocean' when he deliberately narrates the gruesome details of the cannibalism after the wreck of the *Don Juan*. In one of the most famous poetical renditions of the aftermath of a shipwreck, Byron explicitly and methodically takes the reader through the act of cannibalism, and offers at the

end a rather bleak appraisal of the action. The process whereby the crew find themselves eating one of their own is ostensibly measured and adheres to a set of unknown rules of how such things are done. The whole experience is devoid of the savagery which accompanies the typical imagining of cannibal practices. These men are not driven to madness and set upon one another. Rather:

> lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd and handed,
>
> In silent horror, and their distribution
>
> Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,
>
> Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
>
> None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
>
> 'Twas nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,
>
> By which none were permitted to be neuter—
>
> And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor. (II, 593-600)

The crew utilise a lottery in order to find a victim, the symbolism of which demonstrates the desire on the part of the crew to make this seem fair and just. In accentuating the need for moral deniability, Byron is westernising what would usually be deemed a savage ritual. But in doing so Byron plays with ironic comparisons and juxtapositions between this account and the reality. The 'distribution' of the 'lots' to choose the victim 'Lull'd even the savage hunger' of the men. The act of order was able to deaden their starvation, destabilising the idea that cannibalism was the right option. They are presented as hungry enough to eat someone, but not too hungry to give out 'lots'. The act itself is noted as 'pollution', although it is depicted as being 'nature [that] gnaw'd them to this resolution'. Byron places his image of cannibalism in conflict with the belief that cannibalism was an act of violence against humanity. The pursuit of colonial wealth has led to cannibalism. But it would not be appropriate unless such measures were taken that it is done properly. Pedrillo, Don Juan's tutor is picked, and 'requests to be bled to death' (II, 601) at the hands of the surgeon. This

goes ahead, and for his troubles the surgeon is allowed 'first choice of morsels for his pains' (II, 610). The surgeon is paid for his work, reinforcing the image of capitalist expansion here, which further emphasises the bizarre method with which the crew are going about this. The mock gentleman-like attitude, however, is eventually exposed when it is revealed:

> The consequence was awful in the extreme:
>
> For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
>
> Went raging mad. (II, 626-28)

Despite all of the attempts at civilising the "savage" practice into "white cannibalism", those who ate Pedrillo 'Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing, | And, with hyaena laughter, died desparing' (II, 631-32). Byron challenges the common notions of the time that white cannibalism was acceptable in such a situation as this by having Don Juan abstain from eating Pedrillo, and subsequently survive. The moral implications are obvious: Byron, in this instance, is utilising the beliefs of the aforementioned group who thought that

> humanity does indeed flicker out at the moment when the *thought* of eating human flesh first crosses the white person's mind. Even among white people, in other words, eating human flesh could be said to entail the deformation or annihilation of the eater's moral nature […] when humanity flickers out, a deeply embedded savagery flames up.[87]

Indeed, recalling Sanborn from earlier again, we know that

> The sailors in these stories [of white cannibalism] are agonizingly stripped of the range of choices necessary to a human identity understood in terms of the freedom of the will: they are left with only one, purely negative mode of identification: to choose against death.[88]

In the fight for the preservation of selfhood, when given no choices, the option of cannibalism becomes the only real answer. But in these stories where sailors 'are agonizingly

---

[87] Sanborn, pp. 42-43.
[88] Ibid., p. 41.

stripped of the range of choices necessary to a human identity', the reason they are placed in such a situation is due to the desire for expansive trade and territorial gains. It is the machinery of colonisation that created the situation where those who ate Pedrillo went mad and died. Through challenging the notion that cannibalism is acceptable when survival calls for it, those who succumbed to the base urge of hunger and later to madness are more akin to what the whites would deem "the savage" than those who were oppressed for being "savages". The word cannibal is inextricably linked to the racist ideologies of the time, as it was 'a name given to the Carib people of the West Indies, who were said to eat human flesh' (*OED*). As Arens states above, the use of the term was what enabled the colonial Spanish to enslave the people of the West Indies, circumventing the command to protect and convert all those who did not display the desire to eat human flesh. In becoming a cannibal, losing all elements of selfhood and humanity, one becomes an echo of the Carib slaves from the sixteenth century. Byron turns the colonial supremacy/savage debasement presumption on its head. The white sailors are not exempt from the lure of base human savagery, and they are more than susceptible to becoming mad with colonial distaste.

In going against the image of cannibalism presented by his grandfather in a poem where he directly references the connection to the wreck of the *Wager*, Byron challenges the notion that to be the ideal British subject you must obey, and in return you will be safe from becoming what the Empire set itself against: savage. Don Juan is initially presented as the very model of the heroic midshipman from the *Earl of the Abergavenny*. But he abstains from the civilised, fairly conducted, and necessary act of cannibalism and is the sole survivor, demonstrating the horrific cost of colonialism for those that follow blindly. He does not consume the produce of colonialism and retains his mind. Like Julian whose home and clothing is removed by the wreck, so Don Juan is cleansed of his colonial discourse through refusing the body of his tutor. If it is to be believed that many instances of cannibalism occurred through the desire to take on powers or abilities of the person being eaten, then here we can see how the meal consisting of a white, Western tutor in fact removes

intelligence, creating animal-like bodies devoid of humanity, but most strikingly, devoid of

selfhood.

Chapter Three: Elegy, Mourning, and the Brother in Wordsworth

On the 5th of February 1805, the *Earl of the Abergavenny*, captained by William Wordsworth's brother John, sank off the coast of Weymouth. Around two hundred and sixty were reported to have died, including John who refused to abandon ship.[1] Speculation ensued as to whether John was suicidal (he was reported to have been drunk and the ship contained his entire fortune) or if he stayed on board as a matter of duty as others were unable to escape. The last reports were of John clinging to the mast as the ship went down. His actions were subsequently cleared by testimonies of the survivors, but the blow to Wordsworth was substantial. This was John's last planned voyage as part of the East India Company and he had hoped to earn enough money to support himself, Dorothy, and Wordsworth for the rest of their lives. Whilst the financial implications of John's death were considerable – Wordsworth would not see economic freedom for the majority of his life – the grief had a considerable impact on his writing.

This chapter considers the importance of a grave in the act of grieving, and how the absence of a body affects this process. The main question that this and the next chapter interrogate is whether an elegy can function as a surrogate grave when a body is lost at sea, and how this process modifies selfhood. What these chapters also consider is how the agency of the sea influences the elegiac form. Elegies written around nautical themes function in a distinct way in comparison to the traditional pastoral elegies of the time. Because John's body was later recovered from the sea, Wordsworth's elegies demonstrate both elements –the pastoral and the nautical – and the two aspects vie against each other. His elegies are rarely the focus of critical study, and are often side-lined in favour of his more famous works. Those written around the time of his brother's death present an ideal platform from which to analyse the poetic presentation of grief and mourning. Wordsworth's experience of death

---

[1] See Carl Thompson, ed., *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007), p. 146.

at sea is evoked in the poetry and encapsulates the interrelation between mourning and the agency of the sea. My intention here is not to explore a psychoanalytical or autobiographical reading of these poems in light of the familial context. Rather, the aim is to observe and interrogate how Wordsworth captures the process of mourning in those elegies that I identify as deeply connected with John's death, using the shipwreck as a point of reference from which to view the poems. Doing so will facilitate an investigation into the relationship between the elegy (and its form), the cultural impact and agency of the sea, and the poetic depictions of grief and the mourning process.

The work of Paul de Man in 'Autobiography as De-facement', despite its age, is particularly useful in mediating the tension between the autobiographical nature of these elegies and the anonymous speaker, highlighted by de Man's question 'can autobiography be written in verse?'.[2] Autobiography, de Man writes, is

> a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts. The autobiographical moment happens as an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution.[3]

The nature and topic of these elegies means they are explicitly self-referential as their provenance, 'the authenticity of the signature' attached to them, depends on their connection to Wordsworth as the author.[4] Only in this sense do the references to John make sense. The value of the author-connection is challenged, however, as autobiography 'demonstrates in a striking way the impossibility of closure and of totalisation (that is the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions'.[5] Yet the act of writing these elegies, I argue, is an act of self-preservation. Wordsworth seeks to preserve his own selfhood through projecting his grief at the same time as placing a boundary between

---

[2] Paul de Man. 'Autobiography as De-facement', *MLN*, 94:5 (1979), 919-30 (p. 920).
[3] Ibid., p. 921.
[4] Ibid., p. 923.
[5] Ibid., p. 922.

himself and grief's destructive capabilities. This boundary is formed through the speaker, allowing Wordsworth to create the elegies whilst keeping his selfhood detached from the permanent representation of grief that the poems symbolise. De Man notes that 'prosopopeia is the trope of autobiography, by which one's name […] is made as intelligible and memorable as a face', and yet autobiography ultimately 'veils a defacement of the mind of which it is itself the cause'.[6] The prosopopeia is how Wordsworth preserves the self, and yet the 'veil[ing]' of the 'defacement of the mind' is how the elegies retain their authenticity and emotional power. However personal these elegies are to Wordsworth, they present a sympathetic depiction of mourning that, whilst based upon factual events, does not require a psychological reading. The events of John's death that are the inspiration for these poems can be used to contextualise the poems without informing or enforcing a particular reaction. In doing so I aim to expose the manipulation of the elegiac form because of, or in reaction to, the pervasive influence of the sea's agency.

This influence is notable in the silences that permeate the poems, that function to imply a meaning or connection between the sea and the poems' subject, John, without directly linking the two. The use of silences in fact is a powerful tool of the elegiac form, and it is the moments where the speaker's voice is overwhelmed by silence that makes the following poems rich for critical study. These poems are not all typically seen as elegies, but in light of their connection to John's death, which is made clear through the redrafting process, I argue that they should be seen as a variation of the elegiac form. They demonstrate how the elegy can function as a tool to progress mourning, to deal with grief, and how the sea acts as an opposing force, eroding and pushing back against this poetic rendering of grief. The sea seems to act as a destructive force in elegiac mourning, altering the tone of the elegy between one of understanding the role and agency of the sea in John's death through silencing his voice, to a reversed silencing of the sea and a resurgence of John. Ultimately it seems to present an ebb and flow between a Blakean creative destruction, as embodied by

---

[6] de Man, p. 926, 930.

the Romantic sea, and a Miltonic pastoral that provides a more robust defence against the poetic and cultural intrusion of the sea.[7]

For cultures heavily involved with the sea there is an increased pressure in dealing with maritime death. The necessity of a grave to act in the same way as the Miltonic pastoral, to defend against the sea's agency, is a central concern of Carsten Jensen's 2006 novel, *We, The Drowned*. This contemporary text, whilst temporally disparate from the texts in this study, astutely grapples with similar questions over the role of the grave. *We, The Drowned* is an exploration of the cultural impact of the sea on the social consciousness of a small southern Danish town called Marstal. Covering a hundred years and two world wars, the text details the transition from the Golden Age of Sail in the mid-nineteenth century to the dominance of steam power and the creation of iron ships in a town that exists solely through and for the maritime industry. One of the more poignant recurring motifs is the consideration of how the families of the town's sailors, who are at sea for the majority of each year, attempt to cope with the losses that inevitably happen, especially during both world wars. The novel suggests a correct method to mourn a sailor, and exposes what seems to be a common trope in maritime communities. Jensen writes that

> The merciful comfort of a grave where you can take your children and tell them about their father in front of the headstone that bears his name; the possibility of distracting yourself by clearing weeds or perhaps disappearing into a whispered conversation with the man who lies underground: a sailor's widow is denied all that. Instead, she'll receive an official document declaring that the ship her husband was working on, or perhaps skippered and owned, has been 'lost with all hands', gone down on this or that date, in this or that place, often at a depth beyond salvaging,

---

[7] The notion of Blakean creative destruction is best understood through the figures of Orc, embodying chaos, rebellion, and the destruction of constraints, and Los, who embodies creativity, both of which stand in opposition to Urizen, the oppressive controller. For more see: S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

with fish as the only witnesses. And she can put that piece of paper away in a drawer of the bureau. Such are the funeral rites awarded to the drowned.[8]

Later in the book, one of the main characters, an ex-sailor turned ship-owner and broker called Albert, goes to break the news to a resident of Marstal that her husband's ship has been lost. Jensen writes

> She sat down opposite Albert and poured the coffee. He accounted for the circumstances of the lost ship as well as he could. There wasn't much to say. 'Missing' meant only that it had failed to arrive in Liverpool, but it was important that she not draw hope from this uncertainty, for then her mourning would never end. Perhaps it never would, anyway. But hope stops time, and time only heals when its flow is not stopped. He knew that much.[9]

What we see here is how graves as a cultural concept in the western world are integral to the grieving process: as Wordsworth writes in 'Essays upon Epitaphs' (1810), 'a grave is a tranquillising object: resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered'.[10] This phrase especially resonates with his own engagement with 'wild flowers' in 'To the Daisy', written in memory of John. But it also reminds us of how important the resting place of the dead is to those who are left to mourn. As Jensen suggests, those involved with the sea have to cope with the potential of not having a physical connection to someone they lose, at best receiving an 'official document' to act as a surrogate for the gravestone. The drowned are left only to exist in the mind of those that they have left behind, and as particles and bones at the bottom of the ocean. What's worse, those who elect to hold on to hope that the missing will return are unable to progress with their mourning.

---

[8] Carsten Jensen, *We, The Drowned* (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 56.
[9] Ibid., p. 293.
[10] William Wordsworth, 'Essays upon Epitaphs', in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 60.

Grieving is a fundamental societal process, but it is made harder in cases where there is no closure. To understand why the grieving process of those lost at sea (rather than those who die a natural death) is particularly poignant during the period, it is useful to put into context the sheer weight of influence that nautical deaths had on Britain at the turn of the 19th century. Carl Thompson and Terence Grocott have identified an approximate annual figure of five thousand deaths at sea for a population of ten and a half million.[11] That would equate approximately to a figure of thirty-one thousand deaths per year with our current population of sixty-five million – which is roughly fifteen times higher than the current number of annual road fatalities. Death at sea would have been a substantial part of Britain's social consciousness, and outside of periods of war, one of the most significant contributors towards national fatalities.

The pressure to become what Peter Sacks calls 'successful mourners' is a process that begins at the grave.[12] Elizabeth Hallam notes in her book *Death, Memory & Material Culture* how, with the burial of a corpse,

> the social presence of the body could be maintained via a stone or marble funerary monument […] [and] the corpse after disposal was allowed to recede, to return to dust, while the stone or marble image of the body, made visible for the purposes of memory, was one that marked a death while referring back to a 'life' – the personhood of the deceased was thus partially retained […] upon a precarious boundary somewhere between the status of a corpse and a socially 'living' body.[13]

The gravestone or 'funerary monument' allows the mourners a physical presence to which memories of the dead can be attached. Hallam asserts that this process of anchoring memories is one of the basic techniques for progressing through a bereavement. This is

---

[11] Carl Thompson, *Romantic-era Shipwreck Narratives* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007), p. 7; and Terence Grocott, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Eras* (London: Chatham, 1997).
[12] Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 6.
[13] Elizabeth Hallam et al., *Death, Memory & Material Culture* (Oxford; New York: BERG, 2001), p. 132.

particularly important considering, as Jacques Le Goff observes, that 'Romanticism accentuates the attraction of the cemetery linked to memory'.[14] Without memories of the deceased, and a physical item to which these memories can be anchored, the grief of the bereaved becomes unstable. Therefore, in instances where there is no body, the grave can become a parody of the grieving process, acting as a constant reminder that the ground is hollow and devoid of the object that should give the grave its meaning.

Robert Harrison remarks in *The Dominion of the Dead*, 'in the absence of a body [the mourners] were at a catastrophic loss, their grief could not find its proper object; hence the work of mourning, by which the dead are made to die, was destined to fail. The missing body meant that the deceased person was fated to remain, in effect, *undead*'.[15] A further issue, as Harrison also notes, is that whilst we can build upon the earth, 'the sea offers no such foothold for human worldhood [… and] in its hostility to architecturally or textually imprinting memory, [it] often figures as the imaginary agent of ultimate obliteration'.[16] Without a body, and with the sea so resistant to physical alteration, any mourner is left without a proper avenue through with they can direct their grief, the sea actively eroding any attempt to mourn.

The hostility of the sea towards human existence, and how this threatens the preservation of the self, is important in understanding our relationship with it. Our inability to survive at sea without aids or control its course heightens our desire to be seen as strong enough to withstand its power. Alain Corbin highlights in *The Lure of the Sea* (1995), that the sea shore prior to the Romantic period

> is where horror at the viscous immobility of the sea creeps in. The image of what has become heavy and fetid, and excremental, teeming with monsters, coincides with the grip of the swamp on collective imagination, and with that of infectionist theory on

---

[14] Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 85-86.
[15] Robert Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), p. 144.
[16] Ibid., p. 4.

medical thought. The dreamer [on the sea shore] is horrified at the thought of confronting the inexpressible. [17]

As with the rotting sea and ship from Coleridge, the sea for early beachgoers was a place of disease and putrification. The 'excremental' element suggests a living quality to the sea, as though it is a creature in its own right. Humanity's engagements with it are therefore between two living entities, and mastery of one over the other resonates with the image of Byron riding the sea's waves like they were horses. Long before the Romantics, the agency of the sea and its ability to viscerally effect humanity was a poignant topic. In the previous two centuries this concept of the repulsive sea pervaded literature. It is mirrored in the works of both Thomas Nashe and John Flavel, who, writing nearly a hundred years apart, similarly describe the repulsive nature of the sea.

In 1593 Nashe writes in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*

Fools be they that imagine it is the winds that so toss and turmoil them in the deep; they are no winds but insurrective sins which so possess the waves with the spirit of raging. I drowned all the sins of the first world in water; all the sins of the first world now welter, souse, & beat unquietly in the sea, whither the world of waters was withdrawn when the deluge was ended, and as a guilty conscience can nowhere take rest, so no more can they in the sea, but, embolning the billows up to the air, with roaring and howling dart themselves on every rock, desiring it to overwhelm them, and because they know they can never be recovered, with the same envy which is in the devils they seek to drown and ramverse every ship that they meet. [18]

And later, in 1682, John Flavel writes in *Navigation Spiritualized* how

Seamen are, as it were, a third Sort of Persons, to be numbered neither with the Living nor the Dead; their Lives hanging continually in Suspense before them. And

---

[17] Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside 1750-1840* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 168.
[18] Thomas Nashe, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593), p. 14.

it was anciently accounted the most desperate Employment, and they little better than lost Men that used the Seas.[19]

From these we can get the sense of the sea figuring as an horrific entity that acts directly against humanity, constantly posing a threat to life and existence after death. But the Romantic period sees a resolute shift away from this view of the ocean, to one of intellectual fascination and longing. Corbin notes how, by the turn of the 19th century

> the sight of the boundless sea's emptiness creates a sensation without an object that encourages the imagination to plunge into the waters […] [and] creates a temptation to let oneself be swallowed up […] the fantasy of being swallowed up by the watery abyss […] reveals a longing for this coenaesthetic return, just as it expresses 'an acceptance of one's temporal condition'.[20]

This shift is therefore dramatic and culturally enforced, not as a result of a phenomenological change in the sea. This shift is noted by W. H. Auden who states that 'the Romantics found in the sea a timeless "symbol of primitive potential power as contrasted with the desert of actualized triviality, of living barbarism versus lifeless decadence."'[21] Samuel Baker extends this to suggest that

> for the Romantics, the sea could represent natural vitality, [as well as also calling] to their minds human efforts to overcome or transcend nature […] the sea [acts] as a Romantic symbol for what lies beyond society [as well as] the imaginative zone in which the Romantics reconceived of society itself.[22]

The idea then, is that there is a transition in the cultural perception of the sea from a place of horror and purgatory, to one of destructive freedom and collective improvement.

---

[19] John Flavel, *Navigation Spiritualized* (1682), iii-iv.
[20] Corbin, p. 167.
[21] Samuel Baker quoting Auden in *Written on the Water*, p. 24.
[22] Baker, pp. 24-25.

To see how this functions in the elegy, we must first understand it as 'a poem of mortal loss and consolation,' which 'follows the ancient rites in the basic passage through grief or darkness to consolation and renewal'.[23] In his seminal work *The English Elegy* (1985), Sacks outlines some basic conventions, such as 'the pastoral context; the use of repetitions, refrains and repeated questions; outbursts of anger and cursing; a procession of mourners; a movement from grief to consolation; and concluding images of resurrection'.[24] Importantly, the specific difference between Romantic elegies and traditional or pastoral elegies is the introspective focus of the poet, rather than their extensive lamentation for the dead. As Coleridge writes:

> Elegy is the natural poetry of the reflective mind; it may treat of any subject but it must treat no subject for itself, but always and exclusively with reference to the poet himself. As he will feel regret for the Past or Desire for the Future, so Sorrow and Love become the principle themes of Elegy. It presents every thing as lost and gone or absent and future. The Elegy is the exact opposite to the Homeric Epic, in which all is purely external and objective, and the poet is a mere voice.[25]

Coleridge believes uncertainty is integral to elegy, and this is emphasised, according to David Shaw, in how for Romantic 'elegists silence and reserve are more than a stylish aesthetic of despair [...] we have to linger over dashes and caesuras, over the periods and ellipses, listening there for meanings that are otherwise inaudible', for 'silence seems the only possible response to the elegist's discovery that the universe of sense is also the universe of death'.[26] Therefore, an 'elegy is characterized by an unusually powerful intertwining of emotion and rhetoric, of

---

[23] Sacks, p. 3 and p. 20.
[24] Ibid., p. 2.
[25] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) [*Collected Works*, XIV] pp. 444-445.
[26] W. David Shaw, *Elegy & Paradox: Testing the Conventions* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 103 and p. 104.

loss and figuration', which 'gives us the chance to view man in tension with [...] the language that so conditions him'.[27]

This conditioning by language is only part of the larger concept of elegy. Sacks bases much of his approach to elegy on the work of Freud, substantially from *Mourning and Melancholia*.[28] Readers of Freud and Sacks will notice that some of the concepts on 'work[s] of mourning' are applicable here.[29] Particularly, for Wordsworth there is a need for 'detachment of affection from a prior object followed by a reattachment of affection elsewhere'.[30] Beyond this there is no need for Freud in this interrogation of Wordsworth. Both David Kennedy and David Shaw highlight problems with his work, as well as with Sacks' use of it.[31] As a result my study of elegy is largely concerned with '[o]ne of the least well observed elements of the genre [which] is this enforced accommodation between the mourning self [...] and the very words of grief and fictions of consolation'.[32] The act of forcing suggests the process is not a natural one, but one of willpower and control. But a considerable part of mourning is an acceptance of a loss of control. As such, the control that is enacted over the creating of poetry can be seen to work in opposition to losing control over the dead. What is clear is that Sacks is highlighting the myth of elegy, where claims of coming to terms with grief are enforced rather than felt. Elegies are about continued grieving and not a retrospective documenting of process.

Returning to *Essays upon Epitaphs*, Wordsworth remarks on the importance of words, writing:

Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with: they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it,

---

[27] Sacks, p. xii and p. xiii.
[28] Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).
[29] Sacks, p. 6.
[30] Ibid., p. 8.
[31] See David Kennedy, *Elegy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) pp. 42-48, and 49-56; Shaw, pp. 50-51.
[32] Sacks, p. 2.

then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those possessed vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. From a deep conviction then that the excellence of writing, whether in prose or verse, consists in a conjunction of Reason and Passion, a conjunction which must be of necessity benign; and that it might be deduced from what has been said that the taste, intellectual Power, and morals of a Country are inseparably linked in mutual dependence. [33]

The belief in the power of language is paramount here, as Wordsworth suggests they are the controlling force 'over thoughts'. Yet herein lies a conflict, as what we see in elegies is the failure of language to fully convey the meaning of grief. More appropriately, the 'dominion [of language] over thought' is in fact a restriction of thought by language. Words are unable to fully represent the nuances of thought, but they are the only tool available in the formation of a legacy. The extent of linguistic analysis necessary is clear, even in the 'transports of mind, or [...] quick turns of conflicting passion' that make up elegiac poems, and are not suitable for epitaphs.[34] Neither poet nor critic can forget this anxiety about the proper use of language, especially when its subject is someone's death. Harold Bloom states that 'all major elegies for poets, do not express grief but centre upon their composers' own creative anxieties'.[35] Elegies suffer from the pressures that are placed on written language; they are as crafted, refined, and polished as any epitaph, and as lasting, but seem to suffer from a greater responsibility of conveying meaning. It is important to consider in elegies how, if it is the grave that tranquillises, the poet manages and manipulates their language on the page. What

---

[33] Wordsworth, *The Prose Words of William Wordsworth*, II, p. 84-85.
[34] Ibid., p. 60.
[35] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (London; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 151.

happens to writing grief when the elegy has to function as a grave? Does the weight of their predecessors bearing down at a time of heightened emotional instability cause their words to buckle? It is necessary to look deeper at the 'silent speaking words',[36] and the 'enforced accommodation between the mourning self [...] and the very words of grief and fictions of consolation', to find how the sea impacts upon the poetry of 'mortal loss'.

In the elegies of Wordsworth, the sea destabilises many of the traditions of their form. Sacks notes that 'probably the greatest influence on the form of the elegy has been the rituals associated with the death and rebirth of vegetation gods'.[37] The act of regeneration can symbolically and physically only occur in the eyes of the bereaved when there is a body to decompose, giving life to plants surrounding the corpse. When the body is lost at sea, the visual rebirth through 'vegetation' cannot be observed; therefore, it acts like the lack of a grave in prolonging the mourner's period of grief. Thinking back to Corbin's 'viscous […] fetid, and excremental' sea we can see how it doesn't allow for the blossoming of Sack's regeneration analogies. Corbin notes that the classical notion of the sea was of 'a symbol of Purgatory'.[38] In this sense, those who die and are lost at sea could be viewed by those on the shore as being suspended in a viscous primal fluid of Purgatory, restlessly forced into a sleep that prevents them from ascending to Heaven.

In this way, the horror of losing a friend or family member to the sea was made greater if their body was not recovered because the sea was still thought of as mysterious, unknown, and terrifying. In addition, the sea's agency also unsettles notions of repetition in the elegy, because 'repetition creates a sense of continuity, of an unbroken pattern such as one may oppose to the extreme discontinuity of death'.[39] Repetition is fundamental to the bereavement process as well as the elegy, as 'the repetition of words and refrains and the creation of a certain rhythm of lament have the effect of controlling the expression of grief

---

[36] Shaw, p. 105.
[37] Sacks, p. 19.
[38] Corbin, p. 9.
[39] Sacks, p. 23.

while also keeping that expression in motion'.[40] The regularity of the sea's tides appears ideal for echoing these repetitions. However, the ceaseless movement and instability of the sea contrasts with the regularity of the tides, standing in defiance of the sought-for repetition in the elegy. Despite the tides, the hostility and instability of the sea makes it impossible to imagine the body being at rest. The effect of this can sometimes be seen in the lack of structured rhythm in the poetry that mimics the erratic and irregular motion of the sea's currents and the waves.

In preventing this fundamental aspect of the elegy from forming, the sea prolongs the time of mourning. The positive act of repetition usually found in the elegy mirrors the repetition needed in 'the highly important phase of mourning in which the griever must be convinced of the actual fact of loss'.[41] The propensity to disbelieve the reality of death is remedied by the repetition in elegies that pushes the mourner towards accepting the reality of death: 'Only once the loss is recognized can the griever continue the work of mourning by withdrawing his attachment from the dead'.[42] Hence, when the action of the sea stands in the way of achieving successful repetitions within the elegy, the poet is left unable to contemplate the reality of the death. This is further reinforced, as has been mentioned previously, by the lack of a grave.

Coleridge's idea that elegy must be orientated around the poet is fundamental; it is not the one who is lost, nor the situation of the loss, that is the primary focus of the poem. The poet, the one who is suffering, is the key, and the elegy acts as a method of coming to terms with death. Sacks notes that 'few elegies or acts of mourning succeed without seeming to place the dead, and death itself, at some cleared distance from the living'.[43] It could be concluded, therefore, that the sea acts ideally in forcing a 'cleared distance' between the dead and the mourner. Yet the elegies we are concerned with here suggest that it is the loss of

---

[40] Sacks, p. 23.
[41] Ibid., p. 24.
[42] Ibid., p. 24.
[43] Ibid., p. 19.

choice in being able to visit the location of the dead that reverses the need for a 'cleared distance'. The dead need to be removed but not completely absent. In physically forcing this distance between the dead and the living, the sea undermines the elegy's ability to facilitate a psychological distancing in the poet. It is this distance that initially prevents Wordsworth 'succeed[ing]' in the manner that Sacks believes a poet should.

The initial loss of John's body, and subsequent retrieval, allows for a shift away from the sea and a literal grounding in Wordsworth's poetic grieving. Wordsworth scholars have emphasised the dramatic impact that the death of his brother had on his work. Some have gone so far as to argue that 1805 marked the decline of Wordsworth's talents, suggesting that the loss of John shook him to an extent where serene contemplative writing was no longer possible.[44] Many have focused on strictly biographical readings of Wordsworth's poetry resulting from this disaster, and the impact this had on his later work.[45] Interestingly, critics have overlooked the impact of John's body initially being lost, and then buried without Wordsworth being present.[46] However, the information surrounding the shipwreck can be used more fully if we focus exclusively on the poems relating to John's death, rather than speculating about its effect on Wordsworth's whole *oeuvre*. The poetry that specifically relates to John's death is more interesting when considered in relation to the process of Wordsworth's mourning. Here I consider how he represents his grief in relation to nature and specifically the sea as the agent of John's death, and how he uses silences as a tool to replicate the mourning process for the reader.

Kurt Fosso suggests that the foundational years of Wordsworth's life were spent dealing with death and destitution, and that this can be seen in his works up until 1804. Fosso

---

[44] See: R. C. Townsend, 'John Wordsworth and His Brother's Poetic Development', *PMLA*, 81:1 (1966), 70-78; and E. L. McAdam, Jr., 'Wordsworth's Shipwreck', *PMLA*, 77:3 (1962), 240-47.

[45] For example, see: Richard Matlak, 'Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 31:3 (2000), 127-132; and Jonathan Roberts, 'Shared Grief in the Elegies on John Wordsworth: Farewell the Heart that lives alone', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 32:3 (2001), 155-61.

[46] See for example Edward Wilson, 'An Echo of St Paul and Words of Consolation in Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas"', *The Review of English Studies*, 43:169 (1992), 75-80, as well as the works cited below.

argues that Wordsworth creates a poetic idea for a community of mourners, where everyone shares compassion for joint losses:

> [By] living in a broken family of mutually consoling mourners, of desiring stability in a culture of considerable discontent, Wordsworth consciously or unconsciously gleaned a redemptive force: unfinished mourning-work like his own could be the basis for an indigenous form of community, one well fitted to his era's search for fraternity and equality. A small community, founded upon grief and articulated by the shared mourning of its individual members, would in effect be bound together – be held in common by the common – be rooted in the past and present, and be enduring, like little else in Wordsworth's life and world.[47]

Fosso's argument can be advanced to show that, upon the death of his younger brother, Wordsworth's concept of a community of mourners is challenged and partially broken by a loss where the body is initially absent. The distance between Wordsworth and the grave of John further compounds this challenge. He focuses poetically on the landscape that he remembers John enjoying rather than the typical community formed around graves. The sea acts in opposition to Auden and Baker's views as being a liberating force enabling a remodelling of society, instead breaking down community. Subsequently, as will be discussed, the economics of mourning (both literal and figurative) show how the death of John was another financial setback for Wordsworth, but one that was much more closely linked to his creativity than before.

> In a letter dated 28 March 1805, Dorothy Wordsworth writes:

> Yesterday's post brought us a letter from my eldest Brother in which he informs us that the Body of our dearest John had been found by dragging and was buried at

---

[47] Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (New York: State of New York Press, 2004), p. 16.

Weymouth. This is a great comfort to us – his grave is a resting-place for our thoughts – the end of all in this world.[48]

There is no record of Wordsworth's reaction to his brother's death, but it is plausible that he would also have felt the 'comfort' Dorothy writes about. John was captain of the merchant vessel *The Earl of Abergavenny*, which struck a rock at 'about 4.00 pm on 5 Feb […] and it sank at 11.00 pm […] two miles off Weymouth Beach'. The blow Wordsworth (and his family) felt resonates through Letters 244-261 in the Oxford edition.[49] On 23 February he writes:

We know what we have lost, and what we have to endure; our anguish is allayed, but pain and sadness have taken place of it; with fits of sorrow which we endeavour to suppress but cannot. But why dwell upon this mournful subject? I have neither right nor inclination to do so.[50]

Wordsworth's attitude in this letter begs the question, if he doesn't have the 'right' to 'dwell upon' the loss of John, then who does? It is understandable that he does not feel the 'inclination' to 'dwell upon this mournful subject', but by questioning the reasons behind mourning, he displays subconscious preoccupation with John, precisely because at this time there is still little known of the events or even of the whereabouts of his body. Considering Hallam's assertions on the importance of how the 'social presence of the body could be maintained via a stone or marble funerary monument […and so] made visible for the purposes of memory', on 19 March Wordsworth asks his brother Richard 'if any memorial of dear John should be recovered from the Ship, Box writing-desk, telescope, or any thing [sic] else great or small, for God's sake let it be preserved for us'.[51] As if in anticipation of the complete loss of John's body to the sea, Wordsworth yearns for a physical object through

---

[48] Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: I, The Early Years 1787-1805*, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt and Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 573-74. Hereafter cited as *Letters*.
[49] *Letters*, Letter 256, p. 562, Wordsworth writes: 'he [John] went to sea high in hope and heart that he should be soon able to make his Sister independant [sic] and contribute to any wants which I might have. […] I will work for you was his language and you shall attempt to do something for the world.'
[50] *Letters*, p. 546.
[51] Hallam, p. 132; Wordsworth, *Letters*, p. 571.

which to remember John, and also, as Hallam writes, to create memories from, and to which to attach old memories.[52] The desire for any physical connection to the deceased is a central theme in the poem 'Distressful gift! this Book receives', 'Composed perhaps around May 20-July 5, possibly shortly before July 5, 1805'.[53] In the poem the speaker laments a book that has been returned, the pages of which

> One after one and score by score
>
> All fill'd or to be fill'd with store
>
> Of verse for his delight. (26-28)

The reminder of the book of poetry, implicitly written for John because of the reference to 'His weary Vessel' (35), elicits the response to 'let me be resign'd | Beneath thy chastn'ing rod' (42-43) and to spare 'those which yet remain behind' (41).[54] The book, and subsequently the poem, therefore becomes the objects to which Wordsworth, via the speaker, can anchor memories.

After receiving news of John's burial, the tone of the letters shifts to the praise and happy recollection of their time with the now departed brother. The tone in the first letter written by Wordsworth after the recovery of John's body is noticeably more light-hearted and positive. His last, from 19 March, started 'Your Letter relieved us from great anxiety',[55] whereas on 15 April it begins, 'Many blessings and sincerest thanks of my poor afflicted sister and scarcely less afflicted Wife and myself attend you, for your kind letter, which has afforded us great consolation'.[56] Both beginnings are about the relief of his worry; however, the second letter emerges from the introspective nature of Wordsworth's previous grief. He takes the

---

[52] *Letters*, p. 571, n.2 Wordsworth states that '[h]is sword was eventually salvaged'.

[53] William Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 617-618. Hereafter cited as *Poems*.

[54] Wordsworth writes to James Losh in Letter 256 that 'I never wrote a line without a thought of its giving him pleasure, my writings printed and MS were his delight and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages', *Letters*, p. 565. See also: Peter Swaab, 'Wordsworth's Elegies for John Wordsworth', *Wordsworth Circle*, 45:1 (2014), 30-38; and R. C. Townsend, 'John Wordsworth and His Brother's Poetic Development', *PMLA*, 81:1 (March, 1966), 70-78.

[55] *Letters*, p. 570.

[56] Ibid., p. 578.

time to bless the writer, and puts his sister and wife before himself in terms of importance. The subtle difference marked by the knowledge of having John at rest allows Wordsworth to look outside of himself and to those around him. Previously, as critics describe in detail, Wordsworth was obsessed by the reputation of his brother, and the possibility that John may have sought death when he saw the sinking of the *Abergavenny* as inevitable.[57] Yet as soon as his body was laid to rest, the unsettled and ever changing emotions of Wordsworth and his sister are put at ease. Letters 264 and 266 offer resolution on the part of Wordsworth as his battle to clear the name of his brother in his own mind, and the memory of him, ends with a happy acceptance that John conducted himself in an upstanding manner. Yet in the elegies of Wordsworth we find another aspect to the reflection of his thoughts on John's death, and how he viewed the sea after the disaster.[58]

The letters demonstrate the shock Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy felt from the news, but there was another importance to John's death. He had been working with the intention of earning enough through personal trading to retire and support Wordsworth's creative endeavours, freeing the poet from the issues of patronage or working for commission. In fact, the very voyage on which he was embarking was meant to be his last. His death, therefore, signalled a very real end to any hopes Wordsworth had of complete creative freedom. As Dorothy notes, the only real consolation is that the recovery and burial of John's body at Weymouth 'is a great comfort to us – his grave is a resting-place for our thoughts – the end of all in this world'.[59]

---

[57] See: E. L. McAdam, Jr., 'Wordsworth's Shipwreck', *PMLA*, 77:3 (1962), 240-247; Richard Matlak, 'Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 31:3 (2000), 127-132; and John Wordsworth, *The Letters of John Wordsworth*, ed. by Carl Ketcham (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 51.

[58] For more on the impact of John's death on Wordsworth's writing from a biographical stance, see: Mark J. Smith, 'Elegizing John Wordsworth: Commemoration and Lyric', in *Re-reading Derrida: Perspectives on Mourning and Its Hospitalities*, ed. by Tony Thwaites and Judith Seaboyer, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013), pp. 75-90; Jonathan Roberts, 'Shared Grief in the Elegies on John Wordsworth: Farewell the Heart that lives alone', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 32:3 (Summer, 2001), 155-161; Matlak, 'Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea'; Townsend, 'John Wordsworth and His Brother's Poetic Development'; and McAdam, Jr., 'Wordsworth's Shipwreck'.

[59] Wordsworth, *Letters*, pp. 573-74.

'When first I journey'd hither, to a home' is likely the first poem Wordsworth wrote that directly deals with John.[60] The Cornell Wordsworth notes that 'an early version was composed August 29-30, 1800', meaning that John was still alive during the original composition.[61] The version printed in the Cornell Wordsworth is believed to have been 'composed between around mid-February 1804 and late 1805'.[62] The date range therefore includes the period after John's death, but the text of the poem does not seem to reflect the change. Line 41 reads 'I have a Brother'; an indisputable point that even if the poem was composed partly after John's death that the topic was to remain the same as before he died. The relevance of this becomes apparent when we look to the poem that was formed out of 'When first I journey'd hither, to a home' – 'When, to the attractions of the busy World', published in 1815. The text's significance stems from the original material that formed this poem, and how the alterations to lines referencing John become ambiguous and suggestive of his death. The line 'I have a Brother' is removed, and the first mention now is in lines 52-58:

> At the sight
>
> Conviction also flashed upon my mind
>
> That this same path (within the shady grove
>
> Begun and ended) by my Brother's steps
>
> Had been impressed. – To sojourn a short while
>
> Beneath my roof He from the barren seas
>
> Had newly come – a cherished Visitant!

It is not initially apparent that there has been any remarkable change. But 'Brother's steps' are now in the past tense with 'Had been impressed'. There is no suggestion this is due to John now being dead, but the ambiguity compared to the lines in 'When first I journey'd

---

[60] *Poems*, pp. 563-567.
[61] Ibid., p. 563.
[62] Ibid., p. 563.

hither, to a home' implies that he is. 'He had surveyed it with a finer eye' (61) and 'he had worn a track' (63) again use 'had' to allow the idea of John's existence now being a past tense. 'When Thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore' (69) follows the pattern, and more tellingly, the speaker remarks '– Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone' (86): not a direct reference to John's death, as, in a similar light to the previous poem, this could be referencing his continued journeys over the sea. But there is enough ambiguity in the line to evoke the image of John being returned to the sea, which 'hadst carried | Undying recollections' (78-79) for Wordsworth, through the sinking of the *Abergavenny*. It also conjures the idea of John, the 'Happy Warrior' and mirror image to Lord Nelson, as one who loved the sea, and so in death, by dying because of it, and being buried next to it, has imparted his soul to it.[63] Two later lines compound this evocation of John's death. The speaker remarks 'I think on thee, | My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost'. (97-98). One reading of these lines underscores a lamentation on the effect that being at sea has had on John, resulting in his been unable to appreciate and learn from 'Nature' (79). This was an obvious connection that the brothers shared, demonstrated by Wordsworth claiming they were both poets in their own different ways.[64] The second reading resonates with the knowledge of his death, and how John lost his life, his career, and his hard-earned cargo with which he was going to make his retirement fortune, as well as his ability ever to return to the 'stately Fir-grove' (9) where the speaker was when these recollections appeared.

The final lines suggest a level of hope in John's return, positioning the text as something that can keep alive his memory. The speaker looks forward

> Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
>
> When we, and others whom we love, shall meet

---

[63] *Poems*, pp. 84-86. See also: Mark J. Smith, 'Elegizing John Wordsworth: Commemoration and Lyric', pp. 75-78.

[64] See *Letters*, letter 245, p. 541, where Wordsworth writes to Sir George Beaumont: 'I can say nothing higher of my ever dear Brother than that he was worthy of his sister who is now weeping besides me, and the friendship of Coleridge; meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, and a Poet in every thing but words. Alas! what is human life!'.

A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale. (109-11)

The prospect of looking forward to John joining them again at Grasmere is explicit, but the deliberate mention of 'A second time' also suggests an understanding of a spiritual time of meeting occurring after life. 'When, to the attractions of the busy World' demonstrates the reworking of a poem concerned with a joyful reminiscence of a brother into an elegy of remembrance. The changes are subtle and deliberately ambiguous so as not to remove the hope and optimism of the original composition. But within the ambiguity, the silence of the poem, exists the possibility of John's death. He is simultaneously dead and alive within the text. It is within these spaces or multiple realities that the reader is allowed to form their own image of the lost brother; either missing but expected to return, or lost until the second meeting in the afterlife.

'To the Daisy', noted in the Cornell Wordsworth as 'Elegies Written for John Wordsworth', displaces the sea, accommodating within the boundaries of Wordsworth's language of grief the land where the flower grows, rather than the perpetrator of John's death.[65] It begins

Sweet Flower! belike one day to have

A place upon thy Poet's grave,

I welcome thee once more;

But He, who was, on land, at sea,

My Brother, too, in loving thee,

Although he lov'd more silently,

Sleeps by his native shore. (1-7)

The tension between Wordsworth and the speaker is made apparent with the indication early on that the poem is about his brother, writing 'My Brother' (5). This creates confusion about

---

[65] *Poems*, pp. 608-611.

the identity of who is speaking, as Wordsworth seems to usurp the speaker, appearing to channel his own voice through the poem by addressing the reader directly through the 'I' (3). Yet after this line Wordsworth retreats from the first person, bringing the speaker back to the fore. Only in the parentheses '(I know | The truth of this, he told me so)' (22-23) do we see his voice return, when he validates the progress of the narrative (highlighting more surely that he is also a recipient of the poetic voice's recollections). In excluding himself from the poem, he allows it to act as a vehicle for the reader, not forcing an autobiographical meaning on it. His initial refrain is concerned with the hope that one day a daisy will have 'A place upon thy Poet's grave' (2) – the poet here referring to John. Wordsworth looks past the agency of the sea, reliving the memories of when John set sail, recalling the hope of each occasion he left for voyages across the world. Strikingly, in the retelling of John's earlier voyages the agency of the sea is absent, marginalised by the inclusion of John. Repeated mentions of ships and sailing are strangely devoid of the unifying entity of the sea: 'When to that ship he went away' (9), 'When that stout Ship at anchor lay' (16), 'Was that proud Ship, of Ships the Queen' (20), 'But hark the Word! the Ship is gone' (29). This creates a tension between the boundaries of sea and land, and ship and sea. There is a refusal in the poem to acknowledge the sea when the speaker is reminiscing about happier times, implying a level of blame towards the sea's agency.

The notion of the hopefulness that surrounds the early voyages is married to the image of the 'Sweet Daisy Flowers!' to the 'abodes' of which John 'oft would steal at leisure hours' (25-26). The poem reinforces the importance of the grave and the knowledge that the body of the dead is free from the restless existence of being lost at sea. The 'Sweet Flower!' (1), becomes the link between the speaker and John. As previously noted, five years after John's death Wordsworth wrote that 'a grave is a tranquillising object; resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered'. In being buried, John is tied to all that is grounded, and the 'Daisy', as well as being an anchor for memories, becomes the manifestation of nature with which

Wordsworth, through the speaker, can sympathise. The 'wild flowers' of John are daisies, which the speaker wants to be besprinkled 'upon thy Poet's grave' (2). This in turn allows the poem to progress as a discussion of John's favourite pastimes whilst on shore, following the speaker's mental projections of the enjoyment he had in wandering the rural landscape of Britain. The sea's agency, in fact, is only mentioned as a temporary guardian of John. The poem becomes a description of the events leading up to the disaster, as it seeks to connect John back to the land in which he is buried. The 'Poet's grave' (2), recalling Wordsworth's letter to Beaumont calling John a 'Poet in every thing but words' above, is distinctly removed from the 'Six weeks beneath the moving seas' (36). But the contrast between his final grave and to where 'He lay in slumber quietly' (37) is confusingly unclear. For the speaker, John's time beneath the sea was 'Unforced by wind or wave | To quit the Ship for which he died' (38-39). It was a voluntary choice on John's part not 'To quit the ship', as the sea was not forcing him away 'by wind or wave'. The implication is that, because John is no longer 'at her [the ship's] side' (41), he can be imagined in a peaceful setting. Instead of focusing on his untimely death or the indiscriminate nature of the sea in killing him, Wordsworth focuses on the duty his brother had, and gives honour to his death in dying for his ship. In fact, the speaker claims that the 'Ocean makes | A mournful murmur for *his* sake' (53-54), demonstrating how the removal of the sea's agency from the elegy removes the need for blame and guilt that is present in later elegies.

Wordsworth writes how John 'Should find an undisturbed retreat | Near what he loved, at last' (48-49). In several Letters, Wordsworth remarks on John's love for the countryside, and especially a particular grove that was later named 'John's Grove'.[66] As noted above, John only maintained his career in the merchant navy in order to earn enough money to support both Wordsworth and Dorothy, after which time he would retire to the Lakes with them. Yet in being placed by the seashore both physically and in the poem, Wordsworth

---

[66] *Letters*, letter 172, p. 364, n.1, notes 'John's Grove was a grove of Scotch firs […] The grove got its name from being much frequented by J. W. [John Wordsworth] when he lived at Dove Cottage in 1800'.

is suggesting the connection that has been made with the sea by John's death. What he 'loved' could be either 'his native shore' where the 'ocean make[s] | A mournful murmur for his sake', or the 'Daisy' of the poem, 'Thou, sweet Flower, [which] shalt sleep and wake | Upon his senseless grave' (55-56). John here has the benefit of being by 'his native shore'; the security of being thought of as back home entwined with the nature of his body being recovered and buried. Through the presence of a grave, the speaker hears the 'ocean' as making 'A mournful murmur for his sake'. The men who searched for the bodies prevented the sea from keeping John's, and so made the sea itself into a mourner for the part it played in his death. By severing that physical connection between sea and body, just as in 'Peele Castle', the sea is marginalised by the projected grief in the poem. That both sea and land could be what 'he loved' allows for the duality of reading that suggests that it is not only the grave which means that Wordsworth, through the speaker, is able to contemplate the death with something more than grief, but the land that acts as a safeguard against the liminality of the sea.

John's grave stabilises Wordsworth's grief, although he avoids directly confronting the sea, using the speaker to do so instead. This renders Wordsworth unable to deflect the encroachment of the sea in his grieving. Displaying the progression of his grief that the burial of John has allowed, Wordsworth does not linger over expressions of despair or misery. He does not direct the poem at himself, pointedly addressing the 'Sweet Flower' as a confidant, explaining to this mute observer what has happened to his brother. Using the image of the flower on the grave, Wordsworth demonstrates the tranquillising effect of the grave, poignantly raising the flowers 'besprinkling the turf' to the level of addressee in the poem. The silence on the subject of the sea is telling as it demonstrates Wordsworth's reluctance to tackle the source of his poetic sadness, whilst also emphasising the importance of the grave in dealing with the death of John.

The elision of events between the fifth and sixth stanzas, between the speaker narrating John's 'third time from the land | […] [where] sorrow was at hand' (33-34) and the

'Six weeks beneath the moving Sea' (36), highlights Wordsworth's disposition to silence on the nature of the disaster. Whilst from his letter (noted at the beginning of this chapter) we are informed of what happened, the fact that he chooses not to poetically engrave the details, even behind the security of the speaker, shows the effects of contemplating a death at sea. The gap in action between stanzas five and six is poignant when considered alongside the additions to the 1815 version, given in a note in the Cornell Wordsworth.[67] The two additional stanzas present a graphic imagining of the events of the shipwreck. The strike on the rocks is a 'ghastly shock!' [1], although this initial image seems underwhelming in being 'ghastly' considering its description of such horrific events. The action is vivid, with the now sinking ship 'Labouring for life in hope and fear' [5], with the 'safer shore – how near, | Yet not to be attained' [6-7]. The next stanza brings John, anonymised to 'brave Commander' [8], who cries 'Silence' [8], getting 'a shriek replied | It was the last death shriek' [9-10]. These stanzas, absent from the earlier version, are detailed in their portrayal of the awful events. For the speaker the sight of the survivors 'by the morning light | Preserved upon the tall masts height' [11-12] becomes an image that 'Oft in my soul I see' [13]. The speaker emphasises the futility of hope, lamenting 'For him in vain I seek' [15], and bridging the way into the image of John 'Six weeks beneath the moving sea' (36). By ending the sixth stanza in the 1805 version with bearing John 'to the grave' (42), not only do we see the sea as the counter to the 'undisturb'd retreat' (48), but the conclusion with the burial emphasises Wordsworth's desire to avoid dealing with the sea at any length. This is highlighted further by the difference the additional 1815 stanzas make. The initial decision not to depict the shipwreck shows that even the protection of the speaker was not enough. Up until the end of stanza five the narration lingers on the land. The speaker observes the ships from the shore, swiftly detailing John's journeys, anchoring them with the line 'Once more on English *earth* they stand' (32) (my emphasis), before skipping the events of his death.

[67] *Poems*, p. 610.

Yet there is a more unsettling consequence of the avoidance of the sea. The 'Daisy' acts in opposition to the sea, fixing the poem geographically, in the pastoral landscape. In doing so Wordsworth creates a conflicting binary of the fertile and placid flower against the implied image of a surging and naufragous sea. But the concluding stanza of the poem demonstrates the inconclusive pitfalls of such a direction of grief.

> That neighbourhood of Wood and Field
> To him a resting-place should yield,
> A meek Man and a brave!
> The birds shall sing, and Ocean make
> A mournful murmur for *his* sake;
> And Thou sweet Flower! shalt sleep and wake
> Upon his senseless Grave. (50-56)

Despite John's body already being interred, the speaker's statement is qualified with uncertain futures. The 'Wood and Field | [...] *should* yield', 'The birds *shall* sing', and the 'sweet Flower! *shalt* sleep' (my emphasis), suggests an uncertainty about the reality of the situation. These things are not currently happening where the grave is, but they may not despite the speaker's suggestion that 'For such a gentle Soul and sweet | Should find an undisturb'd retreat' (47-48). It is as though, in having spent 'Six weeks beneath the moving Sea' (36), John has been tainted with instability, and despite having a resting-place, is unable to exist with any certainty.

The sea has infiltrated Wordsworth's very notions of peace after death, revoking to a certain extent the surety of the grave, and placing all hopes for the future in a precarious situation. Hence, when we consider more carefully the lines 'and Ocean make | A mournful murmur for *his* sake', we see that it is preceded and qualified by the 'shall', upon which the 'birds' song hangs. The 'Ocean' is yet to add its lament to the speaker's. Despite the belief in the tranquillity of the flower-besprinkled earth, the sea still retains its pervasive presence. It unsettles any thoughts on the future, and interrupts all attempts at settlement.

'I only look'd for pain and grief', and the poem for which it formed the basis, 'Elegiac Verses: In Memory of My Brother John Wordsworth', are a further move towards the pastoral for Wordsworth, in a way that mirrors John Milton's 'Lycidas' (1637).[68] Wordsworth uses the 'Shepherd Boy' (11) and the 'Plant unknown' (6) which 'Is flowering at my feet' (10) to set up a pastoral landscape that acts in contrast to the seascapes in the previous poems. These initial stanzas resonate with these lines from 'Lycidas':

> Thee Shepherd, thee Woods, and desert Caves
>
> With wilde Thyme and the gadding Vine o'ergrown,
>
> And all their echoes mourn (39-41)

Both poems show the land's grief for the departed. For Milton, the sympathy comes from the shepherds and landscape that his friend Edward King has left behind, and Milton evokes classical figures to either celebrate King, or question the reasoning behind his death. Wordsworth embraces the pastoral surroundings, using the speaker to mourn:

> And let me calmly bless the Power
>
> That meets me in this unknown Flower,
>
> Affecting type of Him I mourn! (35-37)

At the culmination of 'Lycidas', King has become 'the Genius of the shore' (183), there to help 'all that wander in that perilous flood' (185). In contrast, Wordsworth, through the speaker, turns to 'The Buzzard' (12), 'Lord of the air' (25), lamenting whether this bird could 'Have lent his wing, my Brother dear!' (27), 'And all who struggle with the Sea | When safety is so near'. (29-30). The focus on the shore allows the speaker to understand that

> With calmness suffer and believe,
>
> And grieve, and know that I must grieve,

---

[68] *Poems,* pp. 611-614; John Milton, *The Complete Works of John Milton*, III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)*,* pp. 50-57.

Not cheerless, though forlorn. (38-40)

Because of John's grave, it has been possible to disengage from the sea, and in doing so progress through mourning to a point where it is clearer what form this grieving has to take. In fact, the actual events of John's death are compressed into a single line – 'Sea, ship, drown'd, shipwreck' (67) – mirroring the 'single word, | A breath, a sound' (65-66) that is imagined to have accompanied the sinking of the ship. The sea has been almost entirely removed from the mourning and celebration of John. The implied agent of his death fills the void of the unsaid, allowing space and language to successfully function within the elegiac form.

R. Clifton Spargo has argued that, in 'Lycidas', Milton was finding the limits of pastoral imagery in the face of the violence and vastness of the ocean that was the cause of King's death.[69] Wordsworth's elegy reworks the pastoral into an aid in the grieving processes due to the uncontrollable and sublime nature of the sea that we will see in 'Peele Castle'. In 'Lycidas' the creative freedom of the sea becomes a tool for the effective release of grief, away from the constraints of the pastoral. Wordsworth's approach differs from Milton's through a discovery that the unbridled power of the deep is too destructive in the grieving process, and that returning to the controllable pastoral allows him to control mourning. In doing so the poem is able to function as a monument to John:

> if ever verse of mine
>
> Have power to make his merits known,
>
> Then let a monumental Stone
>
> Stand here – a sacred Shrine. (91-94)

The ambiguity of 'Stand here' allows the reader to picture a physical 'Stone' – perhaps John's grave – acting as a monument, whilst also suggesting that the poem itself is a metaphorical

---

[69] R. Clifton Spargo, *The Ethics of Mourning: Grief and Responsibility in Elegiac Literature* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

'sacred Shrine'. In essence, John's grave allows Wordsworth to employ the limits of language to form a monument to his brother's memory, and achieve at least some level of catharsis in doing so. The poem functions as a grave, acting in a similar manner to Wordsworth's epitaphs above. He can reframe John and his grave, the 'Poets grave' from 'To the Daisy', as a lasting monument that mirrors Milton's 'Genius of the Shore'.

It becomes explicit over the course of three elegies engaging with different facets of John's death that Wordsworth uses silences and spaces indicative of the elegiac form to reduce the sea's threat to mourning. Acting against this destructive erosion, Wordsworth turns away from the freedom the sea has to offer to other Romantic writers, and reaffirms his connection to the land. His attempts at poeticising grief are emphasised in the silences, such as the pauses between words in the line 'Sea, Ship, drown'd, Shipwreck, so it came', where the emotions and meaning are implied. Through not saying everything, in restricting the narration of the poetic voice (often not his own), he is able to deal with a situation that, for any reader, is obviously too hard to contemplate when written on the page. This 'resting-place for our thoughts' allows Wordsworth to both articulate his anger and the manifest agency of the sea, as well as find some path towards a level of acceptance that offers consolation to a sympathetic mourning-reader.

The progression of Wordsworth's relationship to the sea is most clearly expressing in 'Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, In a Storm Painted by Sir George Beaumont' (composed 1806, published 1807).[70] This was the first poem published, though not composed, concerning the death of John. Wordsworth again removes himself from both the physical locale of the sea, as well as creatively framing the poem on the shore rather than the perpetrator of his brother's death. As with 'To the Daisy', he does not directly engage with the sea in dialogue. He is commenting upon the loss through both the speaker and then the mimetic projection of another artist; Wordsworth is not looking at the sea itself, nor his own artistic view, but Beaumont's, towards whom the speaker directs the poem throughout.

---

[70] *Poems*, pp. 266-268.

Wordsworth's ekphrasis emphasises his reluctance to engage the sea personally, and therefore relies on the artistic impressions of others to conduct his grieving.[71] The tension between Wordsworth and the speaker is heightened by the obvious references to biographical details. From Beaumont's painting the speaker remembers when Wordsworth 'was thy neighbour' (1) and 'dwelt in sight of thee' (2). The speaker is not dealing directly with the sea, but rather with the memories that the picture evokes for Wordsworth. It indicates a poetic decision not to connect directly with the sea. What is of most importance, however, is the implied connection of the poem to the death of John, and the explicit avoidance of mentioning him at any point. The void left by John is a reaction to attempting to deal with the sea and its agency in the events of his death.

Because John has been laid to rest, Wordsworth, it seems, has no need to create a real and physical dialogue with the sea in order to feel some connection to his lost brother. Therefore, the painting offers more an opportunity to engage in a cathartic meditation than to deal directly with the tempestuous force that stole his brother away. The sea becomes a secondary focus after the memory of John, and Wordsworth's contemplations of himself. As his body has a final resting place, so can Wordsworth's memories and grief be tempered by recollections of the man, and not his body's unknown whereabouts. Wordsworth's 'Elegiac Stanzas' shows a more complex handling of the grief of losing a sibling than his earlier poems on John.[72]

There is no indication initially that the poem is about the death of John. He is not mentioned by name, and all connections are based upon allusions. At that point, one could ask whether the poem is connected at all with John's death. But the treatment of sea imagery, and the nature of Wordsworth's explicit internal change, suggests that it is. That the castle is 'in a Storm' as the title describes suggests a direct link to the storm that helped sink the

---

[71] See Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1994), pp. 14-18 for more on ekphrasis in Wordsworth with regards to 'Elegiac Stanzas'.
[72] For more on the ties to John and to Milton's 'Lycidas', see: Edward Wilson, 'An Echo of St Paul and Words of Consolation in Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas"', *The Review of English Studies*, 43:169 (February, 1992), 75-80.

Abergavenny. Wordsworth locates himself immediately within the poem through the poetic voice with the first word: 'I' (1). The self-reflexive nature of the first line creates a tension between the autobiographical and the anonymity of the speaker. The de Manian authenticity of the poem stems from the knowledge of Wordsworth's visit to the castle, as well as his relationship with Beaumont.

Whilst this makes it hard to extricate the voice we hear in the first lines from that of Wordsworth, it allows for the reader to become engaged in a dialogue with the speaker. The 'I', when read or spoken aloud, locates the reader in the poem, giving a level of ownership over the language. The blurring of the boundary between the speaker and the reader engages the reader's sensibility, heightening the emotional response and connection to the poem. The 'I' functions to allow the reader to place themselves in the position of the speaker, and subsequently, the silence of Wordsworth caused by the sea is challenged by the reader's vocalisation. As we follow the speaker through the poem, what is noticeable here is that there is an obvious silence surrounding the nature of the grief and the events that saw the loss of the *Abergavenny*. Wordsworth's silence is noticeable through the speaker in *not* discussing the events, and only addressing the sea via the painting which has evoked memories of, initially, 'a glassy sea' (4). The grave has stabilised him to a point where he feels capable of discussing his own feelings within a year of John's death, but the sea can still be seen to have infiltrated his poetry, its power being felt as he is unable to address it directly.

From the second stanza the sense of stillness and tranquillity are at odds with the tenor of the poem, showing how different his notion of the sea's agency is at this point. The sea unsettles the form of the poem initially with this tranquillity, and there seems little which functions as a lament for the dead. Yet here lies the power of Wordsworth's engagement with the sea. It has now become an entity that no longer exists in his mind or life as it used to. Once it was 'a glassy sea' (4), which 'trembled' (8) or unsettled the image of Peele Castle. Yet for the four weeks he lived by it, 'How perfect was the calm!' (9). The sea was so perfectly sedate that one 'could have fancied that the mighty Deep | Was even the gentlest of all gentle

Things' (11-12). Contrary to the terrific nature of the sea, the repetition of 'gentle' undermines any sense of the sublime. The resonance of this memory of tranquillity is such that the speaker directly challenges the mind and 'Painter's hand' (13) as unable to represent what he believes the truth of the sea around Peele Castle used to be. However, in a doubling back of reinforcement, this imagery is undermined by suggesting the additions would be to 'add the gleam | The light that never was, on sea or land' (14-15). These suggestions on the shortcomings of the painting are the consequence of an emotional grappling with grief, but the additions would be to add that which does not exist in the physical world – 'The light that *never* was' (my emphasis). Just as John cannot be replaced, nothing real or tangible can be added to the painting. Compounding the instability of this reality, the lasting vision of serenity is depicted as 'the Poet's dream' (16).

The elegy then, becomes initially a foray into the uncertain, a challenge to what is already represented without an alternative to replace it. The visions of how 'Peele Castle' should be painted are uncertain because, as the poem goes on to show, the death of John has affected any ability to engage with, and creatively project the sea:

> I have submitted to a new controul:
> A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
> A deep distress hath humanized my Soul. (34-36)

The poem's title was changed posthumously in the fourth book of F. T. Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (1875) to 'Nature and the Poet'.[73] Revealingly, this change in title shows how this elegy exposes the tensions that have grown between Wordsworth and nature because of John's death. This is what has broken the tranquillity of the first half of the poem. The 'smiling sea' (38) is no more, and from this Beaumont's painting is ratified as the most apt representation of how Wordsworth now views the sea. 'This sea in anger, and that dismal shore' (44), is now how the agent of calm exists in his mind. Here the use of 'dismal' suggests

---

[73] Francis T. Palgrave ed., *The Golden Treasury* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875).

a dead and barren shore, as well as evoking connotations with the 'mourning garments' worn in the eighteenth century (*OED*). The 'shore' becomes the very clothing worn in grief, emphasising the grave of John being on land and not at sea: the 'shore' is wearing the grief that Wordsworth is writing into the poem. Coinciding with the meaning of 'mourning garments', 'dismal' also denotes 'a funeral mute', who was a 'hired mourner' (*OED*). A connection can be made to the burial of John, which was attended by only one family member, the 'aunt of Mr C. Wordsworth'.[74] There were no other friends or family at the burial because of the need to bury John's body quickly due to it having decomposed for six weeks. Instead, it was attended by the people of Weymouth in the capacity of professional mourners. But the seashore was, at the time of John's death, only the observer to the events; the sea itself was the perpetrator. The seashore is therefore projected as an entity that shares in the grief of Wordsworth.

By causing the death of John, the once 'gentlest of all gentle Things' has betrayed the comforting connection it once had to Wordsworth and as such becomes a 'pageantry of fear' (48). Despite having praised the 'Work' as 'wise and well, | Well chosen is the spirit that is here' (45-46), the painting's potency is undermined with 'pageantry', suggesting not only a very public display of what here is a very profound grief, whilst also highlighting the show-like but hollow nature that embodies the picture's display of 'passion'. The picture is still just a picture, and is like Wordsworth himself removed behind the speaker, a display of passion that has 'submitted to a new controul', and therefore without 'power'. Rather than being unable to break the connection to the sea, the speaker laments a loss of 'power', having been consumed by the sea. But to balance this there is the gain of a 'welcome fortitude, and patient cheer' (57). The memory of the tranquil sea is redundant, and now finds a resonance in the storm in the painting. The speaker has accepted 'Such sights, or worse, as are before me here' in the painting, but proclaims that 'Not without hope we suffer and we mourn' (59-60). By

---

[74] *Letters*, p. 574, n.[1].

the elegy's conclusion there is no longer any concern with the sea as there has been progress through the mourning process.

'That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell' (47) is the only mention that is made of the ship in the picture. By terming it a 'Hulk', it evokes the image of 'the body of the dismantled ship (worn out and unfit for sea service)' (*OED*), tying it to the *Abergavenny*. Resonating with the desire for distance from the events of the night, the image is treated with indifference. The sublime terror of the sea is undermined because John's body had been saved. Using the painting as a shield, the speaker can remain numb, mimicking the castle as it remains 'unfeeling' (51), 'standing there sublime' (49). By relying on the painting and therefore indirectly dealing with the sea, the lines suggest that the grief caused by John's death may have removed the natural terror of the sea and hints towards the egotistical sublimity for which Wordsworth is later known.[75] Emotions have been rendered impotent, and therefore the speaker evokes the Castle's 'unfeeling armour' (51).

Wordsworth is able to detach his memories of John from the sea because of the physical presence of the grave. He can therefore address himself through the elegy, allowing a cathartic introspection in order to come to terms with the grief:

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,

Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!

Such happiness, wherever it be known,

Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind. (53-56)

The speaker is no longer the 'heart that lives alone' as the previous revelation that the death has 'humanized my soul' suggests that this internally fragmented self has been preserved, reconnected through grief. The heart had been encased 'in a dream', placed at a distance to ideas of origin, family, and 'the Kind', connecting it only to nature and the poetic process.

---

[75] See John Jones, *The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1954).

But in being 'humanized', the speaker has come to the realisation that 'Such happiness, wherever it be known' is fleeting and will be lost, 'for 'tis surely blind'. Through contemplating grief at however far a remove, there has been a forced consideration of 'The still, sad music of humanity', reforming internal emotions in order to come to terms with loss. This grieving process, therefore, has been aided through the burial of John. Via the protection of the speaker, Wordsworth has undergone an introspective process of mourning, and although it has negatively affected his connection to nature, he presents himself as having found a way to move on. The speaker is able to 'welcome [with] fortitude, and patient cheer […] what is to be borne' (57-58), and because John has been laid to rest, suggest that 'Not without hope we suffer and we mourn' (60). The use of the double negative 'not without' implies that it is presented as being contrary to expectations: Wordsworth is challenging the idea that death should leave those left behind 'without hope'.

But the grave also has an adverse effect, noticeably in that John is not given a physical representation in 'Elegiac Stanzas'. As has already been noted, John is not explicitly named in the poem, and only by the allusion 'Him whom I deplore' (42), can we suggest the poem is written about him. The burial of John facilitates a different angle from which Wordsworth can poeticise the grief felt, it now being centred on his creative capabilities rather than on what the family has lost. In accommodating his language and himself, Wordsworth has in effect transmuted his grief into a form of creativity. As such, we can see how the burial, the physically filled grave, is contrasted by a void of words about John, where the fantasies of the trials of the dead are alleviated by the painting, here allowing Wordsworth the space to contemplate how he has personally changed. Yet this betrays the silence that such a progression through grief can include. Whilst the grave prevents Wordsworth from focusing on the events of his brother's death, it doesn't allow him to address and re-evaluate the sea and its part in the events. As we see in 'Elegiac Stanzas', it is the sea, and not the memory of John, that has changed.

Although, from its title, 'Elegiac Stanzas' would suggest a poem of 'mortal loss and consolation',[76] we find that in fact it is the sea that, for the speaker, has 'humaniz'd my soul' (36). Only the depictions of the sea have shown any change, going from 'a glassy sea' (4), 'the gentlest of all gentle Things' (12), to 'This sea in anger' (44) with 'trampling waves' (52). This suggests that while there is an allusion to the occurrence of death, Wordsworth's silence, through the ekphrasis of the painting, leaves only the changing imagery of the sea as an answer to his professed transformation. So in this way the sea has become the surrogate object of pain and grief and Wordsworth is left unable to connect with it because John is no longer embraced by the waves. Therefore, he does so only through the ekphrasis of Beaumont's painting, silencing the sea and removing the burden of having to discuss his own visual interpretation of the sea at the time of John's death.

Wordsworth's poetical grieving for his brother shows how the supreme power of the sea can sever all connections, whether they be internal, external, living, or dead: the sea has the ability to permeate all boundaries, eroding them bit by bit. In the cases of his elegies the attrition of the boundaries between the living and the dead can be seen to cause a subsequent build-up of emotional sediment, blocking the channel between grief and language. At times Wordsworth seems to display a reluctance to face the raw sublimity of the sea, using John's grave as a reason not to have to directly confront the agent of his death. The sea, acting as the ultimate threat to the preservation of the self, can sever Wordsworth from the self that existed before the 'deep distress' of John's death 'humanized [his] Soul'. This leaves an entity that has agency, has actions and creates reactions, but which leaves nothing in its wake. The dead, whilst they are left at sea, are left in a liminal space, in stasis, immortal, but severed from everything else.

In using John as a catalyst for his elegies, Wordsworth is able to utilise the audience as a group of surrogate mourners. We bear witness to his grieving, whilst using the silences of detail and abstraction of the possessive to allow ourselves into his place within the poem.

---

[76] Sacks, p. 3.

The elegies become vehicles for our own grief – either actual or imagined. The silences, necessary according to Sacks in a work of mourning, allow Wordsworth to articulate his own grief without overburdening the language to the point of fracture. In fact, the very inability of language to adequately evoke and maintain the true extent of mourning is what necessitates the use of implication through poetical silences. Through their function of lessening the strain on language, they make more real the images of mourning. The spaces provided can be used by the reader to fill in the details for themselves, either by substituting imaginings of the horror of shipwreck, or the memories of personal loss. The silences, and the blank, infinitely unimpressionable sea, make the elegies stronger by acting against the conventions of the form.

Chapter Four: Burying the Dead in the Elegies of Louisa Stuart Costello and Charlotte Smith

The elegiac form provides both the author and the reader with an outlet for grief, whether it is actual or metaphorical. In Wordsworth's elegies there has been a parallel working through the grief of losing his brother whilst simultaneously reassessing his identity. The shifting boundaries of the sea, and its agency within his poetics, shows Wordsworth turning away from the creative destruction of the sea towards the pastoral. The connection between the dead and the land cemented this move and allowed Wordsworth to reject the influence of the sea within the elegies. The notable element allowing this shift was the burial of John's body. But in cases where there is no body to bury – either it is not recovered or the death is of the self – there is no direction towards the pastoral. The sea lures the poet into engaging with its agency. This chapter explores the use of the elegy as a grave for the unburied, and looks at how the sea can be seen to embody aspects of the dead. It begins by interrogating the poetry of Louisa Stuart Costello before moving on to works by Charlotte Smith.

Louisa Stuart Costello: Making the Elegy a Grave

Louisa Stuart Costello was only sixteen when she published her first volume of poetry, *Maid of Cypress Isle* (1815). In April 1826, regarding her third volume of poetry, *Songs of a Stranger* (1825), *Monthly Magazine* wrote of the 'uncommon praise on the taste, talents, and information of the writer', and noting that '[t]he feeling displayed throughout the work is tender without being weak, such as we delight to find in woman, and which would confer honour on our own sex'.[1] She is referenced in proof of the 'error' that 'since the death of Byron our poetry is at a low ebb', named amongst 'the band of women who still live, and write, and reflect honour on our age, and prove its intellectual refinement'.[2] The regard with

---

[1] *Monthly Magazine*, April 1826, p. 417.
[2] Ibid., p. 417.

which she was held during her lifetime emphasises the need to include her in the continuing

revival of Romantic women poets, such as Charlotte Smith, that is headed by critics such as

Jacqueline M. Labbe and Stephen C. Behrendt.[3] The only full-length work on Costello is

Louisa Stuart Costello: A Nineteenth-Century Writing Life by Clare Broome Saunders.[4] It offers a

comprehensive overview of Costello's life but does not provide any meaningful investigation

of her work. The analysis and criticism of her poetry require significant expansion, as well

studying the impact her eldest brother's death had upon her career. The lasting effect is also

noticeable in its permeation into later works. Saunders' text is a significant start but it leaves

plenty of scope for further work.

What makes Costello integral is her connection to the central question of this half of

the thesis, which is; how is someone mourned when there is no grave? Can poetry act as a

surrogate memorial? Her brother died whilst serving on-board HMS *Tweed*, when it sank off

the coast of Newfoundland in Shoal Bay on November the 5th, 1813, his body never being

recovered. W. P. Gosset notes that the ship was 'wrecked in Shoal Bay Newfoundland

because of an error in the chart or the set of the current' and that the court martial was set

for the 28th of December 1813.[5] Terence Grocott and David Hepper offer slightly more

detail. According to Grocott the *HMS Tweed*, captained by William Mather, sailed from

Portsmouth in late September of 1813 as part of a 'small convoy for Newfoundland'.[6] There

was persistent and thick fog which 'prevented the most accurate observer from ascertaining

the precise situation of the ship'.[7] This inability to accurately locate the ship caused them to

suppose 'they were at a distance from land', but at 6am 'she struck a rock'.[8] At this point it

---

[3] See: Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003); ed., *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008); *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Stephen C. Behrendt, *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
[4] Clare Broom Saunders, *Louisa Stuart Costello: A Nineteenth-Century Writing Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[5] W. P. Gosset, *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy, 1793-1900* (London: Mansell, 1986), p. 91.
[6] Terence Grocott, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Eras* (London: Chatham, 1997), p. 360.
[7] Ibid., p. 360.
[8] Ibid., p. 361.

is recorded that 'many of the crew instantly jumped upon the rock; but the greater part indulging hopes that by exertion she might be got off, remained in her'.[9] The situation worsened as the ship began to break up, and so those on the rock started dragging men from the ship to the rock using a rope. Many, however, feared being dashed against the rock whilst being pulled across and so 'stayed in the ship till she went to pieces'.[10] Captain Mather was saved at the end, with only 52 of the original 120 surviving the wreck.

David Hepper writes that the HMS *Tweed* left Cork on the 3rd of October, escorting a convoy of 50 ships. It was on the 4th of November that she found herself steering through 'banks of drifting fog, but with the soundings steadily deepening as they left the bank she stood on. By the early hours of the following morning she was forced to heave-to' due to increasingly thickening fog. They believed themselves to be 'about eight leagues from the shore' due to the soundings they had taken, but at 5:30 am they spotted land ahead. They attempted to 'gain headway to tack away, but before this was complete she struck a high rock and stove in her starboard quarter. She rapidly started filling with water, and in just thirty minutes she was full and fell over to starboard'. According to Hepper, they then discovered men on the rock they had just struck, finding that they were the 'crew of the quarter boat which had been swept away when she struck'. Concurring with Grocott, the account says that ropes were used to try and get people off the sinking ship onto the rock, but that at 7am the ship broke apart drowning the rest. The end of the account remarks that the wreck was caused 'due to an error in the soundings shown in the Admiralty chart, coupled with a strong current which had carried them inshore'.[11] It is recorded that 64 men died. Despite the discrepancies these accounts seem to concur on the basic events, concluding with the same end result. Records of the crew list and details of the court martial have proven elusive, but it must be assumed that Costello's brother was one of those who did not survive; otherwise

---

[9] Grocott, p. 361.
[10] Ibid., p. 361.
[11] David Hepper, *British Warship Losses in the Age of Sail 1650-1859* (Rotherfield: Jean Boudriot, 1994), p. 148.

he got to shore but decided never to return home. Either way, to Costello, he died at sea without a grave or body to mourn.

This loss permeates her poetry, and she writes several elegies over the succeeding years. In each she introduces a deliberate ambiguity about characterisation and the nature of the speaker, with a complex examination of authorship and poetic voice. The loss of her brother, and the image of his body being adrift at sea, results in a confused and conflicted relationship between Costello and the sea. A bond is created, with the fact that there is no gravestone to anchor her grief resulting in the role of monumentalisation being displaced onto the sea. She conflictingly expresses hatred and anger towards the sea, in part due to its perceived agency behind nautical disasters and her brother's death. Therefore, the sea is confusingly imagined as both a hateful and a helpful presence, displaying a tension between a vivid hatred of its indifferent killing, and a longing for a connection to a brother that the sea has consumed. Her portrayal of the sea becomes ambivalent, symbolising both the terrible power of nature and human mortality. This is placed alongside the desperate grief displayed by the severing of the familial bond with her brother. This internal conflict creates silences and ellipses in the poems that evoke incapacitating feelings of loss and mourning. The voice of Costello is often hidden, with an anonymised speaker accommodating the 'mourning self' and her 'words of grief'; a protective act that allows her in turn to preserve her selfhood.

Costello's account of her brother's maritime disaster is not sensationalised. Instead of detailing the events and horror of the situation, her poems elegise the story of her brother's death in what Coleridge would identify as a typically Romantic manner, offering a retrospective contemplation of the loss and the timeline of bereavement focusing on the perspective of the poet. [12] The account is not set as a shipwreck narrative, but as a contemplation of the effects of the event, indicating how her work should be considered in

---

[12] See extract from Coleridge on p. 6.

a different way to popular shipwreck narratives from the time.[13] The poem can be seen as a handling of grief and the bereavement process, to repeat Sacks, a 'work of mourning' contemplating the realities of death.[14] To this end, Costello's sea can be seen to occupy a space of sympathiser, the only link she has to her brother. The sea is created with its own agency: one which is in dialogue with her; and one which allows her not only to communicate with her brother, but also questions the role of God, the ambivalence of natural power, and the mortality of mankind. The subtle effect of her poems, however, lies in her ability to explain and represent the horrors of death at sea as she felt and saw them, through her 'silent spoken words'.[15] The highly autobiographical nature of the speaker in her poems means the voice is both separate and a part of Costello's own as the author. As such the speaker allows a preservation of the self for Costello whilst reinforcing the authenticity that the autobiographical connection instils. She uses the distance provided by authorship, removing herself from the text, as security in vocalising her grief, which is the more powerful because of the context of her loss. As such, the autobiographical reading can help frame the poetry while leaving room for a reader-response analysis. The importance of the reader here, in a greater way than with Wordsworth's elegies, is emphasised by the didactic aspect of these poems.

Written shortly after her brother's death, 'On the Death of My Brother' presents the struggles encountered in trying to define the identity of the dead.[16] Because of the lack of published works and shortness, I have included the whole poem.[17] It goes as follows:

1   Where rolls the wide Atlantic's wave,

---

[13] For more on the popularity of shipwreck narratives from the period, see: Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 59-71 and pp. 107-27; and Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), pp. 234-49.

[14] Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 24.

[15] W. David Shaw, *Elegy & Paradox: Testing the Conventions* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 105.

[16] Costello, 'On the Death of My Brother, Who Was Unfortunately Lost in His Majesty's Ship Tweed, off Newfoundland, Nov. 5, 1813', *The Maid of the Cyprus Isle, and Other Poems*, (London: Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, 1815), pp. 11-12.

[17] The same has been done for the other poems written by Costello that are studied here. Line numbers have been included for ease of reference.

2   Which dashes 'gainst the shore

3   Of stern America's bleak clime,

4   With hollow deathful roar---

5 There, there thou sleep'st beneath the sea,

6 Which swallow'd all our hopes with thee!

7   Remorseless death, in spring of youth,

8   Has snatch'd that much-loved form away;

9   Cold! cold, thou liest! a sea-weed shroud

10   Now wraps thy pale and senseless clay!

11 And vain are all our tears for thee,

12 For low thou sleep'st beneath the sea!

13   Tho' lost for ever here on earth,

14   Oh, may thy soul ascend on high!

15   There, where no stormy winds assail,

16   Enjoy blest immortality.

17 May we in heaven again meet thee,

18 Tho' now thou sleep'st beneath the sea!

Costello possesses the poem through the title, but maintains a plurality of identity within the body of the text. It is a collective loss that has been suffered, suggested by the 'our' of lines 6 and 11 and the 'we' of line 17. In doing this Costello presents a confusion of identity brought about due to the eroding nature of death and the sea on identity. The brother remains nameless as if a security exists in pronouns. The speaker refrains from using the 'I' and instead remains within the safety of group mourning. Suggesting, perhaps, the anonymous nature of her brother's death, Costello reaffirms the notion of the challenges

that the sea poses to identity. She removes her own voice from the poem, relying on the unknown plurals to depict the 'ocean wide', which so few know in the way she does after her brother's death as the place 'Where silence and where sadness ever reign'. The apparent lack of closure caused by the inability to recover her brother's body characterises our perception of her engagement with the sea and how she treats the loss. Her grief is destabilised and intensified by her inability to visit his final resting place, her lack of closure emphasising the vastness of the sea and how it prevents her from seeing either the edge or the bottom from the shore. The sea becomes her only connection to his earthly body; yet conflictingly, it is the perpetrator of his death and the reason she cannot contemplate his spirit having ascended to heaven. She cannot feel the 'tranquillising' effects of the grave of which Wordsworth writes. In this first poem to engage with the loss of her brother, Costello berates the sea and its part in the disaster.

In excluding the 'I' she creates a space between her grief and the language of mourning, as she relates her concept of the events without admitting the rawness of emotion that the poem subsequently projects. The speaker provides protection in order to preserve the self against a sea that is imbued with the attributes of Death. The sea-as-Death is a physical representation of the abstract and supernatural figure, and describes the 'stern [...] bleak clime' (3), and 'hollow deathful roar', a place of sterility and nothingness. The use of 'hollow' suggests the void left by the brother's removal from the family, and is also indicative of the impotence of the 'deathful roar' of the sea now that her fear has turned to grief. The lines further emphasise the 'hollow' identity of the poet and subject, demonstrating the 'forced accommodation' whereby the grief is collective and anonymous. The 'hollow' voice of the poet is also mimicked by the representative voice of the sea and its 'deathful roar'. Just like the voice of the poem, the sea has been rendered vocally impotent.

'Hollow' has further meaning when we consider his body being adrift in the Atlantic. His grave on land is and will always be 'hollow'. The sea has become his grave, but its vastness and ever shifting nature means that it too represents a 'hollow' grave. In being identified as

the grave, the sea becomes one entity, which has a connection to Costello's brother. But his connection exists through the consumption of the brother by the sea, the 'hollow' chiming with 'swallow'd' (6) to suggest a hungry vacancy of the sea. The sea that the poet views from the shore is physically devoid of any trace of him whilst simultaneously dissolving him – spreading his identity everywhere. This sense of the emptiness permeates the poet's voice, as 'the sea | Which swallow'd all our hopes with thee' (5-6) explains the ramifications of his loss. Yet the ever-shifting nature of the sea means that the poet can never believe her brother is at rest. In a constant reminder of his state of limbo, the 'wave, | Which dashes 'gainst the shore' (1-2) evokes his ever-moving surroundings, with the nearness of the shore mocking his inability to escape.

The concluding lines underscore the sense of hopelessness in the poem. Costello's wish that her brother makes it into Heaven is not assured, emphasised by 'Oh, may thy soul ascend on High! | [...] May we in heaven again meet thee' (14-17). 'There' (15) provides an anchorage to the hopes of reunion, but is undermined by 'May' presenting an uncertainty that she will see her brother. This uncertainty is extended into a question about the existence of an afterlife, and as such challenges the benevolence, or even existence, of God. Complicating this image even further is the creation of the binary conflict between the earth and sea, of the stasis of being at sea and the desire for ascension to heaven. The image of the sea becomes one of purgatory and is challenged as a resting place with the line 'lost for ever here on earth' (13). The wish that he manages to 'Enjoy blest immortality' (16), affirms the faith in his eventual salvation and escape from the purgatory of the sea. The concluding line 'Tho' now thou sleep'st beneath the sea!' (18) confirms the transient stasis of his identity and resonates with the preceding notions of his sleeping in lines 5 and 12. Because he will eventually awake, his current state as a boundless entity trapped in purgatory is only fleeting. The final lines in fact are presented as a prayer adding hopes of a resolution to his current state. Her brother still sleeps there and only 'may' manage to rise up to Heaven, but her plea

is offered in an attempt to avoid confronting the reality that he will be trapped at sea permanently.

The first sestet stanza of the poem is more accurately a ballad stanza quatrain joined with a rhyming couplet. The effect of this, with the rhyme structure of *abcbdd* (which continues throughout the rest of the poem), is to destabilise the motion of the stanza with the end double rhyme. The alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and trimeter create a rhythm of duality, and this pattern creates a rhythm that mimics the motion of a wave coming in and then receding:

> Where rolls the wide Atlantic's wave,
> Which dashes 'gainst the shore
> Of stern America's bleak clime,
> With hollow deathful roar --- (1-4)

The flow of the poem is then halted by the couplet, as the waves seem to break on the shore, adding a sense of finality to the stanza:

> There, there thou sleep'st beneath the sea,
> Which swallowed all our hopes with thee! (5-6)

This jarring is emphasised by the spondee of 'There, there' at the beginning of line 5, and the end-stop which introduces it at the end of line 4. The second and third stanzas follow the same pattern concerning rhyme, the couplet ending each with this finality, tied together by the repeated use of the same rhyme of *dd* for each stanza:

> And vain are all our tears for thee,
> For low thou sleep'st beneath the sea! (11-12)

> May we in heaven again meet thee,
> Tho' now thou sleep'st beneath the sea! (17-18)

This joins the idea of her brother, referenced every couplet as 'thee', with that of the sea, which is also used in each couplet. The reversal of the pair, 'sea' and 'thee' changing to 'thee'

and 'sea', continues the physical motion of the waves, allowing a comparison between the physicality of both man and sea that in turn suggests an imaginative and emotional bond between the sailor and the sea.

The second stanza is in tetrameter, the slight change from the first stanza again emphasising the regular but changeable nature of the sea:

> Remorseless death, in spring of youth,
>
> Has snatch'd that much-loved form away;
>
> Cold! cold, thou liest! a sea-weed shroud
>
> Now wraps thy pale and senseless clay! (7-10)

The spondee 'Cold! cold,' on line 9 unsettles the flow of the stanza as it resonates with the previous 'There, there' in line 5 without returning to the same rhythm of that line and the next. The same happens with the spondee 'There, where' on line 15 (depending on whether the 'where' is read as stressed or unstressed): 'There, where no storm winds assail'. On line 17, 'heaven again' can be read as the end stressed syllable of the previous iamb and an anapest, the resulting added syllable unsettling the rhythm of the couplet. Otherwise it can be more naturally read as an elision – 'heav'n' – allowing for a better flow to the line. In either case, however, the word 'heaven' is highlighted due to the slight pause caused by the elision or the forced stresses if read in full.

This short poem demonstrates how the sea can negatively alter and challenge otherwise reassuring concepts of afterlife, emphasised by 'the wide Atlantic's [...] Remorseless' nature (1-7). Personal identities do not have an impact on the agency of the sea as it kills and saves indiscriminately. Therefore, it challenges the identities of those left who have to contemplate what it means if there is an entity that is so devoid of sentiment or design. Critically, these challenges arise because of the sea's hostile, unstable, and relentless nature. It is a volatile and threatening platform from which to begin the mourning process, and therefore produces continuing feelings of grief whilst prolonging any sense of redemption. In excluding the "I" from the poem, Costello places herself behind the 'veil of

words', occupying the space of the silent griever who is connected through the ownership of the poem ('my Brother' and 'May we in heaven'), but who hides her identity within a group of mourners. Any finality to the events of the shipwreck are undermined by the references to sleeping, betraying an unwillingness to accept the loss of the body or even death itself. Considering the overtly religious sections of the poem, Alain Corbin's primordial and sinful sea is brought to mind in a way that alludes to the speaker's reluctance to leave a body adrift and unburied in such a foetid environment. Rather it is better to imagine him as awaiting the moment finally to ascend to Heaven. The predatory nature of death in 'remorseless[ly] [...] spring[ing]' (7) on her brother reduces him to his base elements. He becomes 'clay' (10) with a 'sea-weed shroud' (9), losing his human identity and form, pre-empting his natural decay at the bottom of the sea. Costello strives to avoid finality in this poem, and in so doing, does more to keep her brother in a state of purgatory than the imagined sea.

The 'lonely silence' Costello displays in 'On the Death of my Brother', hidden behind the poetic voice, is reversed in 'To the Sea'.[18] The following is the poem in full:

1 Oh wide expanse, so awful and sublime!

2   I gaze with wrapt and melancholy eye,

3 As 'midst the silent gloom of lonely eve,

4   I mark thy billows slowly rolling by.

5 That swelling wave, which wet my ling'ring feet,

6   Has haply pass'd o'er many a woeful scene---

7 Has wash'd, perhaps, the dismal wreck'd remains

8   Of some tall bark that grac'd thy surface green!

9 Has heedless pass'd where desp'rate shrieks arose,

---

[18] Costello, 'To the Sea', *Redwald; A Tale of Mona; and Other Poems* (Brentford: P. Norbury, 1819), pp. 57-58.

10   Where sinking beings stretch'd their hands in vain;

11 Or stopp'd its course awhile, and swelling high,

12   Dash'd o'er their forms, and onward rush'd again!

13 Beneath its dreadful force perhaps there fell

14   The only hope of friends, far---far away!

15 There, with them sunk, beneath its direful swell

16   The last sad glimpse of fleeting pleasure's ray.

17 One tender form is present to my view,

18   Which vainly struggles 'midst the rushing tide,

19 Then fades from sight, where waves on waves pursue,

20   And bids the deep the dismal story hide!

21 Could not a mother's and a sister's sighs

22   Join with the wind, and waft thee to the shore?

23 Could not a helpless, orphan, brother's cries

24   Melt the hard fates, and thou return once more!

25 No! thou art lost---nor those sad rites allow'd

26   To weep beside thy flow'r-strewn, mournful, grave,

27 For where the billows sweep with moaning loud,

28   Thy bones are whit'ning low in Ocean's cave!

29 Tho' stormy sea, thou bidd'st these thoughts arise,

30   Yet will I linger by thy rocky side:

31 Whilst to his wat'ry bier my fancy flies,

32   And views his tomb, altho on earth deny'd!

There has been some reconciliation between the poet and the sea in the four-year gap between publications, as the 'I' is introduced for the first time. She starts with a vision similar to 'On the Death of My Brother', relating the 'awful and sublime' scene (1) on which she 'gaze[s] with wrapt and melancholy eye' (2). We are brought back again to obstacles in the way of Costello's attempts to gain any closure on the grief of her loss. At the beginning of the poem there are no displays of what Sacks notes are defining characteristics of the elegy: there is no movement here from 'grief to consolation', nor are there 'concluding images of resurrection'.[19] Here we initially find evidence of a shift away from traditional elegy in Costello's work.

In 'On the Death of My Brother', she modifies these practices of elegy slightly with proposed or hopeful 'images of resurrection' in a desire for her brother's ascension to heaven. But here she has moved away from the expected forms of the traditional elegiac genre. The 'wrapt' from before suggests that the sublime nature of the sea and its ties to her brother create an attraction that, despite the sorrow and hatred, she cannot break. This attraction is further emphasised by the poem being addressed directly to the sea, and in doing so she emphasises the sea's agency in her attempts to converse with a mute entity. Yet her attraction to the sea results in the resurgence of the negative connotations it also possesses. Costello actively believes in the sea's arbitrary and indifferent nature in the destruction of man. 'That swelling wave [...] | Has haply pass'd o'er many a woeful scene' (5-6) begins fantasising about the sea's indiscriminate killing, for it

Has heedless pass'd where desp'rate shrieks arose,

Where sinking beings stretch'd their hands in vain;

Or stopp'd its course awhile, and swelling high,

---

[19] See p. 6.

> Dash'd o'er their forms, and onward rush'd again! (9-12)

From these images we can see how her judgement of the sea has changed little since the death of her brother, and that the sea still maintains a character of terror for her. Yet because of this she cannot escape her need to converse with it. This need can be seen in the mingling of her own voice with the narrator's. She refocuses the poem on to a figure that cannot help but evoke the image of her brother in the lines 'One tender form is present to my view | Which vainly struggles 'midst the rushing tide' (17-18). In visualising her brother's death, she is projecting her impression of his innocence as well as her inability to stop reliving the past, displaying a direct link between her language of mourning and her grief.

She envisions the suffering of all of those on board the sinking ship, and she cannot help but focus her compassion on the 'One tender form', leaving the suffering of the 'sinking beings' to whoever is left to mourn them. The nightmare scene is crowded with victims but only inhabited by the 'One tender form'. The shift away from the multitude to the singular displays a defensive selfishness inherent to mourning that is matched by the indifference of the sea's violence; she has indiscriminately had to cut compassion out of her poem for those other victims to create a literary grave for the single figure. As in 'On the Death of my Brother', the figure, who is presumably her brother, is unnamed. He stands in for the everyman, the lost sailor that everyone can mourn. The sea obliterates identity and so this ode to the sea creates a blank space where anyone's grief can be manifested. This in many ways mirrors the 'forced accommodation' of which Sacks speaks, and as a result of Costello's acceptance of grief and vocalisation of it, she is rendered unable to mourn for the others who died in the disaster. She laments 'Could not a mother's and a sister's sighs | Join with the wind, and waft thee to the shore' (21-22), which suggests that she is still unable to move on from fantasising about what happened. This nature of the indifference of the sea is what compounds the struggles she has with her own identity, despite now being the voice of her grief.

In the penultimate stanza, Costello returns again to the underlying focus of her dialogue with the sea.

> No! thou art lost – nor those sad rites allow'd
>
> To weep beside thy flow'r-strewn, mournful, grave,
>
> For where the billows sweep with moaning loud,
>
> Thy bones are whit'ning low in Ocean's cave! (25-28)

More controlled than her earlier poetic engagement with grief, this stanza explicitly outlines her need for the sea. It is the cause of her being unable to 'weep beside thy flow'r-strewn, mournful, grave', where 'sad rites [are not] allow'd'. His grave is a fiction and as such so is her ability to grieve. Costello ties this false grave to the sea, as it is 'where the billows sweep' that his 'bones are whit'ning'. The 'Ocean's cave' has become the focus of her lament, but she has still had to imagine that his 'bones' have survived the grinding power of the sea. She places them, 'whit'ning' as if being assimilated, in a hollow in the sea, the 'Ocean's cave', in a parody of the grave into which she wishes he was interred. Costello revives her emphasis in 'On the Death of My Brother' on the sea's liminality with regard to the spirit's transcendence to heaven in the last line of the poem.

> Tho' stormy sea, thou bidd'st these thoughts arise,
>
> Yet will I linger by thy rocky side:
>
> Whilst to his wat'ry bier my fancy flies,
>
> And views his tomb, altho' on earth deny'd! (29-32)

The sea allows her to view 'his tomb', yet she detaches the sea from all that is earthly when she writes 'altho' on earth deny'd!' (32). His body is entrapped in the sea so he exists apart from the earth, as he has not been laid to rest. The dual meaning of 'earth' here, indicating both soil and the planet, creates confusion between the temporal and the spiritual worlds. This allows the suggestion that his being denied a burial *in* the earth because of being trapped by the sea also prevents his earthly existence, thereby stopping the transcendence to heaven,

once more seeming to exist in a state of purgatory. He no longer exists on Earth, but yet is prevented from rising to heaven due to being trapped below the waves, evoking notions of the sea providing immortality or a stasis of being. This again reinforces her need to continue a dialogue with the sea: by imagining his body somewhere other than Earth or Heaven, she remains close to the only emotional, physical, and spiritual link she has to her brother.

The poem throughout is written in iambic pentameter with the rhyme scheme of *abab* after the first three stanzas. Before the rhyme change in the third stanza however, the rhyme of *abcb* mirrors that of the first quatrain of every stanza in 'On the Death of My Brother'. This tie reminds us of the close nature of these poems, and the need to remember the events of the first poem for her brother, when reading this one. The change of rhyme then suggests that Costello only wanted to draw the reader's attention to the connection, and that this poem has its own direction to take. We see at the beginning of lines 15, 24 and 25, an interruption to the rhythm of the poem:

> There, with them sunk, beneath its direful swell
>
> [...]
>
> Melt the hard fates, and thou return once more!
>
> [...]
>
> No! thou art lost – nor those sad rites allow'd. (15-25)

Each has an altered meter whereby the first iamb is reversed, forming a trochee, creating a stammer in the flow from the previous lines. As in 'On the Death of My Brother', this jarring change between these lines emphasises the tremor of grief as well as replicating the motion of the sea that the poem is representing to the reader.

Because of the sea's power in destroying life in a manner that often leaves no body or resting place, the corpse is left in a state where none can properly mourn or maintain the belief that they have gone on to a better place (as indicated in 'On the Death of My Brother'). The anonymity of death at sea prevails in the poem, as the ambiguous use of 'forms' (12)

and the only proper noun used being that of 'Ocean' (28) demonstrates. She admits that 'Tho' stormy sea, thou bidd'st these thoughts arise' (29). Here 'stormy' fulfils the role of embodying the potentially destructive side of the sea, and the effects of its rage upon man. Costello hates the notion of the sea because of what it has done and will continue to do, but 'Yet will I linger by thy rocky side: | Whilst to his wat'ry bier my fancy flies' (30-31). For her, the sea is sublime, a complex entity that evokes terror and power whilst simultaneously providing the only link to her brother, for whom she cannot properly grieve because of the restless motion of being in the deep.

Twelve years after her brother's death, Costello published 'Elegy', signalling a change from 'To the Sea' where her grief was tackled by addressing the agent of her brother's death rather than her memory of him directly.[20] The following is the poem in full:

1 The sea is deep above thy grave,

2 And the murmur of the rushing wave

3   Soothes thee to endless sleep.

4 The warring winds, with angry yell,

5 Ring mournfully thy funeral knell,

6   And wild discordance keep.

7 Now round thee wakes the hurrying storm,

8   And the red lightning rends aside

9   The wat'ry veil that strives to hide

10   Thy passive form.

11   The affrighted waves in heaps divide

12   And close again, as the loud thunder peals---

---

[20] Costello, 'Elegy', *Songs of a Stranger* (London: Taylor & Hessey, 1825), pp 82-83.

13   No eye beholds what that abyss reveals!

14 A waste of horror, black and drear, is spread

15   Far o'er the bosom of the troubled main.

16   Thy grave is calm again,

17 The dread commotion ceases o'er thy head---

18 The dark sea onward drives, and peaceful

19   Sleeps the dead!

In directing the poem towards a consideration of her grief, she retreats behind the poetic voice, becoming silent again as she was in 'On the Death of my Brother'. Although in 'Elegy' Costello finds the ability to let the image of her brother come to rest, it comes at the cost of her own poetic identity. The poem locates itself immediately: 'The sea is deep above thy grave' (1). Yet her attitude towards the sea has altered from one solely of hatred and belief in its merciless destruction, to a belief also of its supportive capabilities. The poet writes 'the murmur of the rushing wave | Soothes thee to endless sleep' (2-3), resonating with the repeated use of sleeping in 'On the Death of my Brother'. No longer is the image of the sea just sublimely powerful and evocative of death. The waves are transformed into a compassionate and relaxing presence, and most importantly, by removing her voice from the poem, she has allowed her brother to now be at rest, as he is in an 'endless sleep'. And yet this peaceful image of her brother is troubled and contrasted with a resurgence of the sea in a form we have been exposed to in the earlier engagements with its ferocity: 'The warring winds, with angry yell, | Ring mournfully thy funeral knell' (4-5). Notably here the elements are joining the elegy, adding their mournful 'funeral knell' to the poem, emphasising the desire for a dialogue to be created with them. The sea is given a dual identity: one that at once destroys and soothes. It has a 'wild discordance' (6), which emphasises how her grief has altered her image of the sea. Its heartless power that at first was the sole reason for her brother's death is now disconnected from its enfolding primal comfort. The sea has been

forced into a more forgiving form in her mind through her need to engage with it to seek any comfort from her brother. His lack of resting place has meant that Costello has had to find solace from an agency that at first conjured up images and feelings of malice and danger, through her silence.

We are reminded of this in the central two stanzas. The second character of the sea, the destructive side, creates a 'hurrying storm' (7), where 'The affrighted waves in heaps divide | And close again, as the loud thunder peals' (11-12), suggestive of the storm that Costello envisaged in 'To the Sea' which killed her brother. Yet the sea is given a secretive agency: 'The wat'ry vale that strives to hide | Thy passive form' (9-10). Why would the sea's 'wat'ry vale[s]' want to conceal the brother's body? The forceful action of 'strives to hide' portrays the sea as secretive in its desire to forcefully retain and separate all that it consumes from the phenomenal world, which evokes a sense of malice on the part of the sea. Alternatively, it can be seen that after years of viewing the body of the nameless sailor shrouded with sea-weed with whitening bones at the bottom of the sea, the body is now being respectfully obscured to prevent upset. The sea has become an agent of compassion in trying to prevent the narrator from once more looking at the decaying body. The depths become a space where objects and people are no longer restrained by worldly values, but subject to new forces that are capable of creating nothingness where once there was life or substance. Later the poet again alludes to the sea's desire to maintain a divide from the landed world, as 'No eye beholds what the abyss reveals' (13). The poet's mind and sight cannot penetrate the inner workings of the deep and, as such, the sea is imbued with a spiritual dimension, challenging the image of Heaven. The 'abyss' is open, but only to those that have 'the sea […] deep above […] [their] grave[s]' (1). Despite this dual identity of the sea however, for Costello, through the poetic voice, it has become what was longed for in 'To the Sea': a grave beside which she can weep. The entirety of the sea is 'Thy grave' (16), and her brother has, to some degree, finally been laid to rest.

'Elegy' is split into four different stanzas, each altering to fit the progressing emotions of the poet. The first stanza is the longest, being a sestet, with a rhyme pattern of *aabccb* and a meter of two lines of iambic tetrameter followed by one line of iambic trimeter:

> The sea is deep above thy grave,
>
> And the murmur of the rushing wave
>
> Soothes thee to endless sleep.
>
> The warring winds, with angry yell,
>
> Ring mournfully thy funeral knell,
>
> And wild discordance keep. (1-6)

The combination of the lines of iambic tetrameter with the rhyming couplet emphasises the natural flow of the lines, creating a fluid progression that is gently suspended by the third line of iambic trimeter. The effect of this is to suggest the 'murmur' of the waves through the feeling of reading the lines, the iambic tetrameter giving pace to them, mimicking the 'rushing' nature of the sea here. The pattern is repeated, but the message changed, jarring with the meter of the lines. The gentle and peaceful sea is now one of 'warring winds' and 'wild discordance' which is at odds with the first three lines. Yet the tying of the third and sixth lines through rhyme suggests the unity of the stanza, and that for the poet there can be no division between the sea of serenity and the sea of sublimity.

The second stanza clashes with the easy flow of the first, the quatrain unsettling the rhythm of the first stanza by lengthening the third line (9) to iambic tetrameter, itself then being jarred by the final line (10) which is shortened to an unexpected iambic dimeter:

> Now round thee wakes the hurrying storm,
>
> And the red lightening rends aside
>
> The wat'ry veil that strives to hide
>
> Thy passive form. (7-10)

The effect of this is to place uncertainty on the stresses in the lines, the iambic dimeter failing to provide a sense of finality, with the flow of the lines wanting to place a natural pause between 'hide' (9) and 'Thy' (10) in order to make it fit the rhythm of the preceding three lines. On line 8 as well, the uncertainty is shown in 'And the red lightning', with stress falling on potentially 'the' and 'light[...]', or three successive unstressed syllables of 'And the red', as having a stress on 'the' seems unnatural. It is these confusions that mirror those conflicts the stanza describes. The form is then again altered in the third stanza.

> The affrighted waves in heaps divide
>
> And close again, as the loud thunder peals---
>
> No eye beholds what that abyss reveals!
>
> A waste of horror, black and drear, is spread. (11-14)

The hypermetrical initial unstressed syllable at the beginning of line 11 draws it out after the sudden stop of line 10, seeming as if the poem is beginning again, yet the rest of the line continues in iambic meter, forming an iambic tetrameter as a whole. This is then extended in the following three lines to iambic pentameter, the added foot again upsetting the flow of the poem, matching the turbulent imagery. Again, as with line 8, the unwanted stress on 'the' in line 12 causes the poem to stumble, mimicking the jarring 'thunder' in the fourth stanza.

The final quintet mimics the first stanza, displaying through poetic form the returning to calmness of what was moments ago chaos and conflict.

> Far o'er the bosom of the troubled main.
>
> Thy grave is calm again,
>
> The dread commotion ceases o'er thy head---
>
> The dark sea onward drives, and peaceful
>
> Sleeps the dead! (15-19)

Line 15 continues the iambic pentameter, bringing the turbulence of the previous stanza into the concluding lines. The full stop at the end of this line signals the passing of the storm, with the shortened meter of line 16 allowing a rhythmical calm to set in. This line of iambic

trimeter links back to those lines of the same length in the first stanza, used to emphasise the gentle swell of the ocean. That line 17 returns to iambic pentameter ties in with the line's reference to the 'commotion' from the previous stanzas. Interestingly, the final two lines seem almost to run into one single line of iambic hexameter, the stresses in line 18 falling on the start of 'peaceful', leaving the unstressed second syllable to be paired with 'Sleeps' on line 19. With the caesura after 'drives' (18), the two lines form a pair of iambic trimeters, the balance of which causes the end of the poem to feel final and complete. Because of the subtly elegant parallelism of 'ceases o'er thy head' and 'peaceful | sleeps the dead' the conclusion of the poem matches and underscores the message that finally Costello can envisage that her brother's body and spirit are now at rest, for 'Peaceful | Sleeps the dead!' (18-19).

The discordant and fractured nature of her engagement with the sea in 'Elegy', accentuated by the divide in voices, betrays her unsettled acceptance of her grief. The Biblical allusions to the parting of the Red Sea with the 'affrighted waves in heaps divide' (11) coupled with the Satanic resurrection from the 'abyss' (13) – 'A waste of horror, black and drear' (14) – provoke a sensation of a loss of faith. Surrounded by this turmoil the body sleeps happily. But there seems to be a clashing of religious entities, forcing the waves apart to expose the dead but only finding a hellish abyss. Her emotions have progressed to a stage where she can contemplate her brother at peace, and where the sea no longer threatens her sense of mortality, through not accommodating her 'mourning self' in this elegy. The sea retains much of its violent power, but in a way that is separated from the part that she needs to be able to remain in dialogue with her brother. The sea mocks the attempts of the elegies to build up repetitions to reinforce the reality of her brother's death.[21] In mimicking her pattern of returning to the topic of her brother, the sea's currents and waves prevent Costello from breaking that emotional tie she seeks to maintain with the memory of her brother. The fluidity and restless nature of the sea means her memories have nothing to be anchored to, actively resisting the formation of physical memories kept by many in remembrance of the

---

[21] See Sacks, pp. 23-25, on the importance of repetition in elegies.

dead. In this way, she is left adrift, unable to properly let go of the idea of her brother, but ultimately – which is perhaps even more damaging – she is unable to break the self-destructive chain of needing the sea to satisfy both her anger and her grief. The detached and ever-shifting nature of the sea means that she is refused closure. As such, Costello's elegies become the physical manifestations of her continued search for acceptance of her bereavement, but in a way that, even in her latest poems, proves unsuccessful.

There is a continuation of the sleep imagery found in 'On the Death of my Brother' and 'Elegy' in 'The Dreamer on the Sea Shore'.[22] The following is the poem in full:

1 What are the dreams of him who may sleep

2 Where the solemn voice of the troubled deep

3 Steals on the wind with a sullen roar,

4 And the waters foam along the shore?

5 Who shelter'd lies in some calm retreat,

6 And hears the music of waves at his feet?

7 He sees not the sail that passes on

8 O'er the sunny fields of the sea, alone,

9 The farthest point that gleams on the sight,

10 A vanishing speck of glittering light.

11 He sees not the spray that, spreading wide,

12 Throws its lines of snow on the dark green tide;

13 Or the billows rushing with crests of foam

14 As they strove which first should reach their home---

15 Their home! what home has the restless main,

---

[22] Costello, 'The Dreamer on the Sea Shore', *Songs of a Stranger*, pp. 10-12.

16 Which only arrives to return again,

17 Like the wand'rer she bears on her stormy breast,

18 Who seeks in vain for a place of rest.

19 Lo! his visions bear him along

20 To rocks that have heard the mermaid's song:

21 Or, borne on the surface of some dark surge,

22 Unharm'd he lies, while they onward urge

23 Their rapid course, and waft him away

24 To islands half hid 'midst the shadowy spray,

25 Where trees wave their boughs in the perfum'd gale,

26 And bid the wave-borne stranger hail;

27 Where birds are flitting like gems in the sun,

28 And streams over emerald meadows run,

29 That whisper in melody as they glide

30 To the flowers that blush along their side.

31 Sorrow ne'er came to that blissful shore,

32 For no mortal has entered that isle before:

33 There the Halcyon waits on the sparkling strand

34 Till the bark of her lover the Nautilus land;

35 She spreads her purple wings to the air,

36 And she sees his fragile vessel there---

37 She sees him float on the summer sea,

38 Where no breath but the sigh of his love may be.

39 The dreamer leaps towards that smiling shore---

40　When, lo! the vision is there no more!

41　Its trees, its flowers, its birds are gone---

42　A waste of waters is spread alone.

43　Plunged in the tide, he struggles amain---

44　High they pour, and he strives in vain:

45　He sinks---the billows close over his head,

46　He shrieks---'tis over---the dream is fled;

47　Secure he lies in his calm retreat,

48　And the idle waters still rave at his feet.

The poem is set on the shore with an unknown man, with the first line confusing who exactly is doing the dreaming. 'What are the dreams of him who may sleep' (1) can be read as either referring to the dreams that the man who is asleep is having, or the dreams someone is having of the man who is also asleep. The poem acts seemingly to prevent this from becoming clear. In doing so the dreamer is positioned as a manifestation of Costello's brother emphasised by the connection between sleeping figures. This then, on one level, is ostensibly about Costello/the speaker dreaming about the sleeping/dead brother. But on a simpler level the poem poses questions about the dreams of someone who falls asleep whilst next to the sea. In doing so it opens up a dialogue about the boundaries between humanity and the sea that can be most readily understood during times of unconsciousness. The poem resonates with those written directly about Costello's brother with the second and third lines evoking the ominous nature of the sea: 'Where the solemn voice of the troubled deep | Steals on the wind with a sullen roar' (2-3).

The sea becomes a sympathetic agent with the dreamer wondering about notions of home and feelings of security.

He sees not the spray that, spreading wide,

Throws its lines of snow on the dark green tide;

> Or the billows rushing with crests of foam
>
> As they strove which first should reach their home---
>
> Their home! what home has the restless main,
>
> Which only arrives to return again,
>
> Like the wand'rer she bears on her stormy breast,
>
> Who seeks in vain for a place of rest. (11-18)

The 'billows' race each other to get home, but the narrator questions the very existence of such a home for 'the restless main'. Its ceaseless motion – 'arrives to return again' – is mirrored with the vessels that 'she bears on her stormy breast'. The action of the 'billows' parodies the ships that chase their own concepts of home (be it a friendly port, safe anchorage or home nation) whilst pursued by the storms that traverse the sea. Yet, despite the destructive capability that is alluded to by the image of the ships seeking 'in vain for a place of rest', the narrator pities the sea. The extensions of the sea imagined here as the 'billows' are placed in parallel with the ships that float upon it. In doing so, Costello joins the sympathies of the two. The sea becomes like the ship, searching for 'their home'. The term 'bears' then becomes less ominous as in previous poems, rather suggesting that the sea is attempting to carry the ship away from the storms to 'a place of rest'.

After a dream sequence where the dreamer visits a paradise island where 'the Halcyon waits' (33) there is another instance of boundary blurring. The dreamer is said to wake – 'the vision is there no more!' (40) – and in doing so rushes into the sea to recapture the vision of the island of his dream

> Plunging in the tide, he struggles amain –
> High they pour, and he strives in vain:
> He sinks – the billows close over his head. (43-45)

When he wakes up, realising that 'the vision' and 'Its trees, its flowers, its birds are gone' (41), disorientated he runs into the sea next to which he was asleep and begins to drown.

The sea has subconsciously had the power to entice him away to an island paradise whilst asleep and has subsequently tricked him into being consumed. Yet a layering of the dream sequences now occurs where Costello reveals that, after 'He shrieks' whilst drowning 'tis over – the dream is fled | Secure he lies in his calm retreat' (46-47) showing that in fact the drowning had been a second dream. This breaking down of the boundaries between sleep, death, land, sea, poet and dreamer causes the poem to become unsettling and deliberately confusing. The final line, 'the idle waters still rave at his feet' (48) juxtaposes the tranquillity of 'idle' confusingly with 'rave'. This forces the reader to view the sea as a presence that seems benign and pleasant on the surface but that underneath is an insidious agent reminiscent of the apocalyptic abyss found in 'Elegy'.

This negative image of the depths is contrasted by Costello in 'To the Mermaid' where she attempts a return to the sea wishing to live below the waves with the mermaids.[23] Its contemporaneity to the earliest poems about her eldest brother's death (published in the same body of work in 1815) creates a dialogue between the images of his body asleep at the bottom of the sea and the speakers wish to inhabit that space. The following is the poem in full:

1 Oh! clasp me in thy silken arms,

2 Oh! bind me in thy powerful charms,

3 Oh! chase my mortal heart's alarms,

4   And let me range with thee!

5 With thee, sweet Syren! might I go,

6 Thro' ocean's pearly caves below,

7 I'd leave all joys that earth can show,

8   To dwell beneath the sea.

---

[23] Costello, 'To the Mermaid', *The Maid of the Cyprus Isle*, pp. 74-75.

9 There would I build a bow'r of spar,

10 And watch secure the billows war,

11 And view the tossing ship from far,

12   Sink in a wat'ry grave:

13 Then would I with the mermaid train,

14 Arise, and hasting through the main,

15 Restore each form to life again,

16   Each gallant sailor save!

17 Oh, tell me, when the storms assail,

18 And deaf'ning billows wild prevail,

19 Does Neptune hear the fearful wail,

20   And kind assistance show?

21 Methinks an answer meets mine ear,

22 They straight a Triton's image bear,

23 Or dolphin's glitt'ring shade appear,

24   And form his court below.

She wishes that she might 'go | Thro' ocean's pearly caves below […] to dwell beneath the sea' (5-8), the 'pearly caves' here conjuring images of Heaven's pearly gates to mind. Knowing that the brother is held in stasis the purgatorial nature of the deep has been replaced with one of a Heaven below the waves. She 'leave[s] all joys that earth can show' again reinforcing the notion that she is not remaining in the mortal realm, nor earth itself, instead progressing to an afterlife that is devoid of earthly joys but where she can enact a particular role. Her wish is to train with the mermaids so that she can 'watch secure' in her bower made from

spars (10) 'the tossing ship from afar | Sink in a wat'ry grave' (11-12) and then travel 'through the main, | Restore each form to life again' (14-15) of 'Each gallant sailor' (16). She wants to leave life behind in order to act as guardian and saviour of all the sailors who are lost at sea. By introducing the mythical mermaid and parodying the gates of Heaven with the 'pearly cave' of the ocean she confronts the notion of God who is not providing help for those lost at sea.

The conclusion of the poem offers a confusing suggestion about the role of divine intervention and salvation for those who die at sea. She asks

> Oh, tell me, when the storms assail,
> And deafn'ing billows wild prevail,
> Does Neptune hear the fearful wail,
> And kind assistance show? (17-20)

Here Neptune seems to figure as both a pagan challenge to the Christian God as well as God himself. The question, considering her attitude towards the vengeful nature of the sea in the previous poems, is sarcastic and pointed. She answers it herself

> Methinks an answer meets mine ear,
> They straight a Triton's image bear,
> Or dolphin's glitt'ring shade appear,
> And form his court below. (21-24)

The lines provoke a reading that suggests the 'kind assistance' that the sailors receive is in the form of an image of 'Triton' – the son of Poseidon and Amphitrite – or a glimpse of a dolphin whilst Neptune 'forms his court below' and awaits the arrival of the newly dead sailors. God and not-God Neptune sits in judgement at 'his court' waiting to condemn or accept the drowned. But the deep, as seen in 'Elegy' and 'On the Death of my Brother', is a hellish anti-God place, and as such is ruled by a pagan deity who commands a parody of heaven under the sea. The sailors then are unable to appeal to God as they are forced into the domain of Neptune as soon as they reach the water. This place that the speaker wants to

come to is therefore not a paradise but a mock Heaven, and she wants to act as a defender of the sailors who, without her help, would be forced to join the domain of Neptune.

Charlotte Smith: Destruction as a Form of Preservation

Costello's main focus is to come to terms with the loss of her brother and mediate her way through the mourning process. She does so in a way that preserves her selfhood from the threat of being consumed by grief. But she also seeks to preserve the ethereal selfhood of her brother that exists in her memories, a selfhood that is anchored by these elegies that function as a grave. Charlotte Smith's nautical elegies track the progression of someone mourning the loss of their own selfhood. What makes Smith's engagement with the sea in *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) difficult to place in dialogue with Costello or Wordsworth is that they do not conform to the traditions of elegy by mourning the death of a specific individual.[24] Her non-conformity stems in part from the 'deliberate yoking of seemingly disparate forms' – the elegy and the sonnet – but equally, I argue, from her use of maritime tropes of shipwreck and destruction.[25] Smith is exploring the boundaries of her own selfhood and in these elegies we see a speaker who seeks to create a new self through the destructive forces of the sea. The liberating ability of the sea, resonating with the Byronic approach in chapter three, promises a creative destruction for the speaker. They reject their current self in the elegies and pursue a self that is free and intermingled with the sea. This liberated self can be preserved through the destruction of the living physical self, embodying the liminal undead existence of those who die at sea.

Much of the critical work done so far on Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* has leant heavily on biographical readings. By stepping away from these readings it is possible to engage with the poems in a way that is based on the interaction between the speaker and the sea, avoiding

---

[24] Charlotte Smith, *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Jacqueline M. Labbe, XIV (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007).

[25] Daniel Robinson, '*Elegiac Sonnets*: Charlotte Smith's Formal Paradoxy', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39:2 (2003), 185-220 (p. 185).

the critical conflicts of a psychoanalytical reading.[26] Paul De Man is fundamental in distancing

the reading of Wordsworth from autobiography in chapter four and is similarly useful here.

Kerri Andrews has astutely navigated through the autobiographical in Smith's poetry, noting

that 'Smith and her readers have entered into an agreement' that allows the reader 'the

voyeuristic pleasure of believing they are watching a real woman in the landscape'.[27] Smith,

Andrews remarks, 'refer[s] the reader to a substantially fictional version of herself'.[28] Whilst

this approach allows us to view the dialogue between 'the sublime and the autobiographical'

it also acts to restrict the full potential of these elegies.[29] There is more to them than the fact

they 'dwell relentlessly on Smith's own misery and its resistance to any form of alleviation'

as they are not inhabited solely by Smith.[30] As we have seen with Wordsworth and Costello,

there is room to understand the relevant biographical elements that influence their elegies.

But the relationship between the poet and the poem is not the whole story, and it is not the

case with Smith either. When we look beyond the *Elegiac Sonnets* as a reflection of the harsh

life Smith lived, we find a vehicle for the reader to become the mourner and replace the

speaker, simultaneously grieving their own death and that of the speaker's selfhood.

Gender has not been a part of this study so far, but, as noted earlier, the centrality of

Smith to the recent boom in studies of women writers from this period means that much of

her criticism comes from this angle.[31] What makes this relevant to the analysis here is that

her gender is reflected strongly in the elegies, as Jacqueline M. Labbe remarks, 'Smith does

not simply enact or represent the pressures attendant on being a women writer in the

---

[26] For a useful study connecting Smith to Wordsworth via their shared literary careers see: Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
[27] Kerri Andrews, "Herself … Fills the Foreground': Negotiating Autobiography in the *Elegiac Sonnets* and *The Emigrants*', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. by Jacqueline M. Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), p. 14.
[28] Andrews, p. 13.
[29] Ibid., p. 27.
[30] Richard Terry, 'Sentimental Doubling in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *ANQ*, 20:4 (2007), 50-58, p. 52.
[31] See for example: Christopher Stokes, 'Lorn Subjects: Haunting, Fracture and Ascesis in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Women's Writing*, 16:1 (2009), 143-160. For a study of gender, and particularly the role of the mother, in relation to the *Elegiac Sonnets* see: Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 64-115. For more on gendering the elegy see Celeste M. Schenck, 'Feminism and Deconstruction: Re-constructing the Elegy', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 5:1 (1986), 13-27.

Romantic period; she exploits them'.[32] Labbe recognises how Smith 'follows through with her self-reflexive embodiment and writes poetry that relies on her readers seeing and reading her as a woman'.[33] In the *Elegiac Sonnets* that focus on, or feature, the sea, there is a reoccurring image of the moon. Critics have noted Smith's engagement with the moon, which can be seen in part to stem from a rejection of the male literary dominance in favour of a female literary selfhood.[34] Yet the image of the moon has a further reaching impact functioning as 'the realm of the dead, the place where "the wretched may have rest" and forget the sorrows of their lives on earth'.[35] The land is a geographical area of male domination, a place where men have been able to control and manipulate their surroundings to their satisfaction. The sea, however, figures as a place where men are unable to enact any effect whatsoever. There is no ability to imprint or map onto the surface of the sea, and so it becomes a place that rejects masculinity. The moon in Smith's poetry adds to this through the understanding that the sea's 'tides are governed by the female moon', and therefore the sea becomes a place under feminine control, constituting a 'nonlinear, nonhierarchical space'.[36] Yet the moon 'can only help the living forget their sorrows in a passing moment of fancy', leaving the sea as the only place to seek permanent oblivion.[37] To be interred becomes then an action of submission to the negative male control. For Smith, and the speaker in her *Elegiac Sonnets*, the sea therefore represents a place of uncontrolled space that is free 'from the male literary tradition's alienating effects' and male geographical domination, where death can act as oblivion and not subjugation.[38]

While with Wordsworth and Costello the poetry is dealing with the grief caused by the poets' actual loss of a relative, Smith is adapting the same tropes without having suffered

---

[32] Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 3.
[33] Ibid., p. 3.
[34] See Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender*, pp. 33, 99, 108, 123.
[35] Robinson, p. 208.
[36] Bethan Roberts, 'Literary Past and Present in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 54:3 (2014), 649-74; p. 664. For more on the moon see Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender*, p. 102
[37] Robinson, p. 208.
[38] Bethan Roberts, p. 664.

the same losses. This is an important aspect to understand as it neatly deflects the desire to consider the *Elegiac Sonnets* biographically. Unlike Wordsworth and Costello, she is not poetically mourning the death of her brother, nor filling a grave through poetry. The question is therefore asked, what is she mourning with her dialogue with the sea? Judith Hawley has posed this question, asking 'we need to ask about the object of her mourning: what has she lost? What does she hope to gain?'.[39] Hawley's response looks at the role of gender in the elegy, Smith's decision to 'resolutely refuse consolation', and how her life can inform our understanding of what she wants from the elegies. Yet this argument can be progressed by looking beyond Smith's biography and the role of women in the elegiac form.

Eric Parisot has investigated the role of suicide in the work of Smith.[40] His article suggests that not enough attention has been paid to how the 'poetic expression of suicidal intent' functions within the *Elegiac Sonnets*.[41] The crux of his investigation considers that Smith does not wish to commit suicide physically but rather literarily. Parisot explains this as constituting a reminder that suicide 'remained problematic for female writers' and not just 'the quintessentially transcendent Romantic destiny'. The act of suicide within Smith's poetry would 'rupture [her] literary identity and irreparably damage the very image central to Smith's claim for posthumous recognition'. In this way Parisot argues that 'as a literary experience, suicide is a claim for utter subjectivity' and as such goes 'beyond the capacity for language and the limits of sympathy'.[42] Parisot genders literary suicide, in a way that exposes how it would elicit a negative reader response. The argument, therefore, is that Smith would suffer a complete destruction of selfhood in the event of literary suicide. This form of suicide is

[39] Judith Hawley, 'Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*: Losses and Gains', in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 186.

[40] For more on the role of gender, medicine, biology, and mental health in the work of Charlotte Smith see: Kathleen Béres Rogers, 'Permeability and its uses: affect and audience in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Women's Writing*, 16:1 (2009), 126-142; and Elizabeth A. Dolan, 'British Romantic melancholia: Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*, medical discourse and the problem of sensibility', *Journal of European Studies*, 33:3 (2003), 237-53.

[41] Eric Parisot, 'Living to Labour, Labouring to Live: The Problem of Suicide in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Literature Compass*, 12:12 (2015), 660-66; p. 660.

[42] Ibid., p. 665.

something that we shall see is returned to in several of the *Elegiac Sonnets* as the speaker debates a desire for a 'rupture[d] literary identity' that would allow 'utter subjectivity' at the cost of selfhood.

Literary suicide severs the poet from the reader irrevocably, poetically causing a rift to develop between Smith and her readers. Whilst for critics such as Parisot this is due to her desire for 'posthumous recognition' and to support her gendered conflict, it can also be understood as part of Smith's poetic projection. If we remove the biographical connections in Smith's works from their interpretation, we can see that what is left is a poetic persona that allows the reader to fill the role of the mourning poet. By marginalising herself, Smith encourages the reader to see themselves as the speaker, with Smith creating an environment where a reader can address the grief located within the poems. The reader fills the role of the mourner and the sympathiser, substituting themselves for Smith, complementing what Labbe notes as 'the multiple personae that inhabit the poetry'.[43] This liberation from authorship is the penultimate step in obliterating the selfhood in the elegies. With Smith replaced by first the speaker and subsequently the reader, the process of liberating the self needs only the conclusion of the literary suicide of the self in the poem.

The looming notion of literary suicide is how oblivion is manifested in the nautical poems of *Elegiac Sonnets*. What we see in these poems is a desire to be taken by the sea, simulating the desire for suicide, but whilst rejecting the land. As we will see, Smith positions the land and sea in conflict. The land becomes a place of masculinity, control, and constraint, whereas the sea is feminine, free, and creative. For Smith, being buried (the reality of suicide on land) would damn her to an afterlife imprisoned in the male world. The land very literally figures as the place where men can enforce their own will: legally, visually, and literarily. But the sea, coming under the ownership of the Moon – 'But as the tides the moon obey' – is the geographical space where man can have no impact.[44] This is emphasised by the creation

---

[43] Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender*, p. 3.
[44] Charlotte Smith, 'Studies by the Sea', *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Jacqueline M. Labbe, XIV (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), p. 199.

of the female Moon. In 'Sonnet IV: To the Moon' Smith writes 'Queen of the silver bow!',

setting it up as a divine afterlife 'That in thy orb the wretched may have rest | The sufferers

of the earth perhaps may go, | Released by death'.[45] Suicide can be read, therefore, as the act

of killing oneself on land and being buried, whereas suicide at sea becomes a search for

oblivion as the body can then be imagined as dispersing and intermingling with the essence

of the sea, to one day transcend to the Moon as a place of feminine safety. Smith's nautical

poems become about the binary of freedom and constraint. The poet's identity is improved

by engaging with the sea, especially by the sea's ability to challenge traditional boundaries of

identity in life and death on land.

Smith directly deals with the idea of oblivion in one of her later elegies from *Volume

II* in 'Sonnet XC: To Oblivion'.[46] While the poem does not deal with the sea, it offers a way

into understanding the poetic identity within the elegies. There is not desire for suicide in the

way of just seeking death. Oblivion is what the speaker needs – the complete and utter

destruction of identity and boundaries. Oblivion is 'the state or fact of forgetting', 'obscurity,

nothingness, void, death' (*OED*) and so stands as an extension of traditional death, going

further than just ending biological life. The desire here is to be entirely removed from

existence and memory, which suicide itself cannot achieve. The poem's focus on the ideas

of 'Forgetfulness' (1), 'memory' (4), and 'knowing' (9), emphasising that it is not the cessation

of life that is most important. The negative connotations of suicide also provoke a desire for

an end that is less condemned. There is no religion present in 'To Oblivion', no heaven or

desire for Christian transcendence. The poet seeks the 'quiet reign' of 'Oblivion!' (6), a place

of darkness and no identity as the 'Sister of Chaos and eternal Night!' (5). Suicide, it is implied

by this, requires that the identity is maintained of the one who dies. For the poet oblivion

offers a method of ending existence that also removes all traces of identity. The references

---

[45] Charlotte Smith, 'Sonnet IV: To the Moon', *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Jacqueline M. Labbe, XIV (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), pp. 19-20.

[46] Charlotte Smith, 'Sonnet XC: To Oblivion', *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, p. 88.

to forms of 'memory' as well as 'Chaos' and 'Night' underline the need to be no longer connected to reality in perpetuity.

The sea's ability to obliterate identity is highlighted in Smith's *A Narrative of the Loss of the Catherine* (1796).[47] It is noted that Smith moved to Weymouth in January 1796 and was requested by the South Gloucester Militia to create a narrative of the events of the various shipwrecks that had occurred over the previous months.[48] The request shows how written accounts are necessary to fully memorialise events. The shipwrecks were obviously recorded, but their importance and poignancy is only encapsulated by a narrative. In writing this Smith furthered her involvement with the overarching process of the obliteration or maintenance of identity in sea related deaths. She relates in the *Narrative* that 'On the poor remains of these unfortunate victims death appeared in all its hideous forms' and that there were 'no other means of distinguishing some of the officers than by the appearance of their hands from those of men who had been accustomed to hard labour'.[49] For some, such as Major John Charles Ker, there was no way to identify the body, but, in the case of Ker, 'it is possible that it may have been among the many others which were driven ashore, and buried in this church-yard'.[50] From this Smith experiences how the sea literally removes all identity in death.

This concept is furthered in *Elegiac Sonnets*. 'Sonnet XLIV: Written in the church-yard at Middleton in Sussex' is from the first volume of sonnets.[51] The Moon appears again as the overarching controller of the sea in the first lines 'Press'd by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides, | While the loud equinox its power combines' (1-2). Smith makes the sea an agent of the Moon with 'arbitress' providing the trait of 'a female who has absolute control or disposal' (*OED*). The sea has no autonomy and its power comes from the moon, and as the moon is a location for afterlife, the sea becomes the facilitator of transcendence to the moon.

---

[47] Charlotte Smith, *A Narrative of the Loss of the Catharine, Venus, and Piedmont Transports, and the Thomas, Golden Grove, and Æolus Merchant Ships, Near Weymouth, on Wednesday the 18th of November Last* in *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Dolan, XII (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), pp. 309 – 29.
[48] Ibid., p. 388.
[49] Ibid., p. 329.
[50] Ibid., p. 329.
[51] Ibid., p. 43.

In 'Sonnet XLIV' the sea is driven onto the land and destroys a graveyard, with 'the sea no more its swelling surge confines, | But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides' (3-4). The boundary between sea and land has been broken by the influence of the moon which leads to the breaking of a second boundary, that of the sanctity of the grave. The sea's onward rush over the land 'Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead, | And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!' (7-8). The religious sin committed here by the sea emphasises its role as an alternative route to afterlife, placing the sea and moon in conflict with Heaven.

The act of the sea here is to physically remove the identities of those who have been buried and have now been swept away. Before the action of the poem it is implied that the graves had stones recording and displaying the identities of those who were interred there. The sea has changed their state from identified to unknown: 'their bones whiten in the frequent wave' (10), mingling them 'With shells and sea-weed' (9). The sea's infiltration of the gravesite infuses the remains of the dead with detritus of the sea, evoking a sense of claiming ownership over the bones. Once removed from their graves the remains are unidentifiable. It is the fate of the bones, explicitly no longer to 'hear the warring elements' (12), but implicitly to find oblivion of identity, that the poet notes 'with envy' (14). Here the reader is presented with a clear representation of how the sea can function with regard to the dead.[52]

This concept is furthered in the later poem 'Elegy'.[53] This text is supposed to fit as a sequel to 'Sonnet XLIV'. The events here climax with those of 'Sonnet XLIV', but rather than the poet being located within the events, watching as the sea overruns the church-yard, we now see things from the point of view of 'an indigent young woman'.[54] She 'had been addressed by the son of a wealthy yeoman', but the father had resented the match and forced

---

[52] This idea is returned to in 'Sonnet LXIV: Written at Bristol in the Summer of 1794' where the poet remarks how 'The languid sufferer seeks the tepid wave, […] | [to] Disperse 'the gathering shadows of the grave!", *Works*, XIV, p. 73 (2-4).
[53] Smith, *Works*, XIV, pp. 52-54.
[54] Ibid., p. 52.

the son to sea, where he dies.[55] The woman goes to his father's grave. Confusingly, in the note to the poem's title it is claimed that '[with] the father dying, a tomb is supposed to be erected', despite the fact that in the poem it is stated that 'Then to the tomb where now the father slept' (17), suggesting the timescale is slightly elongated to how it is presented.[56] At the grave she mourns the loss of the son and awaits the same fate of drowning, here from the sea overrunning the land and swallowing the church-yard.[57]

The agency of the sea is evoked from the start: 'The sea heaves conscious of the impending gloom' as 'the Spirits of the Tempest come!' (1-2). Conflating the ideas of heaven and hell, the woman remarks 'Flash, ye red fires of heaven! with fatal light' (7) and thus imagines the traditional idea of heaven as the desired place of afterlife as a hellish place. Because the poem comes after 'Sonnet XLIV' then it is understood by the reader that the sea in this instance has an equalising effect on the graves, removing identity from the remains. As such, when the 'wretched maid' (15) invokes 'vengeance on the dust below' (20) in 'the tomb where now the father slept' (17) it is done so with the knowledge of what the sea's power has and what the resulting flood will do to the grave of the lover's father she despises.

The tombstone itself becomes an object of her hatred as she rails against its presence for evoking the father. She notes its 'cipher'd' message relating to '*his* name and wealth', the term on one hand suggesting, as the volume editor writes, a coded message, but also 'a person who fills a place, but is of no importance or worth, a nonentity, a 'mere nothing'' (*OED*).[58] The father within the grave has already been voided by the woman, but that process is not complete until the sea removes the trace of the grave completely. In opposition to this the women positions herself as the memorial for the son, lamenting that

no tomb is placed for thee, […]

Thou hast no grave but in the stormy sea!

---

[55] Smith, *Works*, XIV, p. 52.
[56] Ibid., p. 52.
[57] Ibid., p. 52.
[58] Ibid., p. 224, n. 145.

And no memorial but this breaking heart! (28-32)

The son's identity and 'worth' is lost 'to strangers eyes' (29) and it will be lost completely with the death of the woman. The only actual record is in fact the poem, highlighting the role that the elegy plays as a literary grave for the dead.

The woman has been rejected by religion, as she writes that she has tried 'with vain effort to submit to Heaven, | And fruitless call on him – "who cannot hear."' (31-32), and so has turned to the alternative afterlife of the sea. This is furthered by the fact that the first three stanzas of the poem are a direct address on the sea's movements, implying that she has been heard by the sea when she was not by God. In rejecting 'Heaven' the sea is imbued with ideas of hell, with 'the Demons of Despair and Death' (39) urging on 'the howling storm' (40). The woman wants to see the 'pale and mangled form' of the son, commanding, in another Biblical allusion, 'Part, raging waters! part, and shew beneath' (37).

For three stanzas the reader is presented with the image of the dead son emerging from the waves 'by the lightning's momentary blaze' (41). The woman is convinced that despite being 'dead [and] disfigured' (49) she can hear 'his accents pierce mine ear' (50) asking her to 'delay no more, | But come, unhappy mourner! – meet me here' (51-52). The sea has consumed his identity and she is able to see and hear it in the agency of the waves. But the image is revealed as a 'phantom' (53) and 'his shadow glides away' (55), reaffirming the notion that the sea strips all identity from the dead, for 'The insatiate ocean gives not up its dead' (60). Upon her last request for the sea to 'Approach, ye horrors that delight my soul' (63) once again the reader is reminded of the silence of God as 'The Ocean hears – The embodied waters come' (65). In the final stanza of the poem the sea is presented as an agent of care for those who seek it, and a destroying force for those that seem to elicit punishment. It 'Tear[s] from its base the proud aggressor's tomb' (67) emphasising the violence of the act, whereas it 'bear[s] the injured to eternal sleep' (68).

Smith's poetic relationship with humanity and the sea is troubled in 'Sonnet LXXXIII: The Sea View'.[59] There is a reoccurrence of the connection between the fires of hell and the sea, but here they are the creation of man, not nature. An infection spreads across the sea with the image of 'dark plague-spots by the Demons shed' (9). This line recalls 'the Demons of Despair and Death' that the woman in 'Elegy' imagines are riding across the waves. These corrupting 'plague-spots' are revealed to be 'the war-freighted ships' (11) that are 'Charged deep with death, upon the waves' (10). These men-of-war are the very symbol of man's polluting influence on the sea and their desire for expansion at the cost of humanity. These ships 'Flash their destructive fires' (12) in a nameless, faceless engagement, creating anonymous victims, 'The mangled dead | And dying' (12-13) who in turn 'pollute the flood' (13). This pollution of the sea stands at odds with the previous notions of the benefits of death at sea. What also stands out is the final line which invokes religion again, noting 'thus man spoils Heaven's glorious works with blood' (14).

The acts of war stand in contradiction to the view of the sea as a place of safety and oblivion. The conflict happens in a haze as the reader is given no fine details, just vague information. The engagement embodies the way identity is destroyed at sea, but in a specifically masculine way. The speaker accuses the 'war-freighted ships' (11) of causing the pollution, whilst the dead and dying are redeemed by being 'victims' (13), although the line break of 'dead | And dying (12-13) creates an ambiguous pause over whether they are also to blame for polluting the sea. What ties the reference to 'Heaven' more firmly with the sea here is the inclusion of 'The upland Shepherd' (1) who is the figure observing the 'wide scene | Magnificent' (6-7) which is then infected with the two ships fighting. The shepherd represents the traditional pastoral, a figure connected with the boundary between the sea and land since John Milton's 'Lycidas'. The shepherd, Hawley notes, enables the 'renewed fertility [that] regenerates Milton's poetry. In doing so Milton leaves behind his dead friend and

---

[59] Smith, *Works*, XIV, pp. 84-85.

surpasses his own previous poetry'.[60] For Smith the shepherd acts to complicate the desire for oblivion that is present in her other elegies by introducing an image of wholesome humanity to counterbalance the dead that 'pollute the flood'. The poem also resonates with the juxtaposing of the pastoral land and chaotic sea in the elegies of Wordsworth in the previous chapter. The Biblical connotation of the shepherd indicates that the point of view from which the reader is observing the events is informed by this figure of the pastoral, who is lamenting the destruction and how it pollutes what was a beautiful seascape. This is a different poetic persona to the one seeking oblivion. This is a persona that is exposing how even from a traditionally wholesome point of view, one which connects the natural world to the work of God and Heaven, the sea still functions as a destroyer of selfhood, facilitating conflict that remains anonymous and forgettable. The use of the benevolent male figure occurs again in *Beachy Head*, as we shall see.[61]

The relationship between man and sea is reflected on in one of the first sonnets in *Elegiac Sonnets*. 'Sonnet XII: Written on the Sea Shore. – October, 1784' is a fictional consideration of the last moments of a shipwrecked sailor.[62] There are voyeuristic notions attached that are nuanced by the fictitious nature of the events. The speaker is seated alone, 'listen[ing] to the deep and solemn roar' (4) of the sea. The setting is one of jarring images and blurring boundaries. The shore is a 'rude fragment' (1), the cliffs 'fractured' (2) where the 'billows break' (2). Despite the 'dark waves', 'tempestuous howl' of the wind, the 'screaming sea-bird' and 'the troubled sea' (5-6) the poet is connected to the environment, noting that 'the scene has charms for me' (7). The poet imagines 'the poor mariner' (10) as the evocation of her metaphorical shipwrecking 'by the storms of fate' (9). He is mirroring the poet: as she stands cast on an imaginary rock, so he is 'cast on a rock' (11). They are sharing a fate, watching 'the distant land' (11), but without hope as 'no succour comes – or comes too late' (12). The slow, tortuous death comes, 'Till in the rising tide the exhausted

[60] Hawley, 'Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*: Losses and Gains', *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment*, p. 192.
[61] Smith, *Works*, XIV, pp. 151-76.
[62] Ibid., pp. 23-25.

sufferer dies' (14). What is remarkable is that the reader is guided through the voyeuristic death of a sailor whilst being asked to envisage that it is also simultaneously happening to the poet. The dual death is intensified by the helplessness of the situation, the dawning inevitability, and the lack of detail surrounding either party. The reader is asked to witness the death of two people who have no names or identities. The poem is again showing the indomitable power the sea has over life and selfhood.

In this poem Smith creates a conflict with some of her other nautical elegies. In this instance the land is represented as the desired destination. The sailor, and by extension the poet, are both seeking the land and help. This goes directly against the notions of seeking oblivion that Smith has worked into her other nautical elegies, suggestive of a less concrete resolve. This notion, however, is reversed by the lines preceding the final stanza. The poet remarks that the gloomy scene 'has charms for me', which is the instigation for imagining the scene of the drowning mariner. The stormy sea elicits the contemplation of the slow death, confirming in fact that the poet is seeking oblivion. Imagining watching the sailor drown 'suits the mournful temper of my soul' (8), but notably without the polluting effects of the previous sonnet.

Smith challenges 'Sonnet XLIV' and complicates the notion of a sea that actively seeks to consume the dead in 'Sonnet LXVI: Written in a Tempestuous Night, on the Coast of Sussex'.[63] It is again set at the coast, the liminal space of oblivion for Smith between land and sea. The poet renames the sea in the first instance, calling it 'The night-flood' (1), underscoring the running theme of identity loss and ambiguity. She writes that 'Along the rugged cliffs and chalky caves | Mourns the hoarse Ocean' (2-3), introducing the idea that the sea has agency away from the control of the moon. Whereas in other poems discussed the sea is presented as unemotional, here the poet anthropomorphises nature. The 'hoarse Ocean' is imagined as 'seeming to deplore | All that are buried in his restless waves' (3-4), an idea which resonates with 'Sonnet LXXXIII' where the dead are polluting the sea. It is

---

[63] Smith, *Works*, XIV, p. 76.

not clear whether the mourning ocean in 'Sonnet XLIV' is so because of being polluted by the dead, or whether the grief is over the loss of life. What does stand out is the gendering of the sea at this point. The 'hoarse Ocean' mourns the dead that are 'in *his* restless waves'. This sets up an unusual binary within Smith's nautical poems between the female moon and the male sea. Here, rather than the moon's power implying an extension of the moon's gender, the sea is given a gender and emotions.

In this poem, at least, a fracture becomes apparent between the moon and the sea. The 'hoarse Ocean' that 'Mourns' is later depicted as 'the desolate and stormy deep', reinforcing ideas of isolation and Othering of the sea. 'Above […] | Gleams the wan Moon' (9-10), the gleaming contrasting with evoking the sea as subdued and dark. Yet within that line 'Gleams the wan Moon' lies an internal conflict. Whilst 'wan' can mean, when applied 'to the (light of) heavenly bodies […] Faint, sickly, partially obscured' (*OED*), it also has an earlier and stronger meaning 'in conventional application in poetry to the sea' as well as 'Lacking light, or lustre' (*OED*). In this line the gleaming of the 'Moon' is conflicted by the dimming effect of the adjective 'wan', as well as the 'Moon' being connected to traditional poetic notions of the sea. In gendering the sea as male and the moon as female the poet has fractured and troubled the relationship between the two poetic images. The fracturing of the two is furthered by describing the moon as 'by floating mist opprest' (10), the sea's aerial assault on the moon realigning the boundaries between the two. This poem demonstrates that when the sea is imagined as male, not only does it become pulled apart from the moon, but it also expresses sentiment and sensibility towards those that have suffered a nautical death.

The role of the emotional male figure, continuing from the shepherd in 'Sonnet LXXXIII' and the masculine sea in 'Sonnet XLIV, is revisited with the 'hermit' at the end of *Beachy Head*.[64] The hermit strikes a balance between the pastoral shepherd and the remorseful ocean, allowing Smith to present a figure who fully embodies the liminality of the coast. The

---

[64] Smith, *Works*, XIV, pp. 175-76.

shore is the place of transformation in much of Smith's poetry, highlighting the division between oblivion and construction, and life and death. The hermit, therefore, is simultaneously the male sea from 'Sonnet XLIV' and the compassionate female poet from the other sonnets. The hermit empathises with any destruction of the environment in the lines 'his heart | Was feelingly alive to all that breath'd', and despite being 'outraged […] | By human crimes' the hermit 'still acutely felt | For human misery'. He is described as being 'disgusted with the world', and 'appear'd to suffer life', traits which make him akin to the ideas Smith has built up of a sea that is repulsed by the effects of mankind. Like the shepherd from 'Sonnet LXXXIII' the hermit is associated with nature, but in this case an anti-pastoral. 'Fanning the bean-field, or the thymy heath, | Had not for many summers breathed on him', cementing the idea of his self-exile from the world of man as well as the typical images of the pastoral hermit that occur earlier in the poem.[65]

His only reason for existence, compounded by the notion of rejecting his own life, is portrayed as being to deal with the bodies of the sheep or mariners who end up dead on the shoreline. Through such a life he has lost all of his own identity, becoming known for the skills he has and the tasks he does. He has 'learn'd to augur from the clouds […] | And from the changing colours of the sea', cementing the notion that he is more a figure of the environment than human.[66] His connection to the sea, although based on a carelessness for his own safety, is underlined by his walking out into the sea during a storm to rescue wrecked mariners. The poet recalls how 'hazarding a life, too valueless, | He waded thro' the waves' and, despite the 'o'erwhelming vehemence', headed 'Towards where the mariner in conflict dread | Was buffeting for life'.[67] The hermit becomes the other half to the dual personality of the sea from Smith's *Sonnets*. He is the rescuer, the sea fills the role of the mourner, contrasting with the 'o'erwhelming vehemence' and 'roaring surge' that indiscriminately imperils those at sea. Despite the 'unhappy men | Who liv'd to bless the hermit of the rocks'

---

[65] Smith, *Works*, XIV, p, 175.
[66] Ibid., p. 175.
[67] Ibid., p. 175.

he remains without identity.[68] His actions have earned him thanks but it is still his actions and not himself that forms his selfhood.

In premonition of his own fate, the hermit takes on the task of burying those who do not survive the sea. When with 'the tide of morning' he finds 'Some blue swol'n cor'se' he carves 'in the chalk a sepulchre' and 'with his prayers perform'd the obsequies'. Like those he saved, the 'mountain shepherds' who were 'anxious for the lonely man' find 'his drowned cor'se' after an 'equinoctial' storm. [69] They bury him, but in fitting testament to the functioning of an elegy as a grave, the poem ends with lines etching his memory into permanence.

> Those who read
>
> Chisle'd within the rock, these mournful lines,
>
> Memorials of his sufferings, did not grieve,
>
> That dying in the cause of charity
>
> His spirit, from its earthly bondage freed,
>
> Had to some better region fled for ever. [70]

It is left unclear where these lines are 'Chisle'd', but it can be supposed that they are in fact 'Chisle'd' into the pages of the poem. The anonymous hermit (even stripped here of his potential inspirational identity of 'Darby') comes as a reminder that actions are the definition of an identity.[71] As with Smith's other nautical sonnets, the hermit does not explicitly transcend to heaven despite 'dying in the cause of charity', but rather continues to occupy some more obscure liminal space without definition.

Costello and Smith exemplify how the elegy form can function as a grave, although each does so for a different reason. Costello mourns her brother, Smith her selfhood, but the formulation is the same for both. For Costello the sea's agency acts as an active

---

[68] Smith, *Works*, XIV, p. 175.
[69] Ibid., p. 175.
[70] Ibid., p. 175.
[71] Ibid., p. 175.

connection to her brother, whilst also providing a canvas upon which to map out a course for successful mourning. She imagines her brother encased by the sea's protective force, in a state of purgatorial sleep, awaiting transcendence to heaven. The boundaries between life and death, and her and her brother, are blurred by the sea. The distortion of boundaries is reflected in how the speaker in the elegies struggles to navigate through grief whilst preserving the boundary around the self. Costello's elegies demonstrate the complexities for mourning when there is no grave to anchor the grief. They expose someone trying to simultaneously reaffirm and realign their own selfhood in response to death. The elegies function to preserve the self of both the mourner and the dead at the same time as highlighting the challenges the sea brings to selfhood. For Smith the sea reflects the inner turmoil of the speaker, and specifically because of the sea's creatively destructive potential it functions in the elegies as a tool with which to commit literary suicide. The selfhood of the speaker at the start of each elegy is in a state of rejection, but the costs of suicide present a final boundary that is not easy to cross. Each elegy ends in a state of suspense until in 'Elegy' the speaker finally embraces 'eternal sleep'.[72] In seeking oblivion the speaker in these elegies utilises the trope of the destructive sea whilst embracing the literary creative potential it provides. For Smith these elegies are a method of mediating the dialogue between a self that exists but is full of grief and a self that would be subsumed into the sea but would gain all the liberty currently unavailable. These elegies are a reconciliation between two halves in tension, providing the grave for one selfhood and the creative origins for a new one. They ultimately show the process of preserving an uncreated selfhood by destroying another, using the sea as a vehicle to cross the final boundary into death.

---

[72] Smith, *Works*, XIV, p. 54.

Conclusion: Locating the Self in the Maritime Poetry of Percy and Mary Shelley

The aim of this study was to interrogate how the agency of the sea was able to challenge and alter the literary constructs of selfhood through a diverse selection of texts written or published between the dates 1768 and 1834. I've attempted to demonstrate that selfhood can be understood in these texts through the concept of self-preservation. From this I've tried to show that in ways relating to voyages of discovery, colonial expansion, or the events of shipwreck and the subsequent ramifications of losing someone at sea, the writers in this study have engaged with a dialogue between the speakers and the sea in a way that attempts to preserve one or both of the paradoxical halves that make up the self. These halves have been identified by Jonathan Lamb as arising from a tension which is

> evident in the "law" of self-preservation, paradoxically construed as the most urgent of instincts and the most imperative of social duties. The self is therefore required to study two different phases of its being, and to see itself at once as the source and product of its own desires. To be fully constituted, it is expected to knit these divisions […] into a sensually ethical entity, a self spontaneously obedient to a natural and a social law.[1]

This means that the self is a binary in tension, a cyclical entity that is simultaneously and indefinitely 'the source and product of its own desires'. These are manifest in the texts studied here as two paradoxes, which 'if the first paradox of self-preservation is that a propensity asks to be obeyed like a duty, the second is that the self is preserved only by being changed'.[2] In these texts we see the natural impulse for self-preservation, 'that a propensity asks to be obeyed like a duty' in the actions of James Cook, John Byron, the Ancyent Marinere, and

---

[1] Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 6.
[2] Ibid., p. 12.

Don Juan in attempting to stay alive in the face of the hostile environment of the sea. The notion 'that the self is preserved only by being changed' is evident in how these characters, for example, adapt to their harsh environments and survive, but also in how the constructs of self are changed by the experience.

Because of its dynamic nature, motive and agency are commonly applied to the sea within these texts. For the mariners there is a level of superstition embodying the destabilising effect of the sea, best exemplified by the illogical killing of the albatross in the 'Ancyent Mariner', whereas those who are mourning approach it with ambivalence, blaming the sea for their loss as well as seeking comfort in its connection to the dead. The way these texts engage with the sea reflects how, as a hostile environment, challenging to self-preservation, it forces both a positive and negative development of selfhood. But the presence of the sea in these texts, whilst often intrusive and destructive, can also seem ephemeral, a looming presence, as though sustained engagement is impossible because of the sea's continual, sudden, and dramatic changes.

Whilst there are moments of obvious chaos and impact caused by the sea, for the authors in this study the difficulty is in representing the sea's instability as an active agent in a text, as well as demonstrating how subtly and pervasively the sea comes to affect selfhood. Steve Mentz has written that it is important not to 'view the oceans simply as bodies to be crossed, but as subjects in themselves'.[3] This study attempts to do this by engaging directly with the construction of selfhood within maritime texts, because through studying how the sea engages with selfhood we are able to see implicitly how the sea itself functions within these texts. This thesis is part of a much-needed larger consideration of the creative and cultural role the sea plays in literature, particularly in discussions of selfhood. As Mentz continues, 'the ceaseless change and instability of the sea countered human existence on land'.[4] In the literature I have interrogated, the land has often functioned as a place of stability

---

[3] Steve Mentz, 'Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature', *Literature Compass*, 6:5 (2009), 997-1013 (p. 997).
[4] Ibid., p. 998.

and reliability. It can sometimes become resistant to human existence, such as in the case of John Byron's shipwreck off the coast of Patagonia where the land is positioned as a dependable counter to the volatility of the sea but in fact is discovered to be just as inhospitable. But the sea's instability better mirrors the constantly developing aspects of selfhood that are exhibited by the characters in these texts. The land offers external stimulus that excites and distracts the characters, whereas the sea facilitates an internal reflection, encouraging a consideration of the constituent parts of their selfhood.

In the texts in this study the sea is shown as an active agent in the mediation of these threats to selfhood. This agency functions as a vehicle for the development of selfhood, but its action exposes tensions within the self. James Cook and John Byron, whose narratives exemplified them as figures of national pride and resolve, are revealed as human and flawed. Their constructs of selfhood are defined by an adherence to a colonial goal that is facilitated by the sea, but the action within the texts transforms them into implicit critics of empire. The development of their selfhoods, from respected figures of national establishment to isolated sufferers of travel, is ultimately brought about by the challenge to survival posed by the sea, and their attempts at preserving both their natural self and their societal self. The influence of the texts by Cook and Byron can be seen in how S. T. Coleridge and Lord Byron attempt to navigate through the tensions of preserving the societal self, and the accompanying sense of ethics, alongside preserving the physical, natural self. The protagonists in their poems are embodiments of this struggle to survive, but in a way that does not reduce the self to a base level of humanity. The language and imagery of the zombie and cannibal can be seen to effectively distil how the voyages in these texts forced those at sea to confront and potentially lose their selfhood through the violent actions of the sea and the dehumanising effects of colonialisation.

Wordsworth and Costello both show a reaction to similar voyages, caused by the national desire to expand, that encompasses their own fight to preserve their individual selves as well as the memorial selves of the dead. The elegies function as a method of self-

preservation for the speakers whilst filling the role of grave and memory anchorage. The act of mourning is itself an act of self-preservation as it seeks to realign the self for a new existence without the influence of the self who is now dead. In the poems of Wordsworth and Costello the sea is a hostile agent that is also necessary for the mediation of emotions that signify the disconnect from the dead. For speaker in Smith's poetry the sea is a liberator, providing what Childe Harold seeks, which is a force to remove the threat of society.

In order to show how the chapters in this study come together I will interrogate several poems by Percy and Mary Shelley, using them to demonstrate how the sea influences the construct of selfhood, both on the side of the loss of selfhood through colonialism and the grief suffered when someone is lost at sea. For Percy Bysshe Shelley, the most direct engagement with the maritime world comes in his poem 'A Vision of the Sea' (1820).[5] Carl H. Ketcham provides useful critique that attempts to locate the poem within Shelley's *oeuvre*.[6] He does so by tying the poem to a biographical reading alongside a less convincing consideration of death and the human relationship to Nature. Scott McEathron progresses this attempt to understand this poem by connecting it successfully to one of Shelley's favourite poems, 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'.[7] In doing so there is again a sustained interrogation of the role of death in the poem, and especially the function of humanity after death. McEathron outlines in the poem a clear focus on the challenges that identity (what McEathron calls "humanity" in his analysis) faces in death, and how boundaries are simultaneously sharpened and blurred by impending doom. But in 'A Vision of the Sea' there is a more deliberate criticism of colonialism, combined with a complex grappling with the effacing effect of the sea on selfhood. Mandy Swann has compellingly argued for the reading of Shelley's use of the sea in his poetry as a cyclical system. She shows how 'A Vision of the

---

[5] Shelley, 'A Vision of the Sea', *The Poems of Shelley* (Harlow: Longman, 2011), pp. 365-78.
[6] Carl H. Ketcham, 'Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea"', *Studies in Romanticism*, 17, 1 (1978), 51-59.
[7] Scott McEathron, 'Death as "Refuge and Ruin": Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea" and Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 43 (1994), 170-92.

Sea' establishes the construction of a maritime utopia 'demonstrating a cyclical view of human history that ultimately undermines Shelley's utopian visions'.[8] Swann remarks that

> The sea recurs in Shelley's poems as the embodiment of time and human things; the waves and violent winds over the sea are analogies for the inescapable pull of Necessity driving man and the earth through both violent revolutionary and reactionary change and into more gradual gentle processes of change.[9]

This 'violent revolutionary and reactionary change' is demonstrated through the cleansing force which the sea becomes in the poem, in a direct challenge to the symbols of colonialism.

We have seen the critique of colonial expansion of the British Empire already in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere', which functions much in the same way in Shelley's 'A Vision of the Sea'. Shelley's well-known aversion to oppressive government and devotion to liberal ideals are formulated in this poem through the figures of the 'woman more fair | Than Heaven' (66-67) and the 'bright child on her upgathered knee' (69). They function to provide the stark contrast with the dead sailors of the sinking ship – 'six the thunder has smitten […] the seventh […] An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back' (61-64) – as well as with the raging animals and the late arriving 'twelve rowers' (153) and 'Three marksmen' (155) who form the rescue party. In the 'Ancient Mariner', the ship is the vehicle and setting that embodies the growth of empire. This is mirrored in 'A Vision of the Sea', with the ship's connection to the colonies and the East emphasised by the inclusion of the exotic animals, such as the 'Twin Tigers' (40), the 'Sea-Snake' (138), and the 'blue shark' (149). Shelley highlights the corruptive nature of the British Empire through imagining the ship as a 'heavy, dead hulk […] an inanimate bulk' (31-32) which poisons 'the living Sea' (32) as does 'a corpse on the clay which is hung'ring to fold | Its corruption around it' (33-34). The ship as the emblem of empire is polluting a sea where, Christopher R. Miller notes,

---

[8] Mandy Swann, 'Shelley's Utopian Seascapes', *Studies in Romanticism*, 52:3 (2013), 389-414 (p. 390) (p. 389).
[9] Swann, pp. 391-92.

'Heaven and Ocean are mirror images of each other', suggesting a divine purity that the ship is poisoning.[10]

The presence of the tigers suggests that the ship is inbound from the East Indies or India. Tigers, as Joseph Sramek writes, were seen by the British 'as "royal" beasts and "kings and masters of the jungle," […] associated historically with Indian and other Southeast Asian rulers'.[11] The potency of the British struggle with the tiger peaked during the reign of 'Mysore's Tipu Sultan (who held power from 1782 to 1799)' a figure who 'employed tigers as powerful symbols of their rule'.[12] This can be seen most clearly in the mechanical organ held by the V&A Museum called 'Tippoo's Tiger' (sometimes known as 'Tipu's Tiger').[13] Made in 1793 for the Sultan, it depicts a tiger mauling an European soldier, symbolising the Tipu Sultan's violent resistance to the expanding British East India Company army. Upon his defeat the organ was taken back to Britain where it was displayed in various locations until settling in the V&A. The tigers, having been held by 'chains in the hold' (41), evoke the practice that James Rennie remarks upon in 1829 where 'A tiger or bear, for instance, has been caught young, and entrusted as a speculation to the captain of a merchant vessel, to be brought to England'.[14]

The sea-snake and shark locate the poem somewhere outside of the Atlantic, most likely the Indian or Pacific Ocean. Nature, projected here as the raging sea, has struck down the participants of colonial expansion, just as in the 'Ancient Mariner', with six of the crew having been struck by lightning, the seventh run through with a splinter. The sea is a remorseless place where men die without warning and animals from different environments are locked in a fatal struggle: one tiger's bones are 'crushed by the infinite stress | Of the

---

[10] Christopher R. Miller, 'Shelley's Uncertain Heaven', *ELH*, 72:3 (2005), 577-603 (p. 589).
[11] Joseph Sramek, '"Face Him Like a Briton": Tiger Hunting, Imperialism, and British Masculinity in Colonial India, 1800-1875', *Victorian Studies*, 48:4 (2006), 659-80 (p. 659).
[12] Sramek, p. 659.
[13] V&A Museum item number: 2545(IS).
[14] James Rennie, *The Menageries: Quadrupeds, Described and Drawn from Living Subjects*, I (London: Charles Knight, 1829), p. 23. For more on the transportation of animals to Britain during the nineteenth century see: Helen Cowie, *Exhibiting Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Empathy, Education, Entertainment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Snake's adamantine voluminousness' (140-41), with the snake itself injured as 'the hot blood that spouts and rains | Where the grip of the Tiger has wounded the veins' (142-43). When the rescuers, 'twelve rowers with the impulse of thought' (153) arrive we are given another conflict between the exotic and the human. The 'three marksmen' (155) also on the boat, fire and

> Hot bullets burn
>
> In the breast of the Tiger, which yet bears him on
>
> To his refuge and ruin. (155-57)

The action of the marksmen resonates with the practice of the British whilst in India. Sramek remarks that 'tiger hunting was an important symbol in the construction of British imperial and masculine identities during the nineteenth century. […] Only by successfully vanquishing tigers would Britons prove their manliness and their fitness to rule over Indians'.[15] The marksmen can be seen to continue this trope of proving masculinity and imperial superiority through hunting the tigers, despite being at sea in a storm. This is an important aspect of their selfhood because, as representatives of the Empire, in the poem 'their claim to sovereignty and effective governance depended upon their successful representation of protection of *their* interest in society, against unruly nature, as the protection of *society itself* against nature'.[16] The marksmen on the boat, therefore, are there to represent the colonial desire to kill nature in order to protect society – here symbolised by the mother and child – depicting a dual act of preserving themselves and these two figures of innocence. The absurdity of the poem is that a boat appearing as though a rescue party for the mother and child turns out to be carrying marksmen to a shipwreck to kill tigers. The boat offers no help, but seems to never have intended to do so. But through their killing of the tigers these men are also rejecting the imperialistic ideals. The sailors on the now sinking ship were once trying

---

[15] Sramek, p. 659.

[16] Shafqat Hussain, 'Forms of Predation: Tiger and Markhor Hunting in Colonial Governance', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46:5 (2012), 1212-38 (p. 1214).

to keep the tigers alive on board the ship, presumably to sell them back in England. Now the action of the men of Empire, the marksmen, is to kill the remaining tiger to stop it getting on board. In the maelstrom of the storm, the men of the Empire, armed with guns and not life-saving equipment, reject the colonies and the exotic, adding to the death the storm is wreaking.

Throughout this clash between the Empire and the colonies sits the mother and child, incongruous with their surroundings. Their relationship to the ship is not explained, but their status as figures of the domestic seems to grant them immunity from the judgements of colonialism. They are alive and seemingly unharmed when the original sailors are shown as dead. The mother is scared; not of what is happening but of being unable to stay with her child: 'to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more? | […] Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes' (84-86). The part of death that scares her the most is the loss of physical contact with her child. The child, however, shows no apparent apprehension as to the events unfolding. 'It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder | […] It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near' (70-72), showing joy at the unbridled destruction being wrought around them on the sinking ship. The mother and child, then, figure as the exact opposites to the Ancient Mariner. They are two who care for each other where he is alone and uncared for. Their ship is sinking, emphasising a decided end to their existence, whereas he is left to exist in Purgatory. They embody youth, vitality and innocence where he is old, decaying and consumed with the grief of killing the albatross. But death scares the Ancient Mariner where the mother fears only losing touch with her child and the child itself is fearless.

In this poem it is the figure of the infinitely loving mother and the innocent child that offer hope and resolution to the destruction that is happening around them. The lack of detail surrounding the voyage as well as the identities of anyone in the poem emphasise the power the sea, and by proxy colonialism, has on identity and humanity. The lack of character building leaves the reader without the requisite knowledge to form a connection with the

people in the poem. It is only through actions, and not back story, that the reader can ascribe motive to the figures in the poem. The prevailing identities that we can connect with are those of the tigers, incongruously thrust into the action of the poem, and the mother and child. The perpetrators of colonialism are dead, dying, or arriving to kill (the absurdity being that the rescuers came armed to a shipwreck as if they had knowledge that they were actually going to kill and not help). Throughout the poem the only identifiers for the characters in the poem are their roles. The men in the boat are just 'rowers' and 'marksmen', the dead on the ship the 'crew', with the other two known as just 'mother' and 'child'. These figures have become, like Coleridge's crew or Byron's shipwreck survivors, vessels without identity. They have no selfhood and are directed and identified only by the part they play. The rescuers' lack of identity, becoming figures of destruction rather than salvation, highlights the role of the mother and child as the redemptive force within the poem. They function as the every-mother and every-child, with their lack of selfhood allowing the reader to project their own identity onto them. The child is genderless so that any parent could imagine their own child there, or any child reading the poem could picture themselves. In this way Shelley make the lack of identity of the mother and child the central concern of the poem as they become the readers themselves within the chaos.

Pervading all of the action is the implicit figure of death. The tigers - one embroiled in a fight to the death, the other fatally shot - are certain to die, their actions only serving to postpone the inevitable. The sea-snake is mortally wounded in the fight. The sailors from the wrecked ship are already dead. But the rescuers, shark and dogfish, and mother and child are what remains. Nautical nature, embodied by the shark, will benefit from the shipwreck, repeating events from earlier in the poem when they 'glutted like Jews with this manna rained down | From God on their wilderness' (57-58) feeding on the corpses of the dead. The fate of the others, however, is left in suspense. The mother and child either drown or are saved by the rescuers. The rescuers are either swamped by the storm or the tiger, or survive. But the fragmentary nature of the poem leaves all their fates in suspense. The boundary between

life and death for them is blurred until they become Schrödinger figures, simultaneously dead and alive.

By the end of the poem the mother and child are left precariously hanging on, yet Shelley alludes to a kinship between the child and the sea.

> her child
>
> Is yet smiling and playing and murmuring … so smiled
>
> The false deep ere the storm … like a sister and brother
>
> The child and the Ocean still smile on each other,
>
> Whilst – (165-69)

The child's innocence and joy during the chaos of the storm signifies the purity of humanity that has not been tainted by the grosser desires and oppressions of humanity imagined through empire. The sea occupies the role of the cleansing figure that is able to wipe the stains of controlling mankind away. By drawing a connection between the child and the ocean Shelley emphasises the benefits of childish joy and the uncontrollability of the sea, a motif that resonates with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.[17] At the beginning of Canto III the poet exclaims 'Once more upon the waters! yet once more!' (10), remarking that 'the waves bound beneath me as a steed | That knows his rider' (11-12). Later, at the end of Canto IV the poet returns to the horse imagery and evoking childhood stating 'And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy | Of youthful sports was on thy breast' (1648-49). This childhood connection is continued when the terror of the 'freshening sea' (1652) was thought of as 'a pleasing fear | For I was as it were a child of thee' (1653-54). Shelley's vision is of a mankind that is more akin to the sea, passionate and violent, but able to rid itself of the stagnation that mankind forces upon it. Earlier in 'A Vision of the Sea' the sea becomes a place of pestilence, mirroring the sea in the 'Ancient Mariner': 'Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain | On the windless expanse of the watery plain' (45-46), with the effect of the doldrums being 'a lead-coloured

---

[17] Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

fog gathered up from the Deep | Whose breath was quick Pestilence' (49-50). The colonial ship gets stuck in the doldrums for nine weeks after which the still and putrid water starts killing the crew until

> One after one
>
> The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
>
> When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
>
> But seven remained. (58-61)

After these seven are killed during the storm we are given a different image of the sea. The sea has cleansed itself; the storm has blown the pestilence away:

> from the air
>
> Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in
>
> Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
>
> […]
>
> And overhead, glorious but dreadful to see,
>
> The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
>
> Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
>
> The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above (116-29)

The sea, as we have seen in the first two chapters, is imagined as a force that breaks down the boundaries of humanity and either destroys or purifies mankind. Colonial expansion is elicited through sailors and their ships, which causes a corruption of the sea. By utilising this imagery, writers such as Coleridge, Byron and Shelley are able to challenge the notion that an ever-expanding empire is in the best interests of the country and humanity as a whole.

The second half of this thesis deals with the use of elegy in facilitating the transition of selfhood through grief, and whether or not the elegy or the sea can function as a grave for those who are lost or killed at sea. In this half the act of self-preservation takes the form of preserving the self that is mourning as well as the self that is dead and needs remembering.

Like Wordsworth and Costello, Mary Shelley had to deal with death at sea. Percy Bysshe Shelley's death on the 8th of July 1822 was devastating to Mary Shelley. He was sailing with Edward Williams and Charles Vivian from Leghorn (Livorno) to San Terezno, back to Mary and Edward's wife Jane, when one or both squalls noted by Edward John Trelawny to have hit the Leghorn area overwhelmed the *Don Juan*. Everyone on board drowned (Shelley was known by his friends for his inability to swim), and their bodies were found at various points on the shore over the next days and weeks.

As with Wordsworth, Costello, and even Smith, Mary Shelley uses the elegy as a substitute for the grave. She was not present when Percy's body was found, nor at the cremation and subsequent burial of his ashes in Rome. Whilst there was a grave (at the Cimitero Acattolico di Roma where John Keats and Percy and Mary's son William Shelley were also buried), the disconnection to the events after his death creates a barrier for her. This is resolved in some part through two of her poems, 'The Choice' and 'On Reading Wordsworth's Lines on Peel Castle'.[18] Graham Allen has argued that these poems fit many of the standard forms of the elegy, similar to the discussion in chapters three and four.[19] Importantly, though, Allen suggests that in 'The Choice' we see an attempt to include the voice and symbolism of Percy within the poem, through images such as the 'sun' (2 and 61) and the 'one star in the else darkened sky' (16).[20] Whilst undoubtedly this poem serves as a cathartic process for Mary, it is the role of the sea that is most interesting. As we saw in chapters three and four, after the death of the loved one (or in the case of Smith, the imagined death of the self) the sea becomes an active agent in the grief. Mary writes how the

knelling waves

Fast to each sad pulsation of my breast,

---

[18] Mary Shelley, *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*, ed. by A. A. Markley, IV (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002), pp. 117-22 and pp. 128-29.
[19] Graham Allen, 'Mary Shelley as Elegiac Poet: The Return and 'The Choice'', *Romanticism*, 13:3 (2007), 219-32.
[20] Ibid., p. 221.

And made their melancholy arms the haven of my rest. (135-37)

She connects the motion and rhythm of the waves to her heart, or breathing, highlighting a bond and dialogue that now exists between herself and the sea. The waves are melancholic, as if their complicity in Percy's death requires a request for forgiveness.

The second poem to deal with the death of Percy is 'On Reading Wordsworth's Lines on Peel Castle'. This poem in fact acts as a dialogue between Mary and Wordsworth, as the initial lines contain a direct reference to him: 'It is with me, as erst with you, | O Poet, Nature's Chronicler,' (1-2). Because of what he went through with the loss of his brother John, Mary connects with Wordsworth on a more profound level. The scene of this communal mourning is the implied painting and poem of Peel Castle, a setting Wordsworth thought fitting to remember his brother. Mary follows suit in decrying the sight of the sea now, noting how 'The summer seas have lost their hue | And storm sits brooding every where. —' (3-4). But whereas Wordsworth rejects the sea, instead focusing on the painting and the pastoral, Mary cannot help embracing it because it offers the only connection she can access to Percy. 'The gentlest rustling of the deep | Aye sings the dirge of him I lost' (5-6) evokes a similar sentiment to Costello and Smith in how the sea now acts as a trigger to remind Mary of Percy. The sea, as with 'The Choice', is a companion in her grief — singing 'the dirge of him I lost' — and so she is unable to leave the shore. She is 'in fear from coming years' (28) and so cannot bring herself to leave the place where she can, on occasion, kid herself that Percy is coming home: 'The fairest skiff his form contains | To my poor heart's mad picturing' (15-16). It is as we have seen earlier in this thesis that the sea has become the active agent in the mourning process of the poet. Despite his grave in Rome, where her child is also buried, the sea offers a closer and more profound connection to Percy.

It is through such rendering, preserving the self of the dead and attaching the memory of them to the sea, that the elegy can function as a literary grave. There seems to be something inherent in such nautical deaths that causes the mourners to seek out the sea in their poetry. It seems that due to its active role, and the potential to see it

anthropomorphically, the sea becomes another actor in the play of their death. As such, the sea needs to be represented in such poetry as a method of remembering the deceased. These elegies act as Wordsworth's funerary epitaphs described in 'Essays upon Epitaphs'. There is no method of physically locating or etching a memorial at the site of those who die at sea. If their bodies are found at all the place where they are remembered last is impervious to any attempts of physical memorial. As such it is the poem that functions as the grave, but it is an entity that can also remember them where they were last. The poets can incorporate the dual sides of the sea – the perpetrator and the melancholic comforter – as well as the person who needs to be remembered. Smith uses the sea as a place of oblivion, a space where the identity of the poet and reader can be disseminated in a way that offers only resolution and consolation. The same is at work in the poems of Wordsworth, Costello, and Mary Shelley. The sea and the poetic language associated with the sea allows for the erosion of the painfully clear memory of the dead. The sea blurs the boundaries between the living poet and the dead in a way that not only allows some form of communication to exist between the two parties, but also facilitates a movement away from the painful memory of their death to a more contemplative state of remembrance.

Selfhood, taken as a 'bundle of immediate and remembered impressions acquired by an embodied mind on which a sense of personal identity depends', is challenged, impacted and changed by the sea.[21] The texts studied in this thesis show, in different ways, how prolonged exposure can cause a distinct degradation of selfhood that ultimately results in a loss of humanity if the fight to preserve the both halves of the self is lost on one or both fronts. The texts in this study, although approaching the topic of selfhood from disparate positions, expose a larger dialogue within literature from the period on how the sea's resistance to transgression of boundaries forces the self to resist the massive pressures of such a hostile environment.

---

[21] Lamb, p. 5.

The first half the thesis has shown the connection between ostensibly factual accounts of voyage narratives and the poems they inspired. In both chapters one and two the poetry reflected a changed perception of the role of the sea and the selfhood of those involved in the original voyages. Cook's selfhood was a forced combination of contrasting notions. He was seen publicly as the non-violent national hero, the gentleman explorer, who expanded the worldview of Britain and society. As I have shown, he facilitated great increases in the knowledge of the world and in the understanding of the self. His national character, informed by his own representation of selfhood within the journals, was crucial to the nation's ability to feel pride a time of violent global resistance to British rule during the Seven Years' War, American Revolution, and the increasing struggles of the East India Company's expansion into India. Yet his voyages are also complicit in the increased dominance of Britain globally, and the oppressive effects of colonialism. His disregard for the suffering of his men and those he encounters is represented in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'.

Coleridge reflects the tensions in Cook's character through the figure of the Ancyent Marinere. The explicit connections between the journals and the poem underscores the dialogue between the two focal characters. For the Ancyent Marinere the journey is a series of trials and challenges, each exposing greater tensions within his selfhood. The journey is exploratory, and therefore considered harmless, but the events expose the damage that such voyages can cause. The death of the albatross and of the crew are indicative of the cost of sea travel. How the Ancyent Marinere responds betrays an ignorance of his own complicity in the events. Coleridge's use of Cook's *Narrative* exposes a reading of 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' as a poem of empire. He mimics the dehumanising effects of Cook's own writing with the destruction of the crew of the Ancyent Marinere's ship. But rather than doing this to conform to the literary tropes of travel narratives, Coleridge does this to emphasise the destructive nature of the expansion of empire. Cook maintains his own identity throughout his narrative as the symbol of Britain, relegating the rest of the crew to faceless names. He, as the representative of King and God on board the ship is the only

identity that needs to be noticed. For Coleridge this process is one that can cause serious harm to personal and national identity. Through the use of zombification, the crew become voided forms, and the Ancient Mariner, who has no set identity to start with, becomes a vessel of guilt and subsequent redemption. The use of zombie demonstrates how such voyages can result in a complete loss of selfhood, and in the case of the Ancyent Marinere, a feeling of guilt strong enough to make him travel the country to warn others of the lessons he has learned.

We see a similar series of events in the texts by John Byron and Lord Byron. There is a clear connection between the poetry of Byron and his grandfather's narrative. As in chapter one, the poetic reinterpretation of events reveals a conflict; here between John's desire to remain dutiful throughout, and Byron's use of the narrative to expose the costs of colonial expansion. John's narrative exposes a transition in his selfhood, demonstrating how life at sea and the effects of a shipwreck can drastically alter someone. For those around him there is a sense of liberty after the shipwreck. Whilst John goes along with the mob rule mentality on the shore, he eventually sides with his sense of duty and rejects the large party of men who choose not to follow the captain's orders. This pull on conscience is replayed in the figure of Don Juan who rejects the decision to eat his fellow survivors of a shipwreck. This raises similar issues to the use of the zombie in Coleridge, here with the adaptation of the cannibal trope presenting another critique of colonisation. Like the zombie, we see how becoming a cannibal results in the loss of selfhood, a reduction to complete base humanity. Where in John's narrative the cannibalism is prevented in order that selfhood is not lost, for Byron it becomes a tool to criticise the cost of sending sailors across the globe.

The familial bond between John Byron and Lord Byron forms a barrier to Byron's overt criticism of the British Empire and colonial expansion. We see in John Byron's narrative how life on board the ship causes a loss of identity within the crew which is somewhat regained after the shipwreck. But life on the shore of Patagonia, whilst allowing this reclamation of identity, causes its own challenges to humanity. In the desperate

prevention of cannibalism during the time on the beach we can see a rejection of the destruction such a label brings to human identity. The need to resort to it during the voyage home, however, reminds the reader of the destructive effects that colonial expansion has, and the minimal welfare shown towards sailors at the time. Byron takes these internal conflicts in his poetry and displays them through humour. Yet the poignancy is no less. He creates in Don Juan a figure of his grandfather that rejects the dehumanising cannibalism. The removal of identity for the rest of the crew becomes an effect of eating each other. His grandfather's character is saved by positioning him as a victim of the growth of empire, but his criticism of the abuse of sailors is apparent.

In the second half of the thesis the main question is whether the sea or the elegy can function as a surrogate grave for dead sailors. In the previous half of the thesis there is often a distinct loss of selfhood on the part of the sailors during their time at sea. The constraints of the ship – exposed by shipwreck or the fatal doldrums and ice fields – strip away the selfhood of the sailors, leaving zombie like beings or cannibals. In the elegies of the second half of the thesis, the dead are trapped in a similar state. They are remembered in their base forms of humanity by the mourners, imagined as being trapped in a liminal state under the waves. In the works of Wordsworth, Costello and Smith there is an extension of the criticisms Coleridge and Byron exposed in their poems, evoking a similar attack on the costs of being at sea. For these poets the result of the all too likely disaster is the loss of a loved one. The restless nature of the sea, however, prevents a feeling of ease and acceptance. The poets are left to mourn without a grave with which to project and anchor their memories and grief. In doing so they expose a refiguring of their own selfhood, as they attempt to connect with the sea instead of the grave. For Wordsworth the complicated situation surrounding the eventual burial of his brother John reveal a building tension between Wordsworth and the sea. In the poetry studied there is an obvious anger embodied by the sea which is contrasted to the pastoral land where the poet and John are both located.

Costello and Smith present a sea that offers both a refuge and an accomplice towards which they can direct anger and grief. Both poets see the sea on some level as a destructive force, but like Byron at the end of Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* they also identify the creative and liberating potential that the sea presents. For Costello the lure of the sea is not in its mysticism or potential adventure, but from the connection it has to her brother. Her poetry speaks of an unfulfilled mourner who finds in the sea a way of communicating with the (not) dead brother. These poems tell the story of those who are left to grieve for the sailors who were part of the global maritime machine during the period of this study. Costello's poetry acknowledges the dangers of the industry and demonstrates how losing someone at sea is different from being able to bury them. Smith utilises this trope of the maritime mourner to explore the inner tensions of someone whose grief causes them to seek oblivion through the sea. Her elegies are a catalogue of mirroring selfhood in the actions of the sea, seeing its violence in dialogue with internal tensions.

The larger ramifications of this thesis are how self-preservation and selfhood can be key ideas in exposing the dialogue between humanity and non-human agents. There is a much larger discourse needed on the cultural and artistic impact of the sea, and how it is interpreted differently at different points in time. The larger cultural studies of the sea by Alain Corbin, for example, provide starting points but lack an incisive and critical engagement with the sea as an agent. The sea has been and will continue to be a large part of our existence, but minimal time has been spent trying to understand the dialogue between it and humanity. There is huge potential in the field of gendering the sea, as chapter four has demonstrated. Whether colonial legacy has altered how other nations engage with the sea is also an area yet to be considered.

The language used to evoke the sea or maritime culture from the period is a key concern for the future of maritime literary studies. Whereas writers such as William Falconer were instrumental in bringing technical terminology into mainstream nautical literature, we have seen how later writers have been able to utilise subtler language to evoke the influence

of the sea. In the first two chapters the use of zombie and cannibal related terminology can be seen to evoke both the ideas of the global reach of the British Empire as well as the dehumanising effects such expansion inflicts upon the sailors tasked with enforcing the nation's growing reach. By using the language of slavery both Coleridge and Byron are able to implicitly demonstrate how enforcing nationalism beyond British boundaries forces sailors into a collective identity of the ship. This is only reversed when the ship is wrecked, the breaking of the ship's boundaries releasing those on board from their servitude and allowing them to reclaim their identities in the process. Through this the sea fulfils a dual role of being the obstacle to overcome whilst on board the ship, and the liberator once the ship is wrecked.

Possibly of greatest importance is that we try to understand our relationship with the sea in order to better affect our perceptions of climate change and rising sea levels. From now on the sea is going to play a fundamental role once more in the development and migration of humanity. The arts are a tool that can engage and persuade people of important things, the power of which comes from the relatability that the sciences are unable to emulate. Facts and figures will not make the general public care about the ecosystems that we are radically affecting in the sea, nor the looming catastrophe of tens of meters of rise in sea levels. But with studies such as this we can begin to map out how we used to interact with the sea culturally, at a time when it was the defining force in the world. Through understanding how our view of the sea has changed over the years we may well be able to utilise that knowledge to great effect in the struggle to convince the world our attitude needs to change. Whilst the smaller scale studies into the gendered, racial, or political readings of the sea, to name a few, are important in their own right, these need to be used to paint a larger picture of how we understand the sea and its importance to us. The drive of self-preservation is no different today than it is exposed in these texts. But our understanding of the importance of the sea has been eroded away to a point where, globally, we are more concerned with the costs to the economy of affecting change, than the costs if we do nothing. There has to be a concerted effort to understand what engages humanity with the sea, and

then utilise that to try and stave off global oceanic shifts that will fatally affect us all. Perhaps if we can tap into that self-preservation instinct, through the arts we can convince people that things really do have to change.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* 489 (September 20, 1712), 84

Austen, Jane, *Northanger Abbey; Lady Susan; The Watsons; Sanditon* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Baillie, John, *An Essay on the Sublime* (London: 1747)

Banks, Joseph, *The Endeavour Journals of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*, 2 vols (Sydney: The Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in Association with Angus & Robertson, 1962)

Biagi, Dr. Guido, *The Last Days of Percy Bysshe Shelley. New Details from Unpublished Documents* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898)

Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967)

Byron, Lord George Gordon, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-93)

—— *Don Juan* (London: Penguin, 2004)

—— *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 2005)

Byron, John, *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (London: 1788)

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1936)

—— *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-1971)

—— *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, Bollingen Series LXXV, 16 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969–2002)

—— *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) [*Collected Works*, XIV]

—— *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. C. Mays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) [*Collected Works*, XVI]

—— *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004)

Conrad, Joseph, *The Mirror of the Sea* (London: Dent, 1946)

Cook, James, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771*, ed. by J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society, 1955)

—— *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772-1775*, ed. by J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society, 1961)

—— *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780*, ed. by J. C. Beaglehole, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society, 1967)

Costello, Louisa Stuart, *The Maid of the Cyprus Isle, and Other Poems* (London: Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, 1815)

—— *Redwald; A Tale of Mona; and Other Poems* (Brentford: P. Norbury, 1819)

—— *Songs of a Stranger* (London: Taylor & Hessey, 1825)

Cowper, William, 'Charity', in *The Works of William Cowper: Comprising His Poems, Correspondence, and Translations. With a Life of the Author, by the Editor, Robert Southey* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1835-1837)

Crowe, William, 'On the Death of Captain Cook', from *Lewesdon Hill* (London: John Murray, 1827)

Defoe, Daniel, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Penguin Books, 2003)

De Quincey, Thomas, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, and Other Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Dickens, Charles, 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers', *Household Worlds* (2nd & 9th December, 1854), 362-65, 387-93

—— *Dombey and Son* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

Flavel, John, *Navigation Spiritualized* (1682)

—— *Navigation Spiritualized: Or, a New Compass for Seamen* (Leeds, 1788)

Forster, Johann Reinhold, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, ed. by Michael E Hoare (London: Hakluyt Society, 1982)

Gray, Thomas, *The Complete Poems of Thomas Gray*, ed. H. W. Starr and J. R. Hendrickson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966)

Haversham, Lord John, *Memoirs of the Late Right Honourable John Lord Haversham, from the year 1640 to 1710* (London: J. Baker, 1711)

Hawkesworth, John, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and Successively Performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: Drawn up from the Journals Which Were Kept by the Several Commanders, and from the Papers of Joseph Banks, Esq.*, 3 vols (London: printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1773).

Jensen, Carsten, *We, The Drowned* (London: Vintage, 2011)

Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Lamb, Charles, *Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, ed. by Percy Fitzgerald, 3 vols (London: Navarre Society, 1924)

—— *The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are added those of his sister Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas, 6 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Methuen, 1935)

Milton, John, *Milton's Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem*, ed. C. A. Patrides (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961)

—— *The Complete Works of John Milton*, III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Monthly Magazine, or, British Regster, Feburary 1800- June 1836, 1:4 (April, 1826), 417-418

More, Hannah, *Slavery, A Poem* (London: T. Cadell, 1788)

Nashe, Thomas, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593)

Palgrave, Francis T., ed., *The Golden Treasury* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875)

Radcliffe, Ann Ward, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Rennie, James, *The Menageries: Quadrupeds, Described and Drawn from Living Subjects*, I (London: Charles Knight, 1829)

Seward, Anna, 'Elegy on Captain Cook', *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810)

Shelley, Mary, *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*, ed. by A. A. Markley, IV (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002)

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Roger Ingpen, II (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons (1909)

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Shelley's Prose: or The Trumpet of a Prophecy*, ed. David Lee Clark (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1966)

—— *Shelley: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)

—— *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002)

—— *The Poems of Shelley*, ed. by Jack Donovan et al., III (Harlow: Longman, 2011)

Smith, Charlotte, *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Dolan, XII (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007)

—— *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Dolan, XIV (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007)

Southey, Robert, *History of Brazil*, 3 vols (London: Longman, etc., 1810-1819)

Trelawny, Edward John, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author* (London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1878)

—— *Trelawny's Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, I (London: Henry Frowde, 1906)

Wales, William, *The Original Astronomical Observations, Made in the Course of a Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Round the World, In His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775* (London: The Board of Longitude, 1777)

Williams, Helen Maria, 'The Morai', in *Poems on Various Subjects, With Introductory Remarks on the Present State of Science and Literature in France* (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823)

Wordsworth, John, *The Letters of John Wordsworth*, ed. by Carl Ketcham (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969)

Wordsworth, William, *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974)

—— *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)

—— *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

—— *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992)

Wordsworth, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: I, The Early Years 1787-1805*, ed. Ernest De Selincourt and Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967)

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M. H., *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953)

Ackermann, Hans-W., and Jeanine Gauthier, 'The Ways and Nature of the Zombi', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 104:414 (1991), 466-94

Alaimo, Stacy, 'States of Suspension: Trans-corporeality at Sea', *ISLE*, 19 (2012), 476-93

Allen, Graham, 'Mary Shelley as Elegiac Poet: The Return and "The Choice"', *Romanticism*, 13:3 (2007), 219-32

Allen, Stuart, 'Wordsworth, Death and Politics', *Literature Compass*, 1:1 (2004), 1-4

Alpers, Paul, 'Lycidas and Modern Criticism', *ELH*, 49:2 (1982), 468-96

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn (London; New York: Verso, 2006)

Anderson, Elizabeth, et al. ed., *Memory, Mourning, Landscape* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2010)

Andrews, Kerri, "Herself […] Fills The Foreground': Negotiating Autobiography in the *Elegiac Sonnets* and *The Emigrants*', *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. by Jacqueline M. Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), pp. 13-28

Arens, W., *The Man-Eating Myth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

Arias, Rosario and Patricia Pulham (eds), *Haunting and Spectrality in neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Ashley, Scott, 'How Navigators Think: The Death of Captain Cook Revisited', *Past and Present*, 194 (2007), 107-37

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

Augé, Marc, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995)

Averill, James H., 'Suffering and Calm in Wordsworth's Early Poetry', *PMLA*, 91:2 (March, 1976), 223-34

——— *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Suffering* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980)

Baker, Samuel, *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Maritime Empire of Culture* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010)

Bailyn, Bernard, *Atlantic History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)

Bate, Jonathan, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)

Bauer, N. S., 'Wordsworth's Poems in Contemporary Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 11:2 (June, 1978), 61-76

Bayly, Christopher Alan, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989)

Beddie, M. K., ed., *Bibliography of Captain James Cook R.N., F.R.S., Circumnavigator*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Council of the Library of New South Wales, 1970)

Benchimol, Alex, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Behrendt, Stephen C., *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)

Berland, Jody, *North of Empire: Essays on the Cultural Technologies of Space* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009)

Bewell, Alan, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989)

Bieri, James, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Biography* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008)

Birch, Dinah, 'Elegiac Voices Wordsworth, Turner, and Ruskin', *The Review of English Studies*, 50:199 (August, 1999), 332-344

Black, Jeremy, *The British Seaborne Empire* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004)

Blackmore, Josiah, *Manifest Perdition: Shipwreck Narrative and the Disruption of Empire* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002)

Blank, G. Kim, *Wordsworth and Feeling: The Poetry of an Adult Child* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995)

Bloom, Harold, *The Anxiety of Influence* (London; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1975)

Bohn, Arnd, 'Georg Forster's A Voyage Round the World as a Source for the Rime of the Ancient Mariner: A Reconsideration', *ELH*, 50 (1983), 363-77

Brady, Andrea, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century: Laws in Mourning* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Brantlinger, Patrick, *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011)

Brinker-Gabler, Gisela, *Encountering the Other(s): Studies in Literature, History, and Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995)

Bronfen, Elisabeth, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)

Brown, Bill, 'Thing Theory', in *Critical Inquiry*, 28:1 (2001), 1-22

Brown, Stuart, ed., *British Philosophy and the Age of Enlightenment*, V (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

Boxer, C. R., *The Tragic History of the Sea 1589-1622* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1959)

Burroughs, Robert, 'Sailors and Slaves: The 'Poor English Tar' in Naval Reform and Nautical Melodrama', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16:3 (2011), 305-22

Bynkershoek, Cornelius Van, *De Dominio Maris Dissertatio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923)

—— *Queastionum Juris Publici Libri Duo*, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930)

Cantor, Paul A., 'The Politics of the Epic: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Romantic Redefinition of Heroism', *The Review of Politics*, 69:3 (2007), 375-401

Canuel, Mark, *The Shadow of Death: Literature, Romanticism, and the Subject of Punishment* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007)

Carroll, Siobhan, *An Empire of Air and Water: Uncolonizable Space in the British Imagination, 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015)

Carson, Rachel, *Under the Sea-Wind: A Naturalist's Picture of Ocean Life* (London: Staples Press, 1952)

—— *The Sea Around Us* (London: Readers Union, 1953)

—— *The Edge of the Sea* (London: Staples Press, 1955)

Carter, Paul, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987)

Cheeke, Stephen, *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008)

Clark, David, ed., *The Sociology of Death: Theory, Culture, Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993)

Clausson, Nils, 'Pastoral Elegy into Romantic Lyric: Generic Transformation in Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis"', *Victorian Poetry*, 48:2 (2010), 173-94

Clymer, Lorna, 'Graved in Tropes: The Figural Logic of Epitaphs and Elegies in Blair, Gray, Cowper, and Wordsworth', *ELH*, 62:2 (Summer, 1995), 347-86

Cohen, Margaret, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010)

Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009)

Colls, Robert, *Identity of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Cooper, Andrew M., 'Shipwreck and Skepticism: "Don Juan" Canto II', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 32 (1983), 63-80

Corbin, Alain, *The Lure of the Sea: The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840* (London: Penguin Books, 1995)

Costelloe, Timothy M., ed., *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Coupe, Laurence, ed., *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000)

Cowie, Helen, *Exhibiting Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Empathy, Education, Entertainment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

Craciun, Adriana, *Writing Arctic Disaster: Authorship and Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Crook, Nora, 'The Enigma of 'A Vision of the Sea', or 'Who Sees the Waterspouts?'', *Evaluating Shelley*, ed. by Timothy Clark and Jerrold E. Hogle (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 152-63

Crozier, Michael, 'Antipodean Sensibilities', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 98 (1999), 839-859

Culley, Amy, *British Women's Life Writing, 1760-1840: Friendship, Community, and Collaboration* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

Curran, Stuart, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Damon, S. Foster, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973)

Dening, Greg, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Dickinson, Harry W., *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Education for Officers* (London: Routledge, 2012)

Dilworth, Thomas, 'Symbolic Spatial Form in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the Problem of God', *Review of English Studies*, 58 (2007), 500-30

Dolan, Elizabeth A., 'British Romantic melancholia: Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*, medical discourse and the problem of sensibility', *Journal of European Studies*, 33:3 (2003), 237-53

—— *Seeing Suffering in Women's Literature in the Romantic Era* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)

Duffy, Cian, *The Landscapes of the Sublime, 1700-1830: Classic Ground* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Edensor, Tim, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berd, 2002)

Edmond, Rod, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Edwards, Philip, *The Story of the Voyage: Sea Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

—— *Sea Mark: The Metaphorical Voyage, Spencer to Milton* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997)

Empson, Wiliam, 'The Ancient Mariner', *Critical Quarterly*, 6:4 (1964), 298-319

Fairer, David, and Christine Gerrard, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: The Annotated Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)

Feldman, Paula R. and Theresa M. Kelley, ed., *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1995)

Ferguson, Frances and Helen Regueiro Elam, ed., *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment: Romantic Poetry and the Ecology of Reading* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005)

Ferguson, Margaret, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy (eds), *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005)

Ferry, David, *The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978)

Fosso, Kurt, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (New York: State of New York Press, 2004)

Foucault, Michel, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16:1 (1986), 22-27

Francis, Doris, et al., ed., *The Secret Cemetery* (Oxford; New York: BERG, 2005)

Freud, Sigmund, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia* (London: Penguin Books, 2005)

Frosh, Stephen, *For and Against Psychoanalysis*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2006)

Fulford, Tim, 'Slavery and superstition in the supernatural poems', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 45-58

Fulford, Tim, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Fullagar, Kate, '"Savages that are among us": Mai, Bennelong, and British Imperial Culture, 1774-1795', *The Eighteenth Century*, 49 (2003), 211-37

Fulton, Gere B., and Eileen K. Metress, *Perspectives on Death and Dying* (Boston; London: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1995)

Gabriel, Markus and Slavoj Žižek, *Mythology, Madness and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism* (London: Continuum, 2009)

Gascoigne, John, *Captain Cook: Voyager Between Worlds* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007)

Gay, Peter, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, Volume II: The Science of Freedom* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970)

Gilbert, Sandra M., *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve* (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006)

Gill, Stephen, *Wordsworth's Revisitings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Gillen, Peter and Devleena Ghosh, *Colonialism & Modernity* (Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales, 2007)

Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993)

Gosset, W. P., *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy, 1793-1900* (London: Mansell, 1986)

Gottlieb, Evan, *Romantic Globalism: British Literature and Modern World Order, 1750-1830* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014)

Green, Matthew J. A. and Piya Pal-Lapinski, *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terror* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Eras* (London: Chatham, 1997)

Grotius, Hugo, *The Freedom of the Seas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1916)

Guest, Harriet, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Guyer, Sara, *Romanticism After Auschwitz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)

Hagstrum, Jean H., *The Romantic Body: Love and Sexuality in Keats, Wordsworth, and Blake* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985)

Hallam, Elizabeth, and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory & Material Culture* (Oxford; New York: BERG, 2001)

Hardy, Barbara, *The Advantage of Lyric: Essays on Feeling in Poetry* (London: Althone Press, 1977)

Harrison, Robert, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003)

Hart, Richard, 'The Shipwreck: an Elegiac Poem', in *Weekly Entertainer, or, Agreeable and Instructive Repository*, 1 (1783), 165-67

Hartman, Geoffrey H., *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971)

Hattendorf, John B., ed., *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Maritime History*, 4 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Hawley, Judith, 'Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*: Losses and Gains', in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 184-98

Hefferman, James A. W., 'Self-Representation in Byron and Turner', *Poetics Today*, 10:2 (1989), 207-41

Hegarty, Neil, 'Unruly Subjects: Exploration and Culture Contact in the South Pacific, 1764-1775' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Dublin, 1998)

Heidegger, Martin, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001)

Heller-Roazen, Daniel, *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (New York: Zone Books, 2009)

Henderson, Andrea K., *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Hepper, David, *British Warship Losses in the Age of Sail 1650-1859* (Rotherfield: Jean Boudriot, 1994)

Heymans, Peter, *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species* (New York; London: Routledge, 2012)

Heys, Alistair, and Vitana Kostadinova, *Byron and the Isles of Imagination: A Romantic Chart* (Plovdiv: Context Publishing House, 2009)

Higgins, David, 'Writing to Colonial Australia: Barron Field and Charles Lamb', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 32 (2010), 219-233

Hill, James L., 'Experiments in the Narrative of Consciousness: Byron, Wordsworth, and Childe Harold, Cantos 3 and 4', *ELH*, 53:1 (1986), 121-40

Holmes, Richard, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science* (London: HarperPress, 2008)

Horden, Peregrine, and Purcell Nicholas, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)

—— 'The Mediterranean and "the New Thalassology"', in *The American Historical Review*, 111:3 (2006), 722-40

Horlstein, Michael E., 'The Writer as Shaman', *Phenomenology of Life in a Dialogue Between Chinese and Occidental Philosophy*, 17 (1984), 309-321

Hurley, Jessica, 'History Is What Bites: Zombies, Race, and the Limits of Biopower in Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*', *Extrapolation* 56:3 (2015), 311-34

Hussain, Shafqat, 'Forms of Predation: Tiger and Markhor Hunting in Colonial Governance', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46:5 (2012), 1212-38

Hutchings, Kevin, 'Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies', *Literature Compass*, 4:1 (2007), 172-202

Hutchings, Kevin, *Romantic Ecologies and Colonial Cultures in the British-Atlantic World, 1770-1850* (Montreal & Kingston; London; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009)

Izenberg, Gerald, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Jarvis, Robin, *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel: Expeditions and Tours in North America, 1760-1840* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

Jasper, David, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker: Inspiration and Revelation* (London: Macmillan, 1985)

Johnston, Kenneth R., 'The Romantic Idea-Elegy: The Nature of Politics and the Politics of Nature', *South Central Review*, 9:1 (1992), 24-43

Jones, John, *The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1954)

Kapor, Vladimir, 'Shifting Edenic Codes: On Two Exotic Visions of the Golden Age in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41 (2008), 217-30

Kay, Dennis, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Keane, Patrick J., *Coleridge's Submerged Politics: The Ancient Mariner and Robinson Crusoe* (Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 1994)

Kearl, Michael C., *Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Kearns, Sheila M., *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography: Reading Strategies of Self-Representation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995)

Keenleyside, Anne, Margaret Bertulli, and Henry C. Fricke, 'The Final Days of the Franklin Expedition: New Skeletal Evidence', *Arctic*, 50:1 (1997), 36-46

Kennedy, David, *Elegy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007)

Kent, H. S. K. 'The Historical Origins of the Three-Mile-Limit', *The American Journal of International Law*, 48 (1954), 537-53

Ketcham, Carl H., 'Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea"', *Studies in Romanticism*, 17:1 (1978), 51-59

Kitson, Peter J., ed., *Placing and Displacing Romanticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001)

—— *Romantic Literature, Race, and Colonial Encounter* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Klein, Bernhard, and Gesa Mackenthun, ed., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004)

Kneale, J. Douglas, *Romantic Aversions: Aftermaths of Classicism in Wordsworth and Coleridge* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999)

—— 'Wordsworth, Milton, and a Question of Genre', *Modern Philology*, 109:2 (2011), 197-220

Kroeber, Karl, *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Kumar, Krishan, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Labbe, Jacqueline M., 'Every Poet Her Own Drawing Master: Charlotte Smith, Anne Seward and *ut pictura poesis*', in *Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poets from Pope to Wordsworth*, ed. by Thomas Woodman (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 200-14

—— *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003)

—— ed., *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008)

——— *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Lamb, Jonathan, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

——— 'Coming to Terms with What Isn't There: Early Narratives of New Holland', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26 (2002), 147-55

——— 'Cook and the Question of Navel History', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 30 (2006), 98-115

Lau, Beth, ed., *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790-1835* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009)

Lauro, Sarah Juliet, and Karen Embry, 'The Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism', *Boundary 2*, 35:1 (2008), 85-108

Le Goff, Jacques, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992)

Leader, Zachary, 'Wordsworth, Revision, and Personal Identity', *ELH*, 60:3 (Autumn, 1993), 651-83

Leask, Nigel, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991)

Lennard, John, *The Poetry Handbook: A Guide to Reading Poetry for Pleasure and Practical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Lestringant, Frank, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, trans. by Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997)

Lincoln, Margarette, 'Shipwreck Narratives of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century: Indicators of Culture and Identity', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 20:2 (1997), 155-72

Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000)

Lokke, Kari, 'The Figure of the Hermit in Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head*', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 39:1/2 (2008), 38-43

Lowes, John Livingston, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study into the Ways of the Imagination* (London: Picador, 1978)

Lutz, Deborah, 'The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39:1 (2011), 127-42

Macleod, Jock, 'Misreading Writing: Rousseau, Byron, and *Childe Harold* III', *Comparative Literature*, 43:3 (1991), 260-79

Maddrell, Avril, and James D. Sidaway, *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Rememberence* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Mahan, Alfred Thayer, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1889)

Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2006)

Martin, Andrew, 'Dangerous Liaisons in the South Pacific Surfing the Revolution: The Fatal Impact of the Pacific on Europe', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41 (2008), 141-47

Matlak, Richard, 'Captain John Wordsworth's Death at Sea', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 31:3 (Summer, 2000), 127-32

Matsuda, Matt K., 'The Pacific', in *The American Historical Review*, 111:3 (2006), 758-80

Mayer, Elsie F., 'Notes on the Composition of "A Vision of the Sea", *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 28 (1979), 17-20

McAdam, E. L. Jr., 'Wordsworth's Shipwreck', *PMLA*, 77:3 (June, 1962), 240-47

McCollum, Jenn, 'Jane Eyre and Zombies', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 8:3 (2012), 1-17

McEathron, Scott, 'Death as "Refuge and Ruin": Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea" and Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 43 (1994), 170-92

McFarland, Thomas, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

McKusick, James C., *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)

Mentz, Steve, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (London: Continuum, 2009)

—— 'Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature', *Literature Compass*, 6:5 (2009), 997-1013

Miller, Christopher R., 'Shelley's Uncertain Heaven', *ELH*, 72:3 (2005), 577-603

Morrison, James V., *Shipwrecked: Disaster and Transformation in Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, and the Modern World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014)

Mounsey, Chris, 'Persona, Elegy, and Desire', *SEL*, 46:3 (Summer, 2006), 601-18

Murray, Stuart, "Notwithstanding our signs to the contrary': textuality and authority at the Endeavour River, June to August 1770', in *Captain Cook: Explorations and Reassessments* ed. by Glyndwr Williams (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), 59-76

Neill, Michael, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)

Newey, Vincent, *Centring the Self: Subjectivity, Society and Reading from Thomas Gray to Thomas Hardy* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995)

Nichols, Ashton, *Beyond Romantic Ecocriticism: Toward Urbanatural Roosting* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Obeyesekere, Gananath, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Oerlemans, Onno, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2004)

Oloff, Kerstin, "Greening' the Zombie: Caribbean Gothic, World-Ecology, and Socio-Ecology Degradation', in *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, 16:1 (2012), 31-45

Pagden, Anthony, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500 – c. 1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995)

Paine, Lincoln, *The Sea and Civilization: A Maritime History of the World* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015)

Parisot, Eric, *Graveyard Poetry: Religion, Aesthetics and the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Poetic Condition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

—— 'Living to Labour, Labouring to Live: The Problem of Suicide in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Literature Compass*, 12:12 (2015), 660-66

Parry, J. H., *The Discovery of the Sea* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974)

Paxman, David B., '"Distance Getting Close": Gesture, Language, and Space in the Pacific', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26 (2002), 78-97

Peters, Edward, 'Quid nobis cum pelago? The New Thalassology and the Economic History of Europe', in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 34:1 (2003), 49-61

Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

Ramazani, Jahan, *Yeats and the Poetry of Death: Elegy, Self-elegy, and the Sublime* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990)

—— *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Redford, Duncan, *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014)

Rediker, Marcus, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Marine World 1700-1780* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989)

Relph, Edward, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976)

Robbins, Keith, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London: Longman, 1998)

Roberts, Bethan, 'Literary Past and Present in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 54:3 (2014), 649-74

Roberts, Jonathan, 'Shared Grief in the Elegies on John Wordsworth: Farewell the Heart that lives alone', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 32:3 (Summer, 2001), 155-61

Robinson, Daniel, '*Elegiac Sonnets*: Charlotte Smith's Formal Paradoxy', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39:2 (2003), 185-220

Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London: Penguin Books, 2005)

Rogers, Kathleen Béres, 'Permeability and its uses: affect and audience in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Women's Writing*, 16:1 (2009), 126-42

Rosenburg, John D., *Elegy for an Age: The Presence of the Past in Victorian Literature* (London: Anthem Press, 2005)

Rosendale, Steven, ed., *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002)

Rowell, Geoffrey, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Development of Christian Burial Rites* (London: Alcuin Club, 1977)

Ruston, Sharon, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Rutherford, Jennifer, *Zombies* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013)

Sacks, Jeffrey, 'Untranslatability, or Mourning Translation (Darwish with Schmitt and Agamben)', *MLN*, 126:5 (December, 2011), 1083-1122

Sacks, Peter M., *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985)

Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994)

—— *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003)

Salins, Marshall David, *How "natives" think: about Captain Cook for example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Salmond, Anne, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: The Remarkable Story of Captain Cook's Encounters in the South Sea* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003)

Salvesen, Christopher, *The Landscapes of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry* (London: Edward Arnold, 1965)

Sanborn, Geoffrey, *The Sign of the Cannibal* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998)

Sandy, Mark, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

Saunders, Clare Broom, *Louisa Stuart Costello: A Nineteenth-Century Writing Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Scarre, Geoffrey, *Death* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2007)

Schenck, Celeste M., 'Feminism and Deconstruction: Re-constructing the Elegy', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 5:1 (1986), 13-27

Schwab, Gabriele, 'Replacement Children: The Transgenerational Transmission of Traumatic Loss', *American Imago*, 66:3 (Fall, 2009), 277-310

Scodel, Joshua, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991)

Scott, Grant F., *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1994)

Sharp, Michele Turner, 'The Churchyard Among the Wordsworthian Mountains: Mapping the Common Ground of Death and the Reconfiguration of Romantic Community', *ELH*, 62:2 (Summer, 1995), 387-407

Shaw, Philip, *The Sublime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006)

Shaw, W. David, *Elegy & Paradox: Testing the Conventions* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994)

Shilstone, Frederick W., 'A Grandfather, a Raft, a Tradition: The Shipwreck Scene in Byron's *Don Juan*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 25 (1956), 94-109

Sigurdson, Ola, 'Slavoj Žižek, the Death Drive, and Zombies: A Theological Account', *Modern Theology*, 29:3 (2013), 361-80

Simpson, David, *Romanticism and the Question of the Stranger* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991)

Smith, Bernard, 'Coleridge's Ancient Mariner and Cook's Second Voyage', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19.1/2 (1956), 117-54

—— *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985)

Smith, Eric, *By Mourning Tongues: Studies in English Elegy* (Ipswich: Boydell Press; Totowa: Rowan and Littlefield, 1978)

Smith, Mark J., 'Elegizing John Wordsworth: Commemoration and Lyric', in *Re-reading Derrida: Perspectives on Mourning and Its Hospitalities*, ed. by Tony Thwaites and Judith Seaboyer, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013), pp. 75-90

Smith, Vanessa, 'Banks, Tupaia, and Mai: Cross-cultural exchanges and friendship in the Pacific', *Parergon*, 26 (2009), 139-60

Soule, George, 'John Wordsworth's Death and the End of *The Prelude*', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 141 (2008), 2-12

Spargo, R. Clifton, *The Ethics of Mourning: Grief and Responsibility in Elegiac Literature* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004)

Sramek, Joseph, '"Face Him Like a Briton": Tiger Hunting, Imperialism, and British Masculinity in Colonial India, 1800-1875', *Victorian Studies*, 48:4 (2006), 659-80

Stewart, Garrett, *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1984)

Stillinger, Jack, *Romantic Complexity: Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009)

Stokes, Christopher, 'Lorn subjects: haunting, fracture and ascesis in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *Women's Writing*, 16:1 (2009), 143-60

Sunstein, Emily W., *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)

Swaab, Peter, 'Wordsworth's Elegies for John Wordsworth', *Wordsworth Circle*, 45:1 (2014), 30-38

Swann, Mandy, 'Shelley's Utopian Seascapes', *Studies in Romanticism*, 52:3 (2013), 389-414

Tanner, Laura E., *Lost Bodies: Inhabiting the Borders of Life and Death* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Terry, Richard, 'Sentimental Doubling in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 20:4 (2007), 50-58

Thomas, Helen, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Thompson, Carl, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)

—— ed., *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives: An Anthology* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007)

—— ed., *Shipwreck in Art and Literature: Images and Interpretations from Antiquity to the Present Day* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013)

Townsend, R. C., 'John Wordsworth and His Brother's Poetic Development', *PMLA*, 81:1 (March, 1966), 70-78

Treadwell, James, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature, 1783-1834* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Tuite, Clara, 'Tainted Love and Romantic "Literary Celebrity"', *ELH*, 74:1 (2007), 59-88

Ulmer, William A., 'The Society of Death in *Home at Grasmere*', *Philological Quarterly*, 75 (1996), 67-83

Wainwright, Jeffrey, *Poetry: The Basics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004)

Warner, Marina, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Webster, Suzanne Elizabeth, *Body and Soul in Coleridge's Notebooks, 1827-1834: 'What is Life?'* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Weinstein, Arnold, *Fictions of the Self: 1550-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

White, Daniel E., 'Autobiography and Elegy: The Early Romantic Poetics of Thomas Gray and Charlotte Smith', in *Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poets from Pope to Wordsworth*, ed. by Thomas Woodman (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), 57-69

Wicker, C. V., *Edward Young and the Fear of Death: A Study in Romantic Melancholy* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1952)

Wiley, Michael, *Romantic Migrations: Local, National, and Transnational Dispositions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Williams, Glyndwr ed., *Captain Cook: Explorations and Reassessments* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004)

Williams, John, *Wordsworth: Romantic Poetry and Revolutionary Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989)

Wilson, Ben, *Empire of the Deep: The Rise and Fall of the British Navy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014)

Wilson, Edward, 'An Echo of St Paul and Words of Consolation in Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas"', *The Review of English Studies*, 43:169 (February, 1992), 75-80

Wilson, Kathleen, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)

Wilson, Ross, ed., *The Meaning of "Life" in Romantic Poetry and Poetics* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009)

—— *Shelley and the Apprehension of Life* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Pres, 2013)

Wu, Duncan, *Wordsworth: An Inner Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003)

Wyman-McCarthy, Matthew, 'Rethinking Empire in India and the Atlantic: William Cowper, John Newton, and the Imperial Origins of Evangelical Abolitionism', *Slavery & Abolition*, 35:2 (2014), 306-27

Yates, Robert, '"The Unshriven Dead, Zombies on the Loose": African and Caribbean Religious Heritage in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 61:3 (2015), 515-37

Young, James E., *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993)

Zeiger, Melissa F., *Beyond Consolation: Death, Sexuality, and the Changing Shapes of Elegy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997)

Žižek, Slavoj, 'Looking Awry', *October*, 50 (1989), 30-55

—— 'Melancholy and the Act', *Critical Inquiry*, 26:4 (2000), 657-81