

# **THE POETRY AND SCIENCE OF HUMPHRY DAVY**

**Wahida Amin**

School of Arts & Media  
College of Arts & Social Sciences  
University of Salford, Salford, UK

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2013

# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	iii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	v
<b>A NOTE ON THE TEXTS</b>	vi
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	vii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Biographies of Davy	4
Methodologies in Science and Literature	12
Davy and Romanticism	16
Transcribing Davy's Manuscript Poems	21
Davy's Notebooks	25
Aims of the Thesis	28
Thesis Structure	32
<b>CHAPTER ONE: THE ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY POEMS</b>	<b>37</b>
1.1 Natural Philosophy and the Sublime in "Sons of Genius"	38
1.2 The Fragmentary Versions	45
1.3 Cornwall and the <i>Annual Anthology</i>	52
1.4 Cornwall in "Extract from an unfinished poem"	57
1.5 The "irritable spirit" in "Lines Descriptive of feelings"	69
1.6 The Sublime in the Landscape	79
<b>CHAPTER TWO: BRISTOL, THE BODY AND THE SUBLIME</b>	<b>92</b>
2.1 Davy as Physiologist and Poet	93
2.2 Rhetoric in "On breathing the Nitrous oxide"	106
2.3 Life, Death and Rebirth in "The Spinosist"	113
2.4 A Vulnerable Protagonist in the "Moses" Epic	130
<b>CHAPTER THREE: THE ANNA POEMS</b>	<b>147</b>
3.1 The Lyric and Lectures	149
3.2 Anna Beddoes and the Anna Series of Poems	163
3.3 "To Anna Maria B." and a "master law"	171
3.4 Solitude and Recollection in "To Anna Maria B."	180
3.5 "Vauxhall" as Part of the Anna Poems	188

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: GEOLOGY AND CONTINENTAL TRAVELS</b>	<b>196</b>
4.1 Methods in Geology and Chemistry	198
4.2 Notebooks on the Continent	205
4.3 “Mont Blanc”	211
4.4 “The Canigou” as the “theatre of science”	223
4.5 The “varied life of Man” in the Baths of Lucca Poems	230
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DEATH AND IMMORTALITY IN DAVY’S FINAL POEMS</b>	<b>246</b>
5.1 Scientific Experiments and the Notebook	247
5.2 Uncertainty, Knowledge, and Immortality	256
5.3 Reconsidering Poems of the Past	274
5.4 Mortality and Hesitancy	284
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>301</b>
Explanation of Editorial Symbols	301
Appendix 1	301
Appendix 2	304
Appendix 3	314
Appendix 4	317
Appendix 5	323
<b>LIST OF WORKS CITED</b>	<b>338</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this thesis was both a very solitary and rewarding occupation, and would not have been possible without a number of people who deserve to be acknowledged. Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Sharon Ruston, for her guidance, care, and time. My thanks also goes to my second supervisor, Frank James, for his invaluable insight and advice. In addition, I am indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for my Collaborative Doctoral Award, which funded my project. The uniqueness of my thesis is a result of the AHRC partnership between the University of Salford, Manchester, and the Royal Institution of Great Britain in London. My appreciation goes to the Heritage and Collections Team at the Royal Institution, who became my colleagues and entrusted me with full access to Humphry Davy's archives. Without their confidence in me, I would not have had such a thorough knowledge of Davy's personal writings. The team also offered me an institutional home and a kind support network for three years, for which I am extremely grateful. I would also like to acknowledge the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of Manchester, where I attained my Master's degree in History of Science, Technology and Medicine, and Science Communication. The staff and my friends during my time at CHSTM gave me an invaluable intellectual basis, and later much courage and advice during this research project.

Beyond the realm of academia, and important to me, are my family and friends who have been a patient source of compassion, support, and love. Of those who have helped me along my journey, I would like thank Tabetha Bhatti, Robert McLauchlan, Sarah Carswell, Samantha Chalker, and Andrew Marmery for all that they have done to encourage me. It would have been a very lonely time

without them. Finally, I want to thank Amma, who should not be surprised to see what her daughters have achieved after our tough beginnings. She has taught us the strength of independence, which led me to Davy. Despite my claims of self-sufficiency while writing this thesis, I was glad that she could also see I needed help to keep going.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AA Southey, Robert, ed. *Annual Anthology*. 2 vols. Bristol: Biggs and Cottle, 1799–1800. Print.
- CW Davy, Humphry. *The Collected Works of Sir Humphry Davy*. Ed. John Davy. 8 vols. London: Smith and Elder, 1839. Print.
- Discourse* Davy, Humphry. *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry*. London: Johnson, 1802. Print.
- DL Davy, Humphry. *The Letters of Humphry Davy*. Ed. Tim Fulford, Jan Golinski, Frank James, David Knight and Sharon Ruston. Web. 11 April 2011.
- Geology* Davy, Humphry. *Humphry Davy on Geology: The 1805 Lectures for the General Audience*. Ed. Robert Siegfried and Robert H. Dott. London: U of Wisconsin P, 1980. Print.
- LB Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*. 2 vols. London: Longman, 1800. Print.
- Researches* Davy, Humphry. *Researches, Chemical and Philosophical; Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Nitrous Air, and its Respiration*. London: Johnson, 1800. Print.
- SL *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey*. Ed. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Packer. Web. March 2011.

## A NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The main texts I have used for Davy's manuscript poetry are twenty-six of his personal notebooks. These are in the archives of the Royal Institution of Great Britain and are catalogued with the reference letters RI MS HD. Each notebook is also given an individual non-chronological alphanumerical label. My thesis identifies each notebook by using the alphanumerical system of the Royal Institution catalogue. The pages has been retrospectively numbered by the Royal Institution archivist. In my chapters, the first reference to a manuscript poem will contain its notebook number followed by page number. After this initial entry, quotations from poems are referenced by their line numbers. Many of the notebooks that I use also contain scientific notes, drawings, and philosophical notes. Davy usually flipped the notebook over to use the other half for different notes, such as on his research or poetry. In my thesis, page numbers in reverse order indicate that Davy wrote from the other half of the notebook. Given that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine over a hundred of Davy's poems, which I have transcribed from his notebooks, I will publish these on a website in collaboration with the Royal Institution after completing my thesis.

## ABSTRACT

Drawing on the wealth of manuscript material in his personal notebooks, my thesis presents Humphry Davy through the lens of his published and manuscript poetry. Having transcribed and examined Davy's poems in groups and from a literary critical and historical perspective, I argue that his poems are historically contingent on the mutability of his career, and in them, Davy adopts and redeploys literary, scientific and medical ideas to confirm his imaginative and controlled emotional connection with nature. Chapter One traces the way in which Davy expresses his youthful ambitions in his published poetry through a nexus of literary and medical ideas. Chapter Two compares Davy's manuscript poetry with his physiological work at Bristol to reveal that he explores the different ways in which the sublime can be both transcendent and physiological. Chapter Three examines Davy's use of rhetoric in his lectures on chemistry and the lyric in his poems on Anna, wife of Thomas Beddoes. Chapter Four contrasts Davy's poetry written during his first and second trips on the Continent. The natural landscapes, which in 1813 are imbued with Davy's confident perspective as a natural philosopher who can find the harmonies in nature, later become a means for reassurance on the workings of the mind and body. Chapter Five examines a notebook used from 1827 as Davy's final act to gather some of his poems into a group. In many of his new and hesitant poems, Davy considers the possibility of immortality and conveys his Platonist beliefs. By reading Davy's poetry as a product of the literary and scientific culture of the Romantic period, my thesis aims to broaden awareness of Davy's knowledge of complex ideas in literature, science and medicine, and the common cultural stimuli of literary and scientific figures in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

## INTRODUCTION

Drawing on the wealth of manuscript material in his personal notebooks, my thesis presents Humphry Davy, the preeminent British chemist of the Romantic period, through the lens of his published and manuscript poetry. From the age of seventeen until his death, Davy wrote over one hundred and sixty manuscript poems and fragmentary lines, most of which are contained in his personal notebooks.<sup>1</sup> Amongst his scientific calculations, philosophical musings, draft letters, and sketches, Davy composed and copied out several versions of his poems and used a range of poetic forms, such as the epic, satire and odes, and blank verse. His poetry tends to be in iambic pentameter, yet his notes and letters demonstrate that he ruminated upon scansion.<sup>2</sup> While Davy shared a few of his poems amongst his circle of friends and published at least eight in his lifetime, much of his literary writing presumably remained in his notebooks.<sup>3</sup> Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate all of Davy's poetry, I have taken a chronological approach, examining a selection of poems written during distinct periods of Davy's life to demonstrate the commonalities and shifts in his poetical style. I argue that in his poetry Davy adopts and redeploys many literary, scientific, and medical ideas, which influenced both literature and science in the Romantic period.<sup>4</sup> As such, his poems could serve as vehicles to confirm his imaginative comprehension of and controlled emotional connection with nature.

---

<sup>1</sup> In my chapters, I use twenty-six of Davy's personal notebooks. He also used at least another forty-three for entirely scientific purposes.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Davy writes a note on the metre of "Moses" (13c 145). In a letter to Jane Davy on 14 July 1828, Davy apologises that he sent her a "vision" that was "not in metre" (*DL*). Also see Davy's letter to Davies Gilbert on 27 January 1823 (*DL*).

<sup>3</sup> Six of the poems published in the *Annual Anthology* in 1799 and 1800 are discussed in Chapter One. The seventh, titled "Life" and published in Joanna Baillie's *Collection of Poems* in 1823, is discussed in Chapter Two. Davy also wrote a poem for his friend and playwright John Tobin on the changefulness of man in the prologue of his 1805 play *The Honey Moon* (7–8).

<sup>4</sup> Here I use the term "science" in the modern sense to encompass the different disciplines that Davy contributed to, such as physiology, chemistry, and geology. Throughout my thesis, I instead

Davy is remembered as a charismatic lecturer who isolated and discovered nine new chemical elements and invented the industry-changing miners' safety lamp. As the following sections explain, historians of science also view Davy as an influential figure who defined and shaped the role of chemistry as a powerful discipline in the early nineteenth century. As Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution in London, founded in 1799 by a group of aristocrats and wealthy gentry during Britain's war with France, Davy became a celebrity of his age.<sup>5</sup> In the eleven years that he lectured at the institution, Davy presented the potential of his discoveries and expounded his views on chemistry. While promoting natural philosophy in his lectures as useful knowledge and as a means for social, political, and imperial power, his experiments with the voltaic pile also revealed the powerful forces and arrangements that underlie the natural world. I trace Davy's knowledge of literary, scientific, and medical concepts through his poetry and argue that his poems are historically contingent on the mutability of his career. His poems also reveal the interactions between ideas in science and literature in the Romantic period. In drawing upon these bodies of knowledge, Davy's poems offer his belief that the natural world is eternal, active, and powerful, and can excite both the imagination and reason.

It is the premise of this study that the history of science and Romantic literary criticism should be integrated to better understand Davy's work and ideas in the Romantic period. Since my thesis draws from studies of the history of chemistry, Romanticism and manuscript scholarship, what follow are three literature

---

try to refer to "natural philosophy" since, as I will illustrate in my chapters, Davy and his contemporaries worked before bodies of knowledge such as geology and chemistry were regarded as separate disciplines in science.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Three and Four for Davy's role at the Royal Institution, his lectures and critical interpretations of his role. For more on one of the founders of the Royal Institution who shaped the imperialist aims of science in Britain, see Gascoigne; Fara, *Sex*; and Holmes, *Age* 1–59.

surveys.<sup>6</sup> Although I divide such scholarship for expository purposes, the following chapters of my thesis bring these ideas together to better understand how Davy wrote poetry, what ideas influenced these verses, and to what effect. My first survey examines the way in which I differ from historians and biographers of Davy who have used his poetry in their analyses. In my second survey, I provide an overview of science and literature scholarship in order to demonstrate that my thesis draws upon historicist and manuscript-based methodologies. The third survey is on studies of Davy and the interrelations between science and literature in the Romantic period, which have used a formalist and historicist approach. I explain that unlike my thesis, their focus is on single poems or parts of Davy's scientific career. After these three surveys, I explain how I have transcribed Davy's poetry in notebooks that contain most of his manuscript poems and fragmentary lines. I argue that his manuscript poetry can shed new light on the formation of Davy's views on the relationship between the mind and nature. I finally outline the aims of my thesis and give an overview of my chapters.

To date there has been no study of Davy's entire poetic oeuvre. The following sections demonstrate that critics such as Christopher Lawrence, Trevor Levere, Jan Golinski, and Sharon Ruston have explored Davy's science for Romantic ideals. I elaborate on their work by illustrating the ways in which his poems undergo shifts in his lifetime, and argue that his poetry is a nexus to understand the common cultural ideas of scientific and literary figures in the Romantic period. In different phases of his poetry, Davy reacts to and redeploys

---

<sup>6</sup> Although there are difficulties to define the exact nature of "Romanticism," I use the anachronistic term to indicate that I follow in the work of critics who have examined Romantic writing, which has a particular Romantic aesthetic, including Davy's, as responses to the historical context after the 1790s that is now termed the Romantic period (Lawrence; Levere, *Poetry* 20–35; Golinski, "Romantic"; Ruston, Introduction). My chapters on the different phases in Davy's poetry agree with the critical view that Romantic writing, such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*, was not a product of "a single unified movement" but of a period "marked by revolution and repression" (Ruston, *Creating* 3).

the work of contemporary poets, such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, and Charlotte Smith, as well as medical and scientific philosophies that he used in his career and influenced Romantic period writing. Despite these commonalities, I illustrate that Davy also differed from his literary contemporaries in his poetry and science with his belief in the power of the reasoned perspective of a natural philosopher.

### **Biographies of Davy**

My thesis is comparable to biographies of Davy such that I divide his poetry into sets of similar poems from specific pockets of time that span his lifetime. This organisation reflects my contention that there are distinct phases in Davy's manuscript and published poetry that align with changes in his life and career. In other words, I present these temporally defined groups of poems in relation to Davy's particular social, political, and cultural contexts. In the following survey of selected biographical scholarship on Davy, I explain that scholarly interest in Davy's poetry has tended to examine his poems to illuminate aspects of his life as a chemist. I also demonstrate the ways in which I differ from these critical studies by focussing on the literary and historical contexts of the poems.

Davy's life and career have invited a number of biographies and studies in which his poetry and friendships with poets are a source of interest. The first biography of Davy appeared in 1831 by the physician John Ayrton Paris, and included nine of Davy's poems. Five of these poems had already been published in the *Annual Anthology* in 1799 and 1800 suggesting that Paris may not have had access to Davy's personal notebooks, which contain most of his poetry.<sup>7</sup> While Paris published some of Davy's poetry and letters in his biography to highlight

---

<sup>7</sup> Paris also includes a version of Davy's poem on Spinozist philosophy, the poem written by Davy for John Tobin's prologue to his play and an unpublished poem on Fairhead (16–29, 84–6, 119–20, 134–5).

Davy's literary aesthetics and poetical output, John Davy was the first to transcribe and publish many poems and extracts of his brother's personal notes and journals in *Memoirs* in 1836.<sup>8</sup> Indeed all scholarship on Davy is indebted to his work. He incorporated Davy's manuscript and often undated and untitled poetry into the narrative to convey Davy's personal views and creativity, and *Memoirs* remains a chief source of Davy's poetry for scholars. Synthesising Davy's life into a narrative using his notebooks was a momentous achievement, yet as the manuscript section of my introduction will outline, there are some problems with John Davy's transcriptions. Moreover, he mainly publishes whole and titled poems, which are not closely analysed from a literary critical perspective. In some ways, the poems in Paris's and John Davy's biographies play an ornamental role revealing Davy's imaginative ways of describing his environment.

After John Davy's biography, Davy's poems were re-published in various anthologies in the decades after his death. For example, eleven of Davy's poems in *Memoirs* are published by Rufus Wilmot Griswold in *The Poets and Poetry of England in the Nineteenth Century* in 1846 (135–8). Griswold included the poetry of natural philosophers (alongside the work of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Walter Scott, John Keats and Southey), since, as his preface states, "though they did not all give a lyrical expression to thought and passion, they were nearly all poets" in their genius (5). However, Alice Jenkins has noted that Davy's poetry "has declined in reputation since the mid-nineteenth century" (133). Despite this, as I explain below, Davy's poetry has been used in later studies discussing his Romantic philosophies and social circles. These studies expanded on John Davy's

---

<sup>8</sup> *Memoirs* is abridged into a single volume for a nine volume *Collected Works* (hereafter *CW*) in 1839, which included Davy's scientific publications. John Davy then published *Fragmentary Remains, Literary and Scientific* (hereafter *FR*) in 1858 having received new material after the death of Davy's widow.

biography, which also described Davy's literary circles and published parts of letters sent to Davy from Coleridge (1: 391–4).

My thesis on Davy's poetry provides a nuanced view of his life, which can reveal the changes in his career and in his personal philosophies that influenced Romantic-period literature and science. Exploring the Romantic elements in Davy's career and writings, Lawrence found Davy's life to have five distinct phases, with the "Romantic connection" in Davy's life most prevalent during his time at the Pneumatic Institute at Bristol and in his last years travelling on the Continent (213). In Bristol in 1799, Davy first met and befriended Coleridge, spent time with Southey discussing politics, science, literature, and medicine, and published seven of his poems. Davy's "Romantic" phase, for Lawrence, returned in his last years. Convinced that he was about to die, Davy travelled the Continent, became friends with Lord Byron, and wrote two philosophical and semi-biographical works, *Salmonia*, published in 1828, and *Consolations in Travel* (hereafter *Consolations*) published posthumously in 1830, in which he reflects on his past. Lawrence does not undertake a close reading of Davy's poems, or make use of the great deal of poetry written by Davy in the three other phases of his life. In spite of this, I agree that are distinct phases to Davy's poetry, differentiated by Davy's use of poetic forms, imagery, and his philosophical concerns.

David Knight's and June Fullmer's biographical studies of Davy have informed my biographical understanding of his life in my thesis (Knight, *Humphry*; Fullmer, *Young*). While they focus on Davy's chemical work and his relation to the changing social role of science in the Romantic period, they also argue that Davy's philosophies and poetry remained an important part of his life. However, a close reading of these poems is also absent in their works. Fullmer's work, like Knight's,

presents Davy as a creative literary and scientific figure and concentrates on his natural philosophy and scientific work. Her study of Davy's early career provides useful details about his ambitions and his social circles in Cornwall, which led him to be at the centre of a radical and intellectual circle in Bristol.<sup>9</sup> Focussing in on Davy's childhood and his research in Bristol until 1800, she contextualised his poetry, letters, and writings published in *Memoirs* to illuminate his formative friendships. While my thesis applies this approach to the rest of Davy's life using his poetry and letters, I focus on the literary elements of Davy's poetry to demonstrate that it engages with and redeploys contemporary preoccupations in science and literature. For example, Chapter One and Three demonstrate that Wordsworth's second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* is an important comparative text to Davy's poems, particularly Wordsworth's "Lines" with the subtitle "Written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798" (hereafter "Tintern Abbey").<sup>10</sup> Davy read these poems having been requested by Wordsworth to proofread and see the second volume of this edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* through the Bristol press.<sup>11</sup> As I explain below, while in Bristol Davy also received many admiring comments on his poetry from his literary contemporaries, such as from Southey who published six of Davy's poems in his *Annual Anthology*.<sup>12</sup>

Fullmer's essay in 1960 on the "considerable body" of poetry by Davy has already provided an overview of a range of his poems on the natural world ("Poetry" 102).<sup>13</sup> As does my study, she showed the changes in his philosophies

<sup>9</sup> Her death in 2000 meant she could not fulfil her aim to write a full biography of Davy.

<sup>10</sup> *Lyrical Ballads* 1798 1: 201–10.

<sup>11</sup> See Wordsworth's letter to Davy on 28 July 1800 (*Early* 244–5). Despite Davy's remit to proofread the manuscript, Wordsworth was disappointed to find errors in the publication that required corrections. See the Cornell edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

<sup>12</sup> Chapters One and Two further examine these comments in the context of Davy's life in Bristol.

<sup>13</sup> Also see, Knight, "Humphry."

by using a chronological structure and grouping together similar poems. She argued that Davy's poems were first depersonalised depictions of the natural landscape infused with his own ambitions for fame (106). His final poems slowly came to be speculative introspections on the healing body and spirit as he suffered from a series of strokes (119). Despite establishing that his poems were written over a thirty-five year period and are widely scattered in notebooks, letters and manuscripts, Fullmer returned to the published texts, examining nineteen poems using John Davy's *Memoirs* and *Fragmentary Remains*, as well as Paris's biography on Davy. Moreover, she does not elaborate on the extent to which his verses are contingent on his scientific research and publications. While Fullmer's aim to provide an overview of Davy's poetry is similar to that of my thesis, my method and results are different. I use Davy's manuscript poems to locate the interrelations and disjunctions between Davy's poetry and science. For example, Fullmer argued that in Bristol Davy published and wrote verses that focused on pain and suffering but in a "Thomsonian tradition" that describes an "idealized natural world" ("Poetry" 105). Fullmer's allusion to James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726–1730) in Davy's poetry can be confirmed by scholarship on Thomson's poetry.<sup>14</sup> I instead explain that Davy's presentation of the sensuous body and his preoccupation with pain and suffering in his Bristol poetry can be traced to his work on the physiological effects of factitious airs that he described in his notebooks.

Given Davy's popularity among his contemporary Romantic poets, it is not surprising that Richard Holmes, a biographer of Romantic writers, undertook a recent and imaginative study of Davy's life, which analyses some of his poems.

---

<sup>14</sup> For more on Thomson's influence on Romantic writing, see Nicolson, *Newton*; and O'Conner, *Earth* 22.

Holmes's work on Davy is part of his popular group biography on the life and work of eminent natural philosophers in the Romantic period (*Age* 235–304, 237–434). Already a biographer of Coleridge, Holmes presents Davy as a passionate and romantic philosopher and writer. Davy's letters and poetry are incorporated into Holmes's narrative to illustrate the indebtedness of his scientific work to his literary aspirations and to his friendships with Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Byron. Holmes's presentation of Davy as an often amorous chemist and traveller is informed by his transcriptions of poems to Anna Beddoes and other women in his life (*Age* 278–81, 422).<sup>15</sup> Holmes also notes that in the poems we find Davy's pantheistic vision, the use of the Romantic symbol of the Aeolian harp, materialism, physiology, confessional outpourings and remarkable parallels with the writings of Romantic poets of the time, including Shelley's work.<sup>16</sup> I expand upon Holmes's analysis of Davy's poetry by examining this in the context of criticism of both Davy's scientific research and Romantic literature. This is to argue that Davy's poetry was influenced by where he worked, whom he met, and the way in which he communicated his research.

While these biographical works that comment on Davy's poetry have helpfully offered an overview of his career, also useful to my thesis are recent studies of Davy that tend to focus on two periods of his career: his work at the Pneumatic Institute in Bristol from 1799 and at the Royal Institution in London from 1801. Davy helped to forge the respective identities of these institutions with his medical research, experimental chemistry, lectures, and publications. For example, Mike Jay has analysed Davy's publications and personal writings in 1799 and public perception of the Pneumatic Institute in 1799 during the controversial trials on

---

<sup>15</sup> Maurice Hindle was the first to argue that Davy may have been in love with Anna, the young wife of Thomas Beddoes, after their meeting in Bristol in 1799 ("Nature").

<sup>16</sup> See *Age* 240–1, 243–4, 260, 268–9, 276, 300, 360, 378–9, 415–6 and 418.

nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas (Jay, *Atmosphere* 194–6; *Emperors* 25–38). In Golinski's work, and following the methods of constructivism, Davy's publications and lectures during his tenure at the Royal Institution present him as actively seeking to establish the authority of science through a careful construction of the claims and the practices of chemistry.<sup>17</sup> I use their findings in Chapter Three and Four to argue that, as in his publications and lectures, Davy carefully constructed specific personae in some of his poems written in these two periods.

Despite the biographies of Davy and the studies that have illuminated aspects of his career, there are certain stages in Davy's life that still need historical attention. Given that he wrote poetry his entire life, I consider Davy's poetical oeuvre to provide a nuanced overview of the shifts and consistencies in his philosophies, relationships, and beliefs. For example, Davy's poems can illuminate what little is known about his childhood in Cornwall. Biographers have noted that Davy's outlined programme of self-education in Cornwall in his notebooks may have formed his fascination with chemistry (Knight, *Humphry* 16–7; Fullmer, *Young* 34, 43). However, I reveal in Chapter One that his poetry written at Cornwall and published in Southey's *Annual Anthology* in 1799 and 1800 in Bristol illustrate how he engaged with and redeployed his independent reading of medical and literary texts, such as "Tintern Abbey" and David Hartley's theory of association. Davy's poetry during his first tour of the Continent from 1813 can also shed light on his preoccupation with the geologist's perspective of nature. In Chapter Five, I also argue that during his last few years suffering from a debilitating disease, Davy's poems hint at his unorthodox, Platonic view of the

---

<sup>17</sup> See *Science* 118–35; *Natural Knowledge* 93; "Sexual"; and "Experimental."

afterlife and his scepticism about Christian doctrine.<sup>18</sup> The fractured nature of some of his fragmentary verses suggests Davy's loss of confidence in the apparent power of natural laws as the source of intense excitement and comfort for the chemist. Overall, by drawing upon history of science, scholarship on Romantic poetry, and science and literature criticism, I demonstrate that Davy's poetry offers a unique corpus of evidence on the changes in his philosophical ideals and cultural preoccupations.

As such, I confirm and extend Golinski's most recent essay on Davy, which argues that he undertook a lifelong personal exploration of selfhood ("Experimental"). Golinski has explained that according to some of Davy's contemporaries, the chemist constructed a chameleon-like identity for social ascent from his provincial Cornish background, becoming a dazzling London lecturer. For Golinski, this was an "unfair" characterisation of a Davy who considered his sense of self and subjectivity in his letters and poetry (24). Like Golinski, I illustrate that in a lifetime's worth of manuscript poetry, Davy explored the self in terms of the mutability of the mind, which at times demonstrates his changing perspectives, such as his emphatic Platonic views in his final poetry. In some ways, I extend Andrea K. Henderson's challenge to the idea that one of the "defining features of Romantic writing" is Wordsworth's construction of a universal self that is a developing and psychologically deep entity (1). While Romantic poets such as Wordsworth reflect on the ambivalent aspects of the mind, Henderson has explored the historical context of Romantic canonical poetry and the competing models of identity, such as the science of obstetrics and French physiology, to present the multiplicity of discourse on selfhood. I offer the idea that Davy's

---

<sup>18</sup> Davy's trips through the Continent and his later years have been examined in Holmes, *Age* 352–4; Golinski, "Experimental" and Knight, *Humphry* 154–83.

conception of the mind of a natural philosopher in his poems is another competing model of identity in the Romantic period.<sup>19</sup> My following chapters on Davy's poetry will discuss the ways in which he redeploys concepts in Romantic literary writing and natural philosophy into poetic form to present his belief that by understanding the harmonies of nature one can understand the self. While his Romantic literary contemporaries are ambivalent on the workings of the mind, in his poetry, Davy is emphatic in his belief in its immortality.

### **Methodologies in Science and Literature**

Critics often point to Davy as a manifestation of Romantic interdisciplinarity, sometimes evoking the letters and comments of Romantic poets who befriended him and admired his poetry.<sup>20</sup> In her anthology of Romantic science and literature, Judith Hawley notes that Davy used "Romantic concepts of genius and organic unity" in his lectures to packed audiences in the Royal Institution lecture theatre, including Coleridge (xi). In her recent book on Romanticism, Ruston argues that Davy's engagement with the sublime reveals that Romantic concepts were "informed by [...] scientific material and knowledge" (*Creating* 3). My thesis expands on these critical works to demonstrate the ways that Davy brought together his knowledge of scientific and literary concepts in his poetry. Jonathan Smith has claimed that Davy explored the differences between science and poetry in his private notebooks, publications, and public lectures, and blurred these differences in his lectures and personal notes (78–82). However, Smith does not deal with the shifts in Davy's intellectual views and the way that Davy drew upon a particular social, political, and philosophical cultural milieu that fostered interdisciplinary ideas in the Romantic period. As I expand upon below, I follow the

---

<sup>19</sup> She extends the work of critics on Romantic writing and the sense of self such as "Wordsworth's conception of his poetic role" (Abrams, *Natural* 28). Also, see Siskin 29–53.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Goellnicht 11, and Ruston, *Creating* 176.

critical tradition in studies of Romantic science and literature that use manuscript material from both historical and formalist perspectives. In blending these methodologies, I argue that Davy's poetry was a response to cultural stimuli that also influenced Romantic literary writing.

Gillian Beer, Sally Shuttleworth and George Levine laid the foundations for studies of science and literature, and Beer's methodology in particular is useful to my thesis.<sup>21</sup> As David Amigoni states, Beer's work moved scholarship away from the view that the two cultures of science and literature were unable to "converse with one another" ("Darwinian" para. 2).<sup>22</sup> Beer proposed a new methodology that looked to the "chording of significance" between science and literature (Beer, "Translation" 187). Beer was interested in the "interchange" between scientific ideas and literary forms, stemming from her belief that all language is embedded in its history and culture (*Darwin's* 18, 78).<sup>23</sup> For Beer, a text cannot "preclude the reader's invocation of other knowledge," whether this is a scientific idea or literary aesthetics that can "lie latent in the [text's] terms and forms" ("Translation" 187). Indeed, as I discuss in Chapter One and Two, the Aeolian harp, a key concept in Davy's poetry, is a "latent" idea that may evoke in an early nineteenth-century reader a poet's or a physiologist's conception of the relationship between the body and the external world.

Beer has tended to focus on the interrelations between science and literature in the Victorian period during a time when science was battling against other

---

<sup>21</sup> See Levine, *Novelists*; Levine, *Darwin Loves You*; Beer, *Open Fields*; Beer, *Darwin's Plots*; Shuttleworth, *George*; and Shuttleworth, *Mind*.

<sup>22</sup> Science and literature as a discipline had been shaped by C.P. Snow's contention in 1959 that there was a mutually antagonistic relationship between the two cultures of science and literature (*Two Cultures*).

<sup>23</sup> Beer elaborates on the interchange of concepts between different texts in "Anxiety and Interchange."

intellectual modes of thinking.<sup>24</sup> Men of science, including T. H. Huxley, were demarcating their field by comparing and alluding to other ways of thinking such as theology. Similarly, in the early nineteenth century, Davy presented the role of chemistry as a powerful discipline for humanity. As I explain in Chapter Three and Four, in his lectures, Davy asserted the morality, utility, and pleasure of science for fashionable London audiences and the landed gentry. Conscious of the changing role of natural philosophy, Davy's poetry shows the shared contextual stimuli of literature and science. However, he also commented upon the disjunctions between these fields in his lectures. For example, Smith's examination of Davy's views on science and poetry in his publications and manuscripts concludes that Davy made it publicly clear he had chosen his vocation of science over poetry, yet still wanted "some measure of accommodation between them" (*Fact* 78). With this in mind, I also explain that despite the interaction of scientific and literary ideas in Davy's poetry, he remained emphatic in his powerful perspective as a natural philosopher.

Since Beer's seminal work, the critical landscape of science and literature has moved into a number of different avenues.<sup>25</sup> For example, in his comparison of geological texts to contemporary literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, Ralph O' Connor regards all writing including scientific writing as literature (*Earth* 393). Like O'Connor, I compare Davy's poetry to the aesthetic aspects of his science, regarding Davy's poetry as drawing upon images and concepts from his research and the literary texts accessible to him. Since my thesis is based upon a specific historical actor rather than a scientific discipline, also relevant to my thesis are new methodologies in the science and literature field that use the

---

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of Beer's, Levine's and Shuttleworth's methodologies and Victorian science see Dawson, "Literature" 312.

<sup>25</sup> See Levine, Introduction; Stefan Collini's introduction to C. P. Snow's *Two Cultures*; and Moran 134–64.

history of the book to elucidate how scientific practices and ideas were shaped by the act of reading. For example, Charlotte Sleigh in *Science and Literature* combines methods that pay attention to the metaphors in texts, cultural history, and the history of the book to argue that the form of the novel allowed for an interchange between science and literature. This approach is similar to Gowan Dawson's method of close reading of fiction and poetry, contextualised with the reading practices of historical actors ("Comparison" 15). His study is based on Beer's argument that the reading lists in Darwin's notebooks can demonstrate his knowledge of literary texts and that these influenced "the imaginative development of his ideas" (1). Dawson compares Richard Owen's reading habits in fiction to his science, and argues that a thorough knowledge of the material act of reading by the natural philosopher can shed new light on the interactions between literary and scientific fields in the period (9). My focus is not on Davy's scientific practice, but on his poetry. I look to his scientific knowledge, as demonstrated in his lectures and, where possible, his notes of his scientific reading habits, to reveal the "striking connections" between his poetry and his science (14).

Ruston has already demonstrated that one can usefully make connections between poetry and scientific notes. Her comparison between Shelley's poetry, his notes on Davy's 1814 published lectures *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry* and Davy's published texts, reveals that the fragmentary notes in a notebook can illuminate Shelley's extensive knowledge of science and offer a new reading of his canonical poetry (*Shelley* 96). Similarly, my thesis is based upon manuscript material and fragmentary pieces of writing to give a holistic view of Davy's cultural concerns. Like Beer, Dawson and Ruston I explore how manuscript material — in this instance Davy's poetry and scientific notes — can convey how an historical actor reshaped both his literary and scientific concepts of nature. My thesis is

governed by four dynamics surrounding and shaping each of Davy's poems: Davy's social circles, his lectures and research, his intellectual conception of the world as outlined in his reading, and the relationship of a single poem to the larger body of poems and manuscript versions. Indeed, as I explain below, Davy's manuscript poetry provides crucial insight into the development of his philosophical ideals in the Romantic period, including his own natural philosophy.

### **Davy and Romanticism**

My thesis contributes to the work of Romantic literature and science critics who, in light of the work of Beer and her contemporaries, have tended to analyse the relationship between the two fields of knowledge based upon an understanding of the historical context of texts and that draw upon a formalist reading of these.<sup>26</sup> The combination of a formalist and historicist approach in Romantic science and literature is central to my methodology since, as James Chandler has argued for literary culture in the Romantic period, Romantic writers were self-conscious of their cultural specificities (1–3). Most of Davy's extant poetry was written while he self-consciously fashioned the role of the natural philosopher as a moral and powerful figure who could control nature for the benefit of humankind. Thus, I view Davy's poems as careful formulations, which recognise his own cultural and historical role as part of, as William Hazlitt put it, *The Spirit of the Age*. In this publication in 1825, Hazlitt comments on the writings of figures in Davy's social circles such as William Godwin, Coleridge, Byron, and Southey. I argue that Davy's poetry responds to and redeploys the same cultural stimuli as these literary figures. As the first full-length study of Davy's published and manuscript poetry,

---

<sup>26</sup> Jerome McGann, Marjorie Levinson, Marilyn Butler, and James Chandler have argued for an "historical methodology" in Romantic literary studies (McGann, *Romantic* ix). For approaches that combine formalist readings of Romantic writing with a historical context, see Wolfson, *Formal*; and Rawes.

This thesis provides an overview of essays that have sought to connect his science and literary writings through both a historicist and formalist reading. I also explain how I position myself critically in relation to them.

Scholarship in the sub-discipline of Romantic science and literature, including studies of Davy's poetry, is part of the shift away from the view that literature and science in the Romantic period were disparate fields. As a proponent of the divide between the two fields of knowledge, M. H. Abrams stated in his influential but now outmoded work *The Mirror and the Lamp* that Romantic poets resisted the rationality of the Enlightenment and scientific ways of thinking. Focussing on moral and emotional symbolism in Romantic poetry and regarding Wordsworth as the "exemplary poet of the age" (*Natural* 14), Abrams found that to some writers "poetry and science are not only antithetic, but incompatible, and that if science is true, poetry must be false, or at any rate, trivial" (*Mirror* 299). In other words, poetry for Wordsworth gave significance to humankind's emotions and moral values, while science, which was "unemotional and objective," regarded poetry as inconsequential (299). However, Abram's view of the period was partly due to his focus on the aesthetic character of texts by Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Wordsworth. Scholarship since then has attached significance to the social circles of these Romantic poets and the intellectual parallels between these and a diverse set of writers, including Davy.

Indeed, historical approaches in Romantic studies, no longer focused on the poetry of the "big six," have shown that Romantic poetry engaged with the work of natural historians, botanists, chemists, and physicians. In Chapter One and Two, which discuss Davy's knowledge of eighteenth-century philosophies such as those of Hartley and John Locke, I draw from critics who characterise the Romantic period as a time when poets and novelists engaged with the politics

of scientific and medical ideas.<sup>27</sup> I also use studies that demonstrate the way in which Romantic British poetry actively adopted and redeployed contemporary ideas on the mind, such as brain science, psychology, physiognomy, and epistemologies of emotion.<sup>28</sup> In Chapter Four, I examine Davy's geology lectures in the context of the recent historical and aesthetic analysis of the similarities between geology and Romantic texts.<sup>29</sup> Like these critics, I locate the scientific and literary ideas accessible to Davy and compare these to his poetry. In doing so, I trace how ideas in science and literature interact and become redeployed in his poems. By further comparing Davy's manuscript poems, written throughout his lifetime, with his published work and lectures, I also reveal the changes in his intellectual perspectives on the natural world.

Some critical essays have explained the ways in which Davy drew upon the work of Romantic poets in his science. These studies of Davy and his friendships with Romantic poets are indebted to Roger Sharrock's essay that compared Davy's lectures with the "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads*. For example, Hindle and Knight have used Davy's letters and lectures to illuminate the "mutual influence" of Davy and literary Romanticism (Hindle, "Humphry" 16; Knight, "Poet"). Ruston has recently argued that Davy should have a more central role in the creation of Romanticism given his friendships with Romantic poets and the influence of his science on their writing (*Creating* 176). Where Ruston has focused on Davy's conception of the sublime in his poetry and scientific works, I explain below that my thesis expands upon the changes in Davy's adoption and redeployment of ideas in Romantic science and literature in his poetry, including the sublime, and the historical and textual context of his literary work (*Creating* 132–64). Although

---

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Goellnicht; de Almeida; Richards; Vickers, *Coleridge*; Lawlor; Allard; Noel Jackson, *Science*; Grinnell; and Ruston, *Creating*.

<sup>28</sup> See Pinch; Richardson, *Neural*; G. Rousseau, *Nervous*; Faubert; and Richardson, *British*.

<sup>29</sup> For example, see Jonathan Smith; Heringman, *Rocks*; and Wyatt, *Wordsworth*.

these critics have argued that Davy held a significant place in Romantic culture as a chemist who shaped the ideologies of his audiences through his science and who influenced the work of Romantic writers, none have analysed Davy's entire body of poetry for the way it influenced and was influenced by contemporary culture.<sup>30</sup>

In tracing the changes in Davy's poetry and philosophies, my thesis contributes to the work of scholars who have closely read his poems from a formalist and historical perspective. However, like Sharrock, these critics tend to focus on a particular poem or instance in Davy's life. Ted Underwood concentrates on Davy's poetry in Bristol to show that the earliest version of Davy's poem "The Life of the Spinosist" was a reflection of the eighteenth-century natural philosophy that influenced the research at the Pneumatic Institute (*Work* 67–71, 142–3, 203–4).<sup>31</sup> Underwood's other essay on Davy's fragmentary poetry illustrates the ways in which poems and his use of analogy in his science are comparable ("Skepticism"). He analyses the "little-noticed aspect" of the fragmentary nature of Davy's poems from his Bristol notebooks and those written from 1819 that were published by John Davy (95). Given that Underwood does not examine the large number of finished and titled poems in Davy's notebooks, his selection of only Davy's fragmentary poetry paradoxically reaffirms his view that Davy's poetry is uncertain since the poems never reach a conclusive end or have a defined poetic shape. I reveal that Davy reworks some of these fragmentary

---

<sup>30</sup> Laura Crouch has explained that Mary Shelley may well have drawn upon Davy's research and lectures in her portrayal of science and chemistry in *Frankenstein*. For Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter Kitson, the influence of Davy's work on Romantic poets is an example of the way in which literary Romanticism was partly a reaction to uncertainty about man's place in the world at a time when natural philosophers explored the unknown (*Literature* 30). Also, see Fulford, General 15–8, 25–6.

<sup>31</sup> I will hereafter call the poem "The Spinosist" since this is how Davy re-titled the poem in his notebook (13c 7).

lines and the many versions of his poems, illustrating that Davy was committed to forming complete poems with an individual identity.

While critics, such as Underwood and Alice Jenkins, have also focused on specific terms or tropes in Davy's poetry and science, my overview of Davy's entire poetical oeuvre discusses his nuanced use of such concepts.<sup>32</sup> For example, in Chapters One and Two I explore Davy's use of the sublime, which as Ruston has recently argued, offers evidence that Davy was alive to both scientific and literary conceptions of this important aesthetic in Romantic writing (*Creating* 132–74).<sup>33</sup> For Ruston, Davy's scientific and literary knowledge influenced and was influenced by Coleridge's conception of the sublime. I demonstrate that the sublime was a mutable concept to Davy, who uses three concepts of the experience. His published poetry illustrates that at times he presents the sublime in terms of Longinus's first-century conception of a rhetorical sublime, where the text is itself a reflection of sublime genius. I also explain that Davy uses the two aesthetic categories of the sublime and beautiful set out in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry* (1757), as well as Immanuel Kant's conception of the sublime in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790). While Ruston has carefully traced a Burkean and Kantian sublime in Davy's poetry, I explain that these different discourses on the sublime may not sit well together in his manuscript poems.

Examining Davy's published and manuscript poetry written across four decades from a historicist and formalist perspective offers an insight into the mutability of his philosophies. My historical reading of Davy's poetry illustrates his

---

<sup>32</sup> Alice Jenkins examines Davy's treatment of light in his poetry and his science, and compares these to published poems by his Romantic contemporaries.

<sup>33</sup> Critics before Ruston have tended to focus on "The Sons of Genius," one of Davy's first published poems to show that this Romantic concept was common in Davy's poetry. See Levere, "Humphry"; Lawrence 221; Schaffer, "Genius"; and Golinski, *Science* 135–188. Davy used the term genius in relation to Isaac Newton, which will be explored in Chapter One. For more on Newton and genius, see Fara, *Newton* 155–91; and Higgitt 6–9.

knowledge of the range of Romantic writing that occupies the diverse canon. By reading his poems closely, I also elucidate the ways in which Davy deployed different aspects of natural philosophy and literary ideas in his poetry. In these ways, my thesis presents his manuscript poetry as a useful insight into the interactions of scientific and literary ideas in the Romantic period.

### **Transcribing Davy's Manuscript Poems**

My analysis of Davy's manuscript poetry is based upon my textual criticism of my transcriptions of Davy's chaotic notes and poems in his notebooks. This methodological approach draws upon textual and manuscript criticism. Studies of manuscripts are fraught with practical and theoretical issues, such as transcription conventions, editing re-worked and draft poetry, authorial intention, deciding what constitutes a poem, and how to approach fragmentary poetry.<sup>34</sup> In what follows, I explain my method of transcribing and analysing Davy's fragmentary lines and different versions of whole poems through both historicist and formalist methods in order to elucidate the formation of Davy's philosophical ideals.<sup>35</sup>

In my study, I define a poem in Davy's manuscripts as a piece of verse that shows clear lineation and a completed poetical form, though it may also be untitled or messily written. I focus on the fuller, though often untitled, poems in my ensuing chapters, although my thesis also makes use of Davy's fragmentary lines. The fragments that are pertinent to my thesis often seem to be false starts or reworked verses that relate to or contrast with poems that are neat and found as a whole

---

<sup>34</sup> Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley provide a broad overview of recent scholarship on Romantic manuscript poetry, authorial intention, and historical context. Also, see Wimsatt and Beardsley; Wimsatt; Reiman, *Study*; and "Nineteenth-Century"; Schillingsburg; and Greetham. For Romantic scholarship on fragmentary poetry, see Bostetter; McFarland, *Romanticism*; McGann, *Critique* (54–8); Levinson, *Romantic* (5–14); Bradshaw, "Hedgehog," and Regier.

<sup>35</sup> Given the large amount of scientific notes in these manuscripts, further work could be done on the way in which Davy's science is explored and presented in his personal notebooks. My study does at times discuss Davy's personal notes on his scientific research in the context of his manuscript poetry.

elsewhere in the notebooks. At times, Davy's writing can be difficult to read, untidy and his poems are often re-worked. His notebooks also contain poems written in fair handwriting in ink, drafted lines and stanzas, and experimentation with scansion. I follow the "diplomatic style" of transcribing his poems in order to deliver a conservative transcription, and, as far as possible, to replicate the manuscript.<sup>36</sup> I represent the lineation of the verses, and include orthography, cancellations, and marginal notes.<sup>37</sup> For example, in the case of Davy's Cornwall poems, as discussed in Chapter One, many poems are re-worked at different times and show deletions, and changes in word choice and order. My transcription method contrasts with John Davy's editing style in his publication of his brother's poetry in *Memoirs*. John Davy transcribed many of Davy's neat and finished poems from the notebook, but often added punctuation, particularly commas at the end of a line, some added capitalisations, and erroneously transcribed words.<sup>38</sup> By transcribing and examining multiple versions of a single Davy poem, fragments, and grammatical inconsistencies may prove to be compelling evidence for understanding Davy's intentions in his composition of a final verse.

Romantic-period editing projects have provided a useful basis for my transcription conventions. They also reveal that there are diverse literary and textual views on the appropriate manner to approach re-worked poetry.<sup>39</sup> For example, Seamus Perry's transcription of Coleridge's notebooks keeps contracted

---

<sup>36</sup> G. T. Tanselle, a textual theorist, provides an overview of the varieties of scholarly editing in which he delineates two ways of reproducing a handwritten text: diplomatic and critical editing. The critical style allows for editorial conjecture where, in trying to deliver the text as part of a work, the editor is not just presenting the text of a document. Here the editor may incorporate alterations for the reader in light of the other texts in the author's hand (Tanselle 17).

<sup>37</sup> The Appendix to my thesis contains my transcriptions of Davy's manuscript poetry and a symbol key. This symbol key has been informed by Kathleen Coburn's transcriptions of Coleridge's notebooks (*Notebooks 1*: xlii).

<sup>38</sup> For example, see Chapter Four on Davy's poetry in notebook 14i. John Davy's handwriting is noticeable in notebook 14i on Michael Faraday's copies of eight Davy poems on European natural landscapes, including "Fontainebleau Dec 29<sup>th</sup>" and "Mont Blanc" (1–2).

<sup>39</sup> For more on the transcription conventions of scholars using Romantic manuscript material see Coburn; Reiman and Fraistat; and Perry.

forms used by the poet, yet does not record deletions to produce a text with “few obstacles” for those studying Coleridge’s poetry (Perry xix). However, other Romantic manuscript projects have viewed the deletion as an important site in which to locate and illuminate the poetical process.<sup>40</sup> Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest’s publication of Shelley’s poetry, including manuscripts, noted the uncertainty in working with what may at first seem to be the “irredeemable chaos” of fragmentary and incomplete pieces of verse (xii). They chose to include the “chaotic” first drafts by Shelley that are untitled, and include the deletions, capitalisation and surrounding notes (xxviii). As such, they can trace the changes in his poetry to illuminate the shifts in his literary ideas and philosophies.

Like Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, I “reveal the harmonies (and dissonances)” between poems and fragments by keeping deletions to reveal the changes in Davy’s literary aesthetics (xix). One of the difficulties in working with manuscript poetry is that for some critics “the concept of author’s intentions” is not “clear and unambiguous” – it is not fully reachable (Hunter 60).<sup>41</sup> I argue that Davy’s fragmentary poetry has an unstable but significant relationship to his complete poems. My method draws upon Kelvin Everest’s comparative reading of Shelley’s manuscript versions of “Ozymandias” and its first publication. In Everest’s reading, Shelley’s actions of reworking and publishing a poem were analysed for their imaginative and cultural significances. In this way, I view changes and enduring elements in Davy’s manuscript poetry to have an aesthetic and cultural significance.

In locating and transcribing the different versions of a poem, my thesis considers each of these versions, with or without revisions, as discrete poems

---

<sup>40</sup> For example, see Kelvin Everest’s reading of Shelley’s manuscript and published version of “Ozymandias”; and Goslee 167.

<sup>41</sup> See McGann, *Textual*, 55–8.

engendered with their own meaning and context. In his examination of the textual instability of Coleridge's poems, Jack Stillinger argued that a textual history of Coleridge's work could give a more nuanced reading of the multiple versions of his poems and his method of authorship. Stillinger took into account how the poet composed, why he may have revised, and what constitutes a version, to demonstrate that Coleridge never established a final version of a poem. Following Stillinger's argument, each of Davy's versions of a poem could be analysed according to the context in which it is composed, where every draft is itself a final text.<sup>42</sup> For example, versions of Davy's drafts of an epic on Moses, begun in notebook 13c in 1799, also appear in a notebook used from 1827 (14e 65–57). The epic poem is presumably never published, although it is always possible that there are unrecovered published versions of his poems. As I explain in Chapter Two and Five, it is apparent that Davy recalls and ruminates on the poem decades later but with different concerns in mind. Transcribing his reworked poems and the different versions of a poem can provide insights into how Davy appropriated and reformed literary and scientific ideals in his manuscript notebooks.

By paying attention to his revisions and the different versions of his poems, I demonstrate that Davy experimented with a “performative” poetical identity, to borrow Jacqueline Labbe's term (“Revisiting” 24). I show that Davy's poems are “performative” since they present a speaker who is determined by the view that one can find a real relationship between the mind and the natural world. My

---

<sup>42</sup> In contrast to this pluralistic account, textual and literary critics have asserted that a single draft can be the most authoritative version of the poet's writing process. For those who support textual “primitivism,” such as Stephan Parrish, one of the editors of Cornell editions of Wordsworth's works including *The Prelude*, the earliest manuscripts represent the earliest, freshest, and most authentic original intentions (Stillinger 120; Hunter 79). The last version, on the other hand, may show the most authorial influence and control which, for Stephan Parrish, brings to mind a Whiggish interpretation of literature (Parrish). In contrast, Zachary Leader argues that poetry undergoes a cumulative process and there is a “creative completion or birth” as the work goes through the printing process (142–3).

analysis of Davy's experimentation with this poetical persona follows Zachary Leader's argument that for Wordsworth revisions were an attempt to establish personal identity over time (5). In the same vein, Davy's manuscript poems can reveal his exploration of the relationship between eternal nature and the malleable mind. The reworked and different versions of Davy's poetry, analysed in the context of his different research and environments, illustrate how his poems are careful constructions of subjectivity that are also influenced by his ideas on the natural world as a chemist.

### **Davy's Notebooks**

In looking at the shifts in form and imagery in Davy's poetic oeuvre, my thesis depends on an analysis of Davy's notebooks that contain most of these poems. In what follows, I explain my chronological organisation of the notebooks, which in turn informs the organisation of my chapters. Davy's poems range from long but unfinished pieces of verse to small, fragmentary, and difficult to transcribe lines. The notebooks also contain whole poems that are neat and titled, at times dated by Davy, or even poems written out by another, such as Davy's assistant Michael Faraday. Davy's poetry is a persistent feature in his generally disorganised notebooks and there is little propensity by Davy to divide a notebook between poetical works, philosophical musings and scientific notes. John Davy remarked that his brother's notebooks were:

hastily written, and irregularly kept, designed for no eye but his own, they are very characteristic of him and of the pursuits in which he was engaged at the time they were kept. (1: 363)

Davy's notebooks are mainly leather bound pocketbooks, presumably bought so that he could carry them on his person and record his "pursuits" such as during his trips through the Continent after 1813. This makes them a jumble of thoughts,

drafts of ideas for publication, and poems. In one instance in notebook 13c, scientific notes are intersected three times by a draft letter, two illegible lines, four lines of poetry on “Anna” and an arithmetical calculation (116–5, 113, 111). Davy also turned his notebooks over to use the end of the notebook as another beginning.

In order to investigate the nuances within Davy’s poetry, this study has involved transcribing, analysing, and selecting manuscript and published poems from his entire poetic oeuvre. While I am aware that I analyse only a selection of Davy’s poetic oeuvre, I have read all of Davy’s manuscript poems and selected certain verses for close examination in order to provide some insight into Davy’s philosophical and literary aesthetics at particular phases in his life. The Appendix to my thesis provides a transcription of the poems that I closely examine in my chapters. I also contextualise the notebooks in each chapter, since dating each manuscript poem depends on an analysis of the writings that surround it in the notebook and establishing how such notes correspond with Davy’s life. I focus on Davy’s poetry in his notebooks, rather than his letters, since I can provide a careful evaluation of when Davy wrote these undated poems and the ways in which they relate to their textual context. In contrast to the few poems that he shared with friends in his extant letters, the quantity of Davy’s manuscript poems can reveal the changes in his personal philosophies as well as his commitment to writing poetry his entire life.

Dating Davy’s poems can be a difficult task. As Kathleen Coburn stated in her transcription of Coleridge’s notebooks, an analysis of personal notebooks needs to allow the page sequence to be a “natural basis for chronology,” with the understanding that there will be retrospective entries that are difficult to date, and that such dates must be determined with evidence from external sources (xxiv).

For example, handwriting, the colour of the ink, or the depth of the pencil mark can give evidence where an entry is retrospectively written over a text. To date a poem by Davy, I seek individual instances of writing where Davy had noted the date, or by matching the subject of the notes to Davy's various chemical research that were carefully recorded and dated in his publications.<sup>43</sup> For instance, though notebook 13c has no clear date from which it was used, it contains chemical notes from his research on nitrous oxide in April 1799, and a poem titled "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" dated the same year (4, 45). In looking at the paratext of the poem and Davy's biography, I can presume that the poem was written in or after April. This relies on knowledge of Davy's preoccupations, career, and reading habits, so that an interpretation of the text is always contingent on the context.

Similar to Coburn's approach to Coleridge's notebooks, I have found "natural break[s]" in Davy's notebooks and divided his poetry according to when there is a noticeable aesthetic or contextual change in his verse (xxi). As mentioned above, useful to my thesis is Coburn's method in her transcriptions of Coleridge's notebooks. Davy's and Coleridge's notebooks are similar in the way in which they contain an array of personal notes on various disciplines and fragmentary poetry. Coleridge also filled his books, presumably in light of the paper shortage during the Napoleonic Wars (Coburn xxiii). This may be why Davy, like Coleridge, turned over his notebooks and used them from another end to start a new series of notes. My method of dividing Davy's notebooks is similar to Coburn's: in her first volume of transcriptions of Coleridge's notebooks, she covers 1794 to 1804 when

---

<sup>43</sup> For instance, notebook 12 has a clasp with the engraving "J.G.C to H.D." and contains a miscellany of poems, sketches, and experimental notes on elements, such as potassium, iodine, fluorine and chlorine by Davy and his amanuensis Michael Faraday. John George Children, a chemist and close friend of Davy's, must have gifted this notebook to Davy before his first trip to France; the notes on potassium must be from his experiments in 1813 and versions of Davy's poems on European natural scenes are dated to have been written in 1814 (270–2). These are in Faraday's hand, presumably while they were on the Continent, but it is unlikely that anyone can tell exactly when Faraday wrote these poems in Davy's notebook.

Coleridge spent his last days in Grasmere alongside Wordsworth, as this marked a shift in Coleridge's thinking and context (xxi). Likewise, as Chapter Four explains, Davy's series of poems on the natural landscapes of Europe in 1814 are contextually and aesthetically different from his series of poems on the loss of health written at the Baths of Lucca in 1819. I place Davy's notebooks into five loosely chronological periods: poems written on Cornwall (1795–1800); in Bristol (1799–1801); in London (1801–1812); during his early trips to the Continent (1812–1819); and his final poetry (1824–1829). Such a division depends upon my argument that there are clear shifts that take place in his poems corresponding to each phase of Davy's life, knowledge, and changing social circles.

### **Aims of the Thesis**

To reiterate the aims of my thesis, I attempt to tie together Davy's understanding of scientific, medical and literary concepts by showing how these were brought together in a lifetime's worth of manuscript poetry. As such, I aim to extend knowledge on both Davy and the intellectual milieu of Romantic culture to which he contributed. Responding to work on Davy as a chemist, I have transcribed and examined a range of his poetry to demonstrate the mutability of his career and his understanding and appreciation of different aspects of scientific, medical, literary, and philosophical concepts across his lifetime. Given the dearth of an integrated perspective on Davy's entire poetical oeuvre and his career, I stress the interrelatedness of ideas between Davy's knowledge of scientific, medical, and literary concepts, and their influence on each other in the Romantic period. While Davy is remembered as a chemist who wrote poetry, my approach is to broaden awareness of Davy as a writer and examine his poetry as a product of Romantic culture.

My examination of Davy's poetry is guided by two interrelated questions: what and why did he write, and how was this important to his career and his position in the broader cultural milieu of the Romantic period? These questions can be initially addressed here using two contemporaneous publications by Davy and by Coleridge. In regards to the first question, by reading Davy's poetry closely I show that Davy may well have felt equipped as both a chemist and poet to reflect on the "Parallels between Art and Science" in his short, published, but anonymous essay in 1807. Although this essay implied that natural philosophy was a "more durable" pleasure than music, painting or poetry, the conclusion eloquently captures why Davy wrote poetry: "Nature cannot decay: the language of her interpreters will be the same in all times" (197). The words of a poet are "mutable and fleeting" while "philosophical discoveries" are "durable" (197). His implication was that the "interpreters" were natural philosophers who could transcend languages and generations to describe the wisdom that underlies the natural world. Despite his emphasis on the role of natural philosophy, Davy's conception of nature as eternal and open to the ascription of different meanings illuminates both his science and poetry, and explains why he wrote manuscript poems. His scientific research with nitrous oxide, the voltaic pile, and the invention of the miners' safety lamp all gave him the fame he had yearned for from the age of sixteen. As evident from his lectures and publications, this work revealed to him that nature could eternally arouse wonder and awe. Similarly, when reflecting on the natural landscape in a lifetime's worth of poetry, Davy could create a model of an eternal and dynamic natural world that can reveal eternal laws. This philosophy in his poetry provides a framework through which he could explore his hopes, personal relationships, Platonism, faith in natural philosophy, and the realisation of his own mortality. While the chemist sought to claim knowledge as eternal, his

poetry reveals that his own knowledge was mutable and ever changing throughout his life.

In addressing the second question on the importance of Davy's poetry in his career and in relation to Romantic culture, my thesis presents his manuscript poems in groups and compares these to Davy's scientific research, notes, lectures, as well as to his knowledge of the writings that influenced his literary contemporaries. This is to demonstrate the extent of the interdisciplinarity in Davy's poetry. I have already explained above the ways in which Davy's poetry can be organised into groups that hold both differences and similarities, and that these can give a more nuanced view of Davy's personal philosophies and his diverse career. His poetry also contributes to a deeper understanding of the currency of scientific ideas and sociability amongst Romantic literary writers.<sup>44</sup> As frequent studies of Davy's science have made clear, and as is explained in my previous sections, Davy wrote in a time before disciplines existed and when literature and natural philosophy were part of the same culture. Exploring this view of Romantic culture, scholars have proposed that such interdisciplinarity was evident in Coleridge's statement in his 1817 poetry collection *Sibylline Leaves* that Davy was:

a man who would have established himself in the first rank of England's living poets, if the Genius of our country had not decreed that he should rather be the first in the rank of its philosophers and scientific benefactors. (90)

Trevor Levere uses this comment to show Davy's relationships with poets and natural philosophers alike and their views on his imaginative lecturing style (Levere, *Chemists* 456). For Maurice Hindle, the comment is more "suggestive of [Coleridge's] regard for the man, than for his [poetry]" ("Humphry" 16). Davy had impressed Coleridge when they met in Bristol in 1799, yet by 1812, Coleridge

---

<sup>44</sup> See Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite for more on Romantic sociability.

had grown hostile to Davy's electrochemistry that suggested "Atomist" ideas (qtd in Levere, *Poetry* 35). As Levere has explained, this reveals the changes in Coleridge's own metaphysics given Davy did not accept John Dalton's theory of chemical atoms (35). Perhaps persuaded by Davy or others that he was not a corpuscular materialist, I propose that Coleridge's admiring comment in *Sibylline Leaves* does not offer a division between Davy as a poet and natural philosopher. For Coleridge, Davy was a "Genius" because he could establish his intense relationship with nature in his poetry, but more powerfully in his science.<sup>45</sup>

My thesis on Davy's poetry also demonstrates to some extent the sociability of Romantic literary and scientific figures. It has yet to be noted that Coleridge's comment on Davy followed the poet's description of a dinner party where "men of celebrity in science" and of "polite literature" had "collected round the same table" and discussed an anonymous poem (89). Coleridge claimed that Davy recognised but did not reveal in the discussion that Coleridge was in fact the writer of these verses. In this way, the poet illustrated that Davy was part of social circles that included both literary and scientific figures, and that Davy was highly regarded, at least by Coleridge, for his knowledge of contemporary literature. I demonstrate that Davy blended the two fields of literary and scientific knowledge in his poetry, making it a product of the interdisciplinary ideas and sociability of literary figures of the Romantic period. As my first and second chapters will explain, Davy's literary social circle, which included Southey and Coleridge, read his poetry and commented on this in their letters and notes.<sup>46</sup> Davy's manuscript poetry is often

---

<sup>45</sup> In 1812 Coleridge also wrote in an essay in *The Friend* that in Davy's chemistry "we find poetry, as it were, substantiated and realized in nature" (1: 470–1). See Levere, *Poetry* for the way in which the poet imagined science and poetry to have unifying ideas (176–7).

<sup>46</sup> For example, the Scottish writer John Gibson Lockhart commented on Davy's poem on Spinosism in his memoirs on Walter Scott, Jane Davy's distant cousin and friend to Davy. He stated:

grammatically awkward, difficult to follow, or philosophically simple in his regard for the perspective of a reasoned mind. Indeed, in a letter to friend John Rickman on 21 May 1811, Southey described Davy's handwriting as unintelligible (*SL* 1926). Despite Davy's difficult handwriting and often-awkward use of grammar, I have transcribed his poetry in order to trace the ways in which Romantic writers admired his verses and how Davy emulated his friends' work in his poetry. However, Chapter Three and Four will also show that as his meteoric career progressed, Davy turned to creating a public image of science using rhetorical devices that, at times, contrasted science with the more "fleeting" words of poetry and his youthful past ("Parallels" 197). His poetry in this period differed from his literary contemporaries and became an extension of his views on the powerful perspective of a natural philosopher. Thus, I also recover the differences between his poetry and the literary Romantic writing that Davy read and commented upon. Focussing on Davy's poetry, I reveal the variety of Davy's literary work, career, and his own response to the ideas that influenced both Romantic science and literature.

### **Thesis Structure**

As a teenager, Davy regarded the sublime in nature as a means to transcend the limits of the material world and to possess immortal reason. In the first chapter, I consider the ways in which Davy expresses his youthful ambitions in his poetry on Cornwall's seascapes through a nexus of literary and medical ideas, presenting himself as a knowledgeable natural philosopher to whom his home county represents the past. Davy explores the aesthetics of the sublime and beautiful, the image of the Aeolian harp, and Hartley's medical theory of association and

---

for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? (Lockhart 6: 245).

irritability to reveal the inspirational and intense relationship between nature's forces, the physical body, and the mind. I begin by tracing the differences between Davy's versions of "The Sons of Genius" and explain that these ideas are explored later in his other published poems. From these manuscript versions, it is apparent that Davy's ideas for his published poems stem from the same depiction of the natural landscape. The chapter moves on to explain Davy's part of the "coterie aesthetic" of the *Annual Anthology* and their interest with regional Romanticism as epitomised by Cornish historian and poet Richard Polwhele and Davy (S. Curran, "Mothers" 577). I then examine three of Davy's published poems, which use Cornwall, the ode, and an embodied sublime to suggest that natural philosophy offers passage to a higher ground towards natural genius. Publishing some of these after he moved to Bristol, a comparison between his notes on medico-scientific ideas, his published research and his poems reveals that Davy could bring together the influences of his friendships with Romantic writers such as Coleridge, literary representations of Cornwall in the late eighteenth century, and his medico-scientific research in verse form. I finally explain that in his published poetry the Longinian, Burkean and Kantian conceptions of the sublime enable him to organise his youthful energies and his understanding of nature's forces. In this way, Davy publicly demonstrates his belief that reason can be stimulated by the intense relationship between nature's forces, the body, and the mind.

The second chapter turns to Davy's first research position at the Pneumatic Institute in Bristol with the radical doctor Thomas Beddoes, where Davy chemically analysed and produced factitious airs with the hope to find cures for respiratory diseases. Through Beddoes, Davy was introduced to a group of radical writers including Coleridge and Southey. I present the way that Davy's poetry can be read in the context of his physiological work at Bristol. His self-consciousness of the

physical experiences of the body during moments of pleasure and pain results in a set of poems that are uncertain of the way in which Davy could conceive of the sublime as both transcendent and experienced within the body. The influence of his friendships with Romantic writers and his own research on the body in terms of a Brunonian system in relation to the sublime are remarkably apparent in Davy's diverse poems composed in this period. I begin by examining a poem by Polwhele on the nitrous oxide trials to reveal the political and social context of Davy's research. I then analyse Davy's short poem "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" in the context of Davy's knowledge of Hartleian and Lockean theories on the body and the mind, as well as the Longinian rhetorical sublime. I then show that his longer poem, "The Spinosist" also reasserts Davy's ideas on the intimate relationship between physiology, psychology and the external world, yet does not offer a consistent concept of the sublime. His stanzas for an epic titled "Moses" signify the way in which Davy, inspired by Southey, attempted an epic. In these fragments, Davy is still conscious of the physical experience of the body, yet commits to a Kantian conception of the sublime.

After becoming a public chemist at the Royal Institution in London from 1801, Davy's popular lectures were characterised by his confident outlining of the powerful work of the natural philosopher and the application of chemistry as a means to human progress. In contrast, Davy's poems vary between nostalgia, woefulness, or sudden objectivity as he reflects on his friendship with Anna, wife of Thomas Beddoes. Chapter Three examines Davy's use of the lyric form in his poems on Anna. I first establish that there are striking similarities between the lyric and the way in which Davy constructed a particular identity in his lectures at the Royal Institution from 1801 and at the Royal Society in London. As such, it is clear that in this period the lyric was another means for him to examine and fashion the

self, using his emotional connection to the figure of “Anna.” I compare these poems to Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” already emulated by Davy in his Cornwall poems, and Wordsworth’s group of Lucy poems.

After his retirement from his lectureship at the Royal Institution, Davy undertook three tours of the Continent, during which he composed a number of poems. Chapter Four considers Davy’s lectures on geology and his poetry during his first trip and second trips on the Continent from 1813. As a traveller and independent chemist, his poems in 1814 are remarkably impersonal, using the natural world and the sublime as evidence that a natural philosopher can locate the geological patterns that underpin nature. I focus on two of his Continental poems, which describe the natural phenomena of a landscape and the natural philosopher’s ability to understand these laws. For example, Davy’s “Mont Blanc” poem deploys his method of analogy as outlined in his chemical lectures: the sublime mountain can encourage reason and a transcendent understanding of nature. His poetry during his second tour, in which he ponders on the physical decay of human life, is less confident in form and imagery. Davy’s poems are remarkably similar to his earlier poetry on Cornwall and to the poems written in Bristol. The melancholic and ethereal poems vary in form, suggesting his uncertainty when channelling his energies inwards to reflect on his own physiology and mind.

In Chapter Five, I focus on poems from one of Davy’s notebooks, partly a journal of his penultimate trip through the Continent in 1827 where he tried to recover from a debilitating disease. I argue that Davy gathers his past assertive poems next to hesitant poetry on the possibility of an afterlife in a single notebook as a final act to see his poems in a group or as a collection. Conveying his Platonic view of the afterlife and his scepticism of Christian doctrine, Davy’s

poems ultimately become personal and hesitant forms of writing through which he can locate the various forces that underlie all life. His final poems ruminate on the value of memory, tempered by the feeling of the inevitability of death. I suggest that the fragmentary form reflects his consciousness of the ambiguity of the mind and body's perception of the world, and his own mortality. In light of such uncertainty, Davy uses his notebook to reflect on his past and produce poetry on the meaning of life.

As Reiman and Fraistat have attempted for Shelley's writings, I locate the way in which Davy's "abandoned forays" into the epic, sublime, radicalism, satire, and love in his poems can compare to his published literary and scientific writings (xxi). Like these critics, I argue that Davy's published and manuscript poetry can give a better understanding of the shifts in his literary and philosophical ideals in his lifetime. Moreover, in a wider context his poetry can be a "telling access to its own cultural moment" (xxi). His poems can reveal, to use Beer's phrase, the "chording of significance" between scientific ideas and literary culture in the Romantic period ("Translation" 187). In other words, Davy's poetry can bring to light the rich and interdisciplinary ideas that shaped his conception of the natural world and the writings that define the Romantic period.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE *ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY* POEMS

Davy's six poems in the *Annual Anthology* in 1799 and 1800 are a rare instance where the chemist published a collection of verses.<sup>47</sup> This chapter focuses on the way in which Davy presents himself to the editors, contributors, and readers of the anthology. I argue that Davy's first published poems contain a nexus of physiological, chemical, philosophical, and literary ideas, connected by the belief that a natural scene can be a site of physical exhilaration and intellectual transcendence. Like Wordsworth, Davy presents the aesthetics of the beautiful and the sublime in nature as the "workings of one mind" (Wordsworth, *Prelude: 1799* 6.568). While Wordsworth and Coleridge saw these "workings" of natural laws as signs of divinity in nature, Davy's poems written in or about Cornwall offer the idea that by understanding these natural laws one can gain sublime transcendence and a state of unity between man and the external world. Davy interweaves his medico-scientific interests into his descriptions of the Cornish seascape near his childhood home to make his case for the power of natural philosophy.

Some of Davy's finished, yet untitled and unpublished poems from his time in Cornwall have already been examined by scholars in order to trace his early biography. For example, the poem with the first line "My eye is wet with tears" in notebook 13c, according to Holmes, describes Davy's mournful feelings on the death of his father (139–6; Holmes, *Age* 240–1). Here I focus on four of Davy's

---

<sup>47</sup> The four poems closely examined in this chapter are "The Sons of Genius," "Lines," which has the subtitle "Descriptive of feelings produced by a visit to the place where the first nineteen years of my life were spent, on a stormy day, after an absence of thirteen months," "Extract from an unfinished poem upon Mount's Bay," and "Ode to St. Michael's Mount" (*AA* 1: 93–9; 2: 293–6; 1: 281–6; and 1:172–6). These are called hereafter "Sons of Genius," "Lines Descriptive of feelings," "Ode to St. Michael's Mount" and "Extract from an unfinished poem." The two other published poems in the *Annual Anthology* are "The Song of Pleasure" and "The Tempest," which are alluded to in my analyses (1: 120–5; 179–80).

published poems and, using four case studies, examine the ways in which he presents Cornwall as a site of transcendence and as a bygone phase in his life. My first study compares two fragmentary manuscript versions of the poem “Sons of Genius,” which diverge in content and imagery, and the 1799 published version. In doing so, I argue that Davy’s Cornwall poems are similar in origin. These two manuscript versions hint at the ideas in his other poems that Cornwall is a historical site and reminder of the past, and that the medico-scientific philosophy of irritability can emphasise the power of the natural world. These two ideas are the focus of my next two case studies. In the final study, I explore the way in which Davy deploys the aesthetic of the sublime to construct a particular image of himself as a natural philosopher inspired and exhilarated by the natural world. My analysis of published versions of these poems makes use of manuscript versions to add to my argument that the poems can be read as a collection and in light of Davy’s scientific research.<sup>48</sup>

### **1.1 Natural Philosophy and the Sublime in “Sons of Genius”**

The poem “Sons of Genius” is the first example of my thesis with which I argue that Davy wrote distinct bodies of poetry in different phases of his life. In comparing the two fragmentary versions to the published version, we find that the poem diverges into three different ideas: the abstract, Cornwall, and irritability. Davy elaborates on these ideas in his published poems “Sons of Genius,” “Ode to St Michael’s Mount” and “Lines Descriptive of feelings” respectively.<sup>49</sup> As such, “Sons of Genius” can point to the common elements in Davy’s first published

---

<sup>48</sup> Manuscript versions of the published poems are in notebook 13f, 13d, and 13h. Each section will discuss these notebooks in relation to the analysed poems.

<sup>49</sup> In notebook 13h, Davy neatly writes out poems, some of which are published in the *Annual Anthology* (13h 76–64). Here there is a longer version of “Sons of Genius” with stanzas that are later reordered or taken out for the published version (70–64). The pages that presumably contain the first seven of the thirty-four stanzas have been torn out. Although it is not clear if the notebook was used when Davy was in Cornwall, he writes in the notebook while at Bristol since it contains notes on mixtures of gases (31).

poems. Here I focus on “Sons of Genius” to explain that Davy uses the literary aesthetics of the Longinian sublime to make the case for the power of natural philosophy. Although critics have suggested that “Sons of Genius” characterises Davy’s poetry and science, more close reading can elaborate on the way in which the poem brings together literary and natural philosophical ideas.<sup>50</sup>

“Sons of Genius” is a lengthy poem of thirty-two quatrains of largely iambic pentameters, a metrical scheme often used by Davy, on the abilities and immortality of those with genius. In form, the poem parallels Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” a poem published in 1751 that Coleridge and Wordsworth deliberately experimented with and reconfigured in the *Lyrical Ballads*.<sup>51</sup> Gray’s poem follows in the tradition of the elegy as a classical Greek and Roman form that addressed topics for mourning or consolation. Gray, however, focuses on the frailty of the human condition using a structure that, as Onno Oerlemans puts it, “makes formal demands that a life be remembered and evaluated according to numerous conventions that define and determine a life’s *meaning*” (63–4). Differing from Gray, “Sons of Genius” outlines Davy’s vision of natural philosophy as sublime. Overall, the poem claims that the forces of motion in the landscape invite the speaker’s reflection on two possible ways of interpreting this power — with superstition or with reason. Those with reason are “Sons of Genius” who are sublimely elevated when reflecting on the forces that underlie

---

<sup>50</sup> Knight claims that the “Sons of Genius” poem showed Davy’s awareness of “Romantic” ideas since it is full of references to the sublime and beautiful, and views nature as a means to understand the human mind (*Humphry* 19). Ruston has recently argued that Davy’s use of the sublime conveys the interaction between his science and poetry (*Creating* 132–74). I further explore scholarly interpretations of “Sons of Genius” later in my chapter.

<sup>51</sup> The poem was first published in 1751 with the title *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Churchyard* and again in 1753 in a collected edition of poems with the title “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (28–36).

nature.<sup>52</sup> Despite their physical mortality, their sublime transcendence and legacy means that, like the natural forms that the speaker sees, the memory of them will endure. I will later explain that Davy's poem is both an ode and elegy to such "Sons."

Though titled to suggest that the "Sons" are the focus of Davy's attention, the poem largely concentrates on the powers that underlie and animate the scene. The poem begins with a description of moonlight reflecting off sea waves. In contrast, the "poor shepherd," with superstition, imagines "Elfins" and "Sprites" amongst the landscape (13–6). Davy disrupts the highly structured lines of iambic pentameters with an additional syllable when the shepherd "Surveys the darkening scene with fearful eye" (14). His trepidation disturbs the harmony of the poem when portraying how the shepherd, a key component in pastoral literature, has a flawed reaction to nature. In contrast, Davy claims that the natural philosopher welcomes the night. Davy repeats the idea that Genius "loves" the night time, with its "silent hours" and "stillness," because the "animating" mind can work undisturbed (21–2, 27). While the untaught fear nature, the philosopher can take refuge in this setting. Nature is better suited to the deeper understanding of the philosopher. Contrasting the turbulent images of nature, Davy also explains that "By science calm'd" the philosopher's knowledge can "extend her soft controul" (89, 91). Knowledge can bring peace, and encourage mastery over fear and uncertainty. This scholarly refuge is perhaps a reference to the surrounding political climate, where Britain's war with France is represented by images of violent natural phenomena. An escape "From these pursuits" suggests that the scientific mind extends beyond transitory events such as war (85).

---

<sup>52</sup> See Golinski, "Literature" for his discussion on the use of the sublime in scientific discourse as a means to "discriminate between a discerning apprehension of the power of natural phenomena and a merely irrational [...] fear of them" (534).

For the “Sons of Genius,” the landscape is more than just a means of escape; nature belongs to them. Davy repeatedly uses the possessive pronouns “Theirs” and “For them” in how the “charms of Nature” exhibit their characteristics (38, 41–9). The descriptions that the “moon-beam shines” and the “chrysal flood” glides “for them,” and not “in vain,” convey how natural philosophers regard nature as beautiful and elemental, yet acting within reason (49, 52). This level of understanding leads “man to rise” above “Superstition,” suggesting that a deeper relationship to nature through scholarly pursuits can elevate the moral and inner consciousness (17–8). In the poem’s final stanzas, the natural elements are assigned wider symbolic connotations. The waves become metaphors representing “generations of mankind,” while the “pale moon” remains as an enduring spectacle (103, 110). Humankind is transitory, swept away over time. The Sons of Genius differ, however, and “Like yon proud rocks” stand “immortal” amongst “the billow’s rage” (117, 120). The Sons acquire the characteristic of the natural sublime, suggesting that like the natural world, they become that which inspires the reader. Davy puts forward his view that to interpret and understand the laws of nature, as represented by the meteorological and geological forces in the Cornish landscape, one can be elevated to a transcendent state, and become unified with nature’s forces.

Davy’s published poem presents an abstract idealised world that describes the way in which “Genius,” a personification that rises in the hopes of man, is guided by natural philosophy. In doing so, he offers his belief that one can react to and be fostered by the sublime in an active natural scene. Published in 1799 while he was in Bristol, the poem is dated 1795 when Davy lived in Cornwall. This suggests that his belief in the power of natural philosophy began before his friendships in Bristol with Beddoes, Coleridge, and Southey – those who found

affinity with his views when they met the young researcher.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Southey regarded Davy with admiration, although perhaps more for his chemistry than for his efforts in this particular poem. Southey commented on Davy's poetry in a letter to friend William Taylor on 27 October 1799, finding "Sons of Genius" "tedious & feeble" overall, yet towards "the close" of the poem there were some "fine stanzas" (SL 452). The "tedious" stanzas may be the many lines on the way in which the Sons of Genius acquire "Newtonian wings" through calm contemplation of nature (82). In the same letter, Southey's admiration for Davy was made apparent in his description of how "two paralytic patients have been cured by the gaseous oxyd of azote," or nitrous oxide, "the beatific gas" Davy discovered that gave "a new pleasure." Southey was fascinated with Davy because he could reveal through his chemistry what he means by the exhilarating power of nature in his poetry.

Before I explain that Davy experimented with the purpose of the poem in his earlier extant fragmentary versions, I now examine one published stanza closely for the interrelations between scientific and literary ideas. Here Davy's stanza exemplifies his primary belief that natural philosophy can elevate the mind. He celebrates the work of those who seek:

To scan the laws of Nature, to explore  
The tranquil reign of mild Philosophy,  
Or on Newtonian wings sublime to soar  
Thro' the bright regions of the starry sky. (77–80)

The first two lines of the stanza connote the passivity of he who simply interprets idealised "Nature" and only explores the "mild" monarchical power of "Philosophy." Perhaps reflecting on Britain at war with France, Davy hints to his support for the

---

<sup>53</sup> For example, Holmes has compared Davy's poetry to Thomson's *The Seasons*, which celebrates a Newtonian perspective on the natural world (Age 243). Davy's Romantic literary contemporaries would have admired his eighteenth-century poetical allusions in Davy's poetry that presented the landscape according to Newtonian laws, such as that of Thomson. Thomson described light and colour as accurately as possible in his poetry, which according to Marjorie Hope Nicolson, was "enhanced by a new appreciation" of nature heralded by Newton's *Opticks* (Newton 36).

French Revolution when he suggests that reason rather than religion or doctrine should govern humankind.<sup>54</sup> In contrast to those who “scan” nature, others sublimely “soar” through the “sky.”<sup>55</sup> The eye rhyme between “Philosophy” and “sky” conveys the disparity between those who passively interpret and those who conquer nature. Later in his career, Davy repeats this Baconian idea in 1802 in *A Discourse Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry* (hereafter *Discourse*) at the Royal Institution in London. Davy claimed a contrast between those who passively looked to understand nature, and those who sought to master it through experimentation (16). “Sons of Genius,” dated to have been written in Cornwall but published in the *Annual Anthology* in Bristol 1799, shows that Davy already believed in such a contrast while experimenting on factitious airs at the Pneumatic Institute.

In the first line of the stanza quoted above, Davy also alludes to both the scansion of metre in poetry and to Newton’s works, which combined mathematical proof with observations of the physical world. Indeed, his ideas initiated the late Enlightenment philosophy that the complex phenomena of the world could be reduced to simple laws. It is clear from Davy’s notebooks that he aspired to follow Newton, at one point in 1799 writing “Davy and Newton” after inhaling nitrous oxide during his medico-chemical investigations (20b 182). The pleasurable and strange experience stimulated Davy to think that like Newton he had reached the

---

<sup>54</sup> Davy’s political views in his early life are explored in the second chapter. As the subsequent chapters demonstrate, in his later poetry and in his lectures to audiences in London Davy claimed that providential nature can guide morality, revealing a shift of Davy’s political allegiances to conservatism.

<sup>55</sup> The verb “to scan” and Davy’s praise of Newton appears in many of his poems. In “Extract from an unfinished poem” for example, the love of the sublime and the expansive scene leads the heroine Theora’s “eagle eye” to observe the Newtonian “laws / That move the ruling atoms” and converse with the “dusky planets rolling round the sun,” “drinking in his radiance” (89, 90, 91). Theora’s intimacy with the natural world enables her to analyse, understand, and become physically cultivated by this environment. As in “Sons of Genius,” in line 89 she “roamed the fields of Nature, scann’d the laws.”

sublime heights of natural philosophy.<sup>56</sup> Later in 1801, Davy wrote in his *Researches Chemical and Philosophical chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide* (hereafter *Researches*) that he hoped chemistry could present the “subtle, busy and intricate movement of the organic creation as clear as Newton obtained of the movement of the heavenly masses” (543). Where Newton proposed a set of elegant celestial and terrestrial mathematical laws that governed the orbits of planets, Davy sought to find such unity in chemical and electrical power in all of life.

Indeed, Davy’s poetry draws upon and is shaped by his belief in the power of Newtonian mechanics or “Newtonian wings” as a means by which to be elevated to sublime heights (79). The “Sons” who are created by the mythic abstraction “Genius” can discover the harmonious laws that Newton declared underlies all of nature. They “soar” beyond well-established knowledge and become part of the celestial world of the “starry sky” (79, 80). Here Davy’s depiction of the sublime is derived from Longinus’s first century treatise on the aesthetic. Longinus described the merits of a rhetorical sublime, where an elevated literary style can transport and inspire the reader beyond their perceived limitations.<sup>57</sup> Davy uses Longinus’s language of “ὑψος” or uplifting to declare that the sublime elevates the reader to a deeper understanding of humankind’s “noble mind” (Longinus 23). In a draft poem “On the Morning” in notebook 13h, Davy’s footnote explains that his depiction of the sublime is influenced from Longinus through Sappho (74). Indeed, Davy’s “Sons of Genius” draws from Longinus’s definition that “sublimity is the echo of the mind,” which originates from genius (Longinus 150). Sublime discourse defines

---

<sup>56</sup> For more on Newton’s legacy as a genius, see Fara, *Newton* 155–191.

<sup>57</sup> For more on Longinus and his treatise on the sublime, see Habib 118–28; Shaw 12-26; and Axelsson 55-126.

genius, yet the genius of the writer also defines such a sublime.<sup>58</sup> Like Longinus, Davy's "Sons of Genius" claims that genius is possible through the sublime, and that the sublime represents the immortality that is gained by genius. Christopher Stokes has shown that such paradoxical Longinian qualities of the sublime are present in Coleridge's poetry from 1796 in *Poems* (38). Yet Stokes also makes clear that Coleridge rejected the fictive nature of the speaker and the text as performance. Coleridge later reshaped his poetry so to present moments of spontaneity and emotive sincerity, and explored alternative theories on the sublime. While Davy's knowledge of the Longinian tradition is evident in "Sons of Genius," his other poems analysed in the final sections also show that Davy presented Burkean and Kantian conceptions of the sublime in his poetry. Before this, I argue that some of Davy's Cornwall poems came from his experimentation with the purpose of this single poem.

## 1.2 The Fragmentary Versions

Notebook 13f was begun by Davy in August 1795 while he was in Cornwall and contains many either titled or fragmentary poems not published and so far unexplored by scholars, presumably because of their miscellaneous and emotive subject matter. After describing these poems, I examine the two manuscript versions of the first three stanzas of "Sons of Genius" that is in the same notebook (13f 67–8; 139). These two surviving fragmentary versions demonstrate that Davy's Cornwall poetry can be analysed as a whole for its similarities and divergences.

There are a number of poems in notebook 13f, such as a crossed out fragment of an elegy on raptures and pleasures, an eight line fragment on

---

<sup>58</sup> For more on Longinus and Coleridge's use of his concept of the sublime, see Stokes 20–2.

“Infancy” and, and a long epic play titled “An Idyll” with two characters called “Monobbon & Trevelis” (29; 30 69–77). There is also a seven line stanza titled “On Happiness” describing young love in rhyming couplets, a blank verse poem titled “The Rose” on Merlin, and a nine quatrain poem on the contrasting feelings of despondency and virtuosity with the first line “Ah why my [\*] do the tears of Woe” (78–9; 81–2). Davy also planned a “Scheme of an ode on the death of a Maiden” (17). These manuscript poems contrast those published in the *Annual Anthology* by their emotional content. This suggests that Davy carefully chose to publish verses with a particular image of the poet concerned with transcendence gained through reason, rather than on his own sensibility. Other than poetry, the notebook also contains Davy’s cartoon-like drawings on the cover and inside cover pages, such as a wreath encircling a ship. Davy filled the pages with philosophical essays, cartoons of trees and Roman soldiers, and scientific notes.<sup>59</sup>

Amongst this miscellany of poems and sketches, Davy twice drafted fragmentary versions of “Sons of Genius.” The first and second manuscript versions are in Appendix 1a and 1b, and the following gives a description of their differences. In the beginning of the first version, Davy considers the forcefulness of the “Lunar Beams” that plunge through the darkness of night (2). The moonlight reveals the turbulent seascape, the changefulness of light in the night sky, and the effect of such light on the terrestrial scene. Unlike the second version, Davy uses version one’s plosive consonant of “bursting” in the published poem to convey the potency of this natural force (1). In all three versions, Davy then contrasts this with a description of the child-like delicacy of the moonlight that can “play” along the ocean, and the trembling of the light as it passes closely over

---

<sup>59</sup> For the sketches, see 13f 14, 66, 68, 138.

the water (2). From the beginning, he celebrates the quick movement of these natural forces and the speaker's ability to scan the scene for all its subtle changes.

Scholars have already argued that through "Sons of Genius" we can understand Davy's conception of the role of the natural philosopher. Levere argues that the poem was practically "Davy's manifesto" in which he claims that a natural philosopher is above earthly cares and can gain immortality through the contemplation of nature ("Humphry" 36). Fullmer argued that the poem was a "clear response" to Francis Bacon's notion of a natural philosopher as an interrogator of the natural world (*Young* 39). Moreover, Fulford, Lee and Kitson view "Sons of Genius" as a means for the natural philosopher to express his views of scientific genius in verse (191–2).<sup>60</sup> Rather than focussing on the published version of the poem, I argue here that the manuscript versions demonstrate that while composing "Sons of Genius," Davy trialled different iterations and ideas that he further explored in his other Cornwall poems.

It is clear from the two different fragmentary versions and the first three stanzas of "Sons of Genius" that Davy investigated three ways to develop the narrative. In the first manuscript version, the third stanza claims that the natural scene has a direct effect when contemplated by the viewer. His "Mind" "aspires" to "the heavenly regions" (9, 12). This aspiration, rhymed with the "native fires" of the soul, suggests that the spirituality of the individual can be fostered by nature through the elevation of the mind and stimulation of the body (10). As I explain in later sections of my chapter, the direct effect of the natural landscape on the mind and body is further explored in Davy's published poem "Lines Descriptive of feelings" that draws upon the medico-scientific philosophy of irritability. In the second manuscript version, and unlike the published version, Davy makes it

---

<sup>60</sup> Also, see Fulford, General 24–5.

apparent that the sublime scene is shaped by his own experiences with the Cornish seascape of his childhood, and namely “Old Michael,” a tidal island off Mount’s Bay (9). Instead of describing specific parts of Cornwall in “Sons of Genius,” Davy composed and published three other poems explicitly on Cornwall, such as “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount.”

The published version of “Sons of Genius” differs from the extant fragments by its subtler hints to Cornwall, Davy’s lengthy descriptions of natural forms, and ultimately its form as a celebratory ode. The topography of Cornwall is described in abstract terms, where the immediate focus is on the subtle movements of the natural world, immersing the reader into Davy’s fascination with the natural laws that govern the external world. As I have already explained, tranquillity and enclosure characterise the language of the third stanza and the rest of the published poem, such as his description of the wind.<sup>61</sup> Davy’s use of the verb “warbles” (12) for the “Zephyr” may have influenced Coleridge and his poem “The Eolian Harp” on man’s relationship to nature in the 1817 version of the poem. Originally published in 1796, Stillinger has shown there are sixteen versions of Coleridge’s poem written from 1795 until 1828, and the description of “warbles” for the Zephyr appears in 1817 (Stillinger 27). Both Davy and Coleridge find pleasure in the musical gentleness of nature and, as I explain later in this chapter, draw

---

<sup>61</sup> Davy’s third published stanza also resembles four lines of Alexander Pope’s neoclassic poem “January and May,” where rather than the moonlight, Pope describes the beams of the sunlight on the sky:

Clear was the day, and Phoebus, rising bright,  
Had streak’d the azure firmament with light;  
He pierc’d the glitt’ring clouds with golden streams,  
And warm’s the womb of the earth with genial beams. (2: lines 613–6)

In contrast to Pope, Davy presented nature as to be directed by a power that animates all things. In the majority of his poetry, Davy does not draw upon Pope’s Christianized ideal of the world, and focuses on the forces underlying nature without refuting that these powers are ultimately God’s will. As Golinski has shown, the sublime in natural philosophy could point to the functions of “the deity in scientific discourse,” so that the deity is “no longer so explicitly specified” (“Literature” 231).

upon medical theories to intensify the connection between the body and the natural world. My following section on irritability will explain that the Aeolian harp was a significant Romantic symbol of the reactive relationship between man and nature. Romantic poets drew upon theories of natural philosophers who saw the harp as an analogy to the way our bodies react to and shape our perceptions of the environment.

“Sons of Genius” differs from Davy’s other Cornwall poems because it is a celebratory elegy. In Davy’s poem, the lives and posthumous fame of the “Sons” are explained in the elegy to be determined by their duty to understand the natural world and to gain intellectual insight. The tone in the final stanzas is subdued by the idea that despite the immortality of their “Genius” such “Sons” must leave their “lives behind” (112). There is a hint at these ideas on death in the beginning of the poem since all three versions contrast the sure and powerful rays of moonlight to the stars that “Grow pale & fade” in the night sky (6). The second stanza awkwardly emphasises this loss by repeating the “paler” and “fainter” beams, which do not shine as brightly over the plain (8).

However, the poem is also clearly an ode that celebrates the idea that the mind can understand and gain power over nature. Davy’s poem is similar to Wordsworth’s statement in his poem “Resolution and Independence” that, unlike the mutability of nature, man has “so firm a mind” that it can surpass the decaying body (*Poems* 1: 97 line 145). When describing the “Sons,” Davy uses possessive pronouns such as “Theirs” is the “glory of a lasting name” (126). Rhymed with “eternal fame,” Davy’s mixture of elegy and ode finds that death does not limit the impact of these men since they possess the ability to transcend time through their discoveries (127). Wordsworth’s elegies, such as *The Ruined Cottage*, undermined elegiac traditions by celebrating the mind’s ability to distance itself

from death (Oerlemans 48, 64). In his published “Sons of Genius” poem, Davy aims to elegise the work and posthumous reputation of natural philosophers. Mapping this onto the natural landscape, Davy creates a celebratory mood, distinct from the classical elegiac tradition and mournful tone of Gray’s “Elegy.”

Despite the differences between Davy’s published poems, they can be examined as a group of poems given that the most complete extant version of “Sons of Genius” in notebook 13h is written alongside other versions of his poems published in the *Annual Anthology*. Here, we find the first eight lines of “The Tempest,” “The Song of Pleasure,” and a version of “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” (13h 59; 45–6; 52–44). Those that are not published include “On to the Morning,” “An Adieu to Indolence,” “To Freedom” and “The Irish Lady” (60; 58–1; 76–1; 44).<sup>62</sup> Like “Extract from an unfinished poem,” Davy adds footnotes in the manuscript poem “On the Morning,” explaining geographical and meteorological details. One footnote notes that the Aurora is caused by refraction of light (76). The notebook also demonstrates that Davy viewed these poems as a collection, categorising “Sons of Genius” as an ode:

Prospectus of a Volume of Poems –  
 1<sup>st</sup> Eight Odes 1<sup>st</sup> To the Morning –  
 2 Sons of Genius 3<sup>d</sup> To S<sup>t</sup> Michaels  
 Mount 4<sup>th</sup> Song of Pleasure  
 5 Song of Virtue, 6<sup>th</sup> To Genius  
 7 & 8 Anomalous as yet –  
 2<sup>d</sup> Cornish Scenes, 1<sup>st</sup> St Michaels  
 Mount 2<sup>d</sup> Landend [sic] 3 Calm 4 Storm  
 3<sup>d</sup> 1 Tempest 2<sup>d</sup> Lilly –  
 4 A Tale. The Irish Lady[.] (13h 43)

His plan for a “Volume of Poems” reveals that Davy intended his poetry to be a collection, grouped together into four sections. These were the “Eight Odes,” “Cornish Scenes,” focussing on the natural landscape of his childhood home, a

---

<sup>62</sup> In *Age of Wonder*, Holmes suggests that “The Irish Lady” may allude to Grace Davy’s lodger, Mademoiselle Nancy who had fled France (242).

“3<sup>d</sup>” section of “Tempest” and “Lilly,” and section “4” for the tale of the Irish Lady. It is almost certain that Davy published four poems from his eight odes and one from section “3<sup>d</sup>” in the *Annual Anthology*. We cannot be sure if “Extract from an unfinished poem” and “Lines Descriptive of feelings” in the *Annual Anthology* are referred to in Davy’s section for “Cornish Scenes,” or whether Davy composed these two poems without the volume in mind. However, in the end, Davy published his poems in the *Annual Anthology* without the structure or range of poems in the “Prospectus.” Despite his unfulfilled plans, judging from his numbering of the first twenty-four pages of notebook 13h, the neatness of the poems, and the fact that the first eighteen pages have been torn out, it is possible that Davy sought to or did show these poems to others.<sup>63</sup> We find that before the *Annual Anthology*, Davy had already intended to publish poems linked by their inspiration from Cornwall.

Ultimately, as a stand-alone poem, “Sons of Genius” casts nature as analogous to the immortality of those with “Genius.” At first, the poem looks to the sublime and beautiful in nature, to correspond with the various interpreters of nature, whether it is the pastoral in literature, poets, or philosophers. By interpreting the poem alongside manuscript versions, as well as in the context of the notebook in which the poem was drafted, we find that the natural scenes of Cornwall are an independent entity open for ascription. In the published version of “Sons of Genius,” Cornwall represents the idea that one can gain immortality through sublime transcendence, an elevation gained from understanding the natural laws that underlie all motion. I now turn to his other published poems to reveal that “Sons of Genius” is part of a series in which Davy set forth his belief in the power of natural philosophy through an exploration of his past and the knowledge he had gained since leaving for Bristol.

---

<sup>63</sup> It is also possible that others tore out the pages, such as John Davy or Jane Davy.

### 1.3 Cornwall and the *Annual Anthology*

In this section, I describe the formation of the short-lived *Annual Anthology*, and then introduce two texts by Cornish poet and historian Richard Polwhele, author of a multi-volume history of Cornwall published from 1803, which will later inform my analysis of Davy's poem "Extract of an unfinished poem" in the next section. I argue that by alluding to popular Cornish writing on the area, as epitomised by Richard Polwhele, Davy presents himself as a product of the intellectual milieu of Cornwall, an ancient county with a rich history.

The formation of the *Annual Anthology* can reveal Davy's standing as a Cornish natural philosopher within his new social circles of Romantic writers while in Bristol. On 30 December 1798, after receiving William Taylor's letters on his studies in German literature and the value of "an annual Anthology of minor poems" as "the turning-point" of a German poet's career, Southey replied having decided upon "speedily editing such a volume" for his own "pieces" and his "intimate friends" (Taylor 228, 239; *SL* 364).<sup>64</sup> Southey edited and published the first *Annual Anthology* in 1799, following this with the companion volume in 1800. Hoping to publish it every year, he requested that like-minded friends send him their work to produce what Stuart Curran calls a "collective discourse," where the anthology revealed a coterie aesthetic amongst Romantic writers ("Mothers" 577). Southey's table of contents, as Laura Mandell describes, lists only some of the poems' recognised authors, including Coleridge, Southey, Mary Robinson, and Charles Lamb. The anthology also showed that it included poems by the Bristol publisher Joseph Cottle, and Davy's mentor, the radical doctor and founder of the Pneumatic Institute, Thomas Beddoes.

---

<sup>64</sup> The advertisement of the anthology states that it was modelled on the anthology on the German almanac *Voss'sches und Göttingsches Musenalmanach*. Lynda Pratt attributes Southey's friend and correspondent William Taylor for providing "the impetus, the format, and the subgenre" for this publication (Pratt, *Robert* 71).

Davy's name in the final volume implies recognition that he was part of this group. After Southey left for Portugal in April 1800, he hoped that Davy and friend Charles Danvers would organise a collection of poems for the third anthology (Speck 83). Despite Southey's confidence in Davy, the *Annual Anthology* was not continued. Indeed, Davy had already assured his mother in a letter on 1 September 1799 that, even with the publications of his poems, his role as superintendant at the Pneumatic Institute in Bristol remained the focus of his attention:

I have sent you with this some copies of a poem on the place of my nativity – but do not suppose I am turned poet. Philosophy, Chemistry, & medicine are my profession. I had often praised Mounts Bay to my friends here, they desired me to describe it poetically. Hence this poem—which as they admired I published. (DL)

Presumably discussing a poem written whilst at Bristol, Davy noted that his involvement with the *Annual Anthology* drew upon the significance of Mount's Bay on his imagination.<sup>65</sup> However, it is important to note that his new friendships began during his investigations into "Philosophy, Chemistry & medicine" at Bristol and the physiological effects of nitrous oxide. To visitors and friends of the Beddoes's family such as Southey and Coleridge who were invited to try the gas, Davy was a natural philosopher. In the same year of the publication of the *Annual Anthology*, Beddoes located his and Davy's work as a product of the intellectual landscape of the local area by publishing his annual anthology of West Country scientific work titled *Contributions to Physical and Medical Knowledge, principally from the West of England*. This contained Davy's early essay on heat and light (Davy, "Experimental Essays"). Both Southey and Beddoes sought to present the coterie aesthetic of natural philosophers and poets in South West England,

---

<sup>65</sup> Davy may be referring to his retrospective poems that are not dated: either "Lines Descriptive of feelings" or "Extract of an unfinished poem."

identifying Davy as a West Country writer who moved in both natural philosophical and literary social circles.

Following the use of pseudonyms by others in the *Annual Anthology*, four of Davy's poems appear under his initial "D.," and "Lines Descriptive of feelings" is signed with a "K.". His last poem in the 1800 volume, "Extract from an unfinished Poem," is the only poem to bear his name. Davy's use of pseudonyms in his poems may be in imitation of Coleridge and Southey who contributed poems under "many aliases" that had already appeared in newspapers such as *The Morning Post* (Pratt, *Robert* 82; Magnuson 58). Davy's poem in the 1800 volume appears before the anthology's final two poems, both by Beddoes: "Domiciliary Verses" and "Passages, Extracted from imitative 'Verses on Alexander's Expedition, &c'" (2: 287–8; 289–300). The latter is signed with Beddoes's name. Such placing of Davy's poetry in the anthology can suggest that his poetical work was deliberately connected with Beddoes's well-established reputation as a scientific figure who also wrote poetry.<sup>66</sup> Thus, even the placing of Davy's poetry in the publication identified him as a figure associated with Bristol medicine and a close acquaintance of Beddoes.

Davy's descriptions of his Cornish roots in the only poem to bear his name present him as a fascinating regional writer for the editor and readers of the *Annual Anthology*. His interpretation of Cornwall can be better understood by considering the context of, firstly, the contemporary literary scene in Cornwall and, secondly, the Cornishmen themselves who influenced him. Davy spent the first nineteen years of his life in Cornwall. His family relocated in 1787 from Penzance to a small farm in Ludgvan, an inland village near Mount's Bay. During

---

<sup>66</sup> See Stansfield for Southey's anger at the publication of Beddoes's "Domiciliary Verses" in the *Annual Anthology* because it ridiculed the *Lyrical Ballads* (136).

his youth, Davy often walked across the Cornish countryside and, as is explored in the next section of this chapter, created a self-confident syllabus of self-education. Despite the sudden loss of his father in 1794, Davy held the patronage of Davies Giddy (later called Gilbert) who had served as High Sheriff of Cornwall and later became a Member of Parliament.<sup>67</sup> Gilbert succeeded Davy as President of the Royal Society in 1827. Davy's friendship with Gilbert was formative on his career in natural philosophy since Gilbert was a close friend of Beddoes and gave Davy access to his large collection of scientific books.<sup>68</sup> Gilbert may have encouraged Davy to write on Cornwall since he himself authored the four-volume *Parochial History of Cornwall* in 1838 that also drew upon Polwhele's history of his home county.<sup>69</sup> Polwhele's works will be compared to Davy's poem "Extract of an Unfinished poem" in the next section. In addition to having means to read recent publications on natural philosophy and Cornwall in Gilbert's library, during his scheme of self-education Davy was apprenticed to apothecary-surgeon Bingham Borlase. This chapter and the next will explain that Davy's knowledge of scientific and medical ideas while in Cornwall shaped his career as a medico-chemical researcher in Bristol and influenced his poetry.

Davy and Polwhele were products of a similar Cornish early education, both writing poems that explored the history and mythology of Cornwall while living in the county. Indeed Polwhele's life and literary career reveals the thriving

---

<sup>67</sup> Davies Giddy changed his name in 1814 to Davies Gilbert as part of the condition to inherit his wife's uncle's estate (*DNB*).

<sup>68</sup> Gilbert's library may have provided Davy with Beddoes' and Watt's *Considerations on the Medicinal Use and on the Production of Factitious Airs*, another influential scientific treatise on Davy and his chemical interests. F. F. Cartwright suggests that it would have been natural for Gilbert to have copies of Beddoes' publications since he had been Beddoes' favourite pupil at Oxford (572). Both shared an interest in chemistry and geology and, as Roy Porter has shown, Beddoes kept in correspondence with Gilbert on his political and scientific activities, such as his ideas of a Pneumatic Institute in the 1790s (Porter, *Doctor* 14, 16, 168, 186).

<sup>69</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1838 reviewed Gilbert's history, then ex-President of the Royal Society, as part of a trend of "deep interest" "attached to history of that peninsular county" from the seventeenth century and onwards (Rev. of *Parochial* 273–8).

intellectual circles then present in Cornwall. As a Cornish clergyman, poet, and journalist, Polwhele was widely connected with the local literati in the area. Like Davy, he attended Truro Grammar School, where both were given a Classical education in Latin and Greek. Dr. Cornelius Cardew, who had taught and influenced the literary interests of Polwhele, was also headmaster to Davy. In seeking to show that Romanticism had a nuanced set of cultural contexts, Dafydd Moore claims that Polwhele's literary sensibility and sociability was an example of "regional Romanticism" ("Devolving" 949). His literary aspirations were encouraged from a young age by Cardew, although his first published poem "The Fate of Lewellyn; or the Druid's Sacrifice" (1777) was critically panned (Moore, "Devolving" 956). As a founding member of the Exeter Society of Gentlemen in 1792, Polwhele also published a volume of essays by the society in 1796 on various topics such as poetry, optics, physics, and antiquarianism (*Essays*). Though smaller and less influential, the society could be likened to the provincial societies of the North, such as the Lunar Society of the Midlands, and the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester. Like Southey's *Annual Anthology* and Beddoes's *Contributions*, Polwhele's two volume *Poems, Chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall* (1792) collected together works of writers in the West Country region. In his various publications, Polwhele sought to demonstrate the rich geological, intellectual, and industrial elements of his local county.

Over a decade later, Davy's poetry in the *Annual Anthology* and his friendships with the circle of Bristol radical writers continued to demonstrate the sociability and intellectual activity of the West Country. Indeed, his published poems on Cornwall in the *Annual Anthology* demonstrate that Romantic-era writers such as Coleridge and Southey were interested in regional writing of this

kind.<sup>70</sup> In the following section, after an overview of Davy's "Extract from an unfinished poem," I explain the way in which Davy presents an image of Cornwall that echoes Polwhele's writing and Davy's knowledge in natural philosophy. "Extract from an unfinished poem" situates Davy as Cornish writer and natural philosopher through the depiction of a famous Cornish coastline. The poem is undated, and there are no manuscript versions of the poem in his Cornwall notebooks. Thus, we can presume that the poem was written while Davy lived in Bristol reflecting on his life at Cornwall. As in "Lines Descriptive of feelings" and "Ode to St Michael's' Mount," the poem first describes the sublime seascape of Mount's Bay. Yet unlike these poems, I demonstrate that "Extract from an unfinished poem" offers the reader a rich yet fragmentary history and mythology of Cornwall.<sup>71</sup> These elements present Davy as a poet inspired by the power of the coast on the body and the mind, a power that can be understood by medical theories that informed his research into the medicinal benefits of factitious airs.

#### **1.4 Cornwall in "Extract from an unfinished poem"**

"Extract from an unfinished poem" contains one hundred and eight lines of blank verse. While the first half describes the natural power of the Cornish seascape, the second half of the poem describes the legend of the life and tragic death of the legendary "Theora" who died in a shipwreck off the coast. At first, the speaker views the twilight seascape and the tidal island of St Michael's Mount amongst the crashing waves. He recalls the history of the mount as a place where Druids once traversed and enacted religious rights. Time, like the Atlantic Ocean, washed away their presence and monks and priests began to reside there. The speaker then

---

<sup>70</sup> Polwhele later dedicated his *Reminiscences* in 1836 to Southey who was then poet laureate (v–vii).

<sup>71</sup> The character of "Theora" also appears in "The Song of Pleasure," who is described rhyming couplets to act as a beautiful muse ready to listen to the poet's "song" (94).

looks towards the sea and notices Land's End where cormorants fly, the granite rocks of its cliffs, and the clouds far beyond. According to the speaker, those looking for marks of stratigraphical change traversed the cliffs, which are also of interest to those who are inspired by the sublime in nature. Such a scene reminds the speaker of the legend of Theora who died in a shipwreck off the Cornish coast.

Carl Thompson has explained that there was an “enormous interest” in accounts of shipwrecks in Romantic-era writings, which drew on the aesthetic of the sublime to “make [such] catastrophe comprehensible” (14). Theora's shipwreck follows this tradition of shipwreck sublime, where Davy heightens this tragic incident with descriptions of her youth in Ireland and her beauty made more radiant by natural forms, such as the moon, the green wood, and her fascination with the “immensity” of the night sky (92). I explain below that she possesses what Archibald Duncan termed the “eye of Sensibility” in describing shipwreck accounts in his *Mariner's Chronicle* of 1804 (iv). In Davy's poems, when the poem suddenly ends with her violent death under the “white surge” of the waves, the reader feels the loss of her presence, as well as her emotional connection to the natural world.

Davy's “Extract from an unfinished poem” offers a history and mythology of Cornwall that arises from a literary tradition shaped by Cornish writers as represented by Polwhele.<sup>72</sup> This tradition is evident in Polwhele's early poem “The Fate of Lewellyn” on Celtic mythology published while Polwhele was at Truro Grammar School in 1777. Like Polwhele, Davy's Cornwall poems transpose the speaker's emotion onto the natural landscape using Burkian aesthetics of the sublime and beautiful. Drawing on Gray's poetry, “The Fate of Lewellyn” opens with bucolic scenes of Lewellyn's “rural life” and the beautiful aesthetic in nature,

---

<sup>72</sup> For more on the writings of geologist-poets, specifically Robert Hunt, for their construction of “Celtic” Cornwall, see Trower “Geological.”

where the “breezy morn” “Breathes incense thro’ the purpled sky” (5, 17). In “Sons of Genius” and his other poems, Davy similarly contrasts the free movement of the breeze against the “azure” tinged sky (612).<sup>73</sup> Natural landscapes are richly intense in detail yet hold and are held together by forces beyond humankind’s control. Polwhele contrasts the beautiful aesthetic in nature with the sublime, echoing Milton as he describes the war against the rebellious Radnor and Lewellyn’s ill-fated love for his foe’s daughter.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Polwhele’s use of the sublime aesthetic comes when describing Lewellyn’s grief after witnessing his lover’s death. His emotions are mirrored by the horrific sublime scene of a “black’ning tempest” that rose and a “strong whirlwind” that “swept the waste” (9–12). This poem also presents the Cornish mythological symbols of the oak and the Bardic harp. Lewellyn encounters a sleeping druid, who after unknowingly slaying his son, is suddenly surrounded by “the forky lightnings” that “stream / In blue sheets round the blazing shrine” (129, 205–6).<sup>75</sup> Unlike Polwhele, Davy’s poems temper the sublime moment. Reason and an emotional balance come from understanding the sublime natural world, which follows the immortal laws of natural philosophy. In this way, Davy’s belief in the power of natural philosophy distinguishes his work from the poetry of Polwhele.

Davy’s “Extract from an unfinished poem” also offers a literary description of the topography of Cornwall that echoes but also reshapes the descriptive style of Polwhele’s multi-volume works, such as *History of Devonshire* (1793–1806) and *History of Cornwall* (1803–7). The latter history has been considered “as a founding text of modern Cornish identity” and as a key text “in the historiography of

---

<sup>73</sup> As mentioned in the following chapters, Davy often uses the adjective “azure” in his poems to describe the sky or sea, a frequent trope that was presumably informed by his early Cornwall poetry.

<sup>74</sup> Moore has found Polwhele’s poetry to be “uncomfortably perched between neo-classical couplets, abstractions, and Miltonic formulations” (“Devolving” 957).

<sup>75</sup> For more on Polwhele’s Cornish myth-making in his poetry see Moore, “Fingal” 111-3.

the region” (Moore, “Devolving” 957). Mark Brayshay’s *Topographical Writers in South-West England* has presented Polwhele as a neglected Cornish writer who wrote one of the few early exhaustive histories of the area. Brayshay has shown that Polwhele followed in a tradition of studies on English counties that included scientific observations, topographical surveys, and classificatory surveys (10). For example, Polwhele’s three-volume *History of Devonshire* (1793–1806) included a detailed account of meteorological observations by a vicar who possessed “accurate instruments for that purpose” (Brayshay 16). In his *History of Cornwall* Polwhele assembled a large body of material, ranging from local legends, eyewitness accounts of the landscapes, and discussions of the local economy (Brayshay 14–16).<sup>76</sup>

I now explain that, similar to the poetry and taxonomical observations of Polwhele, Davy’s “Extract of an unfinished poem” offers a depiction of Cornwall that focuses on the particular location around St. Michael’s Mount, the powerful forces that overwhelm the rugged natural landscape, and the mount’s associated mythologies.<sup>77</sup> Southey also drew upon Polwhele’s *History of Cornwall* descriptions of Cornish legends for his epic *Joan of Arc* and for his poem “St. Michael’s Chair,” which Davy may well have read since it was also published in the *Annual Anthology* (Southey, *Poetical* 1: 240, 6:71–3; AA 1: 58–61). Southey’s poem, like Davy’s “Extract from an unfinished poem” and “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount,” focuses on the tidal island. While Southey’s poem is a light-hearted balladic verse on superstitions, I demonstrate below that Davy celebrates the history of the mount’s mythology as a site of pilgrimage and as a place for mental

---

<sup>76</sup> Moore has also explored the “confused jumble” of facts, descriptions, and poems in Polwhele’s *History of Cornwall* (“Romance” 42).

<sup>77</sup> Chapter Four will demonstrate that Davy was entranced by the geology and meteorological forces apparent in landscapes, including those of his childhood home. See Davy, “Hints”; Fullmer, *Young* 87–8; Knight, *Humphry* 55–6; and Holmes, *Age* 250.

and physical inspiration. To emphasise the latter, Davy presents the Cornish seascape as dramatic and powerful as an expression of the Newtonian forces that control its behaviour. The vivid narrative also draws upon Celtic mythology to set forth the emotional connections that Davy and those in the past have had with the landscape.

The form of “Extract from an unfinished Poem” gives an insight into Davy’s relationship with his childhood home. As the following close reading of the poem will illustrate, the one hundred and eighty-line poem immerses the reader in Druidic history and descriptions of ancient natural forms. Davy shapes an identity for Cornwall defined by its powerful landscapes, fragmentary ancient history, and its effect on the mind and body. However, like Coleridge in his poem “Lines Written in the Album of Elbingerode” in the 1800 volume of the *Annual Anthology*, Davy also ensures his poem has a factual aspect of Cornwall by giving details on geographical locations in footnotes such as on the Islands of Scilly (74–76). Southey was disappointed about the fragmentary nature of the poem, writing to Davy from Exeter on 4 May 1799 after reading the poem that he “expected more, & wishd more, because what there is is good. there is a certain swell—an elevation in the flow of the blank verse” (SL 433). Others in Davy’s social circle also used the form of the fragment, such as Coleridge in his *Religious Musings* published in 1796. Cronin argues that the fragmentary form conveys Coleridge’s inability to embody his vision of unity and wholeness (*Politics* 21). Similarly, Davy’s choice of form implies his failure to encapsulate Cornwall’s rich history.<sup>78</sup> The fragment suggests that Cornwall is rich with a mythological history that cannot be

---

<sup>78</sup> I discovered Moore, “Romance” late in the writing of my thesis, but a useful comparison could be made between Davy’s use of the fragmentary form and the “random” and “eclectic” nature of Polwhele’s *History of Cornwall* (42).

fully realised in the present. His glimpse of Cornwall's history suggests his past, transitory yet intense connections with his childhood home.

The poem differs from his other published poems by combining Druid legend with contemporary knowledge of Cornish geology to reveal both the mythology and contemporary understanding of the landscape. The poem begins with the speaker following the movement of "the Zephyr" as it passes the dark ocean, twilight clouds, and the waves off Mount's Bay (1–4). The small tidal island of "Majestic Michael rises" into view crowned with castles, clad with ivy, and remains a constant figure "unmoved" by the "change of time" amongst the waves (8, 11–2). The image of this Cornwall seascape preoccupies Davy in his other Cornwall poems. While the mount similarly "rises" into view in the first stanza of "Ode to St Michael's Mount," in "Extract of an unfinished poem," the mount stoically endures the elements that thunder around it. Indeed, it also possesses natural detail that can hint at its ancient history, and so inform the present of the past. Davy explains that the base, now surrounded by waves, had once been covered in foliage and oaks, and druids used the mount as a site for Celtic ancient rituals. On the sides or "craig" of the mount, where the "Tamarisk" shrub whistles amongst the windy scene, Druid's harps used to be heard, "swept" or inspired by the soft or awful breeze (19, 20, 21).

As J. M. S. Tompkins has shown, mid eighteenth-century poetical circles commonly used the trope that nature was an important focus of reverence in Druidic belief (2).<sup>79</sup> In Davy's poem, these groves, and by implication the Druids, have been washed over by the sea and by time. Later "Dire Superstition" led to the building of a "gothic fane" (or temples) for monks and priests (30).<sup>80</sup> Davy also

---

<sup>79</sup> Also see Hutton.

<sup>80</sup> The tamarisk was a plant found to be plentiful on St. Michael's mount, and is referred to in literary texts translated by Polwhele and in Homer's *Iliad*, translated by Pope in 1715 (James Smith

describes famous geological elements of the surrounding area, where the “Bolerium” or Land’s End in Cornwall is illumed by a “purple light” that dominates the scene (33, 34). The headland “Hangs o’er” the ocean, and eerily contains caves of “Spirits” and is made of “shistine rocks” (36, 38, 39). A footnote explains that these rocks sit below layers of granite in the cliffs. Indeed, eighteenth-century naturalists and historians viewed Land’s End, the islands, and the botany of Mount’s Bay as a key feature of Cornwall (Polwhele, *Historical* 1: 37).<sup>81</sup> Davy combines Druidic legend and descriptions of geology in his layers of imagery of Mount’s Bay to present the ways in which people of the past and the present were and continue to be fascinated by the natural history of Cornwall.

Davy’s poem is distinct from Polwhele’s works by drawing on and redeploying his scientific knowledge and medical research. He forms an image of Cornwall as a location that can affect both the mind and body to convey the power of the natural scene on the viewer. Davy first combines his knowledge of Burkian aesthetics of the sublime and beautiful and geology in his descriptions of cliffs. They are “not loved” by “Busy Man” except “He who follows Nature,” who seek the “marks of changes” on the “storm-beat rocks” for the “laws / That raised the globe from Chaos” (44–9). Since Nicolas Steno’s seventeenth-century theory that rock strata formed layers on older layers, geologists speculated on the chronology of Earth based on such stratigraphical observations. The ambiguity and immensity of the history of the earth was another “manifestation of the natural sublime” in scientific discourse (Golinski, “Literature” 537).<sup>82</sup> In “Extract of an unfinished

---

338; Polwhele, *Idyllia* 115). For more on botanical studies on the tamarisk, see Withering 399; and Harrison 109.

<sup>81</sup> See Borlase’s “Meteorological Observations”; “Quantity”; and *Natural* 56, 238, 242, 266, 272, 284.

<sup>82</sup> Davy later expanded on his early interest in stratigraphy in his poems by giving geology lectures to Royal Institution audiences in 1805 and founding the British Geological Society in 1807, as explored in Chapter Four.

poem,” Davy brings together the allusive references to natural philosophy that were common in histories of regions with the idea that the reader can have an emotional and physical connection to the landscape. Those who follow “Nature” could view the sublime tempests from the summit, with a “raptured” mind (53, 54). For Davy, natural world can motivate the mind to understand and become affected by it.

In the second half of “Extract from an unfinished poem,” Davy emphasises the physical connection between nature and man by combining Cornish legend with his knowledge of Hartley’s philosophy of irritability. The notebook that contains the neat drafts of poems published in the *Annual Anthology* was also used by Davy to reflect on, in his words, “Dr. Hartley’s” theory of “impression” (13h 2). Discussions on the source of ideas and sensations in relation to physiology occupied such Enlightenment philosophy. Hartley’s *Observations on Man* (1749) combined physiology and psychology to suggest that vibrations are transmitted through the nerve fibres as sensations in bodily organs and travel to the brain and mind. Davy made notes on similar concepts in a notebook started before 1800, which he called the “Definitions” of “The Laws of Human Nature” (13e 15). Echoing Hartley, Davy wrote “Sensations are motions of the irritable fibre communicated to the perceptive matter” and noted that this “irritable fibre is possess’d of a certain power which is necessary to its contraction, this is called irritability” (13e 15, 16). Davy also wrote about the connection between the external world and the mind: “Ideas are motions of the perceptive matter” (13e 15). By 1794, Coleridge’s “intense study” of Hartley’s theory of knowledge provided him with a philosophical connection between mental events and the physical world. Hartley’s doctrines interested Coleridge for his development of

the theory that complex ideas were formed from the association of initial simple ideas or sensations (Hartley 36). The function of the mind was connected to the sensations of the body caused by physical stimulation.

As Richard Haven has explained, Coleridge's poems employ such Hartleian ideas so to suggest that religious experience could be felt through a psychological and evolutionary process in the "instinctive desire" for gratification (486). For Coleridge, as well as Wordsworth, such theories could serve to emphasise the important influence of the external world on the mind (Levere, *Poetry* 10; Levin 158).<sup>83</sup> By the time Davy became involved with the *Annual Anthology*, Coleridge and Wordsworth waned in their support for the theories of Hartley (*LB* 1: xiv). Although Coleridge named his first child after Hartley, both Coleridge and Wordsworth eventually criticised his theory of association for its material hypothesis that reduced will, reason, and judgement to mechanical effects (Allen 168). On 16 March 1801, Coleridge announced to Thomas Poole that he had "overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley" and rejected the idea of the passivity of the mind (*Collected* 2: 706). Although I will later further examine Davy's knowledge of Hartley's theory of impressibility and John Brown's model of excitability in the next section, I now briefly explain the way in which Davy draws upon these theories in his descriptions of Theora.<sup>84</sup>

"Extract from an unfinished poem" echoes both Romantic literary aesthetics and medical language when focussing on the legend of an Irish shipwreck and the death of Theora, a woman with a close physical and mental relationship to nature. In the poem, Davy shifts the narrative from appreciation of the landscape to the Cornish legend to Theora's story with the claim that the "Bolerium" could also

---

<sup>83</sup> William Hatherell has shown the influence of Locke's and Hartley's theories on the *Lyrical Ballads*.

<sup>84</sup> For more on these theories, see John Brown 1:4; and Hartley 12. For Wordsworth's redeployment of Brown's theories, see Budge, "Erasmus"; and *Romanticism* 60–2, 65–8, 74–5.

inspire the viewer “whose heart / Is warm with love and mercy” (57–8). This puts into his mind the death of a “blue-eyed Maid” who died under “thy surge.” John Thomas Blight explained the myth behind a rock shaped like a female figure named the Irish Lady, to which Davy alludes, in his exploration of the ancient legends of the area in 1861:

The legend is, that a wreck having happened there, of all the souls that were on board only a lady was seen, clinging to this rock. It was found that the ship belonged to Ireland. (108)

Davy’s poem, as a fragment, ends suddenly with her flight from her “native shores” in a ship during a “wild blast” of a tempest while a “whirlwind” shatters the ship at the feet of the “Bolerium” (98–108). While her life, like the poem, ends abruptly, the poem aims to convey the intense effect of nature through allusions to Theora’s emotional and physical responsiveness to her surroundings. The figure of Theora also appears in another of Davy’s poems, “The Song of Pleasure” in the 1799 *Annual Anthology* (line 84). Here, Theora represents the way in which one is physically connected to nature by the sublime. Her environment heightens her physical beauty: the “bright azure of her eye” is likened to lightning and her cheek is “Tinged with the morning’s bright and purple ray” (88–92). Nature acts as both mirror and stimulant, where the quickness of her glances is as intense as the flashes of lightning, and the morning sun brightens her cheek.

Davy’s language recalls Hartley’s argument that sensations within the body, like sound, lead to sensations in bodily organs and travel to the brain and mind (232). Like the music produced from movement of the strings on a lyre, the experiences from the external world travelled through the nerves of the body and fostered thought in the brain. Brown’s philosophy in his *Elements of Medicine*, which was translated from Latin by Beddoes in 1795, elaborated on this idea by suggesting that the body can be balanced with sensations of lethargy and

excitation. Disorders, such as tuberculosis, could be cured by restoring this balance through external stimuli such as opium or musk (J. Brown 2: 225). Like these models of the body, Theora is susceptible to the effects of the landscape:

Hence were her passions tuned to harmony.  
 Her azure eye oft glistened with the tear  
 Of sensibility, and her soft cheek  
 Glow'd with the blush of rapture. Hence she loved  
 To wander midst the green wood silvered o'er  
 By the bright moonbeam. (76–81)

Theora's connection to the natural scene is first described in bodily terms, and this relationship induces her to revere and enjoy the wood of her homeland. She is "tuned," like a lyre perhaps, to her surroundings, which manifest in her body. Earlier in the poem, the Druids had the same connection to the scene, but to different effect. The "Druid's harp" was moved "to grander tones" when "Awakened by the awful master's hand" (21–3). Like an Aeolian harp, the Druids were impelled by sublime nature to produce music. In contrast to these druids, Davy describes Theora in terms of her body and mind. She possesses eyes of an "azure" colour that connects her with her surroundings since Davy's poetry usually ascribes this colour to the sky (211). Her "sensibility" to the scene, made obvious by her tears, is also made visible by the "blush of rapture" on "her soft cheek." Similar to the speaker's rapture in "Lines Descriptive of feelings" explored in the next section, Theora is revitalised and warmed by her surroundings.

Southey became disappointed with Davy's presentation of Theora, writing to him on 4 September 1799 that in the poem "the passion to be excited is *pity*, not admiration" (SL 433). Although Theora ultimately dies in the shipwreck, Davy's "admiration" for her comes from his use of medical philosophies that directed the work of the Pneumatic Institute, showing her as a heroine fully responsive and emotionally connected to her surroundings. Likewise, in Davy's later poem on the

effects on laughing gas, “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” discussed in the next chapter, the speaker finds the gas gives him a “rapture-wakening form” which makes his “bosom burn” and his eyes with “sparkling lustre fill’d” (13c 5–6). Drawing on Brown’s and Hartley’s philosophies of impressibility on the body, Theora’s “passions” and “sensibility” are excited by the environment and affect her appearance. The fragmentary nature of the poem, and her sudden death, reminds us of Brown’s theory that such an intense bodily condition cannot sustain itself (J. Brown 2: 317).

The following case study of “Lines Descriptive of feelings” in the *Annual Anthology* builds on my argument concerning the influence of Davy’s medical knowledge on his poems. The section reveals evidence of Davy’s early reading on irritability while in Cornwall, knowledge that pervades almost all his Cornwall poetry. His poetry and notes alike at this time convey the idea that his work at Bristol placed great importance on how external stimuli can affect the nervous system, and his interest in the connection between the external world and the mind. In “Extract from an unfinished poem” the editor of the *Annual Anthology*, Southey, may have recognised that Davy follows in the work of Polwhele and other historians and natural philosophers on Cornwall by shaping his depiction of the landscape by its mythology, ancient past and geology. While the poem clearly presents Cornwall as a site of rich history, and of sublime natural scenes, Davy also recasts an image of Cornwall as a site of physical inspiration with his medical knowledge and the theories of association between the natural world and the mind. These ideas characterised his work and made him well known at the Pneumatic Institute. We find that through his use of form and imagery Davy is attracted to Romantic literary ideas to reflect on his former life in Cornwall, yet emphasises the present by drawing on his medical knowledge to shape the

image of Cornwall as a site for mental revelation through natural philosophy. Davy presents himself as both informed by his Cornish past and by his place as a medical researcher for the literary coterie in Bristol.

### **1.5 The “irritable spirit” in “Lines Descriptive of feelings”**

“Lines Descriptive of feelings,” which appears in the second volume of the *Annual Anthology* signed with the initial “K.,” reflects on Davy’s visit to and memories of Cornwall after having left for Bristol when he was nineteen. The poem demonstrates the influences of Davy’s knowledge of eighteenth-century medical philosophies and his reading of Romantic literary texts, such as Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” on his poetry. Like “Extract of an unfinished poem,” “Lines Descriptive of feelings” holds central Hartley’s philosophy of irritability to illustrate the force of the natural world’s influence on the mind and body. A manuscript version of “Lines Descriptive of feelings” in notebook 13d, a slim book dated 1800, appears alongside scientific notes relating to Davy’s work on irritability (18–24). The language and ideas of Davy’s contemporaneous readings and knowledge of such medical ideas may have inspired Davy during the composition of the poem. “Lines Descriptive of feelings” reveals that Davy reshapes his medical and physiological ideas in his poems to convey his faith in the ideals of natural philosophy as a guide for all knowledge and experiences.

The poem begins with the speaker who returns to the sublime scene and looks inwards to recall the landscape’s constant presence in his mind. He remembers seeing the “lustre of the day” while a “mother’s care” nurtured his “opening mind” (15–6). As he came to “read / Another’s living feelings” his mind became cultivated and awakened to the sublime (18–9). Like an Aeolian harp, his “earliest lays” are inspired by the “trembling” wind of the night on his “new-tuned

frame” (32, 35). From the same seascape view, he also learned “to trace / The mystic laws” of the motion in the scene (36–7). This suggests that the speaker celebrates the view’s effect that inspired him to write poetry and philosophy on the “laws” of nature. The speaker reminisces on his feelings of ambition as he looked at the “moon-beams” on the “foaming waves” (42). “Lines Descriptive of feelings” then shifts to the speaker’s present to describe the way that nature is a confidante to his hopes and explains that this was “not in vain” (48). He claims his hard work led to the “dew of labor” on his brow so that he now finds inspiration from “the sacred stream / Of Science,” which comes from “Nature’s bosom” (50, 53–5). Possessing an “irritable spirit,” the speaker is taught by the warmth of a supportive social circle to bear any tempestuousness, which is likened to the sea (58). He presents his body as susceptible to external forces, using the term “irritable” to indicate his knowledge of a prevailing eighteenth-century view that sensibility and irritability were the two main underlying forces in plant and animal life. As I explain below, it is also evident that though the speaker had left the landscape its influence remains on his mind through his use of natural imagery.

The seventy-two line poem of verse paragraphs can be viewed as an emulation of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” From the title, Davy echoes Wordsworth’s protracted title “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798.” Davy’s poem has the similar subtitle “Descriptive of feelings produced by a visit to the place where the first nineteen years of my life were spent, on a stormy day, after an absence of thirteen months.” In Wordsworth’s poem, and similar to Davy’s narrative, the speaker undergoes a journey of self-discovery, finding restoration and a connection to the world with the “lofty thoughts” that nature can give him (132). However, Davy differs from Wordsworth in his emphatic belief in Hartley’s theory

of irritability, which is a key concept in “Lines Descriptive of feelings.” In what follows, I explain that Davy’s notes on medical theories of the body and mind, and in particular, his reading of Thomas Beddoes’s works, inform his poem. Moreover, Davy’s ideas on irritability relate to the Romantic symbol of the Aeolian harp, an image that pre-occupied Davy in his youth and which is evoked in the poem, and may have been discussed amongst his Romantic literary friends, such as Coleridge while in Bristol. Davy’s poem is both distinctive and similar to the work of his literary contemporaries.

Following Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” Davy begins the poem with the idea that in seeing a scene, he recollects the past and the changes that have transformed him. Like Wordsworth, who finds a physical response to memories of the “forms of beauty” in the landscape, which leads to the joy of seeing “into the life of things,” Davy’s poem also proposes that memories provoke physical exhilaration (Wordsworth, lines 25, 50). In recent Romantic literature and science scholarship, critics have analysed the cultural context of sensation in Wordsworth’s poetry, finding that he opposed “simple sense perception” and “advanced cognitive activity” (Noel Jackson, *Science* 206). Wordsworth proposed the idea that sense experience could enable the speaker to discover the mind’s capability to theorise abstract ideas. In “Tintern Abbey,” Wordsworth experiences a sublime union with the natural beauty of the scene and feels a sense of community after contemplating all that is around him (Manly 106). The simple act of seeing can lead to philosophical introspection. For Richardson, sight, memory, and thought in Romantic writing such as Wordsworth’s poetry, can be interpreted through contemporary understanding of brain science; including Hartley’s theories of associated memories (see *Neural* 38–57). Wordsworth, according to Richardson, presents an embodied mind made tangible in the natural world

(*British* 71–3). Davy's poem can add to the argument that Romantic literary writing engaged with and reinterpreted theories of the mind and body. As I explain below, he explicitly draws upon his medical knowledge of sensation and the mind, topics he became fascinated with in his early education, for his poem in the *Annual Anthology*.

Davy's early knowledge of theories on the mind and body can also be traced through his scheme of self-education after completing the local curriculum at Truro Grammar School in 1794. This scheme was implemented after Davy left school and during successive years in the course of his apprenticeship as an apothecary-surgeon from February 1795.<sup>85</sup> During this period, Davy read widely and made notes of this reading in his notebooks. Indeed, he claims in "Lines Descriptive of feelings" that the speaker's "irritable spirit" is formed by the external influence of reading "Another's living feelings and his thoughts" (19). Davy's own knowledge and reading of such medico-scientific ideas is apparent in the poem's insistence on the influence of the natural world on his physical being. In preparation for assisting and performing surgery on patients, Davy mapped out a subject-by-subject plan of self-education in a notebook with a large sketch of a harp on the front cover, a symbol for poetry and for the body as a reactive entity to the external world for both medical philosophy and Romantic poetry (Davy, 13f 136; Trower, *Senses* 25). Next to this image of poetical composition, Davy's syllabus also contained a section devoted to "My Profession," presumably his apprenticeship, and outlined the subjects he would pursue: "Botany," "Pharmacy," "Nosology," "Anatomy," "Surgery" and "Chemistry." The syllabus included subsections on "Theology," "Language," and "Mathematics." His notebooks from this period

---

<sup>85</sup> Davy was released from Borlase early in 1799 to pursue the role of medical researcher at the Pneumatic Institute.

contain essays and poems revealing a range of reading and ideas, such as a plan for a poem on “The progress of Reason” (21a 1, 23) and a draft essay “Theory of Mind” (13f 55–8). In the same notebooks, Davy wrote a number of manuscript poems and drafted fragmentary lines of poetry, combining his various readings and interests into the same series of notebooks.

While biographers of Davy have tended to focus on his interest in chemistry before leaving for Bristol, Davy’s poetry can also reveal the significance of his other medical and philosophical knowledge.<sup>86</sup> During his scheme of self-education for his apprenticeship, Davy read in contemporary medical discourse that irritability was the manifestation of a vital principle in the body or, specifically, the nervous fibres, and his notes demonstrate his early reading of Beddoes’s theories of irritability. I will reveal below that these ideas influence Davy’s poem “Lines Descriptive of Feelings.” As already mentioned, Beddoes translated and drew upon the work of Brown for his pneumatic chemistry at Bristol. Brown held the belief that every living thing depended on its portion of excitability, and that the health of the body was contingent on maintaining a balance between the amounts of excitability in the nerves to the stimuli acting on the system. In a notebook started before 1800, Davy made observations on the theory of irritability and drafted letters about a plan to go to Clifton and the Pneumatic Institute (13e 17–8, 40). These notes reveal his reading of Beddoes’s *Observations on the Nature and Cure of Calculus* (1793) who borrows from Brown and Hunter, which I will later reveal influenced his presentation of his connection with nature in his Cornwall

---

<sup>86</sup> For example, Fullmer and Knight explored his education in chemistry, which began in 1797 through his reading of two key publications in the field; Lavoisier’s *Elements of Chemistry* translated and published in 1790 and William Nicholson’s *Dictionary of Chemistry* published in 1795 (Fullmer, *Young* 46; Knight, *Humphry* 20). Fullmer devoted a chapter on his apprenticeship in her biography, yet does not consider the influence of this role on his writings after he left Cornwall (*Young* 29–45).

poetry.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, Davy copied out Beddoes's translation of *Observations* such as "Laws of Irritability" on the habitual effect of stimulation on irritable fibres:

The effect produc'd upon an irritable fibre is in the inverse ratio of the repetition of its application *cæteris paribus* the effect of any stimulus diminishes every time its application is repeated, till at last it is = 0 (RI MS HD 13e 16; see Beddoes, *Observations* 187–8)

Here the theory of irritability is mathematically quantified.<sup>88</sup> As the fibre undergoes a sensation, it becomes accustomed to its application. The irritability of different fibre may vary, but overall the character or "tone" of a fibre depends on the level of stimulation. Thus for Beddoes and Brown, medical treatment could restore any imbalance (Beddoes, *Observations* 189). Davy also copied out the example that a plant exposed to a strong wind becomes accustomed to it and stops contracting from habit (13e 17). Biologically plants and animals are equally susceptible to the natural forces of light, wind, and heat, and can be treated similarly.

Echoing these ideas of the physical effects of natural phenomena, the seascape in "Lines Descriptive of feelings" is equally susceptible to the movement of the wind and reflections of light, resulting in a dynamic and active scene. These descriptions are linked to the reflections, thoughts, and body of the speaker. As he "view[s] / The light of other days" his mind recollects the responsive sensitivity of the natural elements (2–3). He remembers how the "sunbeams dance" on the waves, that the scene awakens his "rapture" within his "throbbing breast," his "glittering dreams," when his eyes first "trembled," and "the trembling moonshine" (3, 6–7, 9, 12, 34). There are continual allusions to movement and vitality, such as the "harmony of voice," "rising social passions," and where his new social circles teach him how to bear discordance or "tempests" "When ruffled by their wild and

---

<sup>87</sup> The theories of irritability in *Observations* are a translation from the work of Beddoes's Swiss friend Christoph Girtanner. Brunonianism was a key influence on Girtanner, who learned of Brown's system when he came to Edinburgh in 1789 (Fullmer, *Young* 78–9; Vickers, *Coleridge* 55).

<sup>88</sup> For more on this passage, Girtanner, Beddoes and Kant, see Vickers, *Coleridge* 57–8.

angry breath” (17, 23, 60, 62). The seascape is responsive to the changes of the wind, as was the speaker to his remembered past. In this way, the speaker is both expressive and sensitive.

Similar to Coleridge’s poems “The Eolian Harp” and “Dejection: An Ode,” Davy’s poem takes on the Hartleian notion that vibrations in the nerves cause thought, or that these vibrations are thought (Trower, *Senses* 25–7). The mental activity of the speaker in “Lines Descriptive of feelings” is analogous to the animation of the scene. Drawing from Beddoes’s work on irritability, the speaker is himself sensitive to the natural forces of light, wind and heat, which cause him to remember and re-experience his recollections. In a stanza similar to Davy’s notes on irritability, the speaker’s body or “frame” is impressed upon by the external world. At the remembered seascape:

Here the novel sense  
Of beauty thrilling through my new-tuned frame,  
Called into being gentlest sympathies:  
Then through the trembling moonshine of the grove  
My earliest lays were wafted by the breeze. (31–5)

Referring to the Aeolian harp, a traditional Romantic emblem for poetic writing, we find the speaker likens himself to the instrument in the way nature impelled him to produce poetry. As Clark Lawlor has shown, eighteenth-century writers who claimed that intellectual inspiration came from heightened sensitivity to pain and pleasure shaped the Romantic “culture of sensibility” (55). To Romantic poets such as Shelley, the harp was a symbol of poetry, representing the poet’s physical and intellectual reactive relationship with nature (Kneale 135). Trower has explored how the Aeolian harp became an image for the associationist theories and for Romantic poetry, a link between the external world and the nervous system (*Senses* 13–36). Davy’s poem is similar to Coleridge’s poetry, which in particular engaged with the idea that the strings of a wind-harp could serve as a

model for eighteenth-century neurological and philosophical theories, such as Hartley's *Observations*.

However while "Lines Descriptive of feelings" begins its focus on the sublime landscape, the majority of the poem concentrates on the speaker's claims that he now finds inspiration and support as a social being. Having left his childhood home the speaker has "felt the warm, / The gentle influence of congenial souls" who have "taught / My irritable spirit how to bear" difficulties (54–7). He shifts his reflection on to the influence of friends and acquaintances, presumably referring to the supportive environment at the Pneumatic Institute. In this way, Davy positions himself with his new social circle represented by those involved in the *Annual Anthology*. In Bristol, Davy discussed ideas of the influences of the mind in his letters with his friends and colleagues. On 21 March 1800, Davy informs a "Mr James" of his chemical work at the Pneumatic Institute in Bristol, and considers the idea of impressions:

I have been puzzling myself to find out what people mean by external things. Quere is this the logic of it?—All our ideas have been preceded by impressions before. From their modifications by, or coalescence with their correspondent ideas & [paper torn] ~~Consequently all our ideas~~ all our [paper torn] consists in the perception of those impressions, our identities / for example self, our friends, all the people we know intimately, all the places we are well acquainted with &c; but the ideas of those identities are connected with the possibility of our perceiving the impressions, consequently when we say that an external world exists we mean nothing more than that ideas exist capable of modifying impressions. (DL)

Written just before the publication of the second *Annual Anthology*, the letter holds similar ideas to "Lines Descriptive of feelings" and illustrates Davy's continued interest in Hartley's philosophies. Davy claimed that ideas manifest themselves from impressions and that identity consists of the perception of our surroundings and social circles. He found there is no fixed external world since it is formed by these subjective and malleable impressions. Similarly, in his poem, Davy's "view"

of the scene is “of other days” (2–3). The Cornish scene evokes memories associated with what he sees, casting the landscape as representative of a former phase of Davy’s life. At the end of the poem, when the speaker returns to the reality of what he sees, the “Beloved rocks!”, he returns to his “remembered home,” once again casting it as an intangible memory (63, 68). These descriptions of the permanent effect of his memories and the influence of his new home results in a depiction of a seascape in Cornwall that can represent the past and remind Davy of his life beyond his childhood home.

When compared to the published poem, the subtle revisions of particular words and lines from an extant manuscript version of the poem reveal the extent to which Davy shaped the text to make general the physical influence of the external world (13d 1–3).<sup>89</sup> The manuscript version, though messily written with lines crossed out and inserted words where Davy reconsiders his phrasing, is very close to the version that appears in the *Annual Anthology*. One major difference is that two verse-paragraphs are re-ordered in the published version. The last paragraph in the published version on returning to his “remembered home” is not in the manuscript, suggesting that Davy later frames the poem as a sudden but transitory moment of immersion into philosophical retrospection (68). In the same notebook, Davy also made notes about how Locke’s “doctrine of mind being a tabula rasa” was false and about the formation of organs and feelings (13d 21). Davy’s preoccupation with the body and its relation to the mind is apparent in two instances in the manuscript poem, which were not used in the published version and are highlighted in the following transcription (13d 1–3). After describing his memory of the sublime seascape, he claims:

Here my eyes

---

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 1c for my transcription of the manuscript version.

First **opened on the daylight [\*] my ears**

**First heard** the gently soothing sounds of love

Here first a mother's care ~~attuned my life~~ <awoke my senses>.— (12–5; my emphasis)

The physical body of the speaker is made abstract in the published version, where his eyes “trembled” rather than “opened” and reference to his “ears” are taken out, so that he simply “heard” the sounds. The last line in this transcription shows that Davy deleted “attuned,” perhaps to avoid making too obvious the abstract notion that the body can be impressed upon from the external world like a harp or lyre. Later on, Davy discarded the lines that communicated the idea that sublime thoughts are a living energy that “still within my bosom ~~throbs~~ slows” (36). Instead, in the published version, Davy chooses to describe this energy as having “warm’d my beating heart” (28). In defining himself as an “irritable spirit” and claiming that the mind can stimulate the heart, Davy recalls Hartley’s theory that the external world and the mind were linked through sensations in the nerves. From these two changes, it is evident that Davy sought to present the transformative effect of a physical experience with the external world as a moment not specific to the poet’s body.

Davy’s poem offers an image of Cornwall through the perspective of a natural philosopher inspired by Newtonian forces and an eighteenth-century understanding of the body. The published version, as well as Davy’s other Cornwall poems, uses the symbol of the harp and its association with medical theories of the body to highlight the effects of the powerful natural world. Given Davy’s notes on Hartley’s and Brown’s theories of the body, I suggest that the image of the harp on the notebook further emphasises Davy’s view of the idea that body acts as a conduit between the external world and nature. The next case study makes clear the way that Davy conceived of the

sublime in nature to affect the body and mind, and to inspire intellectual elevation through both poetry and natural philosophy.

### **1.6 The Sublime in the Landscape**

Ruston has recently argued that Davy held the sublime as a central concept in his poetry (*Creating* 132–62). Indeed, as we have seen in my chapter, the sublime in his Cornwall poems invigorates the body and elevates the mind to a state of transcendence. Davy's Cornwall poetry also presents the sublime as a destructive force, such as in "The Song of Pleasure" and "The Tempest." In these two poems, the sublime becomes an integral contrast to the calmer forces of nature to convey the transformative aspects of nature and life. Chapter Two examines the way in which Davy grappled with both a physiological and transcendent sublime in his manuscript poetry. In this section, I focus on the poem "Ode to St. Michael's Mount" published in the *Annual Anthology* and explore the treatment of light, wind and the landscape. I demonstrate that Davy diverges from the Burkian and Kantian conceptions of the sublime in order to connote transformation and the process of mental and physical maturation.

I have already explained above that "Sons of Genius," drawing from the Longinian sublime, illustrates Davy's belief in the sublime impulse of genius by using a language of mental and physical elevation. Davy's published poetry also demarcates two aesthetic categories of the sublime and beautiful, as explicitly set out in Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry* (1757). I demonstrate below that it is clear Davy drew upon this influential treatise to present his experience of nature in terms of the physiology of pain and pleasure. According to Burke, the sublime is possible through metaphorical substitutions; for example, a sublime scene is found in the grandeur of a starry heaven (*Philosophical* 71). Burke's intellectual treatise

on the sublime and beautiful linked such aesthetics with physiology. The sublime could be found in anything infinite and powerful, leaving the viewer with the sense of terror and pain and in turn a thrilling experience in the nerves. For Burke the sublime could also provide the “tone of fibre” with a vigour that would otherwise leave the inactive nerves to “horrid convulsions” (*Philosophical* 122). With its physiological basis, Burke’s classical treatise, according to Frances Ferguson, privileges the individual’s sensate experience (57).<sup>90</sup> Yet I will also illustrate below that Davy’s descriptions of the abstract and a Kantian transcendence that looks to the limits of human perception, which is not present in Burke’s conception of the sublime, suggests that man can attain a universal connection with the sublime in nature.<sup>91</sup> Davy creates a common physiology so that the reader can share the experience of the power of natural philosophy.

After an outline of “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount,” I explain the way in which Davy describes the dynamical change from youth to maturity using the aesthetics of beauty and the sublime. St. Michael’s Mount in Davy’s ode bears witness to the dynamic seascape, and becomes emblematic of the speaker’s ability to observe and to reflect on his own transformation. Indeed, throughout the poem, Davy uses personal pronouns “I” and “my” to reveal the speaker’s emotional and transformative response to what he sees. The speaker describes the changing elements, which surround the mount, and at the same time, he undergoes a transformative experience when “morning sheds her light” on the scene. He finds “Fancy shed / Her rupturing dreams around my head” (25, 28–9). Like the “tower-clad head” of the mount, the speaker senses the power of nature that surrounds him, and responds with “mirth, and cheerfulness” (36, 40). As the poem

---

<sup>90</sup> Chapter Two elaborates on Davy’s use of Burke’s “physiological sublime,” as termed by Ryan.

<sup>91</sup> Ruston also makes this argument for “Sons of Genius” in her recent chapter on Davy and the sublime (*Creating* 160–1).

progresses, the speaker no longer finds insight and inspiration in the mount. He finds it contrasts with the “Immortal Wisdom” gained from taking on a “penetrating eye” “Above” the scene (65–8). The speaker finds maturity and insight by moving away from the particular and understanding the world in its wider connection to the forces that underlie nature. Similar to Davy’s poem “Lines Descriptive of feelings,” Cornwall and his youthful way of thinking symbolise his experiences and changed world view. At first he recalls the scene using stanzas entirely in past tenses, repeating conjunctions “When” and “Then” (31, 37–8). In the last two stanzas, however, the poem is an actual temporal moment for the speaker who finds he is “now to awful reason given” (58). The language moves into present tense after the tumultuous elemental poem becomes a reflection on the speaker’s changed connection with the scene.

As an ode, the poem performs and celebrates a sublime insight through the text’s movement from the particular to the grandiose. It begins with an animated night time scene where a gentle “zephyr” “creeps around” the cliffs of “Old Michael” (6, 10). Layer by layer Davy describes the scene, adding the sombre tinges of “purple” and “silver” (1, 8). We follow the movement of the sky’s fading light at twilight as the speaker’s view moves lower down the scene to describe the “trembles” of the sea (4). Participles describing the dynamic movement of “gently winding waves” and the “Whitening” foam “of the blue wave” contrast with the sudden, particular and present tense of “Michael” as it “rises” out of the sea (6, 9). The forces and state of movement in the landscape in all of his Cornwall poems seem to fascinate Davy, rendering Cornwall as emblematic of the sublime in nature.

Such appeal to the natural forces of a landscape is akin to Davy's chemical theories. On evaluating Lavoisier's theory of caloric, Davy wrote to Gilbert on 10 April 1799 that:

The supposition of active powers common to all matter, from the different modifications of which all the phenomena of its changes result, appears to me more reasonable than the assumption of certain imaginary fluids alone endowed with active powers. (*DL*)

Both Davy's poetry and chemistry in his early career asserted that nature holds an innate and active power. In his letter, Davy refers to Lavoisier who had argued against the widely held belief in the existence of phlogiston, a substance that was released from other substances during combustion. Lavoisier claimed that the gases that resisted decomposition were elements and that decomposable substances could be regarded as compounds. He claimed a new theory for the nature of heat so that "caloric," an imaginary fluid, was a substance of heat that travelled from hot to cold bodies, and that oxygen gas was a compound with caloric (Lavoisier 1–25). Davy, in contrast, criticised the general belief in the "imaginary fluids" caloric and phlogiston, and asserted in an early essay on heat and light that the matter holds a power that acts upon other matter ("Experimental"). I now explain that his belief in the existence of "active powers" that can lead to the phenomena of change in nature characterises his descriptions of nature in "Ode to St. Michael's Mount." The changes of light in the evening, movement and the expansiveness of the landscape in the poem work to convey the sublimity of the Cornish natural scene and the renewed transcendent viewpoint it gives to the speaker.

Davy's use of the sublime is evident in his depiction of an expansive, grand, and transcendent seascape. Labbe's reading of Wordsworth's poetry illustrates that the language of height and abstraction when describing the landscape

suggests a masculine and elite viewpoint (Labbe, *Romantic* xi, xvi). It signifies the disinterestedness of the viewer who is able to oversee and assess, unlike those who are “confined to daily toil at a specific task” such as pastoral figures (xi). Labbe explains that the sublime is used as a cultural signifier of this “prospect view” by emphasising the importance of elevation and the abstract (ix, xii, 36). In the same vein, the speaker in “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” endorses his authoritative elevated viewpoint in order to celebrate his intellectual development and mature mind. From the outset, his viewpoint is expansive. In the first stanza, he looks at the sky, the changes in light, the trembling sea, and eventually the key symbol of the poem, the mount:

The sober eve with purple bright  
Sheds o’er the hills her tranquil light  
In many a lingering ray;  
The radiance trembles on the deep,  
Where rises rough thy rugged steep,  
Old Michael, from the sea. (1–6)

His landscape view first takes in and is thus defined by his view of the sky, an image associated with openness. His prospect and the fall of the light finally focus on the mount, emerging into his view. Unlike the figurative elements, such as light and the sea, the stanza ends with the particular, literally grounded by the final long syllable in “from the sea.” From the outset, the mount weighs heavily within the poem and on the speaker’s mind. Yet as the poem progresses, the particular, the mount, is lost within more abstract and figurative language.

This transformation is explored through the conversion of the “picturesque” to the sublime. William Gilpin (1724–1804) outlined the picturesque as a pictorial doctrine for natural or artificial scenery, which came to be an accepted concept in pictorial composition and formed the aesthetic taste of late eighteenth-century English landscape painting (Barbier 98). Though difficult to define, a picturesque

landscape would constitute a rugged, layered scene with strong contrasts of light. According to Gilpin, though nature can be beyond human comprehension, an artist “lays down his little rules [...], which he calls the *principles of picturesque beauty*, merely to adapt such diminutive parts of nature’s surfaces to his own eye, as come within its scope” (32).<sup>92</sup> Gilpin suggested that the picturesque requires details, and the unification of parts. Indeed, Davy draws on picturesque ideals as he describes particular parts of the mount such as the “rugged steep” and “ivied rocks” (5, 15). Elements of the picturesque and the beautiful (two similar and sometimes interchangeable aesthetic criteria) are evoked in Davy’s poetical portrayal of his childhood home and the changes in light. In the beginning of “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” the scene moves from evening to morning as the speaker recounts the effects of a beautiful scene.

On the other hand, as the final stanza reveals, the speaker’s view of the night-time scene becomes more expansive as he celebrates his sense of the sublime:

Above delusion’s dusky maze,  
Above deceitful Fancy’s ways,  
    With roses clad to rise;  
To view a gleam of purest light  
Bursting thro’ Nature’s misty night,  
    The radiance of the skies. (67–72)

The speaker contrasts the enclosed youthful “Fancy” of the past with the “Bursting” “radiance of the skies” embellishing both viewpoints with aesthetics ascribed to the beautiful and the sublime. The past, closed in because it is “clad” with the softness and smallness of “roses,” juxtaposes his present viewpoint that takes in the sky’s

---

<sup>92</sup> Mount’s Bay was painted by William Brooks in his landscape portraits *Mount’s Bay from Ludgvan* (1790) and *Mounts Bay, Cornwall* (1795). Anne Mellor has explained how these illustrate eighteenth-century aesthetics of the “beautiful” in landscape painting (“Coleridge’s” 261). Mellor regards Coleridge’s “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison” to have a “close visual analogue” to the landscape in Brooks’s *Mounts Bay, Cornwall*, “which depicts a similar prospect of a bay with sailboats, an offshore island, and intervening coastal town and rolling hills” (261–2).

openness and radiant magnificence. By the end of the poem, the speaker no longer fixes upon specific details of the scene, and instead focuses on the expanse of the sky. Wordsworth also employed the picturesque in his early works, but re-fashioned this aesthetic approach in the *Lyrical Ballads* by converting what might have been picturesque to the sublime (Labbe, *Romantic* 57). His work uses the picturesque, sublime, and beautiful so that they are not aesthetically harmonious or overtly unified. As Labbe puts, his poetry is “variegated” in its use of different aesthetics (*Romantic* 57). Similarly, Davy’s “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” shifts between the beautiful and sublime so that the landscape becomes a source of subjective meditation and transformation.

Davy also draws on Burke’s suggestion that slight movement, delicacy and smallness belong to the beautiful “as perfectly beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts [...] They vary their direction every moment, and they change under the eye by a deviation continually carrying on” (104). Similarly, in “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” the movement of light and the waves give a direct physiological response:

When shone the waves with trembling light,  
And slept the lustre palely-bright,  
    Upon thy tower-clad head.

Then BEAUTY bade my pleasures flow,  
Then BEAUTY bade my bosom glow  
    With mild and gentle fire!  
Then mirth, and cheerfulness, and love,  
Around my soul were wont to move,  
    And thrill’d upon my lyre. (34–42)

The light faintly shines on the mount and on the waves with teetering delicacy. In contrast to this gently unsettled landscape, the speaker asserts the resulting physiological and emotional effects with the repetition of “Then.” In evoking a stirring “fire” within him, it prompts an emotive response from the speaker, who is then moved to have “thrill’d upon the lyre” and write poetry. The gentleness of

the evening and arrival of morning invokes a sudden and powerful response from the speaker, who forms this moment into poetry.

Contrasting the quiet with the terrifying sublime evening tempests that surround the mount, the poem shifts from evening to morning and his viewpoint becomes unbounded, upwards and in effect, thrilling. The storm, personified by the “Daemon of the deep,” “Howl’d” and “bade the tempests rise” so that it “mingle[s] with the skies” (43, 45, 48). For the speaker, the scene becomes vertically blurred emphasising its tempestuousness and terrifying effects. Abrams argues in his analysis of breathing in the poetry of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron, that the breeze and the wind can be a “literal attribute of the landscape” and “also a metaphor for a change in the poet’s mind” (“Correspondent” 113). As in the final stanza of “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount,” the sublime leads to the speaker’s ability to see “a gleam of purest light / Bursting thro’ Nature’s misty night” (70–1). The effect is dazzling.

In the end, the poem becomes a celebration of gaining sublime insight. In his treatise on the sublime and beautiful, Burke claims that the sublime aesthetic is found from “whatever is in any sort terrible” and can produce “the strongest emotion” (Burke, *Philosophical* 36). The evoked “degree of horror” leads to “delight,” which in turn leaves the viewer changed by his encounter (48). In the same vein, Davy contrasts the youthful perception of beauty to his present experience of the sublime:

Ah, then my soul was rais’d on high,  
And felt the glow of ecstasy,  
    With great emotions fill’d;  
Thus joy and terror reign’d by turns,  
And now with LOVE the bosom burns,

And now by FEAR is chilled. (49–54)

His emotional response to the scene becomes intense due to its sublime aspects. The “tempests” create “white foaming billows,” which lead the speaker to feel “the glow of ecstasy” (43–8). He is “rais’d on high” to feel “LOVE” and “FEAR” of the scene. Aligning with Burke’s ideas that the sublime leads to the “mind entirely filled with its object that it cannot entertain any other,” in the poem the speaker’s reactions consume his mind so that he is “fill’d” (51) and “reign’d” (52) with emotion (Burke, *Philosophical* 53).

In the above stanza, the speaker’s body is enlivened by sublime aesthetics and its irritability is increased. The references to heat and cold recall Davy’s reading and later research on Hartley, nerves, and the Brunonian system of medicine. In Beddoes’s *Observations*, a text that Davy copies into his notebooks, when a patient undergoes a fever “the fibre irritated by the stimulus will act upon the blood” so that “By this means the irritability will be increased, the animal heat augmented” (203–4). Sensations in the body may lead to overheating. In the same way “The more intense the cold is, the greater is the accumulation of irritability” revealing that overly cold environments can also excite the body (194). In essence, the medical body can be maintained as a balance of internal forces. In “Ode to St Michael’s Mount,” the speaker cannot fix upon a certain emotion, and undergoes simultaneous and contrasting sensations of burning and chilling. Just as Thomas Weiskel argues for Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s poetry, “Ode to St Michael’s Mount” conveys how the viewer’s experience of the sublime can reveal the failure of determinate perception (25–6). The indefiniteness of the sublime in the ode evokes a Kantian conception of the aesthetic to show his state of becoming.

While Burke was concerned with the sensation of the sublime, Davy's belief in the transcendent state attained through natural philosophy draws upon a Kantian sublime. Indeed, critical investigations of the Romantic sublime tend to centralise discussion on Kant's and Burke's seminal texts.<sup>93</sup> Since Beddoes had already been a conduit for Kantian philosophy in Britain, Kant's work may serve as an important means to understand the sublime in Davy's poetry.<sup>94</sup> As we have seen in the above poems, Davy argues that the reasoning of natural philosophy is sublime. Similarly, in the Kantian Romantic conception of the sublime, nature appears as the medium through which the mind dissolves and presents itself (Weiskel 6). Kant succinctly wrote in *Critique of Judgement* "we may describe the sublime thus: it is an object (of nature) the representation of which determines the mind to think the unattainability of nature as a presentation of ideas" (151). The mind engages with something beyond itself (in the case of Davy he reflects on the forces of the natural world), and realises its own transcendence. Indeed, we can see that Davy evokes a Kantian sublimity in the way the landscape inspires the speaker to attain an indefinable attitude. The sublime landscape of Cornwall leads him to gain what he views as a profound understanding of "awful reason," "hear the voice of TRUTH" and be led by "DIVINE PHILOSOPHY" (58, 60, 63). Similar to the zephyr in the beginning of the poem that explores the depth of the mount as it "creeps" and "murmurs" in its "caves," the sublime gives the speaker a "penetrating eye" (10, 12, 66). He can now uncover the world beyond its surface.

---

<sup>93</sup> See Duffy's work on Shelley's engagement with discourse on the sublime, Ashfield and De Bolla's introductory reader, Shaw's study on its meaning and critical debate, and Kelly's analysis of Wordsworth poetical use of the sublime and beautiful (23–42).

<sup>94</sup> In 1793 Beddoes was the first to translate extracts of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* into English (Vickers, *Doctors* 38). His translations and dissemination of German literature includes a review of Kant's essay "Zun Ewigen Frieden," Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Friedrich Schiller's periodical *Die Horen*, and translation of Carl Wilhelm Scheele's *Chemical Essays* (See Beyer; Levere, *Poetry* 10–5; Stansfield 222; and Vickers, "Coleridge").

As Golinski has argued in his examination of the language of the sublime in natural philosophy in the Romantic period, Kant's conception of the sublime could overcome superstition and reveal that the mind "was able to grasp" the unknown and "inherent powers in nature" through the "intellectual function of the mind" ("Literature" 534). In his poem, Davy regards his mature mind as transformed from a youthful naive perspective to an exalted position of a philosopher, "Above" and away from the particular embodied by St. Michael's Mount (67). The poem can confirm Jon Mee's discussion of Romantic enthusiasm. Language of passion was incorporated into literary texts but with a "regulatory" framework that corrected against excess of emotion (*Romanticism* 7, 14). Such regulation is also apparent in Davy's manuscript poetry examined in my next chapter. Davy's regulatory response to the emotions that are invoked by the sublime and the beautiful in nature, result in his sense of nobility in comprehending that which surrounds him.

However, like his varied sensations, the sublime transformation remains unfixed and unlimited. Though it leads him "To hear the voice of TRUTH" the poem ends with his vision fixed on "The radiance of the skies" (72). The speaker now looks towards the sky, with its changing hues and intensity, for inspiration. He suggests that like the changing light and colours of the sky, a sublime transformation has no definite conclusion or fixed consequence. With present tenses and an infinitive, Davy ensures the speaker's purpose remains open-ended. As Christopher Miller has explained for poetry on evening by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, Davy explores the dynamic between the aesthetic closure of the poem and "the continuous flux of the world" (1). We have seen above that the shifting temporal moment between evening to night, or night to morning results in various emotional responses. In the poem, this dynamic moment can either inspire the speaker to the particular, such as poetry, or to the

symbolic, such as philosophical truth. Time continues to move on, in contrast to the finality of writing and reading the poem. The end of Davy's poem reveals his engagement with the scene and ensuing transformation that has no measurable duration or limitations.

Although Davy's use of the sublime is not necessarily experimental and emulates the writing of Thomson, Pope and Wordsworth, "Ode to St. Michael's Mount" differs from these in the way in which Davy renders an image of the Cornish landscape variegated with literary symbols. Davy hopes to state the case for the transcendence gained from a reasoned understanding of the natural world. The diversity of Davy's published poetry is also apparent in its different emphases of history, elegy, medico-scientific theories, and the sublime. Yet the poems have a common faith in the power of the natural landscape. Transformations within the landscape and the speaker are characteristic of all of Davy's Cornwall poetry. In all the poems examined in this chapter, Davy explores his faith in the power of nature by contrasting the aesthetics of the sublime and the beautiful. Burke's concept of the sublime as a sensory and physiological experience enabled Davy to portray his perspective of the landscape with allusion to his role at the Pneumatic Institute as both chemist and medical researcher. The editor of the *Annual Anthology* and its contributors knew Davy through his medical research on the effects of the external world on the body and mind. It is clear by Davy's emphasis on the sublime as a mentally and physically transformative power that the Longinian sublime and the transcendence of the Kantian sublime gave him the framework to make a case for natural philosophy.

This chapter has examined the ways in which Davy presented himself to his social circle and readers of his published poems. By understanding Davy's construction of Cornwall in the context of his knowledge of the depiction of the

county in contemporary texts, his research, and his social circles in Bristol, it is clear that Davy's interpretation of his childhood home emphasises his present perspective as a Cornish natural philosopher. Davy attempted to write poems on Cornwall using different forms, as well as different narratives, but with the same ideal: that the natural world has a powerful and tangible effect on the mind. A scrutiny of his early works casts light on the way in which Davy appropriates the interlinked ideas of the harp as a body, the poet's song, medical theories of the body, and the aesthetic of the sublime to build his persona as a receptive and impassioned natural philosopher. Davy's poems echo the form, content, and language of Romantic writing, and particularly the *Lyrical Ballads*, with the recollection of memories from his childhood in Cornwall, and the retreat to nature for comfort. In these published poems, Davy makes clear his belief that this retreat into nature gives him an intimate connection with natural laws and that such knowledge could bring a transcendent state of being. The next chapter provides the context of Davy's life in Bristol, and argues that Davy drew upon his own medical research and influence from Coleridge and Southey to attempt reconciliation between physiological experiences of pleasure, pain, and death, with visions of transcendence.

## CHAPTER TWO: BRISTOL, THE BODY AND THE SUBLIME

Between April and the winter of 1799, Davy composed three poems that draw upon ideas that influenced his research at the Pneumatic Institute. Two of these poems further allude to Coleridge's Spinosist ideas on the world, including fragments of an epic poem that attempts to emulate Southey's Romantic Orientalist poetry.<sup>95</sup> These philosophical, medical, and literary concepts created possibilities for Davy to explore and experiment with form, imagery, and content. In this chapter, I examine these three diverse poems that are textually close to each other in a notebook and are linked with an exploration on the physical and philosophical disjunctions between the mind and body. In my previous chapter I argued that in his *Annual Anthology* poems Davy offers the view that by understanding the underlying forces of a natural scene one can gain a mental elevation, at times akin to a Kantian transcendence. While also still envisioning the possibility of such transcendence, I explain that Davy's manuscript poetry conveys his preoccupation with his medical work to alleviate pain and suffering at the Pneumatic Institute. By focussing on poems that pay close attention to the sublime during physical experiences of exhilaration, pain and death, I argue that Davy's medical work helped form his conception of the sublime as an experience within or through the body, or what I will call the embodied sublime.

---

<sup>95</sup> The three poems analysed in this chapter are a single stanza poem "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" (13c 5–6), "The Spinosist" (7–10), and Davy's fragments for an epic titled "Moses" (17, 19–21, 24–6, 148–6). The first two poems I analyse appear on consecutive pages, and the outline for the epic "Moses" is found seven pages after these. I show below that my dating of these texts take into account that the first poem is on inhaling nitrous oxide, experiments which began at the Pneumatic Institute after April 1799 (13c 5–6). The three poems and a medical note of a patient that I examine in this chapter all appear before a note on the winter (30–1, 34). For Davy's undated scientific notes after these, see 54–6. There are also notes from his work at the Royal Institution (71–2, 73–9, 80–5, 86–93, 134–19).

In reading Davy's manuscript poems in the context of his medical research, I reveal that he is inconsistent in his presentation of the sublime, regarding it neither as an experience limited to physical sensations, nor that the process of the sublime can be entirely described as transcendent. As such, I follow in the scholarly trend in arguing that while the Kantian sublime valued "the mentalistic over the physiological," Romantic period writers also explored how such transcendence was seated in the experiences of the human body (Richardson, *Neural* 24–5). In the following first section, I highlight the ways in which Davy was confronted with physical expressions of pleasure, pain and death while working on the medical efficacy of factitious airs. I then demonstrate that a linking of physical experiences with transcendence has already been explored in Romantic scholarship on the embodied sublime. This will help build my argument in the rest of my chapter that Davy's medical work influenced the way in which he explored corporeal experiences of the sublime in his Bristol manuscript poems. Clearly conscious of the Longinian, Burkean and Kantian conceptions of the sublime, we find that Davy struggles to fully conceptualise these together in his manuscript poetry, resulting in three poems that present different experiences of the sublime.

## **2.1 Davy as Physiologist and Poet**

The three poems that I analyse in my chapter are only a selection of a large amount and variety of poems composed by Davy while he was based at the Pneumatic Institute from 1798 until 1801. His personal notebooks used in this period contain a mixture of poems, fragments, experiments and notes, where there are at least thirty fragmentary or finished pieces of verse.<sup>96</sup> Many of these poems are interested in the perception of the mental and physical effects of nature, such

---

<sup>96</sup> For the finished poems see 13h 76–64, 58–51, 52–44; 13d 1–3. For the fragments see 13h 37–40; 13c 11–12, 13–15.

as the substantial fragments (comprising at least three stanzas without titles) with the first lines “While yet the pale face moon her lustre throws,” “As the blue flower neglected,” and “The seed of future life.”<sup>97</sup> Davy also outlines two epics: “Romance on the establishment of Religion” (2) and “Moses.”<sup>98</sup> The range and volume of poems suggest that this was a particularly creative time for Davy to attempt different forms of poetry.

My following analysis of the science of the Pneumatic Institute informs my argument that while scholars have focused on Davy’s chemical research, his physiological work also influenced his interpretation of the sublime in his poetry. Indeed, Davy’s research at the Pneumatic Institute also shaped his prose. On 11 July 1800 he noted that while “lying on top of a rock” he felt connections of thoughts and ideas, so that “Every thing seemed alive [...] I should have felt pain in tearing a leaf from one of the trees” (13d 9–10). Davy saw and felt the natural world as nervous bodies that can feel pleasure and pain. Like the unification of the trees with his body, in his poetry, Davy unifies his “different” perspectives as “a philsologist [*sic*] & a poet!” (13d 10).<sup>99</sup> Davy also viewed life and death as closely linked, where chemistry could help understand this relationship. In notebook 13h, and after his notes on the decomposition of nitrous oxide “by passing thro [*sic*] a tube containing volatile alkali,” Davy wrote that life can be supposed “to be the result of chemical changes” (10–1). “[T]he differences between dead and living matter” could be ascertained “by the changes which they undergo during their transmutation into each other” (11). Davy’s concomitant chemical and medical research resulted in his view that life and death are physical transformations that could be regarded as simply as changes in chemical compounds. I now explore

---

<sup>97</sup> 13h 37–40; 13c 11–2, 13–15.

<sup>98</sup> For the fragments of the “Moses” epic, see 13c 3, 16, 19–21, 148–5.

<sup>99</sup> For more on this passage, see Knight, *Humphry* 36–7; and Ruston, “From”.

Davy's research on both the life-giving and fatal effects of factitious airs on the bodies of patients and animals to illuminate the medical aspects of his research.

With eighty out-patients and over sixty individuals taking part in the experimental trials, Davy worked with Thomas Beddoes at the Pneumatic Institute to find cures for respiratory diseases.<sup>100</sup> Concerned with the quackery of medicine, with doctors, the “bastard brethren of the healing profession” prostituting their art for gain (as he wrote to Joseph Banks), Beddoes believed that his own institute could reach the lower social classes, as well as high society attracted to the hot spas in Hotwells (qtd. in Porter, *Health* 3).<sup>101</sup> Beddoes solicited funding from his social circles, persuading James Watt, father to a son and daughter with tuberculosis, to design the apparatus for gas experiments and to become one of the many influential figures to support the Institute financially for its research. In Cornwall, Davy had been aware of the physical effects of tuberculosis when befriending Watt's son, Gregory, who was sent to Penzance and lodged with Grace Davy in order to recover from his illness. Davy later grieved the death of his friend in 1804, writing to William Clayfield on 21 October that Gregory's letters months before his death “were full of spirit, and spoke not of any infirmity of body” (DL). After exploring Davy's chemical and physiological research at the Pneumatic Institute, I will show that Davy's anxious preoccupation with the relationship between the dying body and the effervescence of the mind is evident in his manuscript poetry in 1799.

I will also explain that his poetry and its philosophical investigations can be regarded as a product of Davy's immersion in the local intellectual activity at Bristol. As a commercial centre, Bristol, “the second city, and the first port of the

---

<sup>100</sup> For more on Beddoes's conception for a Pneumatic Institute see Beddoes, *Notice* 4; and Jay, *Atmosphere* 27–9

<sup>101</sup> See Porter, *Health* 33; and *Doctor* 189.

kingdom,” supported an artistic and literary culture, and joined together politically like-minded figures such as Thomas Poole, publisher Joseph Cottle, and writers Southey and Coleridge (Holmes, *Coleridge* 92). Beddoes was a well-known philosophical radical, and had been forced to resign his readership in chemistry at Oxford in 1793 due to his political sympathy with the French revolutionaries. He had come under attack from conservative thinkers and suspicion from the Home Office due to his initial views of France as the model for humankind, his support for potentially seditious views on democracy, and his campaign for freedom of speech during the gagging bills and treason trials in Britain after 1793.<sup>102</sup> Between 1794 and 1797, Coleridge, Beddoes, Cottle and Southey campaigned and pamphleteered their political ideals in what Porter stated was “the nation’s hotbed of intellectual radicalism” (*Doctor* 16). Although Beddoes’s politics made it impossible for a career within London’s conservative circles, Bristol was a suitable location as a thriving medical centre and with the Bristol Infirmary as the next best alternative to London hospitals. Taking part in Beddoes and Davy’s nitrous oxide trials in 1799, the “West Country radicals,” Cottle, Southey and Coleridge based at Bristol (Magnuson 63) shared a “defiant provincialism” and politics that led to formation of the *Annual Anthology* (Cronin, “Cottle” 7).

The nitrous oxide trials at the Pneumatic Institute drew upon Davy’s independent interests in experimentalism that began in Cornwall, as well as his medical training gained while apprenticed to an apothecary-surgeon. From March until December 1799, Davy experimented to isolate factitious gases in their pure form and investigated their physiological effects on the body. He began his investigation on nitrous oxide “with a view of determining the probability of a Theory published by Dr Mitchil [sic] of New York attempting to prove that it was the

---

<sup>102</sup> See Porter, *Doctor* 14, 16–7; and Levere, “Science and Medicine.”

principle of contagion” (13d 28–25). Priestley had successfully isolated oxygen gas and nitrous oxide, and suggested that a comparison of nitric oxide (a substance he believed would not support life) and oxygen would give a greater understanding of respiration (Priestley iii, 321).<sup>103</sup> Davy ultimately disproved the view that nitrous oxide was poisonous and fatal. Having formed a method of producing it in a relatively pure state, he undertook investigations and various trials into its physiological effects. His experiments began on animals for the effects of different gases on their vitality, such as carbon monoxide, and then trialed a mixture of air and nitrous oxide on himself, patients and visitors to the Institute. He found that inhaling the mixture through a breathing apparatus produced exhilarating sensations and induced physical changes such as heightened hearing.<sup>104</sup> The circle of writers, physicians, doctors, engineers, and politicians who tried the gas gave accounts of their own experiences for Davy’s 1800 publication of his findings in *Researches*.

Visitors enjoyed the physiological and mental effects of the nitrous oxide and spread news of their experiences. Southey, one of the first to try it, wrote to his brother on 12 July 1799 exclaiming “such a Gas has Davy discovered [...] Oh, excellent air-bag! Tom, I am sure in heaven must be this wonder-working gas of delight!” (SL 421). The green silk “air-bag” from which visitors breathed became the symbol of physiological and mental pleasure for visitors (Jay, *Atmosphere* 175–6). However, gas chemistry during this period also had a political dimension from which Davy sought to disassociate himself after leaving Bristol for a career at the Royal Institution in London. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Burke described the uncontrolled and potentially destructive “action” of

---

<sup>103</sup> See Levere, “Science and Medicine” 197.

<sup>104</sup> Davy commented on his sublime experiences with Nitrous oxide in his letters and notes in his notebooks that were later published by John Davy. For example, see notebook 20b, 133. For more on Davy’s use of the sublime to describe his self-experimentation, see Ruston, *Creating* 166–70.

“the spirit of liberty” of the French revolutionaries and their supporters using metaphors drawn from gas chemistry, in one instance, comparing them to a “wild gas” that had unsettled the bonds of society (Burke, *Reflections* 8; Jay, *Atmosphere* 4–5). Golinski has explored how conservative writers of the 1790s viewed the nitrous oxide trials in particular as a sign of delusion and radicalism shaped by Enlightenment philosophy (*Science* 172–3). Writers in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and *The Sceptic* found the Pneumatic Institute’s work to be linked with the materialism and “stagnant pool of French Atheism” of radical clubs (W. Reid 39).<sup>105</sup> According to anti-Jacobins and Anglican preachers, such radicals “would make us believe, that particles, of inert matter, from their chaotic state, could dance into form and order” (Whiting 19). In other words, the nitrous oxide trials were judged as a materialist inquiry into the human body and mind that disobeyed divine, and by implication, monarchical power (Golinski, *Science* 172).

One such response to these trials was a poem in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which described the intermixing of literary and scientific social circles at the Pneumatic Institute, linked by their transgressive political ideologies. The Tory satirical magazine published the anonymous poem titled “The Pneumatic Revellers: An Eclogue” in 1800. For Golinski, the poem set the tone for further satirical attacks. Although signed anonymously, few have discussed the fact that the poem was written by Polwhele, the same Cornish historian and poet as discussed in Chapter One.<sup>106</sup> The poem was re-published in Polwhele’s multi-volume collection *Poems* in 1810, which included in its second volume Polwhele’s now most well-known poem “The Unsex’d Female” and a sonnet to Davy, titled “To Professor Davy 1808” (5: 1–17; 2: 36–44, 59). In contrast to his 1800 satirical

---

<sup>105</sup> For more on these criticisms, see Hunt and Jacob 508–9; and Beer, *Romantic* 9

<sup>106</sup> For more on the “Pneumatic Revellers” poem see Rose 1193–4; Wright 350; and Golinski “Literature” 33. For more on Polwhele’s “Unsex’d Female,” see Calé and W. Stafford 2–34.

poem on Davy's radical social circles in Bristol, Polwhele's 1808 poem to Davy describes "The jealous muse" who is awed by Davy's advancing "chemic powers" (1, 10). Polwhele showed his sonnet to Davy, stating in his 1831 publication *Biographical Sketches of Cornwall* that Davy, who had contributed to Southey's *Annual Anthology* in Bristol, "was much pleased" with Polwhele's verse (25). This comment was in a footnote under Polwhele's "The Pneumatic Revellers: An Eclogue," revealing that Polwhele knew of Davy's published poems and research at the Institute, and that his reputation had changed since leaving Bristol.

Similar to Polwhele's conservative ideals in "The Unsex'd Female," "The Pneumatic Revellers" describes a seemingly fantastical nitrous oxide inhalation trial, parodying the literary characters involved and their writings, such as Southey's "Eclogues."<sup>107</sup> As I explain during my analysis of Davy's nitrous oxide poem, Polwhele ridicules their inability to fully describe the phenomenon. His criticism is presumably a response to Davy's scientific notes and visitors' accounts published in *Researches* that showed their attempts to describe what seemed to be the indescribable (Jay, *Atmosphere* 208–9). Davy's manuscript poem "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" also claims his inability to fully describe the physically and mentally overwhelming experience. Yet unlike some of these other writers and reports, Davy also implicitly suggests that this experience is a sublime moment that can come under his command.

Given that I read Davy's poetry from the perspective of his medical knowledge, it is useful to explore the extent to which Davy investigated the physiological effects of factitious airs on both animals and humans. While Jay has paid attention to the accounts of the patients, Stephanie Snow has also briefly

---

<sup>107</sup> Southey's use of the eclogue has been explored by Bernhardt-Kabisch *Robert* 69–72; S. Curran, *Poetic* 95–9; and Duff 67. Also, see Southey, *Poems* 2: 183; Southey, *Minor* 2:157–66; Canning 11–13; Christopher Smith "Robert"; and Bainbridge, *British* 94.

explored Davy's meticulous work with animals to discover the depressive effects of nitrous oxide (*Blessed* 11–4).<sup>108</sup> Of the four sections in *Researches*, Davy devoted one section to the effects of breathing nitrous oxide in animals, recounting what seem to be often harrowing encounters when experimenting with animals. He described the process of placing animals of different sizes and ages into jars of water, which would displace half an inch of nitrous oxide “so as to prevent [the] mouth from resting in the water” (336). With two or three witnesses, Davy observed and recorded the convulsions and “senseless” condition of the animals, and removed them from the jars to examine the pace of their hearts and respiration. He found that some animals recovered and some were “perfectly dead” (340).

His medical knowledge of the use of animals in these trials and their physiology remains largely unexplored by historians of science and medicine. Davy's *Researches* conveys his extensive work with subjects that ranged from cats, kittens, injured dogs “in great pain,” rabbits, guinea-pigs, mice, a hen, a goldfinch, water-lizards and fishes, to insects, such as drones, butterflies, and flies (337–42; 362–72). After these experiments, Davy dissected the animals to understand any pathology in their internal organs, such as discoloration of the lungs or the blood in the heart (347–54). Davy repeated this process with “Hydrogene,” water, and mixtures of nitrous oxide with other gases to compare the effects with the respiration of nitrous oxide (343). Davy also examined the effects of nitrous oxide on human blood, “Having four or five times had the opportunity of bleeding people in the arm for trifling complaints” and placing samples of their blood in phials (355). He found that when nitrous oxide was passed through the blood, it became purple (374–87). After his research on animals showed that

---

<sup>108</sup> Jay has also given a brief overview of Davy's animal experiments (*Atmosphere* 176–7).

nitrous oxide was not instantly lethal, Davy explored the effects of the gas on himself. His exhalations were used to understand the chemical changes that took place in his lungs, although the practice eventually became an addiction. From his lengthy descriptions in *Researches*, it is evident that Davy had a careful approach to his physiological experiments with the animals and in his records of the effect of the gas on himself while under different conditions (477–91). I will later focus on Davy's poetry to illustrate that, having worked with and recorded his use of various animal models in his experiments, he continued to explore the physical experiences of pain and pleasure in his literary writing.

What remained unpublished in *Researches* was the extent to which Davy also witnessed the physical pain of suffering patients as the Institute's medical superintendent. I later demonstrate that this experience influences his presentation of life and death in his poetry. In 1799, Beddoes's *Notice of Some Observations on the work of the Pneumatic Institute* stated that Davy's role was an important step given "the number of invalid paupers, that have reported" to Beddoes who needed new remedies (6). Beddoes also described the cases of their patients who were asked to take nitrous oxide given their history of paralysis and fits, such as a woman "aged 55" who has had "two strokes of the palsy — the first three years ago" (41). Davy was consulted on the admittance of patients and Beddoes tasked his colleagues to draw up reports of the cases. They noted the changes in their patients' physiology after they inspired the gas, such as their pulse and changes in the symptoms of their disease (40–5). Although scholarship has so far focused on Davy's chemical research and the nitrous oxide trials, more could be done on his work with patients.

A medical note in notebook 13c, which contains the three manuscript poems closely examined in this chapter, gives an indication of Davy's perception of the

patients' experiences of pain.<sup>109</sup> In this note, he wrote his observations when visiting a sick patient. Davy first described the woman's delirium in imagining a life after death and extrapolated from this the question of whether her vision proved the physiological theory that there is connection between heated blood and the mind's ideas. His use of language informs my later reading of his poetry that examines his presentation of physical pain and transcendence:

~~Mr. D had visited early in the morning~~ Her fever had [\*] diminished during the night a species of delirium which indicated a pleasurable state of mind a reaction of the soul succeeded to it. Her eyes were closed her cheek was pale her murmuring life were constantly articulating with smiles  
Mr D cautiously entered the room one of her hands hung carefully out of the bed in softly grasping it [\*] feel the [\*\*] awoke.—  
She first fixed her eyes on the sun which shone through a white cloud full into the window of her apartment [*sic*]. She then turned them animated with a celestial fire on Mr D. We are in heaven she cried. Eternally blessed spirit we are soaring thro the feilds [*sic*] of celestial glory. the darkness of the grave the pains of death we shall remember no more.—

Quere? does not the blood in circulating through the brain & nerves supply the ultimate atoms to the mind which contribute ideas— (13c 30–1)

Davy's use of the third person followed the style of most medical case histories in this period that sought to show a balance between a sympathetic connection with the patient and a dispassionate objectivity.<sup>110</sup> As Mary Fissell has explained, case studies often used language of both sensibility and disinterestedness as a reflection of the power relations between doctor and patient, where authority resided in the practitioner (*Patients* 148–70). Such studies can be found in Beddoes's case histories written while working at the Pneumatic Institute.<sup>111</sup> Davy's description, however, goes beyond compassionate sympathy and recalls his poetry analysed in my previous chapter, such as his descriptions of Theora in his published poem "Extract of an unfinished poem" that focuses on her eyes and

---

<sup>109</sup> Fullmer has examined Davy's many notes on pain in his notebooks at Bristol (*Young* 139–43). Coleridge asked Davy for his theory on pain in a letter on 2 December 1800, which is in the archives of the Royal Institution.

<sup>110</sup> For more on the literary structure of case histories, see Fissell 17; and Rosner 191–2.

<sup>111</sup> See Beddoes, *Rules*.

the colour of her cheeks. As in Davy's poems in the *Annual Anthology*, his note on the patient made connections between the mind, body and transcendence in his careful study of her physiognomy. He found he could understand her "state of mind" from her expression, sensing a "celestial fire" that seemed to burn within her. She is described as having envisaged her own afterlife using the language of a Longinian sublime of uplifting or "soaring" that fascinated Davy in "Sons of Genius."

The similarity between Davy's poems and his notes confirms George Rousseau's argument that literary criticism of medical case studies can illustrate the interaction between medicine and literature in this period (*Enlightenment* 8–10). Indeed, Davy's imaginative description of the female patient, who most likely suffered from consumption, is another "glamorous" image of the condition that was popular in Romantic writing (Lawlor 1). In his 1799 essay on pulmonary consumption, or what we now call tuberculosis, Beddoes complained about writings on consumptive patients that romanticised the ailment as "a state on which the fancy may agreeably repose and in which not much more misery is felt, than is expressed by a blossom, nipped by untimely frosts" (*Essay* 6). While, for Beddoes, the patients revealed the cancer-like degradation of the human body, as Lawlor has shown, Romantic period writers also viewed consumption as a "soft" and "beautiful" death, rendering female consumptives as heroines (31, 58–9). Consumptives before their deaths seemed to be "in the high vigour of life" that could, in Lawlor's words, "signify the triumph of the spirit" (Joseph Butler 30; Lawlor 68). Davy's note on the patient is an example of Beddoes's complaint in the way Davy described the patient's condition as heightening her "spirit" and giving her "a delirium" that "indicated a pleasurable state." Like many descriptions of consumptives, Davy's patient undergoes a slow deterioration that gives her time to

envisage transcendent ideas of an afterlife for a “good” Christian death (Lawlor 64–5). Davy’s account adds to Lawlor’s argument that the apparently positive symptoms generated an idealised folklore of consumption.

However, as shown by Davy’s note below the description, her transcendent experience can be described in terms of her physiology. The episode led to Davy’s enquiry into the organisation of the body and the nature of inspiration and the mind. Following Hartley’s theories of irritability, Davy suggested that the passionate demeanour of the consumptive patient may have been due to the heat of blood, since it supplies the ideas to the brain.<sup>112</sup> This note suggests that Davy’s extensive physiological work at the Pneumatic Institute involved both his creative, poetical side and enquiring curiosity as a medico-chemical researcher. As I will reveal in the rest of my chapter, such links between a physiological understanding of the body and ideas on the literary representation of transcendence are all the more apparent in Davy’s poetry. Davy’s work on the physiology of animals and humans defined life in terms of the somatic experiences of the body, yet as I discuss below, his poetry shows that he still held on to the idea of transcendence using an embodied sublime.

My argument that Davy presents an embodied sublime in his poetry follows and extends scholarship on the interrelations between Romantic literature and medicine. Such scholarship uses eighteenth-century texts that also influenced Davy’s writings, such as the works of Locke, Hartley and Brown.<sup>113</sup> In particular, I draw upon recent work on the “neural” or “physiological” sublime, which claims that Romantic period accounts of the sublime emphasised the corporeality of such an experience by drawing on physiological and medical texts on the body and

---

<sup>112</sup> Davy reiterates his ideas from his early “Experimental Essays” that connected the external world to ideas via the light travelling along the nerves of the body.

<sup>113</sup> As a starting point on Romantic literature and medicine scholarship, see Allard.

mind (Richardson, *Neural* 24; Ryan).<sup>114</sup> Critics argue that Romantic period writers used ideas from the sciences on the brain to present sublime experiences as universal corporeal moments, contrasting with the idealism of Kant.<sup>115</sup> As Vanessa Ryan has explained, Burke believed that the sublime “presents us with our limitedness,” defining the sublime experience by our physiological responses (279). Burke gave “primacy” to sensation (Ryan 272). Kant on the other hand “erases the body” (Mellor, *Romanticism* 88). His conception of the sublime experience was that of a rationalisation of a perceived disorder of mental faculties, which precluded the sublime aesthetic from sensuous experience.

In response to Kantian readings of Romantic poetry, Noel Jackson has argued that there was also an “embodied aesthetic response” in Romantic literary writing, which complicates Kantian readings of Romantic poetry (*Science* 109). For example, as Jackson has shown in Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” Wordsworth seeks to elevate himself from “mere physical functioning” of “sensations sweet” to a transcendence of a “purer mind” (lines 28, 30; Jackson, *Science* 144). Adding to these body-centred conceptions of Romantic writing, Richardson claims that while Kant contrasted himself to Burke, who proposed a physiological sublime, Romantic poetry could combine both these ideas (Kant 158; Richardson, *Neural* 29).<sup>116</sup> A physiological experience of the sublime could lead to a self-consciousness of the brain’s capabilities that is similar to a Kantian transcendence.

---

<sup>114</sup> According to Sha, there was a dominant, “neurological understanding of the body” in the Romantic period that influenced literary writing (*Perverse* 82–95; “Towards”). The interrelations between Davy’s medical work and poetry can also be understood in the context of Noel Jackson’s argument that the “experiential vocabulary of Romantic poetry” was a “site for the self-conscious negotiation of competing ideological claims and cultural practices” (*Science* 14). The origins “of sense or idea[s]” preoccupied Burke and Kant, whose works were refused a “hasty reconciliation or conflation” in Romantic literary work (14).

<sup>115</sup> Richardson, *Neural* 25; Jackson, *Science* 7.

<sup>116</sup> Vandenabeele has argued that Burke was one of the many critics that Kant repudiates in *Critique of Judgement*.

Richardson's most pertinent idea for my chapter is that the physiological and transcendent sublime can coalesce as a matrix of shared ideas in the moment of transcendence. While Kant claims that the sublime leads to a transformative understanding and that reason can surpass the imagination, the neural sublime in literary writing presents this transformation as beginning after the realisation of the capabilities of the brain (*Neural* 29). However, unlike Richardson, I argue that Davy conceived of an embodied sublime that is closer to Kant than Burke in Richardson's suggested matrix for the British Romantic neural sublime. Following Burke's conception of the sublime, I will now illustrate that for Davy the experience originates in the somatic experiences of the body, which leads to a mental process of transcendence. Davy's research into Brunonian medicine and related psycho-physiological theories of Locke, Thomas Reid, Hartley and Jean-Jacques Rousseau helped Davy define the sublime moment.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, as I discuss below, Davy's poem "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" subtly suggests that the somatic effects of gas inhalation offered a controllable sublime that uses Longinian, Burkean and Kantian conceptions of the sublime.

## 2.2 Rhetoric in "On breathing the Nitrous oxide"

When researching the chemistry and medical applications of factitious airs, Davy also wrote an eight-line verse titled "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" (13c 5–6).<sup>118</sup> In the poem, Davy explores the seemingly spontaneous feeling of the sublime when the body experiences the ecstasy of inhaling nitrous oxide. The speaker describes the effects of the gas on his body and face, and suggests his inadequacy in conveying the astounding effects. In contrast to Polwhele's

---

<sup>117</sup> For more on the influences that shaped the "neural" conception of the sublime for both Davy and Romantic literary writing, such as Hartley, Kant, Burke and Reid, see Richardson, *Neural* 100–1; Noel Jackson, *Science* 108–110, 129; and Budge, *Romanticism* 52–3, 79.

<sup>118</sup> For my transcription, see Appendix 2a.

descriptions of the uncontrolled, overzealous passions of the radical circle taking part in the nitrous oxide trials, Davy carefully constructs a poem on the sublime experience from the position of a speaker who can make the experience seem comprehensible and controlled.

Although Davy did not give the poem a date, it was most probably written after August 1799 when he had started self-experimenting with the gas. It was also most likely composed before the summer as it appears in a notebook before “The Spinosist,” which as I explain below may have been written after Davy had met Coleridge. Jay has stated that Davy’s Kantian ideas are apparent in “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” in the way the poem and his notes in his notebooks explore the “mechanics of perception and sensation,” where the mind becomes independent of sensory impressions (*Atmosphere* 195). However, I demonstrate that an understanding of the literary mechanics of the poem can reveal the way in which Davy implies that the sublime can be a regulated physiological experience. Connecting Longinian and Burkean ideas, Davy suggests that the sublime can seem spontaneous, but is both physiological and self-conscious.

There is one manuscript version of this poem, which is widely used by scholars in their analyses, and which shows little re-working. We might ask why there is only one version, since, as I reveal below, Davy reworked his other Bristol poems “The Spinosist” and excerpts of “Moses” decades later. Davy may have chosen to leave “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” in one version in a notebook since he later distanced himself from such an experience given the political affiliations of gas chemistry. Although in May 1802, Davy, now at the Royal Institution, was ridiculed in a Gillray cartoon for his nitrous oxide research, my next chapter will explain that Davy’s lectures distanced the chemist from such politics by presenting him as a powerful and persuasive chemist (Golinski, *Science*

201).<sup>119</sup> The neatness of the single version of the nitrous oxide poem, I argue, lends itself to the idea that the poem is a self-conscious construction of spontaneity and a product of Davy's literary persona as a controlled chemist.

Davy's poem "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" appears to have been written during a self-induced trial. I explain that while the poem self-consciously implies that this is an overwhelmingly sudden moment, Davy's careful language conveys that it is linguistically comprehensible by him, thereby asserting his authoritative perspective. His careful use of language is apparent in the title. The participle verb "breathing" maintains a sense of timelessness, yet the verb also upholds a sense of presence and currency. From the outset, Davy excludes a definiteness of time, and thus suggests that this is a personal and impulsive piece of poetry. In the single stanza, Davy also celebrates his inward subjective experiences through a number of images and negations in a highly structured manner. The first stressed syllable "Not" instantly suggests the inadequacy and inability of the poem to convey the speaker's experience. The poem begins by forcefully awakening the reader into this new experience. Moreover, the laughing gas experience unsettles the pentameter with an extra long syllable — by "wakening" it linguistically revitalises the poem and physically jolts the speaker into an unknown encounter.

After this "wakening" of the metre the poem revels in the "wild desire" of the moment, listing how this new experience affects various parts of his body. Yet the poem also presents it as a regulated moment. Davy writes "Yet is my cheek," "Yet are my eyes," "Yet is my ~~murmuring~~ mouth" (4, 5, 6). The repetition of "Yet," and the many specific physical descriptions suggest this is an overwhelming sensation that cannot be linguistically located in a single place. The sublime experience overwhelms the speaker in feelings of "rapture" and surprising "mightiness," where

---

<sup>119</sup> An original print is at the Royal Institution (RIIC 0488).

negations confuse his senses and his ability to describe the moment fully (2, 8). Kant described the sublime experience as a seeking of order in response to the excess of phenomenon that bears meaning (134–5). Similarly, Davy revels in the physicality of the moment and in the inward visceral experience. He is stimulated and revitalised, suggesting that nitrous oxide can excite the body in terms of Brunonian medicine. He “burns,” is “warm,” “filled,” “replete,” and “clad” (3, 4, 5, 6, 8). The poem is about the primacy of feelings that Davy unifies into a single almost transcendent moment so as to find a “new born mightiness” (8). Davy’s visceral descriptions and the lack of context for the poem invite the reader to experience the moment with him. Polwhele’s “The Pneumatic Revellers” seems to react to similar descriptions of those who took part in the trial, mocking Southey’s incapacity to locate a singular feeling to represent his experience: “At my wits end, I totter – I shall fall / No — I am rapt beyond myself — I feel / At my extremities delicious thrillings!” (99–101).

Perhaps in deliberate contrast to the reports of the trials published in Davy’s *Researches* that foreshadowed Polwhele’s response, Davy presents the experience as self-contained; it does not transgress physical, aesthetic, and by implication, political boundaries. Despite the suggested spontaneity of the poem, Davy’s experience is carefully formed with iambic pentameters and an alternate rhyming scheme that suggests a regulation of the sublime moment, echoing both a Burkian and a Longinian conception of the sublime. The last four lines end with dental plosives of “filled,” “sound,” “thrilld” and “around,” which imply the finitude of his feelings, recalling a Burkian perspective on the sublime as a physiological experience that presents the boundaries or “limitedness” of the body, to use Ryan’s terminology (279). Davy’s self-conscious rhetoric and use of form convey his control over both the experience and his language, which recalls Longinus’s

rhetorical sublime. As already explored in my previous chapter, the Longinian sublime outlined “a kind of eminence or excellence of discourse” that focused on the staging of an intense expression of emotion that “needs the curb as well as the spur” (Longinus 143, 144). Longinus emphasised the source of the sublime as “greatness of the spirit they reveal,” which produces and controls the language of the sublime moment (178). As stated above, and also according to Ruston, Davy’s “new born mightiness around” in “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” suggests a Kantian sublime since Davy becomes conscious of his physiological limits “around” himself, and transcends into “a new, more powerful state” (Ruston, *Creating* 160). However, Davy’s poem carefully constructs the spontaneous moment through the rhetorical sublime of Longinus. This careful rhetoric implicitly elevates Davy as an authoritative speaker.

“On breathing the Nitrous oxide” also engages with eighteenth-century philosophical writing about language and ideas. The speaker assesses the influence, interactions, and associations of nature on his own mind, which lead to a regulatory power that is reflected in the careful metre. His construction of the poem echoes the theories of Locke’s and Hartley’s. Shortly after deciding to leave Cornwall for Bristol, Davy noted Locke’s theory of ideas, namely his example of the “idea of a mathematical Triangle,” which finds that “wherever we see a peculiar figure [...] it directly raises by association the complex idea” (13e 32). For Locke, knowledge is rooted in the link between ideas and the reality of things (378). “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” is perhaps a product of this theory, given that the descriptions of the experience that affect specific parts of his body presents this as a complex somatic moment. Davy connects the different parts of his body to describe the overwhelming yet revelatory moment, which I suggest is aimed to ensure this is a shared, sensory and controlled experience. In a letter to Coleridge

on 8 June 1799, two months after starting to inhale nitrous oxide, Davy again draws upon Locke's and Hartley's ideas on association of ideas to declare to the poet:

You were born to connect Man with Nature by the intermediate links of harmonious sounds & to teach him to disconnect [*sic*] his feelings from unmeaning words. (*DL*)

Davy regarded Coleridge's poetry in terms of associationism, where "links" between words can bring about ideas that unify man with nature. The chemist's consciousness of the musicality and significance of words in poetry suggest that in his "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" Davy linguistically connects the mind's feeling of transcendence with his varied somatic experiences in order to present a well-formed and meaningful poem for the reader.

My argument contrasts to that of scholars who have sought to interpret "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" as written whilst Davy was undergoing a self-experimental trial. Knight claims that nitrous oxide stimulated the chemist to write this poem, implying the gas led to this piece of verse, and thereby romanticising the scientific process (Knight, *Humphry* 37; Lawrence 219).<sup>120</sup> While I disagree with this and Holmes's view that Davy wrote the poem wanting to "see how far his linguistic skills were affected" by nitrous oxide, I do follow Holmes' suggestion that the poem was written by Davy to explore how the experience "could be imaginatively described" (Holmes, *Age* 260). Holmes went so far as to call the poem a "form of scientific data" since it contained "surprisingly precise physiological information" giving "empirical evidence of his mental state." The poem creatively explores the mental effects of nitrous oxide, yet Holmes could have gone further to discover how Davy engages with his knowledge of the

---

<sup>120</sup> Davy's poem can be examined in the context of Romantic intoxication, drugs, and visions. For example, see Ruston, "High'." For more criticism on Romantic literary writing and intoxication, see John Beer, *Romantic Consciousness* 78–105; Russett 135–51; and Milligan.

philosophies of Locke, Hartley, or Longinus. As with his *Annual Anthology* poems, Davy's "On breathing the Nitrous oxide" is a nexus of literary and medical ideas that Davy appropriates and redeploys to state his own case for the sublime and controllable effects of natural philosophy.

Such structuring of the mind, or "thought regulation" as Gavin Budge has termed it, is evident in Romantic period writing on psychological pathologies (*Romanticism* 28).<sup>121</sup> Budge extends Mee's ideas on "enthusiasm" into neurological theories of the supernatural sublime in Romantic literary texts. According to Budge, Ann Radcliffe's gothic novels employed a "formal enactment" of "self-control" that encouraged both enthusiastic reaction and self-consciousness from the characters and readers (*Romanticism* 29, 44). Radcliffe critiqued the Burkean sublime as a terrifying physiological sensation that "imprisons the subject in the sensations of their own nervous system" (Budge, *Romanticism* 35). Instead, she promoted self-reflexivity in her protagonists who possessed self-regulation enough to mirror their "stronger and more self-consistent moral development" (47). Indeed, Mee has argued that such anxieties in reconciling "Enthusiasm and feeling profound and vehement" with "judgement ever awake" is also apparent in Romantic poetry such as in Coleridge's "Religious Musings" first published in 1796 (Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 2: 17; Mee 133). In "On breathing the Nitrous oxide," exhilarating pleasure can be a regulated sublime experience that invigorates the body and renews the regulatory function of the mind.

While scholars have suggested that Davy's poem may have been written when Davy was under the influence of the gas, attention to the poem's literary mechanics surely reveal that this was not the case. Although the poem is deemed

---

<sup>121</sup> Jon Mee, who notes that while political discourse in the 1790s was conscious of the zealous "enthusiasm" of radicals in the wake of the French Revolution, there was a concerted effort to show the discipline of enthusiasm in literary texts, informs Budge's work. For more on this, see Mee 82–128; and Golinski, "Experimental" 20.

a spontaneous piece of expression, linguistically and materially the eight line poem may not be as impulsive as it has been argued. I suggest that Davy's poem is a self-conscious construction of spontaneity that manifests his readings of eighteenth-century theories of the mind and different conceptions of sublime. His careful literary structure suggests his capability to regulate this experience and to reconfirm his own perspective of a sublime genius who can make literal his own transcendent experiences. Davy's poems "The Spinosist" and "Moses," as I now discuss, were also concerned with the relationship between physiological experiences and transcendence during instances of pain and death.

### **2.3 Life, Death and Rebirth in "The Spinosist"**

The first extant version of "The Spinosist" in notebook 13c demonstrates that Davy's conception of life and the sublime was shaped by his reading of prevailing eighteenth-century philosophies on life, the body and the mind, including Spinosism (7–10).<sup>122</sup> I argue that Davy combines Kantian, Platonist, Spinosist, and materialist ideas in his poem in order to try to comprehend the different moments of the sublime in all of humankind's experiences. In "The Spinosist," Davy's presentation of these sublime moments does not conform to a singular conception of the sublime, resulting in a nexus of ideas that is unfocused and suggests his struggle to figure the place of the body during transcendent moments.

The poem was most probably written after Davy had met Coleridge in July 1799 since, as I discuss after giving a summary of the poem, Davy may have learned of Spinosism from the poet. "The Spinosist" can be deemed important in Davy's poetical oeuvre given that before publishing two versions, Davy read out the poem at Coleridge's request during a dinner in Clement Carlyon's home in

---

<sup>122</sup> For my transcription of this poem see Appendix 2b.

London in 1803 (Carlyon 1: 199). In contrast to the single stanzaic “On breathing the Nitrous oxide,” “The Spinosist” is written in ten quatrains with an alternate rhyme scheme and does not focus on a subjective person’s single experience. Instead, Davy comments on the formative experiences of humankind’s life and death. While “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” shows no reworking, the manuscript version of “The Spinosist” features retrospective insertion of words, deletions of lines, and insertion of numbers to denote the reordering of a stanza, suggesting that this version can be deemed as an early draft, if not the first.

At the end of this section, I will examine the ways in which Davy gradually lengthened the poem to thirty-four stanzas. After producing at least three different versions of the poem, it is clear from the extant version published anonymously in 1823 with the title “Life” that Davy eventually distances himself from his early ideas on life as a physiological experience and a materialist immortality (Baillie, *Collection* 156–62). Indeed, Davy’s research changed after 1801. Leaving Bristol and his research on the medical applications of chemistry, Davy became an eminent chemist and renowned lecturer at the Royal Institution in London. I will explain the ways in which the 1823 poem, “Life,” moderates references to the singular experiences of a living or decaying body to focus instead on the universal transcendence of the mind.<sup>123</sup> The substantial modifications from the early notebook version results in a published poem that concentrates on orthodox ideals and expands upon his all-encompassing theory on the way in which one can be fulfilled in life. As Davy’s focus shifts from medicine to electrochemistry after leaving Bristol, so does his use of literary images of the body.

---

<sup>123</sup> As examined in Chapter Five, we see these concerns in Davy’s poetry in the last phase of his life.

First, I explore Davy's presentation of the sublime and transcendence in "The Spinosist." I demonstrate that the poem brings together Spinosist philosophy on the immanent power of nature (which Spinoza also used to mean God) and life as a bodily experience to claim immortality for both the body and mind. The poem begins with a natural scene that activates and is activated by a will in nature, which inspires and empowers the speaker. Overall, the poem suggests that nature and life are characterised by their mutability. Indeed, Davy claims in the first line of the second quatrain: "All, all is change" (5). The following stanzas explore the changes of natural phenomena, and the cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth. Despite the inevitability of mortality, nature is given back "her stolen powers" after the death of the individual (38). The body returns to eternal earth and the mind is reabsorbed into nature. The language of returning suggests that natural forces endow humankind with both its material body and the immaterial "powers" that inhabit the body, alluding to thought and emotion.

The title, "The Spinosist," refers to Benedict de Spinoza and his philosophy of God's immanence that suggests a pantheistic interpretation of the world.<sup>124</sup> His most famous work *Ethics*, posthumously published in 1677, received immediate criticism for its defence of secular government and politics. Davy may have been inspired by Spinoza's philosophy that law and scientific understanding should be founded on self-evident truths revealed through the "natural light of reason" (Spinoza, *Tractus* 119–120). I explain below that scholars have already explored "The Spinosist" in order to reveal Davy's fascination with light. First, I show the way in which Davy drew upon Spinoza's philosophy on God and nature in his

---

<sup>124</sup> Coleridge knew of the late eighteenth century debate amongst German philosophers concerning pantheistic readings of the Bible, including the Spinosist perspective (Class 23, 129). See Berkeley 24–37, 56–67.

poem, and that this philosophical framework may have been a product of Coleridge's influence on Davy.

Coleridge had been interested in Spinosistic philosophy before he was introduced to Davy. We can understand Coleridge's attraction to Spinoza in his letter to Wordsworth in October 1799 on their joint poetical venture, the *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge imagined that his next poem would draw upon Spinoza's work:

If I begin a poem of Spinoza, thus it should begin: I would make a pilgrimage to the burning sands of Arabia, or etc etc to find the Man who could explain to me there can be a oneness, there be infinite Perceptions — yet there must be a oneness, not an intense Union but an Absolute Unity. (Coleridge, *Notebooks* 1: 556)

Coleridge found that Spinoza's unorthodox ideals could be framed by an imaginative reach into distant regions. In doing so, Coleridge could explore an understanding for all that is and could be potentially experienced. Spinoza's idea of the synonymous relationship between God and nature allowed Coleridge to recast Christian views with direct worship to the natural world. For Coleridge, Spinoza's philosophy could inform his belief of a unified power that harmonises and gives intelligence to the world full of the "infinite." This power is ongoing and active: a "Unity" rather than a "Union." Spinoza's influence on Coleridge is also evident in his *Biographia Literaria* in which he celebrates the rationalism behind Spinoza's ideas on God (1: 148). However, Coleridge found difficulty in reconciling what was viewed as the pantheism of Spinoza with his belief in a personal Christian God.<sup>125</sup> He claimed that in the past his "head was with Spinoza, though my whole heart remained with Paul and John," of the Bible (*Biographia* 1: 196).

Davy may have emulated Coleridge's poetical plans of October 1799 in both his poems "The Spinosist" and in the extracts of "Moses" that are later examined in

---

<sup>125</sup> Following on from Piper's work on Romantic pantheism, McFarland has been the authority for continuing studies on Coleridge and Spinosist pantheism, having argued that the poet was preoccupied with such a philosophy his entire life. For more on Spinoza's influence, see Berkeley; and Levinson, "Motion"; and "Of Being."

this chapter. Moreover, he may well have been drawn to Spinoza's definition of the mind in *Ethics*, the idea that ideas are "conceptions" rather than "perceptions" (63). Spinoza differentiates between these two words since perception suggests that "the Mind is passive to its object," while "conception seems to express an activity of the Mind" (63). As I discuss below for Davy's poetry at Bristol and in the rest of his oeuvre, Davy echoes this idea by emphasising the power of the active mind to understand and therefore become unified with nature. Moreover, as explored in the final section of my chapter, similar to Coleridge's plans on Spinosism and the Arabian Desert, in Davy's epic on Moses, the Hebrew prophet makes a pilgrimage across the desert to seek out a philosopher on the oneness of the universe.

Coleridge, already one of the conduits through which Davy could have come to know of Kant, may well have also spoken of Spinosist philosophy during their conversations in Clifton (Haney 175). Coleridge and Davy met sometime around the end of July 1799 or the beginning of August, and their friendship soon developed when Davy visited Coleridge in London at the end of November (Lefebure 97). Fullmer argued that Coleridge scarcely visited Bristol from 1798 and that Davy and Coleridge's friendship in Bristol was conducted primarily through letters, yet there is no evidence that the two discussed Spinoza in their correspondence (*Young* 135–6). While Levere has suggested that intellectual collaboration and philosophical discussion of chemistry typified the relationship between Davy and Coleridge, I argue that "The Spinosist" also conveys Davy's adoption and transformation of Coleridge's philosophical ideas (*Poetry* 20–7).

Levere notes that there are comparisons between Coleridge's and Davy's beliefs in a unified universe but this was "perhaps a little forced by [Davy's] desire to emulate his poetic friends" (*Poetry* 20). Davy's poetry, on the other hand, demonstrates that he did not merely "emulate" his literary contemporaries. He was





relates this physical experience to feeling “the forms,” alluding to both Plato’s theory of non-material forms of the mind as a higher type of reality, and to a child’s experience of a mother’s breast.<sup>128</sup> With this duality of physical and abstract meaning, the stanza hints at Davy’s aim to represent an idealised interpretation of human development. Davy blends together Spinosist philosophy, the idea that all of nature can be revered as heavenly, a similar Platonist ideal that the world is an aspect of a higher being, and the physiological experience of the sublime as “rapture warm.” This blending of philosophies recalls what Coleridge’s nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge, criticised as his “comingled” idealist theories of “Platonism, Kantianism and Christianity” (qtd in J. Jackson 462). Davy’s own interpretation of Spinoza’s ideas focuses on the physical experiences of life, where the stanza on the formative experiences of life recalls both a Kantian and Platonic philosophy. He suggests that humankind has a noumenal appreciation of a higher being that one can intuit, while also giving a Burkean perspective of the sublime that describes the moment of “transport” as a physiological experience.

Davy often reflected upon the experiences of an unborn child and the formation of the mind in his notebooks while in Bristol. In one instance, he wrote that Locke’s “doctrines of mind being a tabula rasa is false” given that “nine months” is “sufficient to form an immense No of habits” “during the formation of organs” (13d 21). Davy explored what makes up the innate, instinctive traits of humanity and viewed identity and the mind as based on the development of human growth. Indeed, Davy may well have been aware that ideas concerning the experiences of childhood framed literary and scientific discourse on identity by the many writers who converged at Bristol for the nitrous oxide trial, such as Anna

---

“trembling frame,” which might remind the reader of the Aeolian harp in his Cornwall poems, is now set amongst allusions to physical sensations of a mother’s body.

<sup>128</sup> I discuss Davy’s Platonist ideas in Chapter Five.

Letitia Barbauld.<sup>129</sup> Davy combines his knowledge of physiology and the sublime into one stanza, which reacts to and redeploys his scientific knowledge and literary concepts he would have learned from his new social circles.

Despite his abstract comparison between formative experiences and birth, Davy still also believes in the power of the natural sublime as outlined in his published poems. In “The Spinosist” he claims that there is a “joy” (20) in witnessing the mutable moments of life:

To view the heavens with ~~solar~~<morning>  
radiance ~~white~~ bright  
Majestic mingling with ~~still~~<the>  
~~blue sea~~-ocean blue.— (25–6)

Although Davy does not fully explain the way in which such a scene can compel emotion from the viewer, he alludes to the sublime as explored in his Cornwall poems. As we have seen in the previous chapter, most of his published poems open with literary images of the sublime seascape, where the moon or sun brightens the “heavens” and the sea. Such an experience can lead to a transcendent sublime. However, in “The Spinosist” Davy offers the idea that a sublime scene is one of many joyous experiences of life. The conception of the sublime as transcendent is more evident in “The Spinosist” when he contrasts nature to the impermanence of human life:

To live in forests mingled with  
~~the whole~~  
Of natures [*sic*] forms to ~~die~~ beneath  
[<sup>±</sup>] feel the breezes play  
O'er the parched ~~forehead~~<brow> to see  
the planets roll.

oer their grey head their life  
diffusing ray[.] (33–6)

<sup>129</sup> Richardson has shown that there was a Romantic literary interest in mother-infant relations (*Neural* 118–38). Indeed, Barbauld, who visited the Pneumatic Institute and took part in the nitrous oxide trials, addresses an embryonic child in a poem, later born in 1799: “What powers lie folded in thy curious frame,— / Senses from objects locked, and mind from thought!” (*Selected* 147 lines 5–6). The unborn child holds an innate and active power waiting to be set free.

Here Davy describes the possibility of a union with nature or “~~the whole~~,” which as I mentioned above, Coleridge hoped to convey in his planned poem on Spinosism. Despite hinting at a union in his deleted words, Davy contrasts the experience of being “mingled with” nature and the “planets” that roll beyond human control with the disintegration of the human body. As Kant claimed for the sublime, it must remind the viewer of humankind’s insignificant status, like the “broad, all-embracing vault” of a starry sky (152). During the sublime moment, humanity is able to reason on what is incomprehensible. For Davy, those with a “parched forehead” and “grey” heads experience the infinitude of “natures [*sic*] form.” Their mortality, subtly likened to “diffusing” light, and his reference to the overwhelming aspects of nature only hints at a Kantian sublime moment. Davy merely points to the inadequacy of decaying humankind compared to the infinitely powerful stars.

Davy later combines this feeling of nihilism with the optimistic belief that humanity can return to nature. While his published poems such as “Lines Descriptive of feelings” end in youthful hopefulness with the speaker “with heart-felt rapture” returning to his “remembered home,” “The Spinosist” offers an impersonal philosophical conclusion that death is a return to the underlying forces of nature (60, 70):

To die in agony & In many days  
 To give to Nature all her  
 stolen powers  
 Etherial [*sic*] fire to feed the solar  
   rays  
 Etherial [*sic*] dew to feed the  
 earth in showers. (37–40)

Here, death is suggested as total and absolute. The infinitive verbs “To die” and “To give” and the expansive words of “many days” and “all her stolen powers” convey the strength of forces beyond human control. In this way, the rebirth of life, through transcendence to “powers” that “feed” nature, is bittersweet. Although the

poem may imply Davy's materialist views, I propose that Davy's concern with the return of both the mind and the body after death draws on Spinosist philosophy, and suggests his consciousness of his experiences with the body at the Pneumatic Institute. The return to nature during death can be read as both a Spinosist and Platonist philosophy that nature and God are of the same subject (Spinoza, *Ethics* 46). Both the body and mind, which are the same to Spinoza, return to the earth and by implication, to God. In a letter to his Cornish friend Henry Penneck on 26 January 1799, Davy described that he has attended "two or three dissections" and had been "studying Anatomy & Medicine" with a great "number of Dr. Beddoes [*sic*] private patients" (*DL*). Davy, perhaps, could not forget the place of the body and his experiences with patients in this poem that ends on death.

Coleridge was disappointed in Davy's presentation of death. In his letter to Davy on 9 October 1800, Coleridge's comment on the notebook version of this poem highlighted their shared aesthetic as well as the differences between them.<sup>130</sup> Before describing the publication of "Christabel," Coleridge offered some advice on Davy's use of language:

In your Poem "impressive" is used for impressible or passive, is it not? — If so, it is not English — life-diffusive likewise is not English — The last Stanza introduces confusion into my mind, and despondency — & has besides been so often said by the Materialists &c, that it is not worth repeating —.

Coleridge commented on Davy's use of the word "impressive" to describe the mind, stating that the word was ungrammatical and that it suggests a passivity. Here, Coleridge refers to a line in "The Spinosist," where the mind is as changeful as the "surface of the seas" or the "moving sky" (15–6). The term "impressible" also alludes to Hartley's theory of impressibility that the senses lead to the

---

<sup>130</sup> This letter is in the Royal Institution archives. For a persuasive argument that Coleridge most likely commented on the 1799 notebook version see Ruston, "From."

formation of thoughts. In 1790, Coleridge had been inspired by Hartley's ideas that thought could be motion of the nerves, but by 1796, Coleridge began to be uncomfortable with a theory based on the passivity of the mind (Wheeler 15).<sup>131</sup> While elsewhere in his letter Coleridge praises Davy's poem, he also noted that he disliked the despondent tone of Davy's final stanza in "The Spinosist" since it repeats the already explored materialist idea that the decayed body returns to the earth. Although Levere claims that Davy emulated Coleridge, the letter reveals that Davy also held his own views on life that conflicted with Coleridge's ideals. Indeed, after receiving Coleridge's letter, Davy did not change the final stanza in his next extant version (Ruston, "From").

Critics have suggested that the poem demonstrates Davy's materialist view of death, which was most likely shaped by his knowledge of the eighteenth-century French materialistic philosophies of Julien Offray de LaMettrie when Davy was living in Cornwall.<sup>132</sup> Indeed these ideas can also be found in his poem on the tombstones of his ancestors in Cornwall, "My eye is wet with tears," which is in the same notebook as "The Spinosist." The speaker looks on at the tombstones of his family and consoles himself by believing that their death returns them to the earth, becoming one with the universe (13c 139–6).<sup>133</sup> By this means, they live again through his body. As in "The Spinosist," in this poem life for Davy is a dynamic cycle of perpetual energy. For Fullmer, "My eye is wet with tears" was attempted by an adolescent Davy, presumably seeking solace for the death of his father in 1794 when Davy was fifteen (*Young* 13). On the other hand, Fullmer also notes that the poem may have been written in 1800 since it echoes ideas from Hartley and associationism (20). As there is only one extant manuscript version, which

---

<sup>131</sup> For more on Coleridge's censuring of materialist philosophy, especially of Hartley's theories, see Class 64–6.

<sup>132</sup> For more on Davy's early materialism, see 13f 33–47; and Golinski, *Science* 172.

<sup>133</sup> For my transcription of this poem, see Appendix 2c.



illness on the Continent during his final trip on the Continent. As his own body decays, Davy considers the abstract idea of immortality.

Indeed, in Davy's final stanza on death in "The Spinosist," he again combines a Platonist notion that death is a return, "to give to Nature her stolen power," with Davy's own consciousness of the physical decay of humankind who "die in agony" (37–8). The body returns, with the mind, in a transcendence illustrating that Davy could not overlook the physical presence of the body in the process. Claiming that there is a return of the "etherial [*sic*] fire" of the mind, Davy echoes his note on his patient who became "animated with a celestial fire" and who claimed "the darkness of the grave the pains of death we shall remember no more" (13c 31). Having undertaken research on the bodies of animals and patients at Bristol, and witnessed their physical pain as part of his experiments, I suggest that the totality of life, including the process of death, in Davy's "The Spinosist" hints at a Kantian transcendence, yet remains nihilistic when figuring the place of the body in his conception of the sublime.

Davy revised, circulated, and published "The Spinosist" in his lifetime, resulting in at least another seven different extant versions.<sup>134</sup> I now explore the final published version to discuss its clearer preoccupation with transcendence. I

---

<sup>134</sup> Davy clearly felt the poem was important enough to share it with others and revise it over two decades. I have discovered a version of the poem in Clement Carlyon's memoirs that I mention above (1: 199). John Paris's and John Davy's published versions each give the poem a different title, and most likely transcribed a printed yet undated version of the poem, which is inserted in Michael Faraday's version of Paris's biography that is in the Royal Institution archives. This printed version may have been transcribed from a loose-leaf version of the poem also at the Royal Institution, which has a note at the bottom by John Davy stating: "By Humphry Davy, Esq. Prof Chem. Roy, Inst. M.S. his own writing" (RI MS HD 26H/15). On this manuscript, Davy writes in place of the title: "Space for a motto," perhaps hoping to displace his early associations with Spinosist philosophy with a title of a general expression the reader can live by. Davy later published the poem in 1823 in Baillie's collection of poems, as I explain below.

A seventh version of the poem is in the Brotherton Collection in the archives of Leeds University, but is not in Davy's handwriting. The manuscript is located in a "Collection of poems and other papers of the Crofts and Sebright families, 1670-1820," and was most likely given to Sir John Sebright, a politician and agriculturalist. After Davy's marriage to Jane Apreece in 1812, the newly-wed couple stayed at Sebright's mansion, and Davy may have gifted the poem to his new acquaintance, which was later copied into a collection of poems (Paris 220).

suggest that the changes made to the poem between 1799 and 1823 illustrate a shift away from Davy's use of images on the condition of the human body to abstract ideas of life and the afterlife. This supports my argument that Davy's notebook version of "The Spinosist" focuses on the body because of Davy's work on the medical applications of chemistry. Leaving Bristol to pursue a career in chemical research at the Royal Institution, the context of "The Spinosist" changes, and leads to revisions of the published version "Life" that casts aside his conception of the embodied sublime and the singular experiences of a living or decaying body.

Davy published the almost unrecognisable version titled "Life" anonymously in Joanna Baillie's 1823 *Collection of Poems* (156–62).<sup>135</sup> At the time of publication, Davy was President of the Royal Society. His extraordinary fame may have meant that he wanted his poetry to be recognised only by those within his own social circles. Like his previous extant versions, each stanza has four lines of iambic pentameter, yet, as Ruston has argued, there are many differences between the "youthful materialism" of the 1799 manuscript version and the published version in 1823 that suggests Davy's orthodox Christianity, and refers to his own career, achievements, and political views ("From 'The Life'").

In the 1823 published version, Davy extends his manuscript poem's initial idea of defining the life of all humankind, and offers the idea that humanity possesses a creative ambition that can be pursued in different ways. In "Life," this can be achieved through fatherhood, the quest for "the strong arm of power," the creation of a "guiding lamp" — no doubt a reference to Davy's invention of the miner's lamp — or a solitary life away from society (77, 104, 109). Despite these

---

<sup>135</sup> Baillie frequently corresponded with Jane Davy (Baillie, *Collected 1*: 494–527). Judith Slagle also shows in her biography of Baillie that Davy had been a close professional acquaintance with Baillie's brother Matthew, through whom Davy became intimate with the Baillie family (Slagle 281). Ruston has also traced Davy and the Baillie's friendship ("From").

differences, in “Life” Davy retains the 1799 version’s movement from the awakening of nature, this time enlivened by an intentional “Eternal will” that “breathes on nature,” to then describing the motherly care that humanity can first receive, the joys of life, and experiences of mortality (11, 14). However, in contrast to the 1799 notebook version, Davy emphasises and expands upon the idea that despite feelings of their own mortality, all humanity will transcend its physical and mental condition, akin to Coleridge’s conception of the sublime in his religious thoughts. Davy’s sublimity in “Life” is close to Coleridge’s natural sublime in “Hymn Before Sun-Rise” where Mont Blanc is a manifest presence of God. For Coleridge, the mountain can make the supersensible entity of God imaginable within human faculties (Stokes 111–33). Similarly, the Christian values of “Life” are suggested in the beginning of the poem with an exclamation of “lo” setting a hymn or prayer-like tone (3). Davy later contrasts the physical mortality of man with the universal knowledge of transcendence in the afterlife: “To be eternal, not a spark that flies / But a pure portion of th’ immortal breath” (42–3). Here there is a contrast between the impermanence of a “spark” (perhaps an allusion to Davy’s work in electrochemistry) to the immaterial, immortal substance within humankind, which is endowed by the “Eternal Will” (14). As Davy proposed in his 1799 manuscript version of this poem, the immaterial part of humanity continues to exist beyond the body in a Platonic supersensible realm.

Davy repeats this idea towards the close of the poem. Despite the “decaying” of human organs, life can also be an anticipation of an afterlife, when (117):

[...] mortal burdens seem to pass away  
 And in the glimm’ring through its twilight shade,  
 To hail the dawning of a glorious day. (118–20)

As our physical presence reaches its “twilight shade,” we are reborn into an entirely new condition. Unlike a Kantian transcendence where the supersensible

such as the sublime frustrates human faculties, Davy collapses the distinction between the human and the divine. He claims that the return after death can be understood with the analogy of the sun. The austere existence of mortality, which is defined as a burden, is replaced by a visionary continuation of the self, represented by sun that acts as a symbol to an afterlife.

The changes between the first extant manuscript version, "The Spinosist," and "Life," published in 1823, show a shift from Davy's exploration of the physical and mental afterlife and instead offer his visionary claims of a return to a divine realm. "The Spinosist" was most likely borne of Davy's friendship with Coleridge, who continued to support Davy's verse through comments and encouragement to share it with others. The nihilistic tone and materialist ideas of the "The Spinosist" that are no longer in "Life" were shaped by Davy's considerations on childhood development, which can be traced to Rousseau's theories, and Davy's encounters with death, perhaps after the passing of his father, as well as Davy's work with patients for the Pneumatic Institute. In "The Spinosist," Davy hopes for an afterlife for both the body and mind, which I suggest are influenced by his work on the medical efficacy of factitious airs and his observations of physical responses to pain. When this context changes, Davy's 1823 poem instead focuses on the transcendence of the immaterial aspects of all of humanity. This change in writing is perhaps a reflection of his all-encompassing lectures on chemistry, which I examine in my next chapter. As the next section argues, in 1799 Davy further explored the relationship between the body and visions of transcendence in his outline and fragments for the epic titled "Moses."

## 2.4 A Vulnerable Protagonist in the “Moses” Epic

Davy's outline and fragmentary stanzas for his epic “Moses,” which first appear seven pages after “The Spinosist,” continue to grapple with the relationship between the body and transcendence, yet in part ultimately commit to a Kantian conception of the sublime. However, as in “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” and “The Spinosist,” I illustrate that Davy still focuses on the body as a sensible entity that experiences pain, this time with an imaginative reach towards the Orient in one of the most experimental and challenging projects that Davy attempted in his oeuvre. After summarising the plot outline and extracts of “Moses,” I explain that Davy's project reflects the popularity of the Orient for writers and readers in this period, especially for the political ideas that underlined their epic narratives. As I further explain below, by the time Southey met Davy, Southey had already published a number of epics and hoped to collaborate with Coleridge, as well as Davy, on other epic poetry schemes. Davy's own epic, “Moses,” can be deemed a sign of their productive friendship. After illustrating that Davy's “Moses,” like Southey's epics explored and shared political sympathies with Jacobinical ideas, I conclude with my main argument that Davy's “Moses” seeks to suggest that intense physical experiences can lead to visionary ideas. Davy combines his knowledge of the physiology of pain by presenting Moses as a physically vulnerable character, who can ultimately experience a Kantian transcendence.

In notebook 13c, Davy writes two outlines for potential religious epics on China and on Egypt.<sup>136</sup> The latter explores the story of “Moses” and is continued through various long fragments in the same notebook. Given the fragmentary nature of this uncompleted epic, it is not surprising that only Fullmer has briefly examined the poem for its “educational moralizing” and political sentiments (*Young*

---

<sup>136</sup> For the outline of the poem on China, see 13c 2.

183). After I survey all the extant versions here, I examine three fragments for Davy's use of the pastoral and language of the sensible body in the context of Davy's preoccupation with the physical experience of pain, which he witnessed during his research on factitious airs. The first instance of "Moses" in notebook 13c presents an extensive outline for the six "books" and a character list (17, 19–21).<sup>137</sup> Book one is outlined as follows:

— Book 1st —

Zipporah & the six other daughters of Jethro <priest>  
 <Of> Midian in watering their fathers [*sic*] flock are  
 insulted by some Shepherds Moses protects  
 them & assists them in watering their  
 flocks they take him to their fathers  
 house — description of Pastoral scenery —  
 Of the patriarchal manners Jethro a  
 Man of Energy receives Moses with  
 affection — (13c 19)

Initially the "Moses" outline closely follows the *Exodus* biblical account of Moses when in Midian where he aids Zipporah and the other six daughters of Jethro while they graze their sheep. Zipporah takes Moses to her father to whom Moses recounts his past. In Davy's outline, Jethro then describes his own philosophy on the "system of the Universe" (13c 19). The outline and descriptions for the later books show that Davy hopes to elaborate on this pastoral context, explore a romance between Zipporah and Moses, with Miriam, Moses' sister, appearing as a prophetess, and Moses's dream of a "deity" (19). At this point, the epic becomes a literary and mystical reading of Christian beliefs. Davy then describes Moses' return to Egypt to speak to the "despot" Pharaoh, followed by a plague, the death of the first born, the march through the desert and the destruction of the Pharaoh and his army (21). The planned six-book epic ends with a "meeting of Jethro" and

---

<sup>137</sup> For my transcription of the "Moses" outline, see Appendix 2d.

“his counsels,” an “institution of laws” and a communion with God on Mount Sinai (20–1).

Outlining a proposed epic in this manner seemed to be common practice among Romantic writers, as is evident in a manuscript version of a proposed epic that was to be written by Southey and Coleridge. In the same year that Davy began to write “Moses,” Southey wrote to Davy on 4 May 1799 about his plans with Coleridge:

We have formed the plan of a long poem to execute in hexameters, but this you had better not mention, as it will need a strong preliminary attack to bully people out of their prejudices against innovations in metre: our story is Mohammed. (SL 433)<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, the form of the “Mohammed” outline is similar to Davy’s, where the first and second books are outlined in two separate paragraphs.<sup>139</sup> For example, Southey wrote on their manuscript:

#### 1st Book

The Deathbed of Abu Taleb—herein we develop the character of Mohammed—After the Death of Abu Taleb the Tumult, & his escape by the heroism of Ali. (Coleridge, *Poetical Part 1* 569)

Like Davy’s “Moses,” Coleridge and Southey’s epic did not go beyond an outline and fragments (568–71). Though we cannot assume that Davy had seen this outline, Davy does seem to emulate their epic in terms of content, where both epics hope to depict the escape of a heroic protagonist in an eastern land.

Of the extensive fragments of “Moses” in Davy’s notebook, three are the focus of this section, where the first appears before the outline of the epic. Here Davy writes a few lines for the first book that describe a pastoral scene, with the first line “The sun had scattered from the midst of heaven” (13c 17). The placement of the extended outline immediately below this fragment suggests that

<sup>138</sup> This letter is in the Royal Institution archives. For more on Southey’s use of hexameters, see Bernhardt-Kabisch, “When.”

<sup>139</sup> For more on their joint poetical schemes, including “Mohammed” see Hickey; and Fulford, “Coleridge’s” 56–9.

Davy hoped to continue writing the poem in this style, but wanted to outline the whole epic's movement in narrative. The second fragment I will later examine is a seventy line blank verse fragment with the first line "She led the way the maiden light of foot" (13c 24–6). Here Davy imaginatively describes Jethro, the priest of Midian, and his first meeting with Moses. At one point Davy turned the notebook over to start it again, where the third manuscript fragment analysed in this section is on the first few pages. This fragment has the first line "Now to the wanderers [*sic*] dull and tearful eye" (13c 148–5). This approximately forty-two line segment tells of Moses' physically arduous escape across the desert from the Pharaoh. The fragmentary nature of these extracts may suggest that these are the remains of Davy's fleeting indulgence with the epic genre, wherein he sought to emulate his poetic contemporaries.

However, as I explain in my final chapter, in 1827 Davy wrote out other extracts of "Moses" in his later notebooks, three of which John Davy published and which he regarded as "specimens" of his brother's epic plan (14e 71–57). John Davy also published three from notebook 13c (1: 126–8).<sup>140</sup> The fragments from the 1827 notebook depict: Miriam's divine prophecy that Moses is a "saviour to thy people;" explore the nature of sympathy and the duties of an unnamed female character; describe Moses' cradle surrounded by the tall plants of the river; and the way in which one can take inspiration from a natural landscape including "the palm-clothed hill" (6, 8). Although Davy returned to his epic poem later in life and although the fragments were later widely disseminated by John Davy in his

---

<sup>140</sup> Two of the 13c fragments are analysed in this section. The fragment found in notebook 13c published by John Davy, but not examined in my thesis has been transcribed and is in Appendix 2h. For the manuscript versions of the fragments in the 1827 notebook, see 14e 71–57. The six fragments published by John Davy are "And loud she struck the harp" (1: 126–7); "Oh, with what pleasure, with what strong delight" (1:127); "Gently flow'd on the waters, as the sun" (127); "What are the splendid visions, and the hopes" (127–8); "But often in the heavens my wandering eye" (128); and "He felt a sentiment of pleasure thrill" (128).

biography, critics have yet to read closely or analyse the context of this poem. My focus in this section is the context of epic writing and Davy's extant fragmentary outline and stanzas found in notebook 13c that demonstrate his enduring fascination with the sublime and its manifestation in the body.

My previous chapter has already shown that Davy's reading habits and friendships reveal his interest in irritability, sensibility and the sublime. Reading records from the Bristol Library Society also show that Davy was attracted to travel writing. He read Bryan Edwards's two volume *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1794) between June and August 1799 (Bristol Library Society Register B7467 110, 123). Fullmer has explained that to some extent his reading on travel and ancient history was influenced by the travel plans of Southey after he became part of Davy's new social circle at Bristol (*Young* 111). Just after Southey had left for Spain, Davy borrowed Henry Swinburne's *Travels through Spain* in January 1800, his two volume *Travels in the Two Sicilies* (1783, 1785) and George Forster's two-volume *A Voyage Round the World* a month later (Bristol Library Society Register B7468 48, 65, 73). Davy may well have felt less worldly than his contemporaries and sought to improve his knowledge of foreign lands. Davy also read about ancient histories including a report on Greek Antiquities by Lord Elgin and Edward King's *Muniments Antiqua, or Observations on Ancient Castles* (1799) (Fullmer, *Young* 112). Fullmer did not elaborate on the ways in which Davy's readings about these far-away places and ancient history fed his poetic imagination. Despite Davy's lack of travel at this point in his life, I discuss the ways in which Davy's poem on Egypt followed the work of his contemporary travellers "comparing [antique lands] with the more familiar classical, biblical or

medieval worlds” (Leask, *Curiosity* 2).<sup>141</sup> Davy, like other travel writers, presents foreign ancient lands within a European framework of “geographical orientation” by mapping British political concerns onto Egypt in his depiction of Moses. I will later show that, like his other manuscript poems, Davy links physiological experiences with the sublime.

Amongst his poetry written while in Bristol, Davy's turn to the epic form may seem incongruous. On the other hand, Davy's attempt at writing an epic confirms Stuart Curran's remark that there was a “proliferation of epics in England” in this period (*Poetic* 158). Southey's own profuse poetic output led Byron to claim in *Don Juan* that we should expect “an epic of Bob Southey every spring” (*Poetical Works* 5.3.97). According to Stuart Curran's study of the British Romantic epic form almost “every major poet planned an epic (though not all were executed)” with Milton laying the foundations of epic writing (*Poetic* 158). Romantic epics had “religious and nationalistic impulses” resonant with the culture of the time, emulating amongst other things Milton's subversion of classical epics with an attention to the characters' psyche (175). I will reveal below that Davy focuses on both Moses's body when describing the protagonist, as well as his mind during a sublime experience.

Davy's choice of form was most likely a response to Southey's proposition that they collaborate on epic writing on 3 August 1799. In his letter to Davy, Southey claimed the epic would celebrate “the victory of intellect, the ascendancy of a strong mind over ignorance; a difficult subject, but may be very striking” (*SL* 426). He suggested that their epic should be on the legend of Mango Capac, a South American Incan King. He also took note that Davy could, in parallel,

---

<sup>141</sup> For more on Romantic travel writing of “antique lands” such as Egypt, which may have inspired Davy's poem on Moses, see Leask, *Curiosity* 54–156.

conduct his chemical research on factitious airs: “I wish I could interest you enough in the subject to induce you to undertake it, to look upon it as the business of your leisure hours – a relaxation from more important studies.” Clearly, the poet regarded Davy’s poetical abilities highly, but also implied that the poem was not as important as his chemical research. This view may illustrate why Davy and Southey failed to achieve their epic schemes, and perhaps why “Moses” remains unfinished.

Southey tended to view epic writing as a means of encouraging collaboration between writers, whether to share the writing or as a means of discussion. While Southey was in Portugal on 26 July 1800 recovering from a serious illness, he wrote to Davy about the process of writing and finishing *Thalaba*, which Davy saw through the press in Bristol (SL 540; Southey, *Poetical Works* 4: xii–xiii). “Moses” may have been inspired by Southey’s talk of epics, though there is no evidence of what Southey thought of its fragments. Their friendship soon waned after Davy left Bristol, as I explain in Chapter Four. Although Southey and Davy did not attempt a joint epic poem, Davy may have been bolstered to write his own while Southey continued to communicate to the chemist about his own work.

Southey made it clear to Davy on 3 August 1799 that his regard for Davy’s poetry was due to their “similarity of opinion” (SL 426). This comment was perhaps in reference to their shared radical support for the French Revolution, which I will demonstrate below is apparent in the extant fragment “Moses.”<sup>142</sup> During a time of war and with the repression of Jacobin sympathies, ideologies

---

<sup>142</sup> For critical attention on the politics of Southey’s epic poems see Curry; Curran, *Poetic Form* 167–9; Cronin, *Politics* 61–82; Tucker; Leask “Southey’s *Madoc*”; Almeida “Conquest and Slavery”; Saglia “Words and Things”; and Fulford, “Plants”.

of revolution and oppression were written into epics in the 1790s. Praise for anything resembling the French campaign of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* could be perceived as seditious, leading epic writers to explore their political ideals by drawing from the legendary past, such as Southey's epics on the story of Joan of Arc or Welsh princes (Pratt, "Revising" 161). Davy's own engagement with the Exodus story can be regarded as part of the great number of ideologically driven epics from the 1790s, which made use of Biblical texts, particularly the Old Testament (S. Curran, *Poetic* 165).<sup>143</sup>

I confirm Michael Bradshaw's assertion that such epics that depict Egypt can correspond with Edward Said's argument on the "Orient." Said claimed that writings on the East depended on and were framed by received or imagined ideals by Western writers. These writers, mapping contemporary British politics onto Egypt, produced an imaginative "Orient" with notions that seemed to be "not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe" (Said 63).<sup>144</sup> For Said, Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt is an important model as a western power with imperial aims that used rhetoric and produced knowledge of the area to appropriate another culture (80–3). This type of discourse continued in the public imagination with images and characters conforming to received and stereotypical characteristics, which established the imperial political division between the familiar "West" and strange "East" (39–42).<sup>145</sup> While there is no evidence that Davy read these epics, Southey may have acted as a conduit to these ideas since epics were a topic of

---

<sup>143</sup> For example, see Charles Hoyle's 1807 epic *Exodus* for similarities between Davy's and Hoyle's poem (7: 470–579). A reviewer for the *Edinburgh Review* wrote that Hoyle's poem showed the immorality of the tyranny of Napoleon (Rev. of "Exodus" 370).

<sup>144</sup> See Bradshaw, "Imagining" 62.

<sup>145</sup> For more on Orientalism, colonialism and politics in Romantic literature see J. Beer, *Coleridge*, 117, 222–53; Shaffer; Said, *Orientalism*; Barrell, *Infection*; Leask, *British*; Richardson and Hofkosh; Makdisi 100–21; Fulford and Kitson; Fulford, Lee and Kitson, Introduction; Bolton; Fulford, "Plants"; and "Coleridge's."



beneath the mossy soil.— (1–6)<sup>148</sup>

Similar to his early Cornwall poems, Davy initially remarks upon an expansive natural scene, slowly moving the speaker's gaze from the heavens to the light across the plain. His portrayal of an exotic backdrop follows with a description of a "green" palm and its leaves as it moves under the influence of the mountain's breeze (3). Amongst this scene of intermingling light and shade, sheep search for nourishment in the "mossy" soil (6). The contrast between the pastoral and the sublime aspects of the scene hints at the movement of the rest of the poem. The "sun" and the "mountain" are sublime elements that weigh heavily on the scene (1, 4). These scatter "parching light" below and direct the movement of the leaves since they wave "to the mountain breeze" (2, 4). The last three words are replaced with a "loud and shrilling sound," emphasising a contrast between the movement of the wind and the sheep, as well as maintaining the final stressed syllable. While more forceful aspects of Davy's epic are present in the fragmentary stanza that are explored below, in the first few lines of the epic, he suggests the way in which elemental nature engulfs the animal figures, which is simultaneously dangerously "parching" and life-giving. The physical body is vulnerable in a harsh environment, which I later reveal is elaborated upon by Davy in his description of Moses as he suffers under the desert sun during his escape from the Pharaoh.

Davy's use of the pastoral in an Eastern form supports Andrew Rudd's work on the mechanics of Romantic Oriental poetry. Rudd has argued that such epics needed to reflect known poetic forms, such as the pastoral and the sublime, and thereby combined both Eastern and Western elements. Indeed Davy's use of the pastoral can be compared to Southey's *Joan of Arc*, which Cronin has shown presents the epic as "a vicious interruption of the pastoral happiness" of Joan

---

<sup>148</sup> Although John Davy transcribed the rest of the epic's outline in his 1836 biography of Davy, the above stanza remains unpublished (1: 124–6).

(*Politics* 68). Political instability and corruption lead Joan to redefine her gender and pursue a life of heroism. Cronin has made clear the political implications of contrasting the pastoral and epic in this way. Southey's epic follows Jacobin sentiments in its indictment of France and Britain, which disrupt both gender and "domestic contentment" (68). This discord in Davy's "Moses" is hinted at the way in which he intends for the line "Reposed & watchful as the day flees round" to contrast the powerful, natural force of the harsh sunlight with the tranquillity of the thirsty sheep.

The two other manuscript fragments of the epic in the 13c notebook demonstrate that Davy grapples with the relationship between the body's physical experience of harsh physical conditions and visions of transcendence. In the second manuscript fragment, "She led the way the maiden light of foot," Jethro is presented as the philosopher of the epic who guides the main character Moses (13c 24–6).<sup>149</sup> The fragment describes their meeting and blends together Davy's interest in the landscape, mysticism, the nature of the mind and its relation to the body. The fragment begins with contrasts between the scorching heat of the desert, which becomes a moist and lush scene as Zipporah takes Moses to meet her father Jethro. Here the fertile land contains "the morning dews" on the "mossy soil," "meadows," "a stream" and a breeze with a "cheering freshness" over the "desart [*sic*] plains" (5–8).

Among this natural scene they come across Zipporah's father's "cottage" (another pastoral trope), where Davy describes a cloistered environment in which Moses can take refuge from the heat. Going inward, Davy moves his focus to the physical aspects of his characters. Adding to the tranquil scene Jethro, an "old Man," whose "eyes were closed," retired in "pleasant sleep" with an antelope lying

---

<sup>149</sup> For my transcription of this fragment, see Appendix 2f.

next to him. Once awakened his “dark” brow “revived” and he tells of the physical difficulties faced by his people (16):

The fountain of our fathers parched  
with thirst  
The harmless children of the dewy  
earth  
No more had lasted of their  
mothers [*sic*] food[.] (17–9)

The focus here is on the physical deprivation of starvation and thirst, a clear contrast to the abundant scene in which Moses finds him. Jethro also claims that despite these surroundings, “often in the heavens my wondering eye / Has seen the white cloud vanish into forms” (21–2). Jethro envisions “forms” in the clouds, alluding to Plato’s belief that there exist privileged non-material abstract forms of knowledge beyond the material world. Davy describes the way in which Jethro can understand Moses’s puzzled reaction with ideas on the mind and impressibility:

[...] My son I see  
thy eye is turned most  
doubtingly upon my countenance  
In youth the enthusiastic mind  
or sees in all realities a dim &  
visionary world or hardly in the  
plenitude doubt sees nothing  
but what impresses his senses[.] (28–35)

Jethro deems Moses’s youthful mind either to be liable to unclear and far-sighted ideas, or susceptible to the immediate impressions of his senses. Jethro disapproves of both a superficial “dim & visionary” understanding of the world or of a passive mind governed by physical sensations. Davy cautions against imaginative and shallow transcendent ideas, and perhaps seems conscious of Coleridge’s critique of Hartley’s theories that suggested that the mind is passive to physiological experiences.

The relationship between physical experiences and transcendence is fully defined in the third manuscript fragment, “Now to the wanderers [*sic*] dull and

tearful eye,” which describes Moses’ escape across the desert after having killed a man in his homeland (13c 148).<sup>150</sup> Davy once again focuses on the body of the protagonist (who remains unnamed until fifty lines into the epic’s fragment) as he sees and feels the burning conditions of the Egyptian wasteland, yet is able to transcend these conditions. He walks away from the “blue and misty Nile” and “In the last rays of evening, his tired feet” walk through a scene where “scarce the sound / Of life or motion shook the parched air” (2–6). The stillness of the dying day corresponds to the character’s disappearing energy as he walks away from the fertile river. Davy suggests a connection between the experiences of the body and the mind where instinctive “fear of death” “served his youthful limbs” (7–8). He then describes the way in which the figure, while walking across the desert found that:

The renovated thoughts of former days rose in  
His dimness—But they mingled  
not with the dark unknown  
future. (10–3)

Like Jethro’s description of a youthful mind that can hold a “dim & visionary world,” Moses’s failing body and mind is described in terms of light (32–3). Dynamic thoughts can be renewed or “renovated” but are disconnected so that memory cannot inspire the thoughts of the future. Once again, Davy maps the dark mind of the protagonist onto the surrounding landscape to emphasise his mindset. A Kantian conception of the sublime begins with the description of the stars, where Moses continues to walk:

[...] whilst above  
him rolled diffusive of creative light  
in their immeasurable rounds  
the glorious stars.— (17–20)

---

<sup>150</sup> For my transcription of this fragment, see Appendix 2g.



Like Davy's description of his patient in notebook 13c, Davy conveys the way in which the character's mind is like that of a fevered "wretch," who similarly felt a "burning" agony and saw wild visions, akin to the symptoms of tuberculosis, yet then feels joyous on a sudden sensation of "health" (13c 30–1). Like the female patient, in "Moses" the wanderer's mind is revived with "new / And vivid raptures of existence," and at this point he is named, as Moses. The delay in naming the protagonist implies that Moses is almost emptied of his own identity when close to death.

In this part of the poem, Davy offers the idea that transcendence occurs when the body is disharmonious and close to destruction. As already discussed in sections one and two of this chapter, Davy's research on factitious airs to alleviate and cure respiratory diseases occupied his notes and poetry. Drawing from these ideas, Davy illustrates that Moses' mind works independently of the painful body, which feels an "existence" with visions likened to a sublime "rapture." Rather than simply feeling a "rapture wakening" as in "On breathing the Nitrous oxide," the epic describes this sublime moment as more than just a test of the protagonist's physical boundaries (2). Moses feels he is "Above the earth" when undergoing the physical torture of heatstroke. When the body fails, transcendence can strengthen Moses. Davy explained his understanding of Hartley's theory of associations in his *Researches* when he stated that physical experience could lead to trains of ideas independent of the body. Pleasure or pain can exist beyond the initial physical impression, and can "awaken ideal or intellectual pleasure or pain" or ideas, such as "hope or fear" (405–6). I suggest that this moment of transcendence in "Moses" is Kantian, but is also derived from the "private sense" of Moses's body, an idea in Burke's treatise that Kant criticised (158–9). Kant claimed that the "sublime cannot

be contained in any sensible form,” since the mind can intuit “a higher purposiveness”:

we gladly call these objects sublime because they elevate the strength of our soul above its usual level, and allow us to discover within ourselves a capacity for resistance of quite another kind, which gives us the courage to measure ourselves against the apparent all-powerfulness of nature. (144–5)

Although Moses’s elevation into an “unconceivable feeling” carries him beyond his physical condition, his experience of pain forces him into the position necessary to attain such transcendence (63). As in “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” and “The Spinosist,” transcendent moments can occur when the body reaches a critical condition. Davy casts the Kantian moment of transcendence as intimately linked with the experiences of the sensible body.

In contrast to the solitary speaker in Davy’s poems in the *Annual Anthology*, Davy’s manuscript poems refer directly to the body of one or more characters to describe the somatic effects of the world. “On breathing the Nitrous oxide” is a self-conscious poem, presenting a spontaneous, yet controllable experience of the sublime that reminds us of Davy’s knowledge of the Longinian sublime. In the poem “The Spinosist,” Davy’s draws upon Coleridge’s interest in Spinosist philosophy to explore that the sequence of birth, life and death, yet does not sustain a coherent, sublime aesthetic on the connection between nature, the body and the mind. Empowered by a new “system” of belief while subjected to the harsh Egyptian desert, Moses in Davy’s extensive fragments of the eponymous epic is an intellectually and physically impassioned man who gains transcendence when close to death (13c 19).

In the same way that Monika Class has explored Coleridge’s ability “to adopt, to transform, to apply” Kantianism in his poetics, I have argued that Davy was alive to different conceptions of the sublime and intertwined these ideas with

philosophies and poetic forms that he discussed with his literary contemporaries (6). Davy's conception of the sublime, evident from his poems in Bristol, illustrate his consciousness of the body's experiences from a material and physiological perspective. Shaped by his social, scientific, and literary environment while he worked at the Pneumatic Institute, Davy's poems are a product of the sociability of Romantic poets and their collaborative literary endeavours. Moreover, his poems illustrate Davy's redeployment of his contemporaneous research on physically debilitating respiratory diseases in his writing. The variation in form, narrative, and influences in Davy's manuscript poetry are a manifestation of his concerted effort into a literary investigation to realise the relationship between physiological experiences and the source of transcendence.

## CHAPTER THREE: ANNA POEMS

In this chapter, I explore Davy's poems composed between 1803 and 1808 to or on a woman named "Anna." I explain that these poems, like his lectures, can be read as self-conscious constructions of lyric performance. From February 1801 until 1812, Davy's popular lectures and research at the Royal Institution in London formed his prolific career as the most celebrated English chemist of his time. Critics have already explored the way in which Davy's lectures upheld the notion that chemistry was a creative and Baconian endeavour that preserved conservative ideals.<sup>151</sup> Much to the delight of his London audiences at the Royal Institution, Davy also included dramatic scientific experiments in his lectures, presenting chemistry as an awe-inspiring and creative discipline. Commentators observed that a notable number of women comprised the "most attentive portion" ([Simond] 2: 34). Indeed Davy captivated all those present in a process of persuasion that depended on "his mode of delivery" and "personality," encouraging the admiration of female attendees (Golinski, *Science* 194–5). Davy received poems from his female admirers and employed his assistant, Michael Faraday, to copy these into his personal notebooks (13a 1–19).<sup>152</sup> While Davy's public persona has already been and continues to be explored by critics, I focus

---

<sup>151</sup> For more on Davy at the Royal Institution and his work that set electrochemistry apart from its associations with radical science, see Morus; Fulford, "Radical;" Fulford, Lee and Kitson 179–67; and Golinski, *Science* 203–35. For a general history on the Royal Institution, see James, *Common*.

<sup>152</sup> For example, there is an anonymous poem sent to Davy on Valentine's Day 1805 with the first line "Whene'er you speak, Heaven!" in the Royal Institution archives, which is also copied into notebook 13a on page sixteen. This notebook has an 1802 watermark and the first page contains the poem "Thou to whom heaven its noblest gifts assigned" sent to Davy in 1804, which is also in the Royal Institution archives. Faraday, who accompanied Davy as his amanuensis during Davy's first trip to the Continent in 1813, wrote out nine poems, some of which are from Anna Beddoes, in notebook 13a. Davy also used the notebook in 1811 to draft a poem on Pencerster (62). In notebook 13i, Faraday again copied out the four poems sent to Davy from anonymous admirers and three from Anna Beddoes (5–32). Davy wrote "A.B." beneath the three poems from Anna (24, 26, 28).

here on Davy's composition and collection of lyric poems on a figure named Anna, who is identified as Anna Beddoes, wife of Thomas Beddoes.<sup>153</sup>

Davy's poems on Anna appear to be the first in his oeuvre to be addressed to a particular person and range from composed reflections on their friendship to conveying emotional longing. His intimate emotional connection with Anna is apparent in a few fragmentary lines in a notebook under a draft letter composed in November 1800 and notes in preparation for a lecture at the Royal Institution:

Anna thou art lovely ever  
 Lovely in tears  
 L  
 Brighter in tears of joy[.] (13c 111)<sup>154</sup>

I reveal that in three finished manuscript poems that were not published in his lifetime the relationship between the speaker and Anna are made a centre-point for Davy to structure "the mental act and imaginative stances" that are typical of the lyric (Altieri 129). Indeed, Davy's Anna poems can be read together as a series of lyrics, given that two of these are in a group of poems written out by Faraday from 1811. In these poems on Anna, we find that Davy casts himself as a solitary speaker drawn to his natural environment while rehearsing different emotional states. Although the three poems analysed in this chapter titled "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.," "To Anna Maria B." and "Vauxhall" are contingent on their different biographical and manuscript contexts, I argue that they are connected by the figure of Anna who acts as a means for Davy to experiment with expressions of emotion, rhetoric and solipsism.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> For more on as the argument that "Anna" is Anna Beddoes, see *Memoirs* 1: 62–4; Hindle, "Nature"; and Holmes, *Age* (279–30).

<sup>154</sup> In this notebook, these lines were also written before his notes on experiments at the Royal Institution, one of which is dated 27 June 1802 (13c 104). Presumably, Davy had Anna in mind between writing notes on his research.

<sup>155</sup> The poems are located in two notebooks: 13g 160–56, 166–4; and 15e 1–4. My transcriptions of the three poems that I analyse in this chapter are in Appendix 3.

In what follows, I first explain that just as the lyric is considered a self-conscious performance that conveys the poet's mastery over their emotions, Davy's scientific lectures similarly cast him as a heroic chemist who can master nature. I then argue that Davy drew upon the ideas in his lectures and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, especially "Tintern Abbey," in "To Anna-Maria B." and "To Anna Maria B." in order to distance the speaker from his past relationship with Anna. In the poems, Anna is a central figure for Davy to articulate a balance between the past and present, passion and calm, at times recalling his own ideas on the power of the mind as expounded in his lectures. Indeed, Davy's satisfaction with these poems can be understood by the ways in which he placed these two controlled poems that mention Anna into a series of poems in two of his notebooks. However, I then explore Davy's more subjective poem on Anna titled "Vauxhall" from a different notebook to reveal that he composed unhappy and uncertain poems that did not feature the controlling factor of reason or the ideas of his lectures. Just as Wordsworth's "Lucy poems" are critically examined as a group, I put Davy's two Anna poems alongside his stark verse on Anna, "Vauxhall" from another notebook to suggest that Davy used the lyric as a site of self-conscious and careful structuring of varying emotional performances.

### **3.1 The Lyric and Lectures**

Interesting comparisons can be made between Davy's poems on Anna and his lectures of the same period, particularly given Noel Jackson's claim that there was a connection between the Romantic "experimental lyric" and "philosophic and scientific experimentation" (*Science* 106). Jackson's argument is based upon the contention that both the Romantic lyric and scientific research required self-observation and solitary reflection to argue for common sense (106). His

terminology comes from the Scottish “common sense” philosophy proposed by Thomas Reid who claimed: “there are principles common to both [philosophers and the vulgar] which need no proof, and which do not admit of direct proof” (36).<sup>156</sup> Jackson’s argument connects these ideas to Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer’s proposal that natural philosophers during the late seventeenth century depended on rhetoric, careful aesthetic criteria, and replication for a shared acceptance of their experimental practice. Carson Bergstrom also compares the lyric in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with experimental science because both operate from “the data of personal observation and experience” (21). Differing from Bergstrom, Jackson has proposed that the “common sense” in both scientific experiment and the lyric were derived from medical understandings of the sensuous experiences of the body where both types of texts sought to persuade.

I extend Bergstrom’s and Jackson’s arguments with the idea that the search for a “common sense” between the poet and the reader in Davy’s poetry on Anna was influenced both by his lectures and contemporary lyric poetry. Davy’s research during the nitrous oxide trials has already been used as a model in scholarship for the way in which experimentation depended on communal and replicable sense-experience to ensure the veracity of an individual’s claim (Jackson, *Science* 112).<sup>157</sup> I show that, similarly, a lyric poem offers the thoughts of a solitary speaker hoping to make shared judgements. In my previous chapters, I argued that Davy’s poetry on the receptivity of the senses recalls the philosophies of Brown whose work influenced Romantic poetry including Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” Such philosophies on the nervous system

---

<sup>156</sup> For Noel Jackson, Wordsworth’s poetry mirrors Reid’s philosophy that experiences of sensations can suggest a common idea or belief (Jackson, *Science* 36–8). The mind is receptive and creative: “Willing to work and be wrought upon” (Wordsworth, *Prelude: 1799* 13.100).

<sup>157</sup> Also see Golinski, *Science* 169–71.

shaped what G. J. Barker-Benfield called the eighteenth-century “cult of sensibility” (xvii). Wordsworth drew on Brown’s medical theory that the sensations felt in the physical body could affect mental states. As such, poetry could act as an agent that stimulates the body and mind (Budge, “Erasmus”). Indeed, Paul Youngquist has noted that Wordsworth’s poetry practised “good medicine” in accordance with the Brunonian system (33). However, I revealed in my previous chapters that by the time Coleridge had met Davy, the poets had rejected Brunonianism for suggesting the passiveness of the mind and body. Budge has explained that Wordsworth reshaped and distanced himself from common sense philosophy by emphasising the imagination of his characters in his poetry.<sup>158</sup> As I will discuss in the following sections, Davy, on the other hand, insists that the physical experiences of the body can inform the speaker’s mental and psychological state.

In addition to scientific texts, Wordsworth’s and Davy’s poems also engaged with the culture of sensibility epitomised by Charlotte Smith’s publication of *Elegiac Sonnets* in 1784. Lyric poems written in the late eighteenth century, such as the *Elegiac Sonnets*, were admired and praised by readers and reviewers. Her sonnets presented self-confessed “very melancholy moments” and were lauded for the way they seemed to present her state of mind (*Elegiac* iii). In these poems, Smith aggrandised a poetic identity that mourned the loss of happiness and perceived death as a form of tranquillity. While readers wrote sonnets to her emulating her style in her “universally admired” work, Wordsworth and Coleridge also extolled Smith’s work as an influence on their early poems (Barbauld, *British* iii). Inspired by her lyrics, Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s poetics subsequently led to the definition of the Romantic lyric as a genre that sought solitariness and

---

<sup>158</sup> See Budge, *Romanticism*, 53, 66–8, 74–5.

emphasised inner emotion represented by larger natural forces (Zimmerman, *Romanticism* 72).

Davy's poems on Anna may well have been influenced by his knowledge of Smith's work and popularity. As a distinguished female poet of her time, Smith cultivated a thriving social circle to include the political philosopher and novelist Godwin, who introduced her to Davy. Smith and Godwin became friends in the late 1790s and corresponded frequently after Smith moved to London (Markley). Godwin had also met and was impressed with Davy in December 1799 after Coleridge brought the young chemist to Godwin's home. Writing to Davy on 1 January 1800, Coleridge reported that Godwin often spoke of Davy "with lively affection."<sup>159</sup> Davy and Godwin continued to dine and meet a number of times in 1801 and 1802, where on at least one occasion Davy also met with Smith, the publisher Joseph Johnson, Southey, and Charles Lamb.<sup>160</sup> While we may never be able to trace the nature of Davy and Smith's interaction, as I demonstrate in my chapter, Davy's "To Anna-Maria B.," "To Anna Maria B." and "Vauxhall" represents the influence of his new literary social circles given his engagement with and deconstruction of the solipsistic nature of sensibility. However, I first want to explore the way in which the lyric form can be compared to Davy's lectures.

Analysing Wordsworth's and Coleridge's early poems that were influenced by Smith's work, Abrams in 1976 defined the idea that the Romantic lyric emphasises the experiences of the speaker who is at the centre of the poem, where a description of a specific place or locality is absent (*Mirror* 97–9).<sup>161</sup> This has persisted as a model for understanding the lyric form and, as explained in the rest of this chapter, can characterise both Davy's lectures and his Anna poems. I also

---

<sup>159</sup> This letter is in the Royal Institution archives.

<sup>160</sup> For Davy's meeting with Smith, see Godwin, *Diary* 30 January 1802.

<sup>161</sup> Also see Abrams, "Structure."

follow scholarship on the Romantic lyric form that has been conscious of the artifice of the lyric. Literature of sensibility, according to Clare Knowles, foregrounds both the speaker and the relationship between sincere discourse and performance (45–72). Critics have explained that as a popular poet of sensibility in the late eighteenth century, Smith helped associate women's writing with the spontaneous and authentic expression of feeling regulated by the literary experience of writing.<sup>162</sup> Adela Pinch's work on the expression of feeling in Smith's sonnets has revealed that Smith presented a simultaneous claim of personal experience and objective literary distance from such feelings (8, 51–71). Kerri Andrews has also argued that Smith manipulated and constructed a poetical self into her sonnets, which could fit with a particular class identity (13–28). Examining the lyric historically and across different authors, Scott Brewster's overview of the history of the lyric has found the Romantic lyric acted in two ways. The lyric could present unmediated thoughts and feelings of an isolated individual, but also be a self-conscious process of persuasion and performance for a particular audience (1, 8, 79). These critical interpretations of the performative aspects of the lyric inform my following reading of Davy's lectures.

My chapter particularly draws from Sarah Zimmerman's recent work, which argues that the Romantic lyric poem collapsed the distinction between the abstract and the personal, since the speaker is both solitary and responsive to his or her context. Her reading of the local contexts of Smith's, Wordsworth's and John Clare's lyric poems found that their work was "embedded in particular moments" (*Romanticism* 6). Many Romantic lyrics feature an often autobiographical and solitary self-absorbed speaker who explores his or her subjectivity through meditation and recollection with an affinity to the natural surroundings (xii).

---

<sup>162</sup> See Pinch 55, 58; Labbe, Introduction 1; and Knowles 151.

However, these poets, according to Zimmerman, were conscious of their local contexts in their work, from class identity, paratext, to the poets' self-conscious economic dependence on their patrons and readers. In their poems, they were solitary speakers who deliberately shaped their particular cultural contexts in the lyric genre. This contradiction between isolation and self-conscious engagement with cultural contexts can also be found in the title of the *Lyrical Ballads* in the way in which it juxtaposes the introspective lyric mode with the impersonal oral narrative of the ballad (Brewster 80–1). The dual aspects of the lyric as individual yet performative, asocial yet cultural, can also be applied to Davy's lectures, as I now explain.

Attracting reviews and commentary from his contemporaries, Davy's popular lectures at the Royal Institution and Bakerian Lectures at the Royal Society have also been examined by scholars for the social and political implications of early nineteenth-century scientific research and practice.<sup>163</sup> In what follows, I am largely informed by Golinski's work on the way Davy developed a "relationship with his audience and his patrons" by remodelling himself to suit the fashionable London audiences ("Sexual" 17).<sup>164</sup> While Golinski has perhaps overstated Davy's purposefulness in the self-fashioning of his identity as an awe-inspiring and powerful chemist, Davy's "Anna" lyrics can bolster Golinski's argument that the chemist self-consciously constructed his identity in his lectures and poetry alike in order to argue for acceptance of his independent conjectures. In the case of his lectures, Davy sought to gain support and resources for his scientific research. As

---

<sup>163</sup> For a thorough list of reviews of Davy's lectures see Fullmer, *Sir* 48–68. For more on the impact of Davy's lectures, see Foote; Knight, *Humphry* 42–88; Fullmer, "Reformer"; and Golinski, *Science* 190–235.

<sup>164</sup> Holmes has also recently explored the way in which Davy presented chemistry as an attractive and powerful discipline to his audiences at the Royal Institution ("Humphry").

with the lyric, Davy emphasised the achievements of the human mind, and includes and encompasses the audience.

In June 1801, Davy wrote to his colleague at Bristol, Dr John King, on his tiring labours of “public experimenting & public enunciation” (*DL*). Indeed, Davy’s public enthusiasm for the human mind and for chemistry was made clear in his introductory lecture to a series on chemistry given on 21 January 1802, which was published in the same year as *A Discourse Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry* (hereafter *Discourse*). Scholars have already explored the ways in which Davy’s lectures shaped Romantic literary interpretations of chemistry. The introductory lecture, for example, was attended by Coleridge, who Ruston has recently shown was intrigued with the language of chemistry (Ruston, *Creating* 135–6). The published lecture may have been also read by Mary Shelley and influenced her depiction of natural philosophy in *Frankenstein*.<sup>165</sup> Like the lyric, Davy’s lecture sought to convince audiences of the speaker’s perspective. In Davy’s lectures, chemistry was presented as the pinnacle of power of the mind, and thereby relevant to all of humanity. After discussing other sciences and past chemical discoveries in his 1802 lecture, Davy declared the “human mind has been lately active and powerful” but that it cannot be believed “the period of its greatest strength [has] passed” (*Discourse* 19). Similar to the sentiments in his poems on his youth in the *Annual Anthology*, Davy suggested that the mind of man may still have the “awkwardness of youth” but it is still forming and shaping itself with “new powers and faculties.” The mind is powerful with “desires [that] are beyond its abilities” (*Discourse* 19). It is an animate force that can be developed, recalling the empiricism of Locke and Hume. Davy claimed that through his work the mind of humanity was realising its potential:

---

<sup>165</sup> For more on Davy’s influence on Shelley, see Crouch; and Mellor, *Mary* 89–114.

The dim and uncertain twilight of discovery, which gave to objects false or indefinite appearances, has been succeeded by the steady light of truth, which has shown the external world in its distinct forms, and in its true relations to human powers. (*Discourse* 19)

For Davy, natural philosophy gave an understanding of “distinct forms” of the world through the “steady light of truth,” at once alluding to Enlightenment ideals of the power of the mind, the rationality of chemical investigation, and the imprecise and subjective observations of sight. However, here he reinforced both the idea that chemistry was reliable and the power of his perspective in the way in which the world in his lectures was “shown.” Nature was passive under the influence of the natural philosopher. For Davy the “new science” of chemistry and the active mind gave certainty to our understanding of the “external world.” Chemistry was relative to the development of the mind so that chemistry and the mind alike were enlightening powers.

Unlike Enlightenment philosophical conjectures on the passivity of the mind, Davy sought to reinstate an active relationship between the mind and the material world. Davy may have taken these ideas from the *Lyrical Ballads*, having read the second volume of the second edition for Wordsworth as it went through the press at Bristol. Conscious of the currency of sentimentality in poetry, Wordsworth claimed that his poetry sought to present the poet’s experiences rather than his subjective emotional state: “the feeling therein developed [in the poem] gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling” (*LB* 1: xvii).<sup>166</sup> Recalling Hume’s views on the flux or changing states of mind, Wordsworth argued that poetry showed the world as perceived and formed by the mind through sympathetic recollection. As Coleridge claimed in *Biographia Literaria*, poetry could reawaken the senses and reform perceptions, since these

---

<sup>166</sup> For more on Wordsworth, empiricism and enlightenment philosophy see Bewell; Leask, “Robert Burns” 81–3; and Budge, *Romanticism* 60–2, 65–8, 75–5. Also see Richardson on the view of passivity of empiricism in *Neural* (46–8).

had become accustomed to the external world through a “film of familiarity” (*Biographia* 2: 3). Through its innate creativity, the mind perceives and renews itself through empiricism and imagination. Similarly, Davy claimed chemistry could reveal that humanity shares a powerful and imaginative capability to engage with and control the natural world. The chemist in particular had:

powers which may almost be called creative; which have enabled him to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments interrogate nature with power. (*Discourse* 16)

Davy declared his work could enable humanity to reassess and modify the “beings” surrounding them, revealing the underlying forces that hold matter together. His ideas on the intellectual power of chemistry are repeated in his 1805 lecture at the Royal Institution, stating the mind’s powerful role to be “the master of his body, and not its slave,” giving the mind control over its own matter (*Collected* 6: 155). Man’s existence was defined by the potential of the mind and offered the natural philosopher the ability to gain an insight into nature. Davy cast himself as an authoritative and controlled central figure.

Like the rhetoric of the lyric, Davy ensured his lectures appealed to his audience. He requested patience for innovation suggesting that the remit of the chemist encompassed all of humanity. He also presented science as an intellectual and social activity, reminding his audiences of the idea that knowledge of natural philosophy enables man’s perception of the fundamental laws governing the natural world and that this can help maintain a social order. As Golinski has argued, Davy proposed the view that knowledge of experimental science could help “men to prefer stability and harmony” both in nature and in society (Golinski, *Science* 197). Davy’s lecture often used first person plural pronouns to emphasise that chemistry is a shared endeavour. In one instance, he stated:

But, though improved and instructed by the sciences, we must not rest contented with what has been done; it is necessary that we should likewise do. Our enjoyment of the fruits of the labours of former times should be rather an enjoyment of activity than of indolence; and, instead of passively admiring, we ought to admire with that feeling which leads to emulation (*Discourse* 16).

Davy claimed that while science has already improved the lives of the audience, enjoyment also comes from actively improving “the labours of former times,” which in turn will lead to further progression and “emulation.” Davy calls for a shared support of chemistry, which will influence the lives of the natural philosopher as well as the audiences in the lecture theatre.

It is also of note that Davy’s lectures included rhetoric on the relationship between science and poetry in order to elevate the power of chemistry (*Discourse* 155; Ross 43). However, Jonathan Smith has demonstrated that Davy tended to blur the differences between chemistry and poetry in his private notes, lectures and publications by using analogies that were poetic and imaginative (79). For example, Smith uses the transcription by John Davy of an undated notebook in which Davy states that the mind during poetical composition flows like a “mountain torrent” that enriches solitary natural forms within its immediate surroundings, such as “the solitary tree or the flowers of its mossy borders” (1: 372). The energy expended for natural philosophy, on the other hand, is a “calm and quiet progress” that may be “deficient in rapidity” but holds strength and careful navigation (373). If we take into account that Davy composed poetry while employed as a lecturer at the Royal Institution, this note reveals that Davy was well aware of the comparisons between the act of writing poetry and of researching scientific ideas. Perhaps conscious that he wrote a great deal of manuscript poetry, Davy believed both natural philosophy and poetry as important to the mind of humanity. Yet he also emphasised their differences, where the former had a more permanent and far-reaching effect. In public, Davy used this analogy of rivers from his personal

notes in a lecture on electrochemistry on 12 March 1808. He asserted that the chemistry is both scientific and poetical. Natural science “flows from the heavens” and “Like a stream rising amongst mountains [...] it adorns and fertilizes” humanity (*Fragmentary* 60). Smith reads this note as Davy giving science a “quasi-divine status accorded to muse-inspired poetry” that also brings pleasure and utility to humanity (*Fact* 80). It is interesting that Davy contrasted natural philosophy to poetry, which is subservient to the “passions, prejudices, or vices of men” (*Fragmentary* 60). He suggested that poetry brought subjective and individual pleasure, while natural philosophy is universal and useful. Given that his poems on Anna could be subjective and personal, his public rhetoric on poetry was perhaps why Davy’s lyrics on Anna remained unpublished in his lifetime.

Like the solitary yet performative figure in the lyric, Davy’s lecture audiences knew that his powerful rhetoric was influenced by his independent experimentation as a natural philosopher. While experimenting with compounds and solutions in his laboratory, in his lectures at the Royal Institution Davy showed that he could bring forth previously unknown truths about the natural world with the voltaic pile that could both delight and awe. Golinski has already revealed that in order to mobilise public support and resources for his research, Davy’s lectures depended on a self-conscious deployment of his passion and the staging of his ability as an experimenter (“Experimental” 17). Having attended one of Davy’s lectures, Louis Simond observed that the chemist manipulated his voice and manner to convey his passion in discovering the secrets of nature: “he knows what nature has given him and what it has withheld and husbands his means accordingly” ([Simond] 2: 151). Simond noted that Davy was careful in presenting a balance of emotions, and did not abandon himself to “spontaneous feelings” despite his incredible insight in having “raised a corner of the thick veil [of nature], and untied one of the

last knots of the great tissues of wonder” (152). Through his passionate speech, Davy instilled his audiences with the idea that the powerful voltaic pile could reveal the secrets of nature. Thomas Dibdin recalled Davy’s experiments with the voltaic pile:

the lecturer called forth its powers with an air of authority, and in a tone of confident success. The hardest metals were melted like wax beneath its operation. Copper, silver, gold, platina, became in an instant soluble. The diamond was pulverised into charcoal; and oh! incomparable art, had charcoal been re-resolved into the diamond! The tremendous force of such an agency struck the learned with delight, and the unlearned into mingled rapture and astonishment; and the theatre or lecture-room rung with applause as “the mighty master” made his retreating obeisance. (1: 226)

The chemist could transmute the “hardest” of metals into liquid, easily moulding matter into something entirely new. Even a prized jewel could be “pulverised” and made unrecognisably into charcoal. This reshaping of substances or bodies “surrounding him” (to recall his 1802 *Discourse*) awed and shocked the viewers and set him apart as a “master” of nature. In other words, Davy was well aware of the way he could enchant audiences by manipulating the instrument and substances to present sparks, colours, and sounds of various sizes and levels (Davy, “An Account” 165–7). In his published account in 1802 that described his demonstrations, Davy was conscious of the different ways to use the voltaic pile and various substances for unusual visual effects.

While Davy presented the Royal Institution audiences with dramatic demonstrations that, to recall Simond’s comments, unknotted the tissue of nature, Davy could also redeploy his rhetoric for his audiences at the Royal Society in the annual Bakerian Lectures, which were subsequently published in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Davy’s Bakerian Lectures had to convey his mastery over nature without demonstrations. These lectures depended on the “different rhetorical techniques” of “literary representation” (Golinski, *Science* 203). In his first Bakerian

lecture of 1806, Davy sought to prove that chemical affinity and electricity were “identical [...] and an essential property of matter” (*Chemical Agencies* 40). Golinski’s most pertinent idea for my chapter on Davy lyric poems on “Anna” is that in the Bakerian lecture Davy “surveyed the alternative claims about the action of the [voltaic] pile” (*Science* 210). Davy wanted to illustrate that he could assess the confusing variety of ideas and conjectures on the action of electricity in order for the audience and the reader to accept his conclusions. He demonstrated that “the chemical effects produced by electricity [...] have been for some time objects of philosophical attention” for Volta, Cruikshank, Brugnatelli and Berzelius (*Chemical Agencies* 1–2). In contrast to these, Davy explained that his experiments could present a new and convincing way of understanding the chemical properties of matter. By responding to the diverse work and ideas of these natural philosophers, Davy could demonstrate that his own work on the action of the voltaic pile was reliable (Golinski, *Science* 211).<sup>167</sup>

Despite projecting himself as a powerful chemist, Davy was also viewed as a vulnerable figure who could, like Charlotte Smith, invite sympathy. Having been criticised for his self-experimentation during what some regarded as uncontrolled and orgiastic nitrous oxide trials in Bristol in 1799, at the Royal Institution Davy ensured his experiments were the centre of attention during his theatrical lectures to his aristocratic patrons and middle-class audiences (Golinski, “Experimental” 22). However, to some members of the audience his own person was part of the attraction. Commentators noticed that Davy flirted with female attendees of his lectures and according to John Davy, who sought to counter disparaging

---

<sup>167</sup> After his second Bakerian Lecture in 1807 demonstrating that his experiments with the voltaic pile yielded the isolation of two new chemical elements, sodium and potassium, audiences were convinced that Davy’s “powerful instrument” could lead to “a plentiful harvest of discovery” (Brougham 395). This lecture depended on Davy’s careful use of language to immerse the audience in the “rhetoric of showing” and maintained “the factuality of his account” with an “attribution of agency to human or equipment” and “anticipation of objections” (Myers 48–9).

comments on Davy's humble provincial roots, ladies would often comment on his physiognomy and appearance claiming his "eyes were made for something besides poring over crucibles" (1: 136). Davy attained something of a cult-like status that was created in part by the idea that his body was vulnerable to his experiments. In January 1804 Coleridge wrote to Southey of his fearful dream that:

when Davy was taken ill I came up into one of Xt [sic] Hospital Wards, & sitting by a bed was told that it was Davy in it, who in attempts to enlighten mankind had inflicted ghastly wounds on himself, & must henceforward live bedridden. (*Collected 2*: 1028)

Projecting his own hypochondria onto Davy, and perhaps recalling Davy's work with patients at the Pneumatic Institute, Coleridge feared the moral decrepitude that could come with Davy's rising celebrity status in conservative circles.<sup>168</sup>

Southey foreshadowed these feelings in a letter to Coleridge on 16 October 1801 when Davy left Bristol for the Royal Institution; he "never will be to me the being that he has been" (*SL* 615). When Davy was ill in 1807, Coleridge wrote to Southey in December 1807 anxious that he may have contracted his illness from the chemist after visiting Davy in London (*Collected 2*: 520–1). Davy's doctors diagnosed the illness as "over fatigue and excitement from his experimental labours" (*Dibdin 1*: 385–6)<sup>169</sup> In order to abate public anxiety, in December 1807 *Dibdin* announced to the "anxious circles which frequented the lecture-room" that the chemist was recovering after "five weeks" of "struggling between life and death" (1: 248). Much like Smith, Davy received both public adulation and sympathy for his vulnerable position as a persuasive public figure.

---

<sup>168</sup> On 3 August 1801 Robert Southey warned Coleridge of Davy's move to London, cautioning: "chameleon-like, we are all coloured by the near objects [...] he should have remained a few years longer here, till the wax cooled, which is now passive to any impression" (*SL* 597). Southey feared success and London society could change the young chemist, including his politics. Indeed, as I explain in Chapter Four, by 1814 Southey had become disparaging of Davy's foppish clothing and political allegiances after he had announced that he would be undertaking a trip to France during the Napoleonic wars.

<sup>169</sup> John Davy stated that his brother later conjectured that his illness may have been typhus fever contracted at Newgate Prison where he was asked for advice on how to disinfect the building (1: 385).

As a public figure, Davy's controlled and affective lectures cast him as a powerful chemist open to both admiring comments as well as satirical disdain. Public and vociferous critique on his demeanour and provincial background would come later in the 1820s after Davy was married to Jane Davy, became President of the Royal Society, and was created a baronet.<sup>170</sup> As I now explain in the rest of this chapter, Davy's "To Anna-Maria B." and "To Anna Maria B." were influenced by his rhetoric in his lectures on the power of the mind. During the time of his first two Bakerian Lectures, when at least two of Davy's lyrical poems on Anna were composed, Davy carefully modulated his emotions in his public addresses to establish the relevance of chemistry for all of humanity. He based this conjectures on his powerful findings as a natural philosopher, thereby also maintaining that his work depended on his mastery over nature through independent research and a careful survey of the numerous and diverse work on electricity. Similar to what Hazlitt maintained in his lectures on poetry in 1818, Davy's lyrics on Anna are equally "high[ly]-wrought" (Hazlitt, *Lectures* 8). Davy's Anna lyrics also seek to control what Hazlitt called "enthusiasm of fancy and feeling" in poetry in order to convey Davy's ability to master his own emotions (Hazlitt, *Lectures* 8).

### **3.2. Anna Beddoes and the Anna Series of Poems**

I now provide an overview of the manuscript context of the three Anna poems examined in my chapter, which can provide new insight into Davy's personal affection for Anna Beddoes. I suggest that his poems may be grouped together in the way critics have interpreted Wordsworth's Lucy poems and in following sections compare Davy's poems to his lectures.

---

<sup>170</sup> This phase in Davy's life is discussed in my next chapter.

Critics who have examined some of the Anna series of manuscript poems in Davy's notebooks argue that the verses convey Davy's continuing emotional attachment to Thomas Beddoes's wife, Anna. Davy stayed at the Beddoes's home when he first moved to Bristol in 1798 and later resided at the Pneumatic Institute in Dowry Square at the beginning of 1799 (J. Davy 1: 92). Davy and Anna, five years his senior, began a close friendship, sending poems to each other and often taking walks along the River Avon (an important motif in the poem "To Anna Maria B.") during which he discovered her unhappiness with her marriage (Holmes, *Age* 28). Anna was the daughter of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, a Lunar Society member, and sister to the novelist Maria Edgeworth. Davy's muse, Anna, was clearly part of an influential literary, industrial, and philosophical circle. Fullmer's account of Anna and Davy's relationship speculated that Davy was in awe of Anna's demeanour and education, and that he "fell a little in love with her" as they explored Clifton together (*Young* 107). Fullmer presented this as a short-lived friendship, in which Anna "led Davy on" due to her own unhappiness with her marriage (107). Holmes's investigation into Davy's letters and poetry found instead that there existed "powerful emotions" between the two from the time Davy was in Bristol and that these feelings continued in the first few years while Davy worked in London (*Age* 281). Holmes suggests that this could have been a "non-scientific" reason for Davy's departure from Bristol (278). However, their friendship remained intact and Anna visited Davy at the Royal Institution in 1802 with her sister Maria. Davy and Anna continued to send poems to each other, some joyous on the birth of Anna's first daughter in 1802, Anna Maria Beddoes, her first child after eight years of marriage (Holmes, *Age* 279).<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Anna's poems to Davy are in the archives of the Royal Institution. Anna later had three more children; Thomas Lovell in 1803, Henry in 1805 and Mary in 1808 (Stansfield xviii).

Important to my reading of Davy's Anna poems, scholars have also explained that Davy and Anna's friendship later became tumultuous. Anna left her husband and pursued Davies Gilbert months after the birth of their daughter, but eventually reconciled with Beddoes (Stansfield 234–5; Holmes, *Age* 280; Jay, *Atmosphere* 229–30).<sup>172</sup> Holmes has claimed that Davy sent “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” and “To Anna Maria B.” to Anna Beddoes, which could have sparked her emotional response to Davy in her letter written on 26 December 1804 that requested him to “destroy it,” which, despite this suggestion, is in the Royal Institution archives (Holmes, *Age*, 279–80). In her letter, she stated her own ill-defined, stormy, and sad emotions after seeing Davy in Bath and was saddened that he asked her to “forget” him. Davy's emotional attachment to Anna in this period is evident in the fact that the letter still exists despite her request. I will later explain during my close reading of “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” that the poem was most likely written in Bristol after Davy had seen Anna in Bath in 1804. Though Anna's letter to Davy clearly indicated they shared an intense view of their friendship, Holmes's biographical work is careful to point out there may have been other women in Davy's life to lead him to write poems about female companions and lost-loves (*Age* 279). Although Davy's “Anna” poems offer an interesting biographical insight into their relationship, I want to read his poems for their literary aesthetics to reveal that Davy was also interested in the way his poetry, like his lectures, were careful constructions of lyric emotion.

Anna in “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” and “To Anna Maria B.” represents the past from which Davy is now distant. These poems are copied twice into notebooks 13j and

---

<sup>172</sup> She again pursued Gilbert in London in June 1806, who soon became engaged to Ann Mary Gilbert in 1807 (Todd 47–8). Beddoes's own view of Anna's indiscretions remains unknown (Stansfield 235). When Beddoes passed away in 1808, Anna moved to Bath and her children became under the guardianship of Gilbert.

13g.<sup>173</sup> By considering the two Anna poems in the context of their textual location, it is apparent that they were methodically written out as part of a series. My approach is influenced by Paul Magnuson who has suggested that the paratextual frame of a lyric poem “influences its significance” (67). The lyric’s location changes its meaning for both our understanding of the historical period and our own construction of Romanticism. As such, I read Davy’s poems on Anna for their paratext and context of Davy’s concurrent public lectures on chemistry. This is to suggest that Davy self-consciously cast himself as remote from his past emotion and thereby from Anna.

“To Anna Maria B.” and “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.” are clearly part of a group of poems because of their proximity to each other, the neat handwriting style, and the way in which they were retrospectively numbered. Notebook 13j is the first extant version of this series, which comprises first of “At Bromham” about the speaker’s visit to a country home that is numbered “3” (3, 5). Next, appear earlier versions of the poems analysed in this chapter, but with different titles. “To ~~Anna~~—1803” is numbered “2” with the first line “When in lifes [*sic*] first golden morn,” then “To ~~Anna~~,” numbered “1” with first line “Think not that I forget the days.” These are followed by “To Athens” which remains unnumbered, as does an untitled poem about two mountains in Donegal with the first line “Mucrish and Arokil ye pair” (13j 16, 17, 19; 21–25; 29–32). This series is written out again in notebook 13g, where the titles and order are changed and are alongside three other poems on Anna, an unknown woman, and a child.<sup>174</sup> John Davy publishes “To Anna Maria B.” in order, he wrote, to present their “virtuous friendship,” an editing decision most

---

<sup>173</sup> My transcription of these two poems in notebook 13g are in Appendix 3a and 3b respectively.

<sup>174</sup> The notebook was used after 1803 and presumably again in 1812 since it contains notes on a paper in *Philosophical Transactions* published in 1807 and on “Thomson’s Chemistry” published in 1812, which is written around “To Anna Maria” with the first line “Yes you are Natures fairest child” (7, 126).

likely influenced by the neatness of the manuscript text and Davy's emotional distance from Anna (1: 62).

It becomes apparent that the numbers in notebook 13j were an indication for Davy to reorder the poems when he copied them out again in notebook 13g. The versions in 13g are also given a new numbering system, perhaps a sign that Davy hoped to reorder the poems elsewhere. Poem "1" and poem "2" of notebook 13j are copied out in accordance with this previous numbering and re-titled "To Anna Maria B." and "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B." respectively, yet the former is numbered "4" (166, 164; 160, 158, 156). "To Athens" and "At Bromham" are copied out in a different order to the number order they were given in notebook 13j (13g 152–44; 140–38). "To Anna Marie," now numbered "3," is addressed to Anna's daughter (13g 124–2). The two poems thereafter are unnumbered, though the handwriting and textual presentation suggest that they are part of the same series. The love poem to an unknown woman titled "1803" with first line "There last I heard her tones" is followed by another unnumbered poem titled "To A.B. — 2yrs," for Anna Beddoes's daughter, with first line "Sweet blossom of the early spring of life" (13g 120–18; 116–5).<sup>175</sup> The poem tenderly traces a child's physical features and compares them to natural elements such as snow, and light and the sky. While Davy's personal notebooks illustrate that Davy was interested in composing poems that had varying topics, narratives and forms, Anna remains the locus of Davy's literary imagination in his notebooks in this period.

In notebook 13j, two poems that are examined in this and the next sections of my chapter have the different titles: "To Anna 1803" and "To ~~Anna~~." My chapter examines the 13g versions since these are the latest, and therefore most worked

---

<sup>175</sup> As I discuss in my final chapter, the poem remains in Davy's mind decades later since this poem is copied out by Davy in his notebook used from 1827 (14e 51).

on, extant versions of these poems. However, it is clear from the titles of the earlier versions in notebook 13j that the two poems were intended for “Anna” who, as with the protagonist in Wordsworth’s Lucy poems, is not given a specific identity through a surname. The two versions of this series, both of which are written in Davy’s fair hand, reveal that he devoted a great deal of time and attention to these poems. The styles of writing in 13j and 13g differ, yet from the similarity of the capital letters it is apparent that they were written in the same hand. The extreme neatness of the Anna series recalls his copperplate style of writing in the manuscript versions of Davy’s Cornwall poems that were published in the *Annual Anthology*. The existence of two different versions of the Anna series, their numbering, and the neat copperplate style suggest that Davy may have hoped to publish these poems. Holmes’s claim that Davy sent “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.” and “To Anna Maria B.” to Anna Beddoes may have been a deduction influenced by the neatness and multiple versions of the poems (Age, 279–80). After copying these poems into his notebook, Davy then used the notebook to write notes in pencil on his research. In notebook 13g, around “To A. B.— 2 years old 1803” Davy wrote “Are not all electrical shocks chemical effects—” (115), followed by notes on experiments with mercury and potash (13g 113–109). On one page before the series of poems, Davy wrote titles of texts on alchemy from 1531, 1597, and 1659 (13g 168–7)

My focus is on the Anna poems in this series given that there are a number of poems titled to Anna, her daughter, or directed at an unnamed woman in Davy’s personal notebooks. Anna clearly occupied Davy’s mind after he left Bristol. When Davy flipped notebook 13g over to start it again from the other side, he wrote two fragmentary poems to Anna’s daughter with the first lines “Thy mother’s genius and her feeling heart” titled “To AMB” (13g 78) and “Thou blooming wonder of thy

father's power" (13g 75–73). On the next page he rewrites the latter and changes "thy father" to "Hygeion power" alluding to Thomas Beddoes's book *Hygeia* published from 1802. These notebooks convey the ways in which that Davy was methodical in organising his poetry. Given that there is a lack of fragmentary lines, that most of the poems are long with tightly structured stanzas, and that all of the poems are given titles in notebook 13j, I argue that Davy carefully organised and wrote out two poems on Anna to distance his emotions from his past, and perhaps from Anna. Davy retained and copied out these two poems to remind himself of his personal growth.

As a series of poems on a particular female character, Davy's Anna poems bear some similarity to Wordsworth's Lucy poems, four of which were most likely read by Davy since they are in the second volume of the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. These four comprise the ballad "Strange fits of passion I have known" (2: 50–1), "She dwelt among the untrodden ways" (52), "A slumber did my spirit steal" (53), and "Three years she grew in sun and shower" (136–8). The fifth in this series, titled "I travelled among unknown men," is in Wordsworth's *Poems of 1807* (1: 68–9). Although the five poems were not published as a collection, scholars have brought these poems together, albeit controversially, to analyse the ways in which Wordsworth engaged with gender, loss and absence.<sup>176</sup> Meena Alexander's analysis of these five poems suggests that they evoke a feminine figure who is metaphorically bound to the natural landscape, and that the character of Lucy crystallises loss and intense longing (147). Anne Janowitz argues that in some ways these poems "clearly belong to a print-culture definition of lyric, spoken in the lyric voice of subjectivity and individuality" (35). In general, critics read these poems and the character of Lucy as a poetic construct or

---

<sup>176</sup> For more on the controversy of this collection, see Mark Jones.

symbol, sometimes arguing that Lucy represents Wordsworth's affections for his sister, Dorothy, or his close friend Coleridge.<sup>177</sup> Davy may have read one of these Lucy poems given that the second line of Davy's "To Anna Maria B.," "When first through rough unhaunted ways," echoes the first line of Wordsworth's Lucy poem, "She dwelt among the untrodden ways." Moreover, both Davy and Wordsworth refer to their respective female figures next to rivers in their poems in order to convey the way that natural forms are thresholds for memories and the flow of time. Indeed as I explain below, "Vauxhall" uses similar language of loss as Wordsworth's poem on his mourning for Lucy.

My chapter follows such scholarship that compares Wordsworth's disparate poems as linked by the character of a sole feminine figure. I contend that in the case of Davy we can interpret his Anna poems, like Wordsworth's Lucy poems, as "broken and shifting lyrical orderings" (Mark Jones 86). The Anna poems can be considered as lyric poems that relay different poetical personas. My argument is that Davy used the figure of Anna to perform a range of lyric emotions so that she, like Lucy, is open to reinterpretation by the poet who holds a lingering grief. Except for these Anna poems and fragmentary lines on Anna and an unnamed woman, Davy's letters and notebooks during and after this period are silent on his emotional attachment to Anna Beddoes. He does describe her in admiring terms to Jane Apreece during their courtship in a letter written on 1 November 1811 and copies out a version of an Anna poem on the youthful beauty of her daughter in a notebook in 1827 (*DL*).<sup>178</sup> Similarly, Mark Jones has revealed that Wordsworth's relationship to "Lucy" "remains a source of wonder" to contemporary critics (6). As Thomas De Quincey remarked, Wordsworth preserved a "mysterious silence on

---

<sup>177</sup> For an analysis of the textual history and biographical readings of these poems see Garrod 78–92; Alexander 147–66; Mark Jones; and Johnston 643–52.

<sup>178</sup> This 1827 version is discussed in Chapter Five.

the subject” (qtd in Mark Jones 6). Given that Jones has traced the literary critical history that led to the grouping of the Lucy poems to show that Wordsworth did not envisage these as a collection, which leads to an “interpretive simplification” of shifting lyrical poems, I group the Anna poems and also reveal both the shifts and differences between these (69). I first now examine Davy’s more controlled and authoritative poems on his emotional distance from Anna.

### **3.3 “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” and a “master law”**

“To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” can be compared to Davy’s lectures in the way it presents his ability to control his emotions through the strength of his mind (13g 160–56). In the same way that Davy controls his language for intended effect in his lectures, his lyric poem on Anna is a self-conscious poetic construct that rehearses different lyric emotions.

In measured stanzas of eight quatrains with iambic tetrameters, Davy’s “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” uses elements from the natural world to create a controlled environment as he describes his personal experiences and emotions. Although the poem’s title is directed to a particular person, the poem remains abstract as the speaker evinces nostalgia and happiness for his past after leaving his “stormy native shore,” having been led away by “Ambition” (3, 5). He reminisces on the “friendship free,” the “Years of pain” he has experienced, and his “Hopes” for a future of “usefulness” and a blissful death (13, 17, 31). Invoking similarities between turbulent emotions and the dynamism of nature, the poem ends with the speaker’s awareness that an experienced mind no longer feels a “storming” of emotion (27). He now understands the mind’s ability to attain a sense of control to a “master law” through the calm of retrospection and reason (12). As is usual in his most assertive poems, Davy’s stanzas explore the states of feelings of an

unspecified “it” that usually refers to the mind.<sup>179</sup> The lyric, similar to Davy’s lectures, is a mediated performance presenting the idea that through introspection one can understand and control passionate emotion.

A close reading of Davy’s language in “To Anna-Maria B.” can reveal the speaker’s initial subjective and emotional perspective. For example, the fourth stanza, the last on his formative years, creates metaphorical links between his way of thinking and nature to claim that the passions of his mind were “Changeful and yet ever bright” as the light “on an aprils [*sic*] day” (15–16). The youthfulness of the speaker’s mind is defined by his tender, changeable, and unfixed spring-like emotions. In contrast to the gentle moments of recollections, the speaker also describes his experiences of an assertive physical exaltation when “ambition” “thrilled within my brest [*sic*] / My heart with feverish hope beat high” (5–6). The aspirations of the mind affect the body and this exhilarating feeling of desire is met with an act of emotion, recalling Brown’s and Hartley’s physiological theories that connected external sensations with the state of the mind. The speaker’s naivety in Davy’s poem is also made apparent in his mind’s unequivocal effect on his body: “hope” “disturbed my rest” and “bade me heave a sigh” (7–8). Just as Pinch notes for Wordsworth’s “Sonnet on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress” published in 1787, Davy follows “the tropes and conventions of late eighteenth-century sentimental verse: the responsiveness of the body, the pleasure of pain” and “its predilection” for “swelling” (81). Davy would have read in the *Lyrical Ballads* that Wordsworth argued that emotions remained central to his poetry. The “spontaneous” emotion of the poet connects with thought, habit and poetic expression. Wordsworth’s poetics were to reassess what he saw as popular literature’s “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation” (*LB* 1: xix). In Davy’s

---

<sup>179</sup> For example, see “Sons of Genius” and “The Spinosist.”

poem, emotion is connected with the physiological effects that grant immediacy to this lyric experience and the potent hopes of the youthful mind.

Yet Davy's Anna poem is also performative in the way it draws upon and redeploys Davy's beliefs in the power of the human mind. In contrast to Wordsworth's and Smith's emotive poems on the psychological state of the speaker or the characters in their poems, Davy's "To Anna-Maria B.," with its pattern of iambic tetrameters and largely alternate masculine rhyme scheme, becomes an assertive verse about his life, which is now guided by the calm reasoning of the mind.<sup>180</sup> The speaker's mind is potent and territorial in hoping to find "a high strength" and is inspired by a "visionary empire" (9–10). It recalls the attitude of his employer at the Royal Institution and the President of the Royal Society, Joseph Banks, who aimed to promote science for the service of imperial power.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the "master law," which the speaker seeks, rhymes and is in harmony with the empire "he saw," subtly making reference to Newton's universal laws of motion. As I showed in my earlier chapters, the notion of fundamental laws governing the powers of nature influenced Davy's poetry and his chemistry. Politically, in his use of the phrase "master law," Davy may be identifying his radical ideals while at Bristol as part of his past passions in his youth, and his mature present with the conservative politics of London and the Royal Institution. The imperial power of the mind suggests that like his lectures, the poem seeks to present, as Jackson puts it for the Romantic lyric, "the imperial consciousness" as the mind seeks to "extend and secure its domain" ("Critical" 137). In Davy's poem, the speaker's maturity is associated with his thoughtful and all encompassing

---

<sup>180</sup> Davy may well be emulating Wordsworth's claim in his "Preface" of the *Lyrical Ballads* that metre could have a healing effect and regulate the "excitement" evoked by poetry (*LB* 1: xxx; Ruston, *Creating* 19).

<sup>181</sup> See Gascoigne for Banks's role in promoting the imperial power of science, Fara, *Sex and Fulford*, Lee and Kitson, Introduction.

understanding of the world. Davy's "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B." finds in reason a means to express the capabilities of human power.

Davy's classification in "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B." of his mental state of "passions changeful" (16) as the past and his movement into a reasoned state of mind foreshadows the ideas of Thomas Brown in his widely read *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, published posthumously in 1820. Brown, Thomas Dixon argues, was the "inventor of [the categorisation of] emotions" in "mental science" and psychology (Dixon, *Passions* 109–34). Brown, a Scottish physician, offered the first systemised category of emotions and compared his system as similar to "chemical discoveries of late" that have "reduced and simplified" nature "to a few simple elements" (*Lectures* 1: 101, 353).<sup>182</sup> He claimed that like chemistry, the science of the mind will "admit" "the innumerable complex feelings" into "corresponding reduction and simplification" (354). Although Dixon uses Priestley's research to elaborate on Brown's chemistry model, Davy's chemistry and his public rhetoric may well have influenced Brown's perception of chemical research and the role of chemistry in society (Dixon, *Passions* 119). Indeed, like Davy in his poems, Brown applies a "Newtonian philosophy" on the "physics of the mind" in his mental science (qtd in Olson 11–2). Echoing Davy's lectures on chemistry, in the 1827 edition of his lectures, Brown discussed "intellectual powers" in terms of the "reasonings of the chemist," who skilfully contemplates "successions" of "different phenomena," ultimately understanding "the relation" between them (*Treatise* 1: 382). The science of the mind, like chemistry, analyses disparate phenomena and can locate links between them. Davy's poems on Cornwall similarly create a mental and physical link between the speaker and the Newtonian system of the natural world. In "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.," Davy adopts his

---

<sup>182</sup> For more on the history of emotions as a coherent medical category see Dixon, "Patients."

perspective as a categorising chemist who can now consider his past mental state from the perspective of a man of reason.

While Wordsworth declared that a poet's words must be carefully weighed and balanced with feeling, Davy contrasts his youthful, turbulent past with a calm, almost passionless present. Rather than a balance of emotion for the past and for his present, Davy regards himself now as a stoic figure who can categorise his emotions. In his poem "To Anna-Maria B.," Davy can understand the malleability of the mind in the way in which "Its pleasure fate & nature give" (29). Sensation and emotion act upon the speaker's mind, the object of the poem, which can transcend these subjective moments. The last four stanzas of "To Anna-Maria B." use the present tense to describe the speaker's now more advanced viewpoint. The connection between the body and the mind becomes more intense: the mind is now changed by "years of pain" rather than by "Ambition" "alone" (17, 20). Emotion and thought are distilled and controlled, formed by "Holy truth severe," and, "if" the mind feels a tear "That tear in purest passion flows" (21-4). As McGann has explained, the tear is an emblem of the literature of sensibility since it is closely linked to the notion of spontaneity. Tears are often a sign of physical and uncontrolled response to an inward emotional experience (*Poetics* 7; Knowles 144). Davy reconfigures the symbol of the tear to represent the confined and controlled experiences of a hallowed and reverential "Holy truth" of life (21). He recalls the experience of passionate sensibility to illustrate that this is overtaken by the confined and carefully sentimental experience of reason. The poet and reader are to become witnesses to his transformation and transcendence. Recalling Davy's lectures on the capabilities of the mind, his poem insists that the mind continually experiences and develops, ultimately reaching reasoned maturity.

While Sharon Cameron has found that the atemporal and spatially dislocated Romantic lyric conveys the way in which the poet feared time, Davy's poem masters past, present and future in his rational world-view (Cameron 212–7). After the speaker declares that his mature mind is settled, reasoning, and yet nostalgic for the past, the speaker looks forward towards the moment of death with his hope “in usefulness to live / In dreams of endless bliss to die” (31–2). The poem possesses a desire for a temporal completion, fusing past, present, and future into the same highly-structured stanzas. Under the control of the speaker, the past is presented as distant yet passion-filled, the present as the pinnacle of calm, and the future informed by his intellect, which can lead to utility and an immortality of “bliss” (32). This promise of the future was most certainly informed by Davy's lectures on the utility of the work of the natural philosopher such as we see in his *Discourse* of 1802. Here Davy defined the changes of the agriculturalist whose work had been informed by chemical science. He claimed he “has learned to think and to reason” and become “aware of his usefulness to his fellow-men” (*Discourse* 12). Interestingly, and as we see in the remainder of my chapters, Davy's conception of immortality is more apparent in his poetry than his science. As Zimmerman has pointed out, the lyric conveyed “a desire for immortality and transcendence” (*Romanticism* 52). The speaker in “To Anna-Maria B.” is removed from the ordinary through Davy's confident command of the future as an abstract idea that transcends his physical present.

The ultimate transcendence and atemporality of the speaker who can survey past, present and future, establishes his state of perpetual calm and anticipation. However, the timelessness of the poem contrasts with the note appended to it that gives the specific time and place in which the poem was composed. In a similar manner, Smith's sonnets offered a timeless state of “perpetual sorrow” with the

speaker oblivious to the present (Zimmerman, *Romanticism* 52). She presented these poems with notes and prefaces on specific locations or seasons in which each poem was composed, emphasising her anchorless emotions detached from the cycle of time or specific place (55). Davy's title to Anna Beddoes's daughter and note "Written in the coach Dec. 25 1803 Passing from Bath to Bristol" and its allusion to Bristol suggest that the poem should be read in the context of Davy's relationship with Anna. However, we have seen that, like the sonnets of Smith, Davy distances his poem from a specific temporality within verse itself, suggesting that he has removed himself from Anna's informing influence. As I will now explain, we will see that the dating of the poem by Davy may have been incorrect, further revealing that the poem can work aesthetically without the particularities of his biography.

As I have already explained above, by Christmas 1803, when the note below "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B." claims it was composed, Davy was a popular lecturer at the Royal Institution and had been elected Fellow of the Royal Society a month earlier, a great achievement for the young chemist who had once written in his notebook "Davy & Newton" (20b 182). As Knight puts it, Davy "aspired to be the Newton of his day" and similarly became President of the Royal Society (Knight, *Humphry* 20). Knight finds that Davy's poem has a hint of weariness in making reference to the "years of pain" that have passed away. However, hope in the poem comes with his experience of "fair thoughts" which now "glows" with "forms of Holy Truth" (Knight, *Humphry* 19, 21-2). Consolation in "To ~~Anna~~-Maria B." comes from an idealised view of the potential of the mind, similar to his statements on the power of chemistry in his lectures at the Royal Institution.

Given that three days after Christmas, Davy was at the Royal Institution, it is unlikely that he composed the poem in 1803 while travelling between Bath and

Bristol.<sup>183</sup> Although not entirely impossible, it is more likely that Davy wrote the poem on Christmas Day 1804 having returned from Bath and after writing to Anna to forget him. Moreover, his stay with the Wordsworths in Grasmere in July of the same year may have influenced Davy's use of the lyric form. Wordsworth recalled in a letter to Sir John Stoddart in July 1831 that he had become acquainted with Davy when he was a lecturer and had visited Davy's London home (*Letters* 415). Wordsworth described to their mutual friend Sir Henry Beaumont on 29 July 1804 how Davy's day and a half visit to Grasmere in 1804 revealed him to be "a most interesting man whose views are fixed upon worthy objects" (*Early Letters* 405). Dorothy Wordsworth recalled that on that day her brother and the chemist "were out of doors from morning till night" (405). Although we cannot trace the nature of Wordsworth and Davy's discussions, we can perhaps infer Wordsworth's influence on Davy's poetry. It was after this trip that Davy composed poems on Anna, which are the first in his oeuvre directed at a particular person and sought to express lyrical moments in various ways. In the winter of 1804, Davy stayed at Bristol, where he most likely composed the "To Anna-Maria B." poem that describes his calm detachment from the past, and therefore Anna. Davy had Anna Beddoes in mind on New Years Day in 1805, sending a poem titled "To Zoe" to Zoe King who was the daughter of Dr John King, Davy's colleague at Bristol (*DL*). "To Zoe" is a reworked version of a poem to Anna's daughter Anna Maria Beddoes, the same figure in the title of "To Anna-Maria B." analysed in this section. Moreover, the earlier version of "To Zoe," with the first line "Thou blooming wonder of thy father's power," and "To Anna-Maria B." are in the same series of poems to Anna in Davy's personal notebooks (13g 75–3). Thus, although we can read "To Anna-Maria B." as part of Davy's experimentation with poetry after meeting Wordsworth and his

---

<sup>183</sup> See Davy's letter to James Losh on 28 December 1803 (*DL*).

visit to Bristol, and his despondency after an argument with Anna, in some ways the possible discrepancy of the date can suggest that Davy's poem is a means to create further distance from specific moments in his past.

Indeed, Davy universalises the poet's experiences through his suggestion of the powerful possibilities of the human mind, thereby writing out Anna's influence in the poem. "To Anna-Maria B." refers to the personal, as conveyed by the poem's personal pronouns, the character of Anna in the title and the dating of the poem. For Anne Ferry, one of Wordsworth's love poems titled "To —" suggested secrecy between the poet and a real, though concealed, woman as he publically displayed his affection for her (Wordsworth, *Poetical* 1: 177; Ferry 121). While "To Anna-Maria B." is directed at and thus implicitly inspired by a female figure, we have already seen that it is wholly an introspective reflection of the speaker's mind and experiences. Most of the personal pronouns in the last six stanzas and the poem as a whole address the perceptions and experiences of "my mind" which is mentioned once yet placed on the end of a line after a caesura to signal the focus of the following stanzas. His mind's experiences dominate the poem: "it hoped," "it glows," and receives "its anguish and its joys," so that the speaker is defined by his mind's experiences (11, 22, 25). In this way he makes clear the mind's rational state and that it is the defining element of the speaker's identity as he celebrates its reasoned maturity. Anna and the reader are made witnesses to the speaker's revelations and triumphant development from a figure "who left my stormy native shore" to finally having "No storming" in his state of mind (2, 27). There appears a contradiction between the title to a particular person, as apostrophe, and the poem's abstract view of his identity.

In contrast to the critical concept of the Romantic lyric as a medium that evoked a sense of awe for nature in the reader, Davy's "To Anna-Maria B." poem

promotes the power of cognitive development and his belief that the mind is malleable to its environment. “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” presents us with a poet who is trying to assert his mental strength to a female companion of the past by suggesting that although he was tethered to her in the past, he is now guided by the mind’s ability to transcend these emotive memories. Like the deletion of her name in the title, Davy seeks to present himself as autonomous or free from her influence. Perhaps conscious of Wordsworth’s delineation between the man of science and the poet in his 1802 “Preface”, Davy brings together his views in his lectures on the power of the mind and the universality of the poet’s thoughts and feelings into his “To ~~Anna~~-Maria B.” poem. The chemist could control nature in his science, while also apprehending or transfiguring these ideas into lyric form. The next two sections explain that Davy uses the lyric and the figure of Anna to explore the tender emotions of loss and communion. We find that Davy’s Anna poems align with Noel Jackson’s critical view of the importance of social community and shared consciousness in Romantic poetry, where the isolated speaker becomes dependent on an absent figure to supplement his own consciousness (*Science* 125). In these poems, Davy sought to experiment with the relationship between community and isolation.

### **3.4 Solitude and Recollection in “To Anna Maria B.”**

In the first few lines of “Tintern Abbey,” the solitary poet Wordsworth looks upon a revisited scene and claims that once again:

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,  
Which in a wild and secluded scene impress  
Thoughts of a more deep seclusion, and connect  
The landscape with the quiet of the sky. (*LB* 1: 191 lines 5–8)

John Barrell found that the fusing of the landscape and sky by Wordsworth indicates that geological forms, such as cliffs, can lead to “lofty” thoughts or new

meanings in the poet's mind (*Poetry* 157). The immediate object of the landscape connects with the sky, which is an emblem of the mind of man. This linkage represents the way that nature can give him moral understanding. Critics' readings of this poem have elaborated on the Romantic lyric's objectification of both nature and women such as the figure of Dorothy in "Tintern Abbey" (Barrell, *Poetry* 137–66; Homans 40; McGann, *Ideology* 86–7). For Homans, the Lucy poems and "Tintern Abbey" conflated the central feminine figure with nature, so that, as Frances Ferguson conceded she appears as "a function of the territorial imperialism of Wordsworth's ego" (Homans 25; Ferguson 126). The self and the imagination are primary in Romantic lyric and the female figure "in the manner of natural objects" has "no more subjectivity than rocks or trees" (Homans 28). Disagreeing with Homans's reading, both Ferguson and Jackson found that the speaker's appearance of solitude fails by the intervention of a character such as Dorothy in "Tintern Abbey" or Hartley in Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" (Ferguson 125; Jackson, *Science* 125). Similarly, as this section and the next demonstrate, Anna in the poems "To Anna Maria B." and "Vauxhall" appears to the reader as a figure appropriated by nature.<sup>184</sup> The speaker finds that in solitude his sense of self is dependent on the outside influence of both the natural world, which also reminds him of Anna, so that the inward looking speaker is neither fully autonomous nor fully socialised.

In "To Anna Maria B.," the speaker is introspective and solipsistic, yet finds Anna present in both his body and his observations of the natural environment and geological forms, such as the mountains (25). The speaker addresses the poem to Anna, stating that though eight years have passed he does not forget their meetings along the River Avon in Bristol. Romantic lyrics, according to

---

<sup>184</sup> For a transcription of "To Anna Maria B." see Appendix 3b.

Zimmerman, have traditionally presented the way in which the poet “forges a bond between [themselves] and the natural environment” (“Dost” 111). This identification is evident in Davy’s poem on Anna. Nature and the poem act as a link between the speaker and Anna, reminding us that both she and nature invigorate the isolated speaker. His “view” has been “dazzled” by new “scenes and objects” yet Anna’s friendship still “bears a living part” of him (13, 16, 22). “To Anna Maria B.” is dated in an accompanying note “Glenarm – august 1806 by Moonlight a view of the Cliffs & Sea” (13g 164). As he views the cliffs and the sea at moonlight the speaker is inspired to remember his friendship with Anna while he was in Bristol eight years earlier. As discussed above, Barrell has analysed the ways in which “Tintern Abbey” extended Wordsworth’s empirical descriptions of the natural world by transforming fixed meanings such as “cliffs” and “wood” into intellectual and philosophical triggers for moods and memories (line 161; Barrell, *Poetry* 149). For Davy, his experience of Anna’s friendship remains part of his corporeal being so that already established influence overrules new experience.

Davy composed the poem in 1806 while in Ireland with George Bellas Greenough who, with Davy, established the Geological Society of London in 1807. In Ireland, they studied the geological characteristics of the area, and from there Davy corresponded with others on his scientific research, relating in his letters his understanding of the agricultural systems of Killarney, his collections of geological specimens from Waterford, and expressing the hope that Nicholson would publish the discovery of fluorine in the wavellite mineral.<sup>185</sup> By 1806 Davy had again taken up the galvanic researches he began at Bristol and was about to deliver his first Bakerian Lecture to the Royal Society in November to

---

<sup>185</sup> Davy describes these in his letters to Arthur Young on 15 June 1806, to William Savage on 15 June 1806 and to William Nicholson on 15 June 1806 (*DL*).

challenge the notion that the voltaic pile was ineffective and unreliable (Golinski, *Science* 210–3). In 1807, Davy's isolation of potassium and sodium, gave him international fame. While he continued to succeed in his chemical research, the Glenarm poem reveals that like his poems on Cornwall, the natural world acts as a symbol of his distance from the past.

Davy used his notebooks in Ireland to describe the geology of natural landscape and to compose poems, such as on the mountainous scenes. In one notebook, Davy describes the “wood, fine trees, and some monastic buildings” and “sandstone schist” in Limerick and writes about the “great hills without rocks, enclosed, and gentle in their declivities” while on the road from Raphoe to Derry (15b 1). In another notebook used in 1806, Davy noted the geological formation of the mountainous landscape of Donegal and its surrounding meteorological conditions (15a 29–43, 51–66, 67–74). The poem on Mucrish and Arokil titled “The two highest Mountains in Donegal” follows Davy's sequence of poems that include the two poems on Anna that I first examine in this chapter (13g 134–28). His poem on Ireland reminds us that during his eleven years as a London lecturer Davy also travelled across Scotland, Ireland and Wales deepening his fascination with the physical structure of rocks and minerals. In another notebook, which contains notes on geology dated 1805, Davy drafts twelve lines of “To Anna Maria B.,” and three fragmentary poems that address a woman who has an “eye so bright and blue” and emotions like the waves of the sea that go back and forth (15f 33). He writes: how “times have changed since first you I saw” and describes her thoughts “As [being] transient as the melting snow” (52, 56). Natural landscapes clearly inspired Davy to compose poems on Anna and an unnamed woman who could also be Anna Beddoes.

As the next chapter will explain, Davy was immensely interested in geology;

he lectured on the subject, and composed poems such as “To Anna Maria B.” that drew upon his knowledge. Evidently inspired by the Irish natural scenes, in “To Anna Maria B.” the poet associates fixed natural “objects” with the memory of Anna in the final stanza, echoing the first few lines of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey”:

The proof, this tranquil moment gives  
 How vivid the remembrance lives  
 For e'en in Nature's [sic] forms, I see  
 Some strong Memorials of thee.  
 The autumnal foliage of the wood  
 The tranquil flowing of the flood  
 The Down with purple heath o'er spread  
 The awful Cliffs gigantic head,  
 The moonbeam in the azure sky  
 Are blended with thy memory. (31–40)

In these lines, Davy explicitly refers to Wordsworth’s claim that poetry takes its origin from “emotion recollected in tranquillity” (*LB* 1: xxxiii). Wordsworth goes on to write that emotion is contemplated until tranquillity gradually disappeared and an emotion is produced, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation (xxxiv). The speaker in Davy’s “To Anna Maria B.” defines himself through the sensation of viewing the natural scene, absorbs it into his own mental state, and discloses his own emotional state in a carefully constructed poem about a memory. The environment reminds him of the past and of Anna, which in turn emphasises his solitary and introspective condition.

Like Wordsworth’s feeling of connection between nature and the mind in “Tintern Abbey,” Davy claims that his sight gives an indistinctly merging yet direct intellectual connection between what the mind perceives and what it confers. Davy’s list of natural objects “wood,” “flood,” “purple heath,” “Cliffs” and “azure sky” are “Memorials” of Anna. They act to preserve and remind the speaker of her existence. While in “Tintern Abbey” the speaker can “see,” as Barrell puts it, the

natural objects as “islands of fixity and clarity,” they appear “blended” with her memory (*Poetry* 148). As Quinney acknowledges, the Romantic lyric collapses the dualism of mind and matter (*Poetics* xii). For Wordsworth, when images impress upon the mind, the empirical experience has “other feelings [...] attached — with forms” (*Prelude: 1799* 1.258). In “To Anna Maria B.” the eye-rhyme between “sky” and “memory” suggests that Davy finds that what he sees empirically reminds him of Anna; the natural scene contains visual associations, yet the verbal dissimilarity between the rhyming pair suggests that the speaker cannot give a distinct reason for this association of external objects with his thoughts. Throughout the poem Davy characterises and associates the memory of Anna with natural geological forms, such as cliffs and rivers. The nature of this link remains unresolved so that the objects of the poem are metaphorically suggestive for the speaker. This lack of resolution emphasises his distance from Anna as well as his own detachment from the present.

As explored in the first section of my chapter, the Romantic lyric, such as Smith’s sonnets, carefully structured emotions, thoughts and memories for an emotional yet considered performance. Davy’s “To Anna Maria B.” is similarly a piece of poetic craft that also follows in Wordsworth’s lyric performances in the way that Davy formally links the present with the memory of Anna. As a carefully constructed performance of emotions, Davy’s “To Anna Maria B.” self-consciously fills the eight years of their separation with the metrical lines of tetrameter and advertises his poetical craft through the line “Eight long years [that] filled their measure” to suggest how metre and the poem can revive a memory in the present (12, 27). Moreover just as the speaker’s thoughts are still “twined” with these memories, so are the tightly structured four ten-line stanzas of rhyming couplets (27). There is a mutual sympathy from the beginning with the

speaker assuring Anna that he does not forget walking with her as “We moved along the mountains [*sic*] side / Where Avon meets the Severn tide” (3–4). Their union is subtly imitated by the confluence of two rivers merging into one, who are enveloped, hidden, but also perhaps threatened by the overlooking mountains.

However, there is also an underlying sense of recklessness. Like nature, the speaker and Anna are “free and wild” as they “Rejoiced, or grieved, or frowned or smil’d” (7–8). As in Davy’s poems discussed in earlier chapters, such as “The Spinosist,” youthfulness is related to spring. The line links together the body and mind so that the feelings of joy, sadness, and smiles moved “Our minds to hope, or fear, or love” (8, 10). The repetition of the conjunction “or” between the infinitive verbs emphasises the speaker and Anna’s undefined, unlimited, and changeful emotions. Though there is a tone of playfulness in the poem, the contrasting list of youthful emotions (which Davy described as being as “changeful as the light” in his poem “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.”) seems uncontrolled and unstable (13g 14). On the other hand, the speaker creates a tone of mutual affection through his use of first person plural pronouns “we” and “our,” which suggests an intimacy between the poet and Anna, and a trusting bond between the speaker and the reader (13g 3, 6, 10, 24). Much like “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.,” this poem celebrates the speaker’s youth but is also conscious of the imperfections of the past.

While the poem creates a soft, inclusive mood by accentuating the effect of Anna’s memory on his mind and body, the poem also tries to emphasise their separation. The poet maintains that he has found inspiration elsewhere as he describes himself surrounded and dazzled by a new environment, alerting us to its disparity with an exclamation mark: “Art! — Nature, in their noblest dress / the City and the wilderness” (17–18). Alluding to Davy’s work in “the City” of London, the speaker portrays his excitement and fulfilment from the last eight years, finding

“scenes and objects grand and new / Have crowded on my dazzled view” (13–4, 18). Sight and scenes impress their influence on the mind. Unlike the harsh change in the speaker’s mind in Davy’s “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.” here the masculine rhyme between “new” and “view” suggests the speaker is excitedly engaged with the new “varying forms” and scenes that surround him. In contrast, “varying” implies the potential for continuous experience, which forms the speaker as he finds “Contentments [*sic*] calm, Ambitions [*sic*] storms” (19, 20). In contrast to the diverging youthful tension in the first stanza, which describes the way in which the speaker and Anna found their “minds to hope, or fear, or love,” the single comma in line twenty that divides “calm” and “storms” illustrates that his mind, like the carefully constructed poem, is fulfilled by a subtle balance of emotion (10).

In both poems discussed above, we find that the relationship between the external world and the mind is a central concept. My next section explains that this concept is also explored in Davy’s “Vauxhall” poem. The speaker in “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.” and “To Anna Maria B.” asserts that the mind is formed through different experiences and each rehearses two different types of nostalgia for his friendship with Anna. “To ~~Anna~~ Maria B.” portrays an assertive mind that distilled and reasoned upon its youthful emotions as it works towards a higher purpose. “To Anna Maria B.” maintains that though the speaker has been inspired by an environment that removes him from Anna, the natural world still reminds him of their relationship. The differences between the two poems reveal Davy’s approach to the figure of Anna as a means to explore various forms of sentiment. Both poems are carefully constructed, given titles and dated, and written out in fair-hand a number of times. Similarly, Davy’s lectures that defined the role of chemistry, his electrochemistry research, and poetry on his “scenes and objects grand and new” carefully control his language in an attempt to rewrite the past, present and future

(13). In contrast to his two Anna poems, which convey Davy's optimism and controlled state of mind, Anna appears in an anxious poem on her absence titled "Vauxhall." By placing Davy's "To Anna-Maria B." and "To Anna Maria B." poems alongside this other Anna poem, we can see that Davy experimented with the role of Anna and the form of the lyric to rehearse different and distant emotional conditions.

### 3.5 "Vauxhall" as Part of the Anna Poems

My focus here is on a poem in notebook 15e that contains fragmentary lines, titled and untitled poems on Anna, which are interspersed between sketches and notes on his trips to mountainous areas, and chemical notes on his research. The case of the poem titled "Vauxhall" and its paratext in notebook 15e reveal that without the careful control of a "master law" on Davy's mind as described in "To Anna Maria B.," his manuscript poems on Anna can be emotive and subjective.<sup>186</sup> I explain that unlike the other Anna poems, "Vauxhall" focuses its depiction on the speaker's surroundings, yet implicitly offers his feelings of dispossession and as a placeless self.

Davy's 15e notebook contains descriptions and sketches of the geology of rocky landscapes, interspersed with biting and self-critical fragmentary poems on his careless relationship with a woman he wishes he could forget. Although it is difficult to identify exactly when Davy used his notebooks, some pages are dated or contain notes that can be traced to certain trips and events of his life. Since notebook 15e includes notes on Ben Nevis in Scotland and has an 1802 watermark, it can be assumed that this notebook was used during his tour of Scotland and England in 1804 (191, 121). I explain below that the notebook

---

<sup>186</sup> My transcription of this poem is in Appendix 3c.

contains heartfelt fragmentary lines on an unnamed woman, which are repeated later on between his geological notes. Despite the difference in paratext, by reading “Vauxhall” alongside Davy’s other poems on Anna, we find that the lyric for Davy can also convey a sense of loss or absence.

“Vauxhall” was most likely composed after “To ~~Anna~~–Maria B.,” which is dated 1804 and before “To Anna Maria B.,” which is dated 1806. Only one version of “Vauxhall” exists and in Davy’s personal notebook it is followed closely by draft lines on the speaker’s anger at his lover’s unstable emotions (15e 1–4, 6). In these lines, the speaker’s and woman’s feelings are expressed through their bodies and made analogous with the natural landscape. In the same notebook, three instances of fragmentary lines explore the speaker’s feelings and how he loved a woman when he was a “careless boy” and his hope that he “will love her no more” (50, 53). Moreover, between Davy’s geological notes on his tours of Scotland and Ireland are fragmentary lines showing the speaker’s and his lover’s turbulent emotions. These include fragmentary poems about her “changing mind,” his views of her as an “ungrateful girl” and another fragment claiming that a man has “enslaved thee as the mountain” (15e 11–16, 62, 100). One page in particular reveals his differing emotions. At the top of page eleven is a fragmentary line where he declares: “My friend, my sister long Remember me!” Despite these lines on the hope that she remains in his memory, the poem beneath begins with the resentment: “Ungrateful Girl, my Heart No more / For thee shall tremble” (11). Given that the notebooks begins with the poem on Anna titled “Vauxhall,” and that Davy knew of her tumultuous emotional state, these fragmentary lines are presumably directed to the same female figure. The stormy anger in his fragmentary lines on his feelings for the unnamed woman

is a stark contrast to Davy's careful and measured recollections in "To Anna-Maria B." and "To Anna Maria B."

"Vauxhall" and the textual context of surrounding fragmentary lines have yet to receive scholarly attention on the way they reveal an unhappy isolated speaker rehearsing his despondent emotions about Anna. The ballad of seven quatrains containing alternate rhyming lines of iambic tetrameter and trimeter is rich in figurative detail to suggest that passionate longing can manifest to make the mind apathetic and absent from the present. The careful structure of "Vauxhall" suggests Davy's consciousness to try to shape into poetic form the speaker's questionable acceptance of his lonely happiness. In his 1802 "Preface" of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth claimed metre could evoke passion as well as "differing" from passion "so widely" to resemble feelings of estrangement (238). Davy reveals the same sentiment of conscious craft, using a balladic form that structures his feelings of disassociation, which ultimately erupts with the sudden claim that he feels "joy" in this estranged moment that "Anna" is absent (28).

"Vauxhall" begins by exploring the poet's state of mind as he takes no excitement in the beauty of his surroundings. In contrast to the despondency of the poem, the title refers to the popular Vauxhall Gardens on the south bank of the Thames, also vernacular for a place of amusement. Vauxhall Gardens opened in 1661 and, as Gregory Nosan has argued, came to be one of London's most celebrated eighteenth-century sites for polite culture to explore a socially-exclusive celebration of national culture (121). After the banning of prostitutes and freelance vendors in 1728, Vauxhall Garden's reputation as an outdoor brothel was "physically and culturally" "cleaned up" into a luxuriant outdoor pleasure garden containing visual attractions and rides, well-lit avenues lined with colonnades, arches, garden art, statues, and performances by an orchestra and well-known

London singers (Shiner 93). I now discuss the ways in which in the final line of Davy's poem the speaker's ambivalent attitude to his beautiful environment suddenly contrasts with final line on his "joy" that "Anna" is not there, jolting the reader to realise she is the reason for the speaker's apathy (28).

The seven stanzas contain expressions of removal, escapism, avoidance and solace to reveal the speaker's melancholy. "Vauxhall" opens with the masculine rhyme of the "balmy" "breeze" with "light glimmering through the trees" to create a mood of gentleness through the dynamism of eternal nature (1, 3). The light is seemingly raised by "a magic power" so that with the gleam of light comes a sense of optimism (2). The environment, which is "as warm" as "the poet's dream" "with fairy tints," should envelop him in the pleasurable fantasy of poetical construction (2, 11, 12). The vital scene is undermined, however, by the speaker's apathy and disengagement. "A gay and motley crew" of ladies are apart from him; they are "Before me" (5). Despite the sensuality of their "flowing locks," "the soft fragrant air" and their "bosoms heaving full" he asserts that they have no effect upon him. This is emphasised by the list of negations and evasion: "No rapture," "Unmoved," "From," "No," "unnoticed," "passes" and "half closed" (17–24). His solace is to be "Away in Quietness," absent from the world and his own sensitivity to his surroundings. The root of this sombre tone is apparent in his falsehood:

And if a transient joy I felt  
It were that Anna was not there[.] (27–8)

The last line claims that the absence of Anna gives him the only transient joy, yet her presence in the line ruptures the balladic tetrameter. This metrical change can be understood when compared to Wordsworth's "She dwelt among the untrodden ways." Like Davy, Wordsworth similarly uses language of absence and loss. She is "untrodden" both as a physical and mental entity "Half hidden from the eye" (1,

6). Her name does not appear until the final quatrain of the poem to disrupt this absence and emphasise the poet's belief that despite her absence she makes "a difference to me!" (12). Moreover, in Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," although Hartley seems to be an afterthought for the poet, his presence, according to Noel Jackson, is central to the speaker's thoughts (*Science* 125). The speaker in Davy's poem is hollowed and dislocated from the rich scenery and activity of his surroundings, seeking isolation to convince himself that his feelings of loss are not because of Anna's absence. The poem's sudden metrical change during the mention of her name suggests that the speaker holds an almost buried emotional response to Anna, which contrasts his detachment from his environment. Clearly, Davy viewed Anna as a feminine figure that could evoke unwanted emotion. While Wordsworth's poem reflects the fact that his mourning for Lucy influences his emotive state, Davy self-consciously makes literal his failing hope to forget the unforgettable Anna.

In "Vauxhall," despite his autonomous existence the speaker cannot metrically repress his passion and dependence for another. His removal from the richness and joy of the immediate environment is contrasted with her name's disruption in the metre, illustrating that Anna is a source of passionate longing for the speaker, who is emotionally distant without her. Kurt Fosso's work on Wordsworth's poetry and mourning has similarly suggested that the poet's Lucy is a figure from whom the narrator's diagetic account can reveal the lasting legacy of his loss (141–8). The speaker's resistance to forget Anna in "Vauxhall" emphasises her presence. Davy's poem can confirm Jackson's claims for "Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's conversation poems that the lyric emphasises the need for communal awareness. The isolated consciousness is "neither thoroughly isolated nor truly "his" at all" (*Science* 125). The speakers in "To Anna Maria B." and

“Vauxhall” convey the impossible existence of a truly isolated consciousness. The speakers in these two poems are defined by their relationship to Anna, an unavoidable social bond.

The first two poems analysed in my chapter reveal the way in which Davy asserts that youthful sensibility represented by Anna can be overridden by the mind’s ability to reason. However in “Vauxhall” Davy explored the lyric’s diversity with the speaker’s feelings of mourning for Anna. Davy’s titles addressed to Anna and the mention of her name in “Vauxhall” imply Davy’s intention of autobiography by giving a particular detail of a person. Yet there is a careful modulation of the poem’s own artifice. In his work on Romantic biography and Coleridge, Michael O’Neill acknowledges that the “Romantic lyric sees poetry as a mode of power that will never submit to biographical explanation precisely because the self wishes to identify itself as inseparable from its own creation” (6). The poet creates an ideal presence from his own imagination and persuades the reader that the text is a version of the actual. As in the two other poems analysed in my chapter, Anna in “Vauxhall” represents a figure of the past who becomes an imagined witness to the speaker’s emotions. While Davy’s poems locate a certain place and specify that they are directed to the figure of Anna, it is from these the central positions that the speaker can drift between the past and the present. It can be argued that Davy’s poems are not entirely biographical and are explorations of different kinds of emotions by a poet-figure. The use of the first person singular as deployed in the lyric can lead to two ways of reading such poetry: as personal and self-dramatising, or universal and rhetorical. Like “Tintern Abbey” the first two poems examined in this chapter are about the “dizzy raptures” of youth now matured to a temperate joy (89). As the poet meditates on Anna’s absence in “To Anna-Maria

B.," "To Anna Maria B." and "Vauxhall" are evidence of Davy's sustained and inward reflection on the ways in which he could express his own identity.

Davy's lyrical poems on Anna written while he was employed at the Royal Institution reveal the extent to which his verses engaged with, adapted and redeployed the language of his own lectures and Wordsworth's poetics. I have argued in my first chapter that the lyrical ode was a means for Davy to present the distant past of his youth in Cornwall. His Anna poems differ in the presentation of his past where Anna is a central focus for Davy to rehearse different poetic personas and lyric emotion. The three poems focused on in this chapter reveal that, like his lectures, the lyric for Davy is a pliable form for individual, brief and concentrated moments of performance. Similar to his Cornwall odes, "To Anna Maria B." uses the figure of Anna to demarcate between the sensibilities of youth and his sentiments on the mind, which were also publicly described by Davy to the fashionable and wealthy gentry of London. The lyric poem is about the condition and transformation of the speaker's mind, where the memory of Anna aids the poet in his evaluation of the past and the present, and the potential of the mind. In other words, "To Anna-Maria B." is a poem about impressions, recollections and the mind's creative and powerful agency as it subsumes Davy's knowledge of Enlightenment philosophy and his belief in the introspective nature of chemical research. "To Anna Maria B" can be regarded as an aesthetically more enjoyable poem in the way it revels in the language of connections, links and convergence to demonstrate the ameliorative effects of the poetic craft. Very different to these Anna poems, "Vauxhall" dramatises poetically the speaker's alienation from actuality as he tries but fails to avoid the presence of Anna in the poem and in his consciousness. Considering these poems alongside one another, the three varied poems reveal that Davy found the lyric as a form to experiment with his emotional

response to Anna. Davy could control nature in his research, his rhetoric in his lectures, and his emotional states in his poetry.

## CHAPTER FOUR: GEOLOGY AND CONTINENTAL TRAVELS

This chapter examines Davy's manuscript poetry from his first two tours through mainland Europe. I argue that in his poems the foreign locations and mountains are, in the words of Cian Duffy and Peter Howell, "*cultural* rather than *natural* objects" with which Davy affirms the "position of the intellectual" who can give a holistic interpretation of nature (16, 36). The natural landscapes in Davy's poetry are made mirror images of his perspective as a geologist and natural philosopher, confirming his belief that there are powerful harmonious forces that underlie nature. Noah Heringman has already explained that Davy's work "embodies [...] a sense of scientific practice as aesthetic experience" (*Rocks* 146). In his lectures and publications, Davy described his powerful and pleasurable experience of the natural world in order to emphasise the legitimacy of the appropriation and utility of nature by natural philosophers (146–7). I develop and extend Heringman's idea by exploring the ways in which Davy's poems offer the view that a natural philosopher has a specific "aesthetic experience" with his surroundings, who uses a blend of observation, imagination, and analogy.

Fascinated with the geology of natural landscapes, Davy communicated this passion in his poetry throughout his life. His first published poems in the *Annual Anthology* firmly locate Davy as a natural philosopher who had been inspired by the geological and meteorological forces of Cornish seascapes.<sup>187</sup> He later composed a number of poems during his excursions across Britain from 1801, while also sketching and keeping geological notes on the scenes around

---

<sup>187</sup> In 1818, Davy published an essay on the geology of Cornwall, including St. Michael's Mount, in the first volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall* ("Hints"). In contrast to his poems on Cornwall, Davy was able to compare Cornish geology to his observations of foreign landscapes, such as the mineralogy of "The Oriental Pyrenees" (40).

him.<sup>188</sup> In what follows, I first explain that Davy fosters a specific approach to the natural world that is outlined in his lectures on geology in 1805. He adopts and redeploys this observational method in his poems to persuade the reader that natural philosophy is both imaginative and reasoned. Composed by him between 1813 and 1814, Davy's neat set of poems in notebook 14i are careful and descriptive verses on the forces of nature and the speaker's ability to make sense of the geological forces that animate the scene.<sup>189</sup> My focus will be on two poems from this series, "Mont Blanc" and "The Canigou," to reveal the ways in which Davy's poems adopted and expressed his belief that geological ideas should attend "to the observations of nature" to present "permanent" and justifiable truths on the material world (14i 2; 5–6; *Geology* 28).

In the rest of my chapter, I look at Davy's poems written while at the Baths of Lucca in Italy in 1819, which explore the ambiguous and undefined powers of the mind and body. Rather than locating the harmonies of the natural landscape as in the 14i series, Davy's hesitant language in his Baths of Lucca poems, still rhythmically held together in pentameters, suggest that he is less certain in trying to express his ideas on the harmonious relationship between the mind, the body, and the landscape. My focus will be on two poems of this kind that are titled "At the Baths of Lucca 1819" and "Baths of Lucca. 1819. August" (14e 160; 154–3). In order to emphasise their difference in content and to avoid confusion, the poems will hereafter be referred to by their first lines "And may not all this varied life of

---

<sup>188</sup> In notebook 15a, for example, Davy sketches the Giant's Causeway and Fairhead in Ireland in 1806, labelling the parts made of chalk, basalt, Neolithic Basalt and Siliceous Basalt (20–2, 59). In notebook 15e used from 1804, Davy's comments on geology are sandwiched by poems on Anna Beddoes and his tumultuous feelings for an unnamed woman (6). These notebooks are examined in Chapter Three.

<sup>189</sup> These are: "Fontainebleau Dec 29<sup>th</sup>," "Mont Blanc Jan.y 5<sup>th</sup>. 1814. 4 o'Clock. In the Carriage" (hereafter "Mont Blanc"), "Banks of the Rhone Jany 6<sup>th</sup> 11 o'clock," "Pont de Guardon. Jany 6<sup>th</sup> 1813," "The Mediterranean Pine. Montpellier Jany 14 1814," "The Canigou January 26<sup>th</sup>" (hereafter "The Canigou"), "Vaucluse" and "Carrara" (14i 1–8). Although Faraday, who copies out these poems, misspells "Canigon," Davy writes near the title that the poem refers to "Canigou oriental Pyrenees" in South France.

Man” and “Again that lovely lamp from half its orb,” respectively. The specific location of the Baths, a site of notable natural beauty with famous curative waters, becomes a centre point from which the speaker can look inward to consider his mortality and impermanence. In this way, the Baths of Lucca poems return to the lyric mode and to the body as a sensuous or transient entity, such as in Davy’s earlier odes on Cornwall and his Anna series. I will also use another poem from the Baths of Lucca series, which has the heading “Baths of Lucca August 24, 1819,” but hereafter will be called “What is there in life’s stormy day” (14g 97–5). The poem is a counter example to reveal that Davy still structures his poems into tight stanzas that offer his strident ideas on the life of man.

#### **4.1 Methods in Geology and Chemistry**

Davy’s breadth of knowledge and views on geology are apparent in his popular lectures on the subject from 1805. By exploring the ways in which Davy presented geology as both an imaginative and empirical way of interpreting nature, I can then show that in both his lectures and in his poetry in notebook 14i, Davy maintained the belief that all men can find the universal truths of nature through the act of observation, imagination, and analogy. Davy made clear in his lectures that imagination and sight are important when considering a mountainous scene, because a “nobler species of enjoyment arises in the mind, when the arrangement of it” is “considered” (*Geology* 13). In his geology, chemistry, and poetry alike, Davy was determined upon discerning the harmonious arrangements within nature and humanity.

While Davy’s lectures, personal notes, and letters have invited some interest among scholars for their contributions to geology, I focus on his poetry to explore

the centrality of geology in his career. Indeed, there has been very little in the way of a full study on Davy and geology or his relationship with the Geological Society.<sup>190</sup> Davy's perspective on the work of a geologist is outlined in his geology lectures, which were given at the Royal Institution to a large audience in 1805, 1806, 1808, and again in 1809 (Siegfried and Dott xiv). Modified from his previous notes, Davy also gave these lectures in Dublin in 1810 and again in 1811 to an audience that included Jane Apreece.<sup>191</sup> Robert Siegfried and Robert Dott's edition of Davy's 1805 lectures provides a rare analysis of his lectures (Davy, *Geology*). According to Siegfried and Dott, Davy held a persuasive understanding of geology, whose "creationist-progressionist" ideas explicitly stated in his presidential address to the Royal Society in 1822 and in his publication *Consolations* were used by Charles Lyell in his *Principles of Geology* in 1830 (Siegfried and Dott, "Humphry" 225). Lyell quotes Davy's geological interpretations in defence of his own theory, later known as "uniformitarianism," that the earth undergoes constant minute and uniform changes. In his lectures, Davy was too tentative to give a theory of the earth or other "guesses concerning what is to take place in infinite duration," since mankind was concerned with "his immediate and future destinies" (*Geology* 45). By the time Davy wrote *Consolations*, during which he was trying to recover from a debilitating stroke, he had formed a fully progressionist view that the history of the earth reveals that humankind is reaching a purposeful "gradual approach" in advancement (149). My focus in this section is on Davy's tentative conjectures on geology from 1805 to 1814 in which he sought

---

<sup>190</sup> G. L. Davies provides a history of the Geological Society. For work that has been already done on Davy and the society, see Knight, "Chemists"; Rudwick, *Bursting* 464–5; Rudwick, "Foundation"; and Herigman, *Rocks* 144–8.

<sup>191</sup> For more on Davy's geology lectures in Dublin, see Davy's letter to Thomas Allan on 6 October 1811 (*DL*). Having just delivered his series of lectures on geology in Dublin in 1811, Davy wrote to Apreece, enclosing a poem titled "Pleasure and Happiness" on a natural landscape in which he agreed with her that mountain scenery has a great effect on the mind (*DL*). The sight of "great objects" such as mountains inspires "great thoughts" which in turn lead to inward change. Davy's view of geology as both imaginative and sublime is apparent in his poetry and letters.

to promote his intellectual position on the perspective of a geologist. I will later discuss the ways in which these ideas are manifest in his poetry.

In his 1805 lectures, Davy stressed the importance of both observation and imagination in his interpretation of other geological works. For him, contemporary theories on the history of the earth and the debate between “Neptunists” and “Plutonists” were speculative imaginings. The geologist and mineralogist Abraham Gottlob Werner proposed the Neptunist view, which was a “mere history of guesses” according to Davy (*Geology* 56). For Neptunists, the earth had first been a complete ocean and that all rocks were precipitations during unique surges and events. Coleridge similarly believed in the creative swell and relapses of a geological power as evident in rock formations (Levere, *Poetry* 166). James Hutton and his followers sought to confirm the “Plutonist” idea that rocks were created and formed by terrestrial heat in an endless cycle. John Playfair, who accompanied Davy during a geological trip in the summer of 1805 in Scotland, popularised Hutton’s geology in a publication of 1802 on a summary of his theories (*Geology* 58). Davy, however, remained cautious about this debate and criticised both Werner and Hutton for their hypothetical theories. In his conclusion on these theories, Davy emphasised that “the imagination, memory and reason” were equally essential for “the development of great and important truths” (58). In contrast to the hypotheses of Hutton and Werner, in Davy’s following lecture on the characteristics of “pieces of rocks” such as granite and coloured sketches, he emphasised that observation was a key means of interpretation since “accurate knowledge can only be gained by minute inspection” (61).<sup>192</sup> For Davy, geology was “a science of contemplation,” where geological investigation depended on “an

---

<sup>192</sup> For more on rock and fossil geology as an observational science in the nineteenth century, see Knell.

enquiring mind and senses alive to the facts almost everywhere presented in nature” (13). In other words, as I demonstrate through his poetry, he emphasised that nature possesses universal truths that can be discovered by an active and observant viewer.

Davy extended this idea in his lectures when describing the imaginative and reasoned way in which the geologist observed a natural scene, which I will later explain that this is comparable to his two poems from notebook 14i. In his geology lectures, he stated:

The imagery of a mountain country, which is the very theatre of science, is in almost all cases highly impressive and delightful, but a new and a higher species of enjoyment arises in the mind when the arrangements in it, their harmony, and its subserviency [*sic*] to the purposes of life are considered [...] The most sublime speculations are awakened, the present is disregarded, past ages crowd upon the fancy, and the mind is lost in admiration of the designs of that great power who has established order in which at first view appears as confusion. (13)

Davy's definition of geology centred on the philosopher's enjoyment in the discovery of the harmony found within the landscape. He claimed that sublime nature can overwhelm the mind, which leads him to transcend his immediate condition to find the “established order” or the harmonies within nature. Using the Kantian conception of the sublime, Davy proposed that the geologist's “present is disregarded” and he forgets himself as he admires the powerfully timeless forces animating the landscape. The “admiration” of the human mind comes from discovering the “designs” amidst the diverse changes of the scene. His observation of a natural scene leads him to understand its “arrangements” and “harmony,” which in turn results in transcendence. As O' Conner has explained, geologists used language of both the sublime and empiricism to give geology a “scientific” status, despite its speculative endeavours (“Facts” 339; *Earth*).<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>193</sup> Buckland has argued that geologists were also concerned that in such imaginative narratives of geology “bad literary form was an indication of bad scientific thinking” (4).

Davy's declaration that mountain scenery "is the very theatre of science," as I explore below, is echoed in his poems "Mont Blanc" and "The Canigou." In one way, Davy's statement suggests that mountainous regions enact or perform the harmonious forces from which the geologist can experience the sublime power of nature. In another way, he also proposes that the sight of such geological and meteorological forces could inspire the geologist to, in turn, lecture on the truths of nature. Davy perhaps alluded to his career at "the Theatre of the Royal Institution" where he claimed he had "been more successful than I could have hoped" to Davies Gilbert in May 1802 (*DL*). As already explored in my previous chapter, the lecture theatre was a site for the natural philosopher to elucidate the truths of nature to his audience in a controlled and careful manner. I will reveal below that Davy re-enacts the theatrics of science in his poetry to explain the reasoned and imaginative perspective of the geologist.

While Davy criticised ancient philosophers such as Plato in the way he formed "the universe after the model of his own intellectual world" by not adhering to observation in his "abstracting metaphysics," Davy's union of nature and the mind is an anthropocentrism (Davy, *Geology* 28). As Marjorie Levinson has explained, some critics suggest that Romantic literary writing presents a "transformation of nature and matter by a human [...] agency which is both materially empowered by this process and refined into ever increasing self-awareness and self-possession" (Levinson, "Pre-" 114). Davy offered audiences of the Royal Institution the idea that the world can be possessed by the mind's powerful interpretation and manipulation of nature. The "sublime speculations" of the geologist are self-reflexive (*Geology* 13). He is filled with awe, yet can then transcend and so command the material world by discovering the cycles, which

underpin it. Indeed my chapter argues that Davy extends this idea in his poetry by presenting the ways in which nature is under his command.

Both in his geology and chemistry lectures, Davy maintained the belief that although sight and imaginative vision give an indefinite impression of the external world, they can also convey a sense of a governing reason that holds nature together: the visible structure possesses an organising principle. For example, he argued in his Bakerian lecture to the Royal Society on 19 November 1807 that classifying bases of potash required understanding resemblances between bodies and that “the analogy between the greater number of properties must always be the foundation of arrangement” (*Chemical Changes* 31–2). A substance is classified according to its similarities to the properties of other substances so that “similar facts are connected” (Davy, *Elements of Chemical* 1). Davy believed new theories could be hypothesised using a connection of facts and analogies. He emphasised throughout his scientific career that the ability to reason by analogy was important including in his work on chlorine, iodine, and the safety lamp (Knight, *Humphry* xiv). Ted Underwood speculates that Davy took up William Nicholson’s definition of analogy in his poetry, which was used by natural philosophers who, aware that they have no certainty in their knowledge, made hypotheses based on sense experience as well as inference (“Skepticism”). Underwood’s essay on Davy and his fragmentary poetry finds that Davy’s scepticism and use of analogy in his science, like Wordsworth, “entertained possibilities without giving them full visionary endorsement” (“Skepticism” 96). Both Romantic poets and natural philosophers held the same scepticism in regards to human perception. While Underwood argues that Davy “entertained possibilities,” in contrast I illustrate in my close reading of “Mont Blanc” that the

poem looks at the complexities of the landscape and finds a clear parallel between nature and the workings of the human mind.

Indeed, Jonathan Smith has explained that Davy's research was based on the belief that analogies were "the key to scientific success" and was one of the "foundations of [his] chemical philosophy" (85). Smith finds that for Davy, analogy, confirmed by observation and experiment, could lead to new connections between apparently disparate bodies or fields of knowledge (85).<sup>194</sup> For Davy, hypotheses were formed from real facts, in contrast, for example, to what he viewed as the "boldness and peculiarity" of Dalton's theoretical atomic theory (*CW* 7: 96). About to return to the Geological Society of London in 1815, Davy confidently subsumes his ideas into "Mont Blanc" and "The Canigou" (145) to offer the view that the natural philosopher's perspective of the world is imaginative and significant.

My argument for a comparison between Davy's lectures and poetry in some ways follows scholarship that suggests the aesthetics of geology and poetry, such as in Wordsworth's writings, "form each other in this period through their shared concepts of landscape aesthetics" (Heringman, *Rocks* 269). As John Wyatt has shown, Wordsworth was interested in the late eighteenth-century geologist's belief that his discipline was imaginative and noble, which acknowledged nature as a source that interacted with and guided the human mind (Wyatt, *Wordsworth* 17–51; 171). The discourse of geology that had been influenced by picturesque and landscape aesthetics in poetry, such as in Davy's lectures, shaped Wordsworth's attitudes towards rock formations.<sup>195</sup> Wordsworth, however, would have been suspicious of Davy's blending of sublime aesthetics and the idea of man's

---

<sup>194</sup> Davy outlined his method of observation, experiment and analogy in his *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* in 1812.

<sup>195</sup> Heringman argues that both poetry on natural landscapes and geology are "anchored" into specific knowledge on the natural world ("Rock" 84).

sovereignty over nature. I now explain that Davy, recalling his own lectures on chemistry and geology, meticulously drew and recorded geological information on specific locations during his first tour of the Continent. These ideas in turn influenced his imaginative and descriptive approach to mountainous regions in two of his poems in notebook 14i (Heringman, *Rocks* 154).

#### 4.2 Notebooks on the Continent

Here I want to look at the manuscript context of Davy's poems in notebook 14i to build my argument that Davy's poems composed during his first tour reflect his confidence to analyse and gain understanding of a natural scene. I examine Davy's notebooks from this period, focussing on notebooks 13a, 15c, and 14g that contain versions of the poems "Mont Blanc" and "The Canigou." I will later examine the latest extant version of these poems found in notebook 14i, although I also refer to the versions of each of these poems that also appear in notebooks 13a and 15c.<sup>196</sup> While composing his 14i series of poems, Davy carefully sketched and noted the geological aspects of these natural scenes. These sketches and notes make clear that observation and field work was an important aspect of his response to these foreign landscapes. I argue that his notebooks reflect his remit in his geology lectures that observation and imagination were two important aspects of the work of the geologist. This textual context, as well as Davy's lectures, informs the descriptive tone of his 14i poems.

The notebooks that I focus on contain poems written from 1813, after Davy and Jane's marriage on 8 April 1812 and honeymoon in Scotland, and during a trip across the Continent from October 1813 until April 1815.<sup>197</sup> Davy had been invited

---

<sup>196</sup> Two versions of "Mont Blanc" are in 13a (57) and 14i. Two versions of "The Canigou" are in notebooks 15c (170–63, 131, 138) and 14i.

<sup>197</sup> Apreece, a widowed heiress, was a distant cousin of Sir Walter Scott, had travelled widely and was well-connected to elite society including the literary figures Madame de Staël, Lord Byron,

to accept the Volta Prize from the Académie des Sciences France in Paris when few were allowed to travel to mainland Europe in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars. Writing that he had seen Davy a fortnight before the trip in a letter to Edith Southey on 25 September 1813, Southey criticised Davy's request for "special permission of the French Government" (SL 2308). Southey regarded Davy as unpatriotic, stating that Davy "ought not to have asked" for such consent "but he has long been going wrong." During their continuing friendship after Davy left Bristol in 1801, Southey found that Davy's career and fame at the Royal Institution had made him vain and a product of the "baneful effect of prosperity" (9 March 1804; SL 910). Despite both public and private criticism in England on Davy's trip to France, his poetry on famous geological sites seems to be a retreat from or convey a "lack of affect" by the political context of warfare, a retreat that Thomas Pfau argues characterised literary writing in this period (*Romantic* 17, 20).<sup>198</sup> Davy's notebooks, filled with sketches, geological notes and poetry, convey the way in which he was fascinated with the visual richness of the landscapes and its geological formations. I explain below that his poetry during his first trip on the Continent responds to the political uncertainty of warfare with the "stoic" and powerful authority of the geologist's perspective who can understand the forces that underlie the natural world (Pfau, *Romantic* 21).<sup>199</sup> Rather than an escape from contemporary political issues, Davy's authoritative perspective draws from the political and social remit of geology as outlined to his audiences at the Royal Institution.

---

Thomas Moore, the Royal Institution lecturer Sydney Smith and John Playfair. For more on Apreece see Knight, *Humphry* 89–92; and Holmes *Age*, 337–9.

<sup>198</sup> For an example of contemporary public criticism on Davy's trip to France, see "Sir Humphrey Davy."

<sup>199</sup> Fulford has examined Wordsworth's landscape poetry for a similar but more ambiguous and "(self-)challenging" "search for authority" (*Landscape* 157–213).

During their eighteen month trip, Davy, his new wife Jane, her maid Mrs Meek and his assistant Faraday first travelled through France, stayed in Paris, and continued on to Geneva and Montpellier. The party then moved on to Italy, visiting Florence, Genoa, Rome, Naples, Rimini, and Venice.<sup>200</sup> Returning homeward after hearing of Napoleon's escape from Elba they stayed in Munich and various cities on the way to Brussels. Faraday and Davy kept notes of their travels and, as I expand upon below, drew from and imitated the Continental travel writing genre, which included poetry inspired by such scenes.<sup>201</sup> As was characteristic of eighteenth-century travel narratives, we find that Davy's poetry in notebook 14i depicts the scene, the primary object of commentary, in terms of its geological and meteorological laws and in turn "displace[s] the self" (Chard 11). For example, in his thirty-seven line blank-verse manuscript poem "Banks of Rhone" in notebook 14i, Davy focuses on the geological forms and meteorological changes that pervade the land (2). He presents the way in which he can contemplate together a range of imagery such as foliage, fauna, edifice, and the movement of the streams and the wind so that the power of the landscape is located in the speaker's ability to observe and describe. He sees no evidence of a winter climate, although it is January, and describes each "varied" component of the land that can be "seen" including the "oak," the "chesunt" [*sic*], "the bright willow," "broken columns" and "mould'ring towers," "vine," "rocks," streams, "water fly" and the scene's "varied" colours (8–32). Davy often uses the noun "tints" in his poetry, particularly between 1813 and 1819, to describe the radiance of the scene at the beginning of a

---

<sup>200</sup> For more on their journey and Faraday's employment in this role, see James, *Michael* 35–7.

<sup>201</sup> Colbert has shown that the language of travel books influenced poetry on Alpine scenes of the Romantic period, such as Patrick Brydone's popular travel book *A Tour through Sicily and Malta*. Brydone described the way in which he was overwhelmed by the scale and infinitude of the scene, though still locates familiar Christian meaning in the scene (1: 189). His publication met with critical acclaim; it influenced Percy Shelley's poem on Mont Blanc, was read by Dorothy Wordsworth in 1796, and was also recommended to Walter Scott for his trip to the Mediterranean in 1831 (Colbert 86–7; Wu 20; Lockhart 10: 109).

poem.<sup>202</sup> The word is at once vague and precise. It suggests an indefinite and unbounded influence of the light on the environment and perhaps the speaker's initial inability to put into words everything that he sees. In the context of the minute detail of the rest of the poem, Davy's use of this indeterminate and delicate word signifies his own fascination with the subtle variance of the scene. The descriptive perceptions of the speaker characterise most of Davy's poems during his first trip on the Continent in notebooks 14i, 14e, 14g, and 15c.

Taken as a whole, these notebooks demonstrate that Davy placed importance on recording the geological and visual details of the landscapes. In the first nineteen pages of notebook 15c, which Davy used during his tour of the Continent as a sketchbook, Faraday made an extensive list of the mountain elevations in the Alps and the Pyrenees and references the work of the travel writer M. La Boulinière (12). After Faraday's records of the dimensions of these geological forms, the 15c notebook contains Davy's pencil sketches of landscapes of mountainous scenes, notes on experiments, and many draft poems on the majestic beauty of France and Italy including "Vaucluse," "To the orange tree. In the open air at Nice. Feb 16 1814.," "Cimineus," "Thine is no dark and dreary mine" and "Well-suited to an age in which the light" (50–68; 69; 170–138; 103–1; 99–6; 87–2). Of the three pencil sketches we find a depiction of Canigou and an early and untitled version of "The Canigou" poem (24–5, 39, 170–63, 138, 131). Between sketches of the mountains in Vaucluse, Davy also composes first drafts of "Vaucluse" about the mountainous landscape. The poem is on the side of sketches and continues after the pencil drawings with "V" in the corner to denote that he is still finishing the poem (62, 66). Davy both observed and commented on

---

<sup>202</sup> See "Evening at Nice" (14e 126 line 8), "Thou loveliest form of the celestial world" (80 line 14); "Some minds there are with tints so heavenly bright" (14g 42 line 1); "Fontainebleau" (14i 1 lines 17, 36, 38); "Banks of Rhone" (2 lines 9, 29); "The Canigou" (5–6 lines 7, 65).

his surroundings using pencil sketches and poems. In one of my following sections that examines “The Canigou,” I explain that the empirical process of drawing the scene is translated into his poetry, which, like the work of the geologist, is both descriptive and imaginative.

The first two poems I examine in the following sections of my chapter are in notebook 14i in a series of eight poems on natural landscapes in Europe. It is clear that this is a group of poems for Davy since they were neatly copied out by Faraday and are the latest extant versions located at the beginning of his notebook.<sup>203</sup> The eight poems were most probably copied out while the party was in France in 1813, given that the notebook contains Davy’s sketches of the mountains and forests of Canigou (14i b–d, 10).<sup>204</sup> John Davy’s decision to publish a selection of the 14i poems was most likely shaped by his relative ease in transcribing Faraday’s neat handwriting. Indeed, we know that John published these poems except “Pont de Guardon” in his *Memoirs* using 14i as his source. He wrote numbers alongside the titles of the poems in notebook 14i that relate to the order in which he publishes them. He also re-worked some of Davy’s wording in the poems. Line 38 of “Vaucluse” for example is published by John Davy as “Seem stolen from the ethereal [*sic*] sky” following the poem’s lines of pentameter, yet the 14i version shows that John writes over the line in which Faraday originally writes “Seem stolen from the middle sky so bright” (7). An earlier version in notebook 15c shows that Faraday’s version of the line is most

---

<sup>203</sup> Formally a book-binder’s apprentice, Faraday drew ornate lines under the titles of the poems, which are a typical publisher’s technique to divide the title and the text. In contrast to this ornamental style, Faraday wrote a version of Davy’s lectures in 1812 and divided the title and the text with a simple double line (4a).

<sup>204</sup> Davy also uses the notebook later in his life: the rest of notebook 14i contains notes from around 1826 such as drafts poems on the past, sketches fish and landscapes, drafts scientific notes and a draft for his *Consolations*.

likely from Davy since it also follows an iambic pentameter (62).<sup>205</sup> Many scholars use John's published versions in their analysis of Davy's poetry. Given such evidence that his brother posthumously edited these poems, I use Davy's manuscript versions and versions published in his lifetime throughout my thesis.

Biographers who have examined these poems suggest that they describe Davy's fascination with the landscapes during his travels and his political views. John Davy explained that in the poem "Fontainebleau" Davy described a power "never to rise," which prophesied the fall of Napoleon a few months after the poem was written (2: 472–3). John also claimed that his brother's description of the British fleet off the Mediterranean coast in "The Canigou" show Davy's "strong patriotic feeling" for Britain during the war with France. John perhaps asserted Davy's politics given the criticism of Davy's presence in France during wartime (475). Holmes pays particular attention to Davy's poem on Pont du Gard and suggests Davy may have been impressed by the engineering of the aqueduct (Age 35–5). I regard the 14i series of poems as significant for Davy given that Faraday copied these into notebook 14i, and the fact that there are earlier versions of some of these poems between sketches of these mountainous regions. Davy devoted his and his assistant's time to these poems. I explore two of these to explain that Davy accords with the Romantic period's fascination with mountainous scenes and that his response is influenced by his knowledge and views as a geologist and natural philosopher.

Davy's notebooks and letters remind us that his focus during his tour through the Continent was his scientific research. This may well have shaped his descriptive and moralistic response to Mont Blanc and Canigou in his poems.

---

<sup>205</sup> John Davy also published three other poems from this trip, two of which are in notebook 14e. One poem is on the artwork by the Italian sculptor "Canova" and the other two, John Davy states, are without a date. These two poems are on natural landscapes in Tivoli titled "The Sybil's Temple," and in south of Italy titled "On a Distant View of Paestum" (1: 488–91; 14e 124–3).

During their Continental tour, Faraday was also tasked to copy out Davy's scientific papers that were to be published in the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* while they were in mainland Europe.<sup>206</sup> Faraday duplicated these to ensure the papers made the journey safely through the Continent during the Napoleonic Wars. Three copies of Davy's experiments on iodine were sent from Florence from 22 March 1814 and further papers between January and April 1814 on the combustion of the diamond, iodine, acids, and painting from Rome. One could speculate that Faraday copied out Davy's 14i versions in preparation for publication or with the intention that, like his scientific papers, they would be sent to England where descriptions of Alpine scenes saturated the travel writing marketplace. In what follows I analyse the two of these poems, "Mont Blanc" and "The Canigou," arguing that Davy's 14i poems on mountainous regions in the Alps during his first trip offer the imaginative and reasoned perspective of a natural philosopher. While sketching these foreign landscapes, Davy wrote poetry that offered a holistic interpretation of nature as harmonious and rational, a perspective that redeploys his knowledge and views on geology using metre, analogy, and metaphor.

### 4.3 "Mont Blanc"

Looking down at the earth after his first ascent of Mont Blanc on 3 August 1787, Horace-Bénédict de Saussure recalled:

What I saw with the greatest clarity was the ensemble of all the high peaks, the arrangements of which I had for so long wanted to understand. I could not believe my eyes, and it seemed to me as if it were a dream [...] I was seeing relationships, their connections and their structure, and a single glance relieved the doubts that years of work had not been able to resolve. (qtd in Rudwick, *Bursting* 17)<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>206</sup> These are in the archives of the Royal Society.

<sup>207</sup> See de Saussure 14.

As Martin Rudwick comments, de Saussure's view gave him "a better understanding of the complex physical geography of the environs" and "enabled him to improve – at least in the mind's eye – [his] map of the Western Alps" (17). Equally, as Duffy and Howell have suggested, Davy's poem on Mont Blanc reconfirms his belief in the imaginative and powerful perspective of the geologist (36–7). While de Saussure channelled his experiences into his journal and maps, Davy outlined the impact of his experience into a descriptive and moralistic poem, where Mont Blanc brings about an understanding of the underlying principles that govern both the natural world and human thought.<sup>208</sup> I also use an earlier manuscript version of Davy's poem to explain how he carefully constructed his poem to align with his "position" as an "intellectual in the social world" (Duffy and Howell 36).

In largely iambic pentameters, Davy's twenty-four line blank verse apostrophe to Mont Blanc describes three aspects of the scene: the mountain, a river that becomes a "devious maze" of streams, and the claim that this river is similar to the mind of a man of reason (11). In what follows in this section, I examine the way in which "Mont Blanc" presents nature as an embodiment of the active and reasoning mind. The speaker exhibits his own ability to observe and comprehend a harmony within nature, and specifically the transformation of the river as it travels down into the surrounding fields. Davy relates this behaviour to the way in which nature's harmonies can inspire and seem similar to his own consciousness. Here Davy recasts his analogy between the mind and mountain streams in his 1808 lecture: "Like a stream rising amongst mountains, [natural science] flows from the heavens to the earth" (*Fragmentary* 60). His extended metaphor of the power of the mind is reshaped into a text that consciously changes its movement through variation in pace, metre and imagery.

---

<sup>208</sup> For my transcription of this poem, see Appendix 4a.

For Davy, Mont Blanc represents latent potentiality provoking the speaker to convey in an odal style the mountain's dominant presence. The participle of the mountain "rising" into view alludes to the way in which the mountain emerges in the sky with Davy's intensifying realisation of the effects of the sublime experience (3). The mountain is then presented as resolutely within his cognition with the perfect verbs "rais'd" and "framed" to assert the mountain's permanence and the way in which Davy is able to translate its otherworldliness into the abstract yet familiar language of Christian faith for "th'eternal" God (3, 5–6). Indeed, Duffy's essay on tropes in Romantic writing on Mont Blanc explains the literary connection made between the physical elevation of the traveller and an elevation of consciousness ("Interrogating" 149). The sublime mountain has, and prompts, a divine grandeur. I will later discuss the way in which "Mont Blanc" presents a Platonic mirroring between the supersensible entity and the natural landscape, which contrasts with the view of critics such as Weiskel, Ferguson or Shaw that argue the deployment of a Kantian transcendence in Romantic literary writing on mountains.<sup>209</sup>

Mirrored in the change in pace, "Mont Blanc" also focuses on the variation and movement of the river, which he later declares are analogous to the "heaven" sent thoughts of man (4). The water's floods are "gain'd" from the bountiful mountain to suggest that the river comes from the analogous divine will (10). Descriptions of the movement of the waters fill the poem in the longer lines of pentameters and an alexandrine, slowing the poem to focus on the speaker's fascination with the river's movements (9–13). The river is fed by the mountain and is itself mutable, becoming independent of its source: the river travels along it, and

---

<sup>209</sup> Also, see Nicolson for a discussion on the links between divinity and mountain scenery in Romantic literary writing (*Mountain*).

changes according to its environment, beginning as “bright green” and then brown “midst the rocks,” expanding from the “flood of waters” gained from the mountain (9–10). The river’s movement is in itself significant for Davy when we find that in an another version he used the word “wand’ring” and changed this to “winding” in line nine in the later version of the poem in notebook 14i (13a 57). The verb “wand’ring” conveys the river’s purposelessness, while in his later version the river possesses a sinuous but directed course through the land. Davy had also previously described how the streams travelled a “devious course” in notebook 13a and in the later version writes that the river splits into a “devious maze” to imply that despite the waywardness of these streams, there is a structured and complex design that connects the streams together (11).<sup>210</sup> Like the geologist who looks for harmonies within nature, Davy can discern the behaviour of the river and its harmonious relationship with the fields.

Despite this varied course and the fact that the river mingles with streams from elsewhere “of lowland origin,” these constituent parts of the river have a function (13). Using long syllables, Davy assertively describes that the streams retain their “strength,” “colour,” and “motion” from the mountain as it passes through “fertile plains” and “wash’d” the “cities [*sic*] walls” (11–6). The waters intermingle with the surroundings but are still defined by the enduring and permanent mountain. Mont Blanc, a temple to God, provides the land with rivers and streams which themselves inspire the speaker to suggest the analogy that these resemble humankind. The waters come from one entity, but possess independent motions and changes. The poem suggests both that the mind and man’s observations have an implicit but indirect relationship with heaven, and that natural forms, like the mind, are self-directed.

---

<sup>210</sup> This notebook version is difficult to date since it was used between 1804 and 1819.

In the last turn of the poem, Davy affirms that this river is comparable to the abstract thoughts of man. Echoing his lectures that compared the forces discovered in natural philosophy with a harmonious social order, Davy implies that the river and streams appear to be similar to the heaven-sent thoughts of men of reason. Like the river and streams, thought “descends from heaven,” full of “reason” and “power” (18–9). The river and streams differ, however, as shown by the way in which the rich description of the landscape’s movements and colours concentrates on the process of change: the streams “lav’d,” “wash’d” and “mingled” with the scene (12–3). Perhaps recalling his assertive Anna poems, and in contrast to the streams, Davy claims that men with heaven-sent wisdom can actively “pass” “uncorrupted” through the world, change according to “social life,” yet “never lose” their “native purity” (20–4). The natural landscape and its variety, though dissimilar to man, can be simplified into an analogy for the patterns of consciousness. Echoing Plato’s philosophy that there is the material world is a degraded version of a perfect transcendent archetype that can be adumbrated with reason, Davy claims that thoughts maintain a spirit given from heaven (like the river and streams), which is given to the character of man (like the fields surrounding Mont Blanc).<sup>211</sup> The last section of the poem offers a universal understanding of the harmony of nature made all the more emphatic by the all-encompassing third-person plural pronouns “those,” “they” and “their” (17–24).

Davy’s poem first appears in notebook 13a and thirteen blank pages after a series of poems that include verses from anonymous admirers and Anna Beddoes, fragmentary lines and scientific notes (57). Faraday neatly wrote both the 14i series and “Mont Blanc” in notebook 13a.<sup>212</sup> Although we may never be

---

<sup>211</sup> Davy’s Platonist ideas are explored in Chapter Five.

<sup>212</sup> This notebook is discussed in Chapter Three.

able to trace why a version of Davy's "Mont Blanc" poem appears in this notebook, Davy may have requested to have it copied twice, which suggests that he valued this verse. As mentioned above, Mont Blanc was a site of immense scientific importance and a rich source of imaginative engagement for artists, two types of discourse that Davy sought to contribute to with his lectures on geology and with his poetry. Indeed, Mont Blanc is an important case to convey the diverse ways Romantic-period writers responded to common cultural stimuli, given that the mountain has become the epitome of Romantic engagement with the sublime (Duffy, "Interrogating" 149). Examining Davy's poems on Mont Blanc calls into question how and in what ways Davy differs in his representation of a popular location revered by contemporary poets and travel writers. I will now give an overview of Coleridge's, Wordsworth's and Shelley's poems that present a personal and philosophical utterance of their observations on the mountain, all of which are indebted to travel writing on the area. As I discuss in the next section, Davy's descriptive poem is more akin to the descriptive nature of travel writing and his own conception of geology that he outlined in his lectures than to the poetry of his Romantic literary contemporaries.

Duffy has traced the emergence of tropes in English Romantic writing on Mont Blanc to find that such engagements with sublime Alpine scenes were indebted to eighteenth-century travel writers and natural philosophers scaling mountains in Britain and on the Continent ("Interrogating"). Travel books on the Continent were a popular means for readers to experience the pleasure and benefits gained by travellers in their writings about foreign landscapes. Poems on Alpine scenes often accompanied descriptive travelogues such as Helen Maria Williams's "A Hymn Written Amongst the Alps" in her 1798 *A Tour in Switzerland* (Williams 16–9; Colbert 83). Shelley was all too aware of "the raptures of

travellers” in their publications, finding that travel writers sought to surprise and awe their readers rather than seek truth in observation (*History* 141). While in Chamouni, Shelley told his close friend Thomas Love Peacock he is “warned by their example. I will simply detail to you all that I can relate” (qtd. in Colbert 141). Before exploring the ways in which Davy’s poem on Mont Blanc retains the descriptive tone that Shelley hoped for, I will explain Wordsworth’s, Coleridge’s and Shelley’s response to Mont Blanc that reaffirm a relationship between man and nature.

Wordsworth was conscious of the way in which imaginative descriptions of Mont Blanc could conflict with his own emotional response at the mountain’s reality. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth finds the much detailed and celebrated Mont Blanc disappointing at first sight:

That day we first  
Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and griev'd  
To have a soulless image on the eye  
Which had usurp'd upon a living thought  
That never more could be. (*Prelude*: 1799 6.452–6)

Wordsworth unifies an empirical observation with emotion and his metaphysical spirit by connecting his feelings of grief with the experiences of his soul, “the eye,” and “living thought.” While the idea of Mont Blanc filled his imagination, the geological form itself falls short of his pre-conceived expectations. For Louise Economides, the mountain “profoundly disturbs the speaker” because he is “confronted with a power in nature that threatens to overwhelm” the human mind (91–2). The sublime material world overpowers the speaker’s mental faculties. Stephen Gill claims that Wordsworth finds consolation from his dejection (69). He realises that as the journey continues, an experience with the potential power of nature, such the “dumb cataracts” and “motionless array of mighty waves” could “make rich amends” for the disappointment of Mont Blanc (*Prelude*: 1799 6.458–

60). While for Wordsworth the sublime is evoked by the obscure and unfathomable, Davy's "Mont Blanc" finds that the sublime is the source of man's ability to reason. I will later explain that his intellectual understanding of geology and chemistry organises his sublime experiences of such scenes. Davy's preoccupation with analogy in his lectures on chemistry is redeployed in "Mont Blanc," where the sublime mountain is overtly an analogy to a supersensible entity, which is the source of wisdom.

Davy may have read Coleridge's "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni" published in 1802 in the *Morning Post*, which presents Mont Blanc as a conduit between earth and heaven (*Poetical Part 2* 717–22).<sup>213</sup> As in Davy's "Banks of Rhone" that I described above, Coleridge evokes the "thousand voices" (85) of natural elements such as its "caves," "rocks" and "cataracts" to join him in his poem or "hymn" (28, 42, 53). On asking about their origin, Coleridge joyously finds that the answer is in "God" (59, 63, 85) so that, as Economides states, Coleridge's desire for transcendental unity with nature results in "a corresponding reduction of the world's plurality and infinite complexity" (107). Davy's "Mont Blanc," like Coleridge's poem, finds that the intricate material world can be unified through a comprehension of its underlying divine harmony.

The atheistic Shelley responded to Coleridge's praise of divine creation (on an imagined scene) with his own "Mont Blanc" poem in *History of a Six Weeks' Tour of the Continent*, which includes a journal of his 1814 trip, letters, and ends with the poem on the physical presence of the mountain (West 73). Shelley's "Mont Blanc" takes on travel writing conventions such as the aesthetics of the sublime and the picturesque popularised by Gilpin. However, Shelley finds that the

---

<sup>213</sup> In a letter to William Sotheby on 10 September 1802, Coleridge explained that his climbing of the mountain Scafell in Cumbria inspired the "Hymn." He explained that he "adapted" his feelings to the "grander external objects" of Mont Blanc and the Vale of Chamonix after "accidentally lighting on a short note on some swiss Poems" (*Collected 2*: 864–5).

power of nature and the human imagination makes him aware of his mental inability to occupy a distinct perception of the scene (Colbert 99). In the first stanza he finds that to look on nature he becomes aware that the mind is a consciousness in transition:

The everlasting universe of things  
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,  
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom  
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs  
The source of human thought its tribute brings. (1–4)

In the above quotation, the viewer senses the “things” of the external world from which the human mind can perceive and create its impressions of nature. Shelley destabilises the traveller’s position as an objective observer and argues through the verb “flows” that an active poetical imagination can renew a landscape and the reader. By acknowledging the incommunicability and subjectivity of perception, “human thought” and nature act as a unifying dynamic whole acting and reacting to each other. Nature holds a potent intensity that inspires and, at the same time, is similar to the mind as it travels like “rapid waves” through the “gloom” of the mind’s chasms, which in turn leads to “secret springs” of thought. Shelley later hints at his own reading of geology in the way he describes his interest in the caves and ice of the mountains to suggest the Alps’ hollowness, which according to Wyatt demonstrates Shelley’s knowledge of “a theory of eighteenth-century travellers and, for some, accounted for the perpetual flow of glaciers” (*Wordsworth* 215). In “Mont Blanc,” Davy echoes Shelley’s metaphor that the rivers are comparable to the flow of the heaven-sent thoughts of humanity. However, whereas Shelley suggests that the speaker’s mind follows the same path of the river, Davy remains a spectator to the scene.

With regard to Shelley’s poem “Mont Blanc,” Coleridge’s “Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouny” and Wordsworth’s description of his crossing of

Simplon Pass in *The Prelude*, Economides finds that these poets explore the gap between poetic imagination and material nature. For Economides, in the end “it is the human mind (and particularly the imagination) that takes precedence in this relationship, with material nature readily transformed or eclipsed by thought” (91). Economides finds that these poets present nature anthropocentrically, giving an analogous function of geological forms such as Mont Blanc to the mind (88). From my close reading of Davy’s “Mont Blanc” and “The Canigou” in this and the next section, it is clear that for Davy the natural forces in the landscape are analogous to the workings of the mind, clarifying his own understanding of geology and his methods in chemistry. We have found that in one of Davy’s descriptive poems that he find direct analogies between the thoughts of humanity and the natural forces that control the scene. I now explain that his descriptions correspond with Davy’s geology lectures in 1805, in which he described that the observations and methods of science would confirm the truth of scripture. It is important to note that Davy was careful to claim that science was not directly derived from natural theology, although he thought there was correspondence between the bible and the results of natural philosophy (Siegfried and Dott xliii). This is perhaps why Davy’s poem distinguishes between the sublime Mont Blanc as a temple of devotion, rather than representative of God himself.

In contrast to these Romantic poets’ verses on Mont Blanc, I suggest that Davy’s poems follow in the tradition of geological writings such as de Saussure and George Bellas Greenough, both of whom he admired or alluded to in his lectures on geology (*Geology* 65). Although Davy’s geological perspective is not explicit in “Mont Blanc,” like de Saussure he presents the geologist’s realisation in seeing “relationships, their connections and their structure” (qtd in Rudwick, *Bursting* 17). In “Mont Blanc,” Davy describes the geological relationship between

the mountain, the river, the streams, and the fields, and creates a further relationship between the scene and the source of humankind's thoughts. Davy's lectures also quoted anonymously the travel writing of Greenough, which I now explain is comparable to Davy's structuring of the scene in his poems in notebook 14i (119).<sup>214</sup> Greenough's travel journals from his tour of the Alps in 1802 with Thomas Underwood, the landscape painter and a proprietor of the Royal Institution, offer interesting comparisons with Davy's poetry. Davy had read Greenough's travel journals to Coleridge, and these later inspired Coleridge to visit Sicily (Wyatt, "George").<sup>215</sup>

Greenough's account of Mont Blanc is similar to Davy's poetry in the way it combines descriptions of his emotional reactions, the sublime grandeur of the landscape, and details of the variegated scene (*Geology* 119–22). In his journal on 3 August 1802, Greenough explained that he found his experience of Mont Blanc difficult to express:

the tranquillity of the Evening, the beautiful tints of the setting sun, the grandeur of the Mountains had thrown me into a mood which it is impossible to describe and rendered me in the highest degree susceptible of pleasure. (qtd. in Wyatt, *Wordsworth* 172)

Wyatt explains that Greenough's notes convey the geologist's appreciation of natural landscape, which offers an emotional reward to the observer and energy to what some would claim is an otherwise inanimate scene (*Wordsworth* 174). The geologist's attention to the changes of light is also apparent in Davy's "The Canigou," as I explore in my next section. Similar to Davy's sentiments in "Mont Blanc," Greenough suggested that while nature can be divided into separate components, its immensity could be made apparent in way in which it surrounds

---

<sup>214</sup> Greenough befriended Davy in 1801 and was already known to Coleridge who had travelled with him in Hartz in 1799 (Levere, *Poetry* 161).

<sup>215</sup> Wyatt suggests that Greenough's influence on Coleridge, makes "an indirect link with Wordsworth" given that Coleridge had a significant influence on Wordsworth from 1798 (9).

the speaker. In his journals, he continued by describing the landscape using the aesthetic of the picturesque:

A rudely sculptured cross let into the hollow stump of an old tree long since cut down and placed in a most romantic situation burst suddenly on my sight — a little further lay in the midst of a field of exquisite verdure large misshapen blocks of granite partially overgrown with mosses and covered with the broad lengthened shadows of several venerable oaks became faintly discernable. (qtd in Wyatt, *Wordsworth* 172–3)

Greenough's journals from Chamonix conveyed elements of the scene in layered descriptions: the "blocks of granite" in the midst of a field covered with the "broad lengthened shadows" of oaks. Beneath him, he saw "the rapid Arve winding among the mountains," which "foamed and roared along its rocky channel." Greenough echoed Gilpin's theory of the picturesque that the landscape should be appreciated for its "constituent parts" such as the "steepness of its banks, its mazy course, the grounds, woods, and rocks [...] and the buildings, which still further adorn its natural beauties" (Gilpin 27). As we have already seen, Davy's "Mont Blanc" similarly focuses on the constituent parts of the scene, such as the maze of rivers surrounded by rocks and "fertile plains" (12). Davy was corresponding with Thomas Underwood during his first tour of the Continent, who composed drawings and paintings using picturesque aesthetics (Wyatt, *Wordsworth* 172).<sup>216</sup> They may well have discussed Gilpin's arrangements in his paintings and Underwood's knowledge of the picturesque.

Barrell's work on poetry and the ideology of landscape representations has shown the way in which many Romantic depictions of natural scenes were organised according to painterly principles, such as Gilpin's picturesque aesthetics.<sup>217</sup> These Romantic writings thus reproduce an ideological agenda from

---

<sup>216</sup> For example, see Davy's letter to Underwood written while in Genoa on 4 March 1814 (*DL*).

<sup>217</sup> See *Idea* 1–63; and *Poetry*.

the eighteenth century to “control whatever power nature seems to them to have, by coming to *know* the natural landscape” according to a set of rules or systems (Barrell, *Idea* 84). Indeed, James Buzard has explained that the aesthetic of the picturesque suffused travel writing between 1790 and 1815 (42–7). Influenced by his role as lecturer at the Royal Institution, “Mont Blanc” presents a didactic view on the speaker’s relationship with the landscape using his scientific method of analogy to create a link between natural forms and the origins of thought. “Mont Blanc” begins with the singular subjective impressions of a speaker and moves on to convey his reverence for the complexity and utility of natural forms using the picturesque aesthetic. These elements of his poetry recall the work of other geologists, as well as his own methods of analogy in chemistry to illustrate that the scene is analogous to the way in which humankind gains reason. In one way, nature inspires the speaker to conceive a philosophical ideal for humanity. Nature confirms the creativity of the poet’s mind and his ability to understand nature’s behaviour. Like Alexander von Humboldt’s geography, in Davy’s “Mont Blanc” the natural landscape is under the dominion of the imaginative and rational mind as it engages with and conquers the material world (Bunkse). As Golinski has argued for Davy’s lectures, which sought to present his vision of science and the natural philosopher’s aesthetic appreciation of the natural world, Davy’s poem “Mont Blanc” has the same remit (*Science*, 196–8). “Mont Blanc” is clearly a poem intimately linked to his imaginative science.

#### **4.4 “The Canigou” as the “theatre of science”<sup>218</sup>**

I now examine Davy’s “The Canigou” for the way in which it explores the underlying forces of nature during the intense and changing moments of

---

<sup>218</sup> Davy, *Geology* 13.

“Morning,” “Noon” and “Evening.”<sup>219</sup> Similar to “Mont Blanc,” “The Canigou” describes the landscape in component parts, yet does not refer to a divine will or spirit. Like the rest of his poems on the mountainous landscapes of France, Davy’s fascination with the alterations in light, motion and terrain make this a richly descriptive poem on the observable geology and meteorology of the landscape. This section explains that “The Canigou” subtly conveys the natural philosopher’s ability to view and understand a mountainous scene as the “theatre of science” (*Geology* 13). Davy’s descriptions of light and geology of the scene offer the revelatory experience of seeing such harmonies in nature, while also conveying the speaker’s ability to understand the forces that pervade the natural landscape.

The changes made between two different manuscript versions of “The Canigou” demonstrate that Davy’s ability to observe what surrounds the mountain is the central purpose of the poem. The 14i version of the poem reveals the subtle intangibility of the changes that take place around the enduring mountain. The sketchbook version in notebook 15c, which I have described above, is between his sketches of the region. In this version, Davy deletes the line that the Canigou is “~~Amidst the dark blue azure~~” (19). Instead, in the 14i version the line shows that the Canigou is “framed” by the morning cloud (12). The preposition “amidst” is deleted so that the mountain is not part of the surroundings, and instead is enclosed by the clouds, and by implication, the speaker’s own controlled perceptions. The word “framed” suggests Davy’s ability to have a degree of control or omniscience over the landscape. Davy’s careful and powerful rhetoric on the mountain conveys his own ability to see and communicate the commanding presence of the mountain.

---

<sup>219</sup> For my transcription of this poem, see Appendix 4b.

By constructing a controlled prospect view Davy illustrates his own degree of ascendancy over what he sees. The mountain is “Rising in” the mists in the sketchbook version, but Davy deletes the line so that in notebook 14i, the base rises “through” the mists (15c line 28; 14i line 16). The mountain cuts through the less significant natural forces as a potent force. In both the sketchbook and 14i version of the poem, Davy also experiments with different ways to present the snow and sea. In his sketchbook version, the line “Thy brow. At first so white ~~that the snows~~ <with> <so bright so pure>” Davy deletes the word “snow” to focus on the Canigou and its white features (15c 89). Davy also makes changes in the presentation of the sea. In the 14i notebook version, during noon there is a stillness of the sea, tranquil “Without a tide whose silver mirror spreads / Reflecting forms of mountain majesty” (19–20). In a motionlessness moment the sea stretches across in a state of “calm” (deleted from the line in the sketchbook version) to become subject to the presence of the mountain (38). The sea is visible across the panorama and takes on the reflections of the mountain. Such changes to Davy’s descriptions emphasise the power of the geological and meteorological forces and by association his own ability to create and control a potent natural scene.

In order to remove uncertainty from the speaker’s observations, Davy’s 14i version does not contain the following lines on the sky and the snow from the sketchbook version:

Though fixed the morning star is seen, So bright  
Thy glittering snows appear they seem to form  
Another dawn. (15c lines 25–7)

These three lines establish the presence of an observer and harmonise the way in which the landscape is subject to the individual conceptions of the speaker. The intransitive verb “appear” and the infinitive “to form” give a sense of the passing of

time between the speaker's perceptions and his ability to create ideas from his indefinite perceptions. The sublime mountain and the speaker's disinterested observations alike are the controlling and fixed points of the scene.

From this vantage point, Davy describes the meteorological processes around the mountain in three sections to convey the dynamism, variation, and harmony of the scene. The unfixed diffusion of light in the first section on "Morning" suggests the speaker's comprehension of the scene. In the 14i poem, Davy describes how the stars "melted into air and formed the day," the upper sky receives "a brighter tint" and the lower sky's tints "with every instant change[s]" (3–6). The scene undergoes many natural changes, such as the light, where the phrases "melted" and "tint" suggest there is indefinite power and potential in the radiant forces that illuminate the scene. On seeing Canigou, Davy finds that the mountain is a new creation brought about by the sunlight when it suddenly appears in his view. The snow on the mountain top is bright, yet the base appears dark as it blends with the waves off the coast. The speaker's view is both informed and represented by the path of light, which reveals the surrounding geological formations.

In the next and longer section on "Noon," Davy sees the sun's rays reflecting off the calm sea, the gentle breeze, and the glittering streams. With the intensity of light comes a detailed description of the movement of the rivers, the rich vegetation, and man-made forms. These streams are fed by the mountain's snow, and pour into the woods surrounding the mountain. Beneath the mountain, there are different types of trees and a "cities [sic] walls" (39). The sunbeams glitter where "crystal waters" "feed" the streams and "cities walls majestically rise" conveying the abundance and changefulness of the surroundings (27, 39). Natural forms and buildings are admired alike, and the presence of the British fleet in the

Mediterranean is compared to the battle of Carthage against Rome. Davy gives the British fleet a timeless and natural presence that is in harmony with the scene, thereby asserting his patriotism despite his presence in the “enemies [*sic*] country” when referring to France in his letter written to Grace Davy on 14 October 1813 (DL).

In the third section, “Evening” begins as a snapshot of a clear sky and ends with obscurity and the “sullen gloom” that comes with sunset (64). As the poem ends, the “Evening” scene is mysterious; the snow is “dark” but “The torrents of the mountain roll along” (59–70). Although the darkness in the end of the poem suggests the importance of light for Davy’s connection with the scene, the speaker hints that nature still offers a continued potency. Nature contains forces beyond human control. Davy elaborates on the idea that there is an unobservable power that underlies all of nature in both the sketchbook and notebook versions. He deletes in his sketchbook version:

~~Saw that in the breeze / in gentle agitation  
Gives a life  
And freshness to its waters[.] (15c lines 39–41)~~

In the 14i version, Davy translates this note on what he had seen into the way in which the sea:

In gentle agitation feels the breeze  
That to its deep & lovely azure gives  
The life of motion[.] (22–4)<sup>220</sup>

Here the sky and atmosphere exerts its traits on the sea, bound together by their mutual and shared characteristics. The water is under the influence of a force it “feels” so that matter is susceptible or impressed upon by an external force. Davy often employs “azure” to describe the clear blue colour of the sky, a word

---

<sup>220</sup> The word “motion” is significant in Davy’s poetry, such as in his Cornwall poetry on the sublime seascapes of his home, since this is the focus and so the key inspiration for most of his poetry. This is explored below.

also used to describe the colour of the sea. To the speaker geological forms and meteorological forces are interdependent through reflections, colours, and movement to reveal the active and deeply connected harmonious world of nature. The breeze “Gives a life” in the sketchbook version of the poem, but in the later version this is described as “The life of motion” (15c line 40; 14i line 24). Rather than creating motion, Davy implies that there is a vital spirit that moves between the streams of air and the sea. In focussing on the harmonies of the scene, the 14i version of “The Canigou” gives his perspective of the subtle yet powerful geological and meteorological forces in the landscape. It conveys his mastery in being able to understand and communicate the “theatre” or dramatic aspects of science.

Davy’s belief that a natural philosopher can understand the harmonies of a natural scene is explained by his use of the word “motion” in his lectures on geology when referring to a Classical perspective of nature, such as the “Pythagorean philosophers” who both theorised on the continuing, imperceptible changes of the earth (*Geology* 24). These “ancient systems” valued the element of “fire” and the sun and focus on the changefulness of nature that inspire theories on geology. Davy’s “The Canigou” almost echoes this claim, when he elaborated that:

The contrast of winter with spring, of night with day, of the ice-clad mountains and sterile snow plains of the north with the warm and fertile valleys of the south must have affected, in the strongest degree, the minds of those whose imaginations are constantly alive. (*Geology* 25)

He continued that ancient philosophers consider fire:

as the most active and energetic of elements and as the material agent the most connected with the changes of things, with motion, organization, and life.

Like these ancient philosophers, Davy focuses on the changefulness of light in “The Canigou,” on the “ice-clad mountains,” and the “fertile valleys” in “Mont Blanc” to dramatise his and the geologist’s “imagination,” made “alive” by what they see. Davy asserts an intense connection between the viewer and nature in his lecture and in “The Canigou,” with Davy’s anthropomorphism that the sea “feels,” linking the sea, his own body and his active mind to understand the “life of motion” (24). Nature’s movements are both an inspiration and reflect the geologist’s and Davy’s own “active state of understanding” (*Geology* 4).

Like his chemistry lectures that included and encompassed the audience, Davy’s sketchbook version of “The Canigou” also shows that he deleted personal and subjective experiences of the scene to perhaps give a universal perspective of the landscape. As we see in crossed out lines on the idea of traversing the peak, the speaker is established as a figure overwhelmed by the physical scale of the poem:

~~Thou art so distant~~  
~~O giant mountain that it seems so little~~  
 A little walk to [\*] thy highest peak[.] (15c lines 46–8)

Davy’s omission of the lines in the later 14i version may suggest that he needed to place a greater emphasis on the universal observations of harmony in nature rather than the philosophies of the individual speaker. “Mont Blanc” begins with personal pronouns (which were crossed out in the earlier version of “The Canigou”) to convey the notion that nature can provide a guiding influence on society and individual perception. “The Canigou” dramatises the perceptions of a philosopher connecting with the “changes of things, with motion, organisation, and life” (*Geology* 25). As Davy claimed for the natural philosopher in his lectures on geology and chemistry, his poems on “Mont Blanc” and “The Canigou” find that perception of a great geological form and the fluctuating meteorological forces reveal the immense potential of the external world.

In “The Canigou,” Davy constructs a landscape through separate yet unified elements, which are held together through geological and meteorological forces that are observed by the speaker. Davy reconfigures his perspective of the scene from his lectures on chemistry and geology to explicate his belief that the natural philosopher’s universal perspective can give an ability to understand the unifying powers of nature. In his study of Wordsworth and geography, Michael Wiley argues that the poet re-imagines landscapes to promote an alternative reality from the established social order, hoping to influence real perceptions and practices (3–4). Similarly, Davy’s 14i poems configure the natural world to reflect his interests and values within it as defined by his science and the society-shaping remit of the Royal Institution.

#### **4.5 The “varied life of Man” in the Baths of Lucca Poems<sup>221</sup>**

In my previous chapters, I argued that Davy tended to write poetry that can be grouped thematically or by a focal point such as Cornwall or Anna. Here I examine his poetry from his second trip to the Continent, which was written at the Baths of Lucca. Compared to the poems in notebook 14i, these are a melancholic set of poems on a particular location in Italy. I analyse Davy’s use of language in his three poems: “And may not all this varied life of Man; “Again that lovely lamp from half its orb.” and “What is there in life’s stormy day.” I explain that though like “the life of Man” these poems are “varied” in form and content, they are similar in focussing on the speaker’s speculations on the self as defined by the body or mind. In comparing and contrasting the three poems, we find that overall, Davy searches for reassurance that there are underlying harmonies within. In his Baths of Lucca poems, the landscape acts as a point from which Davy explores the

---

<sup>221</sup> “And may not all this varied life of Man” (14e 160 line 1).

harmonies within the mind or body. He locates himself within his physical geography through his titles, yet rarely describes the surrounding landscape.

Written during his second tour of the Continent, Davy's poems on the Baths of Lucca have a different historical context to the poems in notebook 14i. The end of the Napoleonic Wars meant travellers were free to undertake a tour of mainland Europe without fear of the political implications of their travels.<sup>222</sup> By 1818, Davy had achieved extraordinary fame for his invention of the miner's safety lamp and was created a baronet in 1818. Although Davy had retired from his role at the Royal Institution, the Davys left England on 26 May 1818 for a two year tour after being commissioned by the Prince Regent to visit Naples to carry out experiments for the unrolling of papyri found in the ruins of Herculaneum. Before his second tour, Davy had also received an invitation to visit coal mines in Belgium as thanks for his invention of the safety lamp. Davy first travelled through Austria, Germany, Vienna, Hungary, parts of what we now call Slovenia, and then into Italy, arriving in Rome on 13 October. He then visited Naples where he began his researches on the Herculaneum manuscripts and returned to Rome in April.<sup>223</sup>

Conscious of the curative role of the Baths of Lucca, Davy's poetry at this location looks to the internal world to question the nature of human life. His more introspective poetry may also indicate the softening effect of Davy's retirement on his writing after years of "public experimenting & public enunciation," as well as a lack of self-consciousness of his time on mainland Europe given that his first trip

---

<sup>222</sup> For more on the impact of these changes on travel writing, see Buzard.

<sup>223</sup> Davy's work on the scrolls, which has yet to be fully studied by historians of science, is mentioned in poetry by Wordsworth and by Sotheby. Wordsworth's "Upon the Same Occasion" published in 1819 looks forward to the rediscovery of ancient lyric poetry and offers optimism for Davy's unlocking of a lost past (*Miscellaneous* 4: 158–60 lines 41–6). After meeting Davy in Ravenna in April 1820 Byron notified his friend and publisher Murray on 8 May that Sotheby had sent Davy a poem on "his undoing the M.S.S." and Davy found "it a bad one" (*Works* 5: 24). This may have been Sotheby's "Naples" poem published in 1818 (and again in 1825) in a collection on his impressions during his journey in 1816 through Italy, which contrasts the sublime eruption of Vesuvius to the beautiful scene and the discoveries which lie beneath, including the scrolls (40–62).

was met with disapproval because of its political implications during Britain's war with France in 1813.<sup>224</sup> Travellers visiting the Continent after the war years wrote enthusiastically about the attractive climes and sights including the Baths of Lucca and the surrounding landscape that could give comfort to visitors. Shelley read *Classical Tour through Italy* (1813) by John Eustace, which recommended the Baths as a place for a person "to retire for purposes of health or improvement," where visitors "may find here tolerable accommodations, and a country to the highest degree picturesque and interesting" (2: 206).<sup>225</sup> Indeed, in 1818 Mary Shelley noted that at the Baths of Lucca, "there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode" (qtd in *Shelley and His Circle* 691).<sup>226</sup> Although Davy's poetry conveys a more reflective and introspective mood at the Baths, he did not forgo his chemical research and published a paper on the deposits found in the water (Inglis 107; *CW* 6: 204–6).

Two of the Baths of Lucca poems I analyse in this chapter, "And may not all this varied life of man" and "Again that lovely lamp from half its orb" come from notebook 14e, which also contains draft poems written between 1823 and 1827 that are the focus of my final chapter. The notebook from Davy's second tour contains another four titled poems, with three dated August 1819 and another dated 1814.<sup>227</sup> The last poem I consider in my chapter, "What is there in life's stormy day," was written at the Baths of Lucca is in notebook 14g next to Davy's drafts of his paper on the Bath's mineral deposits (88–6). The notebook also

---

<sup>224</sup> See Davy's letter to John King in June 1801 (*DL*).

<sup>225</sup> For more on the Shelleys' guides see Goslee 168–9.

<sup>226</sup> Beth Dolan Kautz examines Mary Shelley's writings on health and the curative roles of spas and baths, which drew upon Davy's *Consolations*.

<sup>227</sup> In the four poems that are not the focus of my chapter, Davy explores the richness of the landscape, such as "Evening at Nice—1814" and "He who passes from flower to flower" (14e 126, 90). Another poem, "Thou loveliest form on the celestial world" focuses on the moon's beauty and the effect of its beams on the natural scene (80). The undated poem with the first line "I catch but dimly inspirations faint" explores the way in which an Alpine scene can affect an observer (82). For more on this poem, see Underwood's reading in "Skepticism."

contains descriptive geological notes from 1819 (86–60), an obituary and poem on the death of Scottish engineer John Playfair in 1823 (39–40, 116–6) and six undated poems that explore the animated natural landscape, focussing on aspects such as the lustre of sunbeams, the movement of the rivers Lima and Serchio in Italy, and the poet's eye (20, 21–2, 25–6, 40–1, 42, 43). While these are written in his usual untidy handwriting, Davy's notes on his chemical analysis of the bath waters at Lucca and the Baths of Lucca poem alongside it are written by John Tobin, which, as I will explain below, were retrospectively copied into the notebook while they were on the Continent from 1828 (14g 89).

Given that there are at least five poems by Davy written at the Baths of Lucca and that some of these verses are hesitant in tone, critics who have published them have offered biographical readings of these texts. John Davy transcribed and published five fragmentary poems from these notebooks to highlight the ways in which Davy was affected by the "beauties of nature" (1: 114). These five are "To the Fireflies," which reveal Davy's fascination with the dynamism of the rivers and moonlight (114–5); a poem on the moon with the first line "Though loveliest form of the celestial world" (115–6); a sublime storm in "The tempest gather'd on thy verdant hills" (116); "The whirlwind gone" on the calm landscape after a storm analogous to the mind of man (116); and finally "Again that lovely lamp from half its orb," which I examine in my final section (116–7). Davy's poems while at the Baths of Lucca, according to John Davy, offer moments of "sentiment and reflection" prompted by the mountainous retreat (2: 251).

Holmes finds that the series of poems written at the Baths bear some similarities to Shelley's confessional poetry written at the same time and in response to the same Italian locations (*Age* 378–9). According to Holmes, both Davy and Shelley convey "hope and despair" (379) in their poems, such as in

Shelley's "To the Moon" which likens the moon to the dying body of a woman. In his biography on Davy, Holmes implies that the melancholic tone in Davy's poetry was possibly due to his lack of success in unrolling the Herculaneum scrolls (378). Holmes also suggests that Davy's poems may perhaps act as compensation for a lack of tenderness between Davy and his wife Jane. Contemporary accounts of Davy and Jane's marriage before their second tour of the Continent suggest their unhappiness but, as the Royal Institution lecturer Sydney Smith wryly put it in 1816, there was no permanent "decomposition" between them, despite the quarrels (qtd. in Parker 82).<sup>228</sup> Rather than showing that the poems are products of Davy's unhappiness, I will examine the ways in which they seek to explore the harmonies within the mind and body. In Holmes's biography, Davy's poems on the Baths of Lucca are appended to an account of his unhappy marriage, whereas with my close reading, I suggest that Davy reflects on the mind and body since they visited the baths for Jane's ailments.

Davy recalled in his letter to Grace Davy on 12 October 1816 that Jane had already visited the baths at Cheltenham with the hope to relieve a "weakness & pain in the stomach" (*DL*). Jane later went to Bath with Davy in October to recover but continued to suffer. Writing from London on 16 December, Davy noted to his mother that Jane had recovered though felt that "the cold weather disagrees with her sadly" (*DL*). Although the second tour was a means for Jane to recover from her illness, Davy wrote to J. G. Children on 12 June 1819 from the Baths of Lucca expressing his unhappiness at the lack of "scientific news from England or France" and complained that "in this country there is nothing doing" (*DL*). To cure his feelings of restlessness, Davy set off from the baths in the same month and spent the summer in parts of Austria and Slovenia fishing and shooting. He rejoined

---

<sup>228</sup> For other contemporary comments on Davy's tumultuous marriage, see Holmes, *Age* 376.





compared to dreams that “have no connection” (4, 7, 10). Davy claims that the former are connected, like dreams that seem disparate but are linked because they offer “feeble echoes” of “the past” (10). Despite the pentameter in the beginning and end of the poem, the metre fluctuates between lines six to eight when Davy cannot quite describe the way in which man attains reason and thought. The poem’s uncertainty is again made formally apparent through line indentations as Davy searches for the connections between life, memory and the past (2, 13). In his poem, Davy echoes his reading of Hume in his early notebooks, whose theory of the unity of the mind was based on the conjecture that the mind was a bundle of impressions and ideas (Hume 1: 11–31). As in his Cornwall poems and personal notebooks, here Davy continues to theorise the formation of thoughts and the mind. In both his Cornwall and Baths of Lucca poems, Davy emphasises the parallels between the harmony of forces that underlie nature and the mind. Yet, at the baths, Davy is tentative as he attempts to harmonise the workings of the mind.

The third poem discussed in this section, “What is there in life’s stormy day,” like Davy’s “To Anna-Maria B.,” is composed of quatrains but is longer with fifteen stanzas and alternate lines of tetrameters and trimeter, like a ballad:<sup>231</sup>

What is there in life’s stormy day  
 To please or cheer our sight  
 Or warm our cold & earthborn clay  
 Save feelings heavenly light.

This is the spirit which subdues  
 The Chaos of our mortal doom  
 Gives it creations loveliest hues  
 And kindles brightness midst the gloom[.] (1–8)

Here Davy explains through analogous examples both the beautiful and discordant sublime moments one may experience, including physical pain, so to suggest that life is like a cycle of discordant forces in nature. The poem is in Tobin’s

---

<sup>231</sup> See Appendix 4e for a transcription of this poem.



searches for connections and meanings between disparate ideas and feelings. In linking “power,” “hopes,” “thoughts” and feelings, which are “Heroical [*sic*] & high,” he presents his subjective and increasing confidence gained from nature’s effects (19–21). A list of words becomes the sum total of his present, yet he is unable to develop a precise description of the effect of the external world on his mind. In “And may not all this varied life of Man,” Davy also considers the source of ideas in a similar way:

In infancy  
 The origin of life is lost to memory  
 Yet powers existed of <a> glorious nature  
 Reason & thought & feeling, How we  
 know not[.] (4–7)

Echoing eighteenth-century ideas of the formation of the life and the mind, Davy claims that despite an imprecise knowledge of the origins of life, and although the mind loses knowledge of its own beginnings during “infancy,” it holds “glorious” “powers.” Davy, once again, is unable to develop a description of the mind’s faculties other than through a list of nouns linked together with conjunctions (7). The uncertainty about “how” these originated is emphasised at end of line seven with the negation “not.” The poem does not refer to the baths or the landscape in its entirety and instead ruminates on the origin of life. Davy establishes the location in the poem’s title, yet this ignored in the poem, which instead explores the ambiguousness of the mind. As with his Anna poems, Davy creates poems that make a central figure or place a departing point to conjecture on the workings of the mind.

Although the three poems explore the ambiguity of knowledge, they do regard the body as embodying the healing capacity of consciousness. “Again that lovely lamp from half its orb” regards the cyclical pattern of pain and cure, where in one instance:



of the speaker's perceptions, the Baths of Lucca poems look inwards to the restorative capacity of the body and the mind.

In contrast to the two poems that reflect on uncertainties, "What is there in life's stormy day" in notebook 14g employs nature as an analogy to the pleasurable and painful experiences of life in the first quatrain. From the beginning, Davy makes it clear that the poem is about the contrasting emotions experienced by all and the way that these emotions are like the underlying forces of nature. The sublime storm is analogous to the waywardness of life and hints at the destructive force of passion evoked in his Anna poems. All humankind is derived or "earthborn" from nature to emphasise the appropriateness of the analogies between nature and human sentiment (3). Formally apparent by the alternate rhyme scheme, the poem explores the contrasting forces of joy and anguish. For example, the penultimate quatrain relates the cycles of nature to the mind. Like the rest of the quatrain, the poem overall counsels on the way in which one should accept these diverse forces:

Passions <beams> rays when too concentered  
 Raise a tempest in the mind  
 But by rain & clouds attempered  
 They leave fertility behind. (53–6)

In this unfinished stanza, Davy employs the word "concentered" to refer to both rays of light and intense sublime emotion. Indeed, in his *Biographia Literaria* in 1817 Coleridge uses the word in "The excitement arising from concentered attention" to denote the direction of mental faculties towards a single point (2: 136). In rhyming this word with "attempered" Davy finds the intensity of both sublime nature and emotion can be calmed in one's mind. In *The Seasons*, which is emulated by Davy in his Cornwall poems, Thomson also uses "attempered" in "Autumn" to describe mild temperature (28). On the other hand, in his poem "Lines

on *Observing a Blossom*” written in 1796 Coleridge uses “attemper’d” to suggest harmony or an attuned instrument (*Poems* 107–8 line 26). Davy employs the word in both senses. He implies the mildness brought about by the meteorological forces, the “fertility” of tranquillity and “freshness” when calm overcomes one’s mind, as well as the harmonious forces within the mind when it encounters intense thought (60). Like “Mont Blanc,” “What is there in life’s stormy day” offers the idea that nature can make tangible the mind’s emotions and can reveal the dynamism of both the external world of the landscape and the internal world of the mind.

The assertive tone and careful form of “What is there in life’s stormy day” can be understood when taking into account the textual context of the manuscript version. The rest of the notebook contains notes in Davy’s untidy handwriting, while the poem and the draft paper on the chemical analysis of the bath waters are on adjacent pages. While there seems to be no obvious connection between Davy’s paper and his poetry in this period, it is clear that Davy paired these texts. As I have demonstrated in my previous sections on “Mont Blanc” and “The Canigou,” Davy’s careful and descriptive verses that view the harmonies of nature as analogies to the human mind are almost certainly shaped by his sketches of the scene, as well as the careful rhetoric of his lectures. “What is there in life’s stormy day” can be regarded as a poem on the baths that re-enacts Davy’s persona as a disinterested natural philosopher who can analyse nature chemically and similarly reflect on all aspects of life, including both the positive and negative, in a careful form of quatrains and an alternate rhyme scheme.

The jarring physical analogies of childbirth in “Again that lovely lamp from half its orb”, as well as the contrasting tones of certainty and assertiveness in all three poems, result in a Baths of Lucca series of verses that seems to be a disharmonious collection. Brittany Pladek’s insightful essay on Wordsworth’s

poetics of relief and the work of the Romantic period physicians can help inform my reading of all Davy's Baths of Lucca poetry as a search for harmonies in the body and the mind. Pladek draws parallels between the work of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, who presented their work as palliative rather than curative, and Wordsworth's poetry, such as "Tintern Abbey," which is about "alleviation" and palliative care (407). Davy's research on nitrous oxide at the Pneumatic Institute confirms and extends her argument given that while he aimed to look for cures for respiratory diseases, he instead found himself researching into how to pacify and balance the symptoms of these diseases. After Davy left in 1801, the Institute became a "Preventative Medical Institution," a change in scope that can further inform Pladek's interpretation of Romantic period medicine as "alleviative" rather than curative (404).<sup>234</sup> The Baths of Lucca poems are similar to Pladek's reading of Wordsworth's poetry in the way that both bring together the disparate but connected ideas, to give a curative, though fractured or "fragmentary solution" (409). Davy's poems, two of which are fractured in form and content, bring together ideas on the formation of thoughts and the relationship between the body and the mind as perhaps an ameliorative response to his own anxieties on the indeterminate aspects of the world.

Overall, the Baths of Lucca in all three poems are secondary to Davy's rumination on the workings of the human mind and physiology. There is an ambiguous connection between the mind and the external world in two of the Baths of Lucca poems, while the third reveals that Davy, who had since retired from public research and lecturing, could still hold on to the persona as a reasoned natural philosopher who interprets nature. While the poems in notebook 14i are descriptive portrayals of the landscape to assert the geologist's perspective as

---

<sup>234</sup> See Levere, "Interaction"; and Jay, *Atmosphere* 234–45.

pervasive and powerful, the absence of place in the Baths of Lucca poems reflects the hesitance of the speaker who channels his energies inwards. Despite his uncertainty in two of these poems, Davy's Baths of Lucca poems are evidently important for Davy since they were neatly written out in his personal notebooks 14e and 14g. It is also pertinent that they contrast with the 14i poems by emphasising the fracturing of the mind or the sensitivity of the body.

In both sets of poems, the foreign landscape acts as a medium through which Davy creates a relationship between imagination and reason. By comparing the descriptive poems from his first tour with contemporaneous geological texts, including his own lectures, I have explained that Davy's poetry offers the perspective of the geologist as imaginatively locating the subtle and dynamic forces within nature. Like his lectures, which established that the scientific mind could evoke wonder, awe, and a supremacy over the natural world, Davy's series of poems written while on the Continent in 1814 also convey the same sentiments and politics of his lectures at the Royal Institution. Like Davy's chemistry on the underlying electrical forces in nature, in his poetry Davy presents a foreign land to have come under the understanding and thus supremacy of the speaker who comprehends all that he sees. His poetry from his second tour appears melancholic and tempered where the landscape is a point from which he could explore the physical and emotional powers that reside in the body. No longer a lecturer to a conservative audience or conscious of the political implications of his trip during warfare, Davy's poems are an uncertain exploration of the natural forces, resulting in a series of poems that vary in form. Although Davy does not explicitly advocate the role of a natural philosopher through his poetry during his second tour, he continues to explore the power, harmony, and the disjunctions that reside in the mind. Like Davy's claim in his lectures at the Royal Institution that to

understand the harmonies that hold nature together leads to a harmonious social order, the Baths of Lucca poems focus his energies inwards to try to suggest that nature and the mind are regulated by indeterminate forces, including the past, present and future, acting and reacting to each other.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DEATH AND IMMORTALITY IN DAVY'S FINAL POEMS

Trying to recover as his health deteriorated, suffering from “almost constant pain of the heart and chest,” and less than a year after news of the death of his mother, Davy embarked on what would be his penultimate trip through the Continent in 1827, during which he carried with him notebook 14e.<sup>235</sup> Unlike most of his earlier notebooks that at first seem to contain a disordered confusion of observations on scientific experiments, calculations, lecture notes, fragmentary poetry and philosophical thoughts, in notebook 14e Davy copies out and composes an almost continuous series of poems while travelling through mainland Europe.<sup>236</sup> Davy continues to use this notebook to collect a series of his poems during his final trip through the Continent in 1828. Focussing on Davy's different verses in his notebook, I argue that he explores his own unorthodox philosophies on the relationship between death and immortality to understand what made life, and particularly his own, complete. Much like Davy's two philosophical texts *Salmonia* (1828) and *Consolations* (1830), which are predominately written in prose and are suffused with his ideas on death, natural theology, metaphysics, geology and chemistry, I explain that Davy's final poetry seeks to imagine “the varied whole” of his life, conscious of the inevitability of death (“It is alone in solitude we feel” 14e 166 line 30).

In contrast to his earlier confident public lectures on the power of the human mind over nature, I reveal that Davy's final poetry is hesitant and philosophical

---

<sup>235</sup> For more on Davy's health, see his letter to Thomas Knight on 10 December 1826 (*DL*).

<sup>236</sup> There are, however, a few philosophical notes between his poems, such as “A New Theory of Religion” that suggests Christianity is “an idea” (14e 118–7) and a note on the “parallels” between the seasons and “the periods of Man's life” (116–5). The former is discussed below.

when offering his view that humanity is inferior or “insect like,” and apart from the higher power that pervades nature.<sup>237</sup> These poems also reveal his scepticism of Christian doctrine. In the first section of my chapter, I describe the way in which Davy organised his notebook and examine his despondent poems on the failures of his career. In the second section, I explore his more confident and abstract poems that present his philosophy on the immortality of humankind. These demonstrate his unorthodox faith that is largely derived from Plato and foreshadow the ideas of *Consolations* that was titled to echo *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, a sixth-century Christian Neoplatonist.<sup>238</sup> In the third section, I elaborate on my argument that Davy sought to understand the totality of his life using poems and ideas copied or echoed from his time in Bristol. In the fourth section, I show that Davy’s poems on mortality are hesitant and uncertain in language and form as they ruminate on the decay of the body. In these, Davy continues to seek solace in the idea that despite death one can achieve immortality. Although some of Davy’s poems reflect on his past, most look to the future with a deep desire for an eternal existence, conscious that this is a hopeful idea that cannot be verified.

### 5.1 Scientific Experiments and the Notebook

In a single notebook, Davy deliberately collected and composed a series of forty-six poems, which reflect on his own life and contemplate metaphysical ideas such as death and immortality. He started notebook 14e in “Ravenna” on 18 March 1827, writing that some of the following poems are a transcription of “[v]erses” copied from other notebooks (186). The notebook was flipped over and used by Davy as a daily journal from 27 June to 13 July 1827 and the end-paper conveys

---

<sup>237</sup> “It is alone in solitude we feel” 14e 166–5 line 22.

<sup>238</sup> This allusion has been discussed in Golinski, “Romantic” 5, 12.

the extent to which his health deteriorated in 1827 after a stroke while on the Continent. In unsteady handwriting, he notes that he can only write with his “left hand” while staying in Wurzen in Germany in August (188). This section reveals that although many of the poems in notebook 14e speculate on the abstract idea of immortality, Davy also wrote and kept verses that reflect on the changing fortunes of his career.

Davy dated or titled thirty-three of the forty-six poems, and composed only sixteen of these before he went to the Continent in January 1827.<sup>239</sup> For example, we find long fragments of Davy’s epic “Moses” and another version of his poem to Anna Beddoes’s daughter here titled “To a child; daughter of T. and A.B.” (14e 71–66, 55; 51). Given that Davy writes at the beginning of the notebook that he had “copied” verses from other notebooks into notebook 14e, he may be referring to these and the other poems that offer his strident ideas on his career (186). As I explain in the following section, biographers have suggested that some of the 14e poems respond to occasions when his scientific career or research was met with failure and criticism. For example, both Knight and Holmes have read Davy’s 1821 poem “Eagles” on two birds aiding their young as a poem that suggests how a man of science should inspire others (14e 49–8). They argue that the poem could be a conscious contrast to the difficult relationship between Davy and Faraday, which began in 1821 when Davy, aware of his friendship and rivalry with William Hyde Wollaston, regarded Faraday’s experiments in electromagnetism as “completing Wollaston’s experiments” and therefore not creditable to Faraday

---

<sup>239</sup> Davy’s other personal notebooks kept between 1820 and 1826 contain a few poems from this period such as notebook 14i with the untitled poem dated 17 June 1826 on the memory of a woman he knew nine years ago, her “mortal frame” or body, and immortality (13–4). John Davy published some of Davy’s poems from this period such as a long poem on Ilam Hall written on 11 September 1825 (*Collected 2*: 259–62) and “On the Fall of Traum” written on 25 July 1827 (2: 360–1).

(Knight, “Davy and Faraday” 44).<sup>240</sup> I now focus on four other poems in notebook 14e that directly refer to events in Davy’s life and his scientific inventions, which have yet to receive close reading.

On the page before the “Eagles” poem we find a bitter and undated verse on “the ingratitude of the Northumbrians with respect to the Safety lamp” (14e 50).<sup>241</sup> In the untidy seventeen-line stanza almost entirely in pentameter, Davy explains that there is both “good” and “evil” in man, such as the thanklessness of some as they receive the “light of” “humanity” (3–5). Here, Davy is evidently injured by the claim and ensuing debate that George Stephenson, a Northumbrian engineer, had originated the design of Davy’s miners’ lamp. Davy sets himself apart from the Northumbrians’ emotions in his poem by seeking consolation that these “enemies” have an effect on his mind that is “transitory like the chill” of a cloud in the summer (8, 10). Once again, he uses cycles of nature and the opposition of forces to reveal that like the natural world he can recover from the negative force of such criticisms. His resentment is apparent, however, with a violent but solace-giving analogy that he is like a “Ceylon” tree, which “when cut” gives the axe “perfume” and “balmy oil” that “preserves” the axe from decay (15–7). Although Davy’s poem asserts that he can surpass Northumbrian negativity, there is bitterness when describing the suffering or death of natural forms, such as the “parched” earth and the “cut” tree.

His other poems in the notebook also suggest his unhappiness during his difficult presidency at the Royal Society. Critics have shown that Davy proved to be unpopular and unable to control the conflicts amongst Fellows.<sup>242</sup> His

---

<sup>240</sup> For more on these biographers’ views of Davy’s poem, see Knight, *Humphry* 4; and Holmes, *Age* 418.

<sup>241</sup> My transcription of this poem is in Appendix 5a.

<sup>242</sup> For more on Davy and his difficult presidency see D. Miller; James, “Davy”; and Golinski, *Science* 245.

despondency is apparent in the septet “Verses” (14e 114), a carefully constructed poem that is at once defiant and melancholy concerning those who “do not kindle” the speaker’s “glory” (1).<sup>243</sup> Mostly in couplets with an aabbccce rhyme scheme, Davy finds that the “selfish feeling” in “narrow minds” “usurps the throne” but these feelings are unnoticed by a “spirit lofty bold” (3–5). In other words, Davy finds that despite the resentment of his subordinates, he can ignore and separate himself from them. Davy authoritatively maintains that he is physically and mentally above the ill-mannered feelings of his critics. His rhyme scheme serves to prove his own measured emotions in contrast to his confining environment.

Similarly, “Copenhagen” written on 1 August 1824 may have been copied into the 1827 notebook by Davy in response to the criticism on his experiments for the Navy in the way it ruminates on both melancholy feelings and the triumph of intellect (14e 100).<sup>244</sup> Davy’s work on the copper-bottom ships in 1824, according to James, revealed the political implications of his failure to forge links between the society and the government as president of the Royal Society (“Davy” 208). In May, Davy boarded *The Comet*, a steam-vessel travelling towards Germany, in order to test his method of protecting the copper bottom of Navy ships from corrosion with sheets of zinc. He travelled through Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany and wrote the poem “Copenhagen” as his trip ended. When the vessel arrived at its first destination, Davy found that his initial method of protection failed. The protectors underneath the ship had washed away and the plates had been damaged (Paris 407).

For Knight, “Copenhagen” notices “the greyness of things” and foreshadows the sombre poems written while Davy was on the Continent from 1827 (*Humphry*

---

<sup>243</sup> See Appendix 5b for my transcription.

<sup>244</sup> See Appendix 5c for my transcription. This poem is examined further in a later section.

148). In light of the failed test on The Comet, “Copenhagen” also conveys a hopeful assertion of the endurance of intellect and his electromagnetic method as “[t]riumphant o’er the elements” on the Comet’s protectors (18). Davy’s letter to his wife, Jane, on 20 August suggested that he was optimistic after the trip despite the “severe” gale and sickness from “wind & waves” on his return journey through the North Sea (*DL*). Writing to his mother from London on 22 August, Davy was more optimistic than to Jane, stating that he had been successful in many objects “one of which is important to the Navy” (*DL*). Despite his high hopes, his unsuccessful test on the Comet was criticised in *The Times* on 16 October, which declared that not only were “[t]he learned President’s experiments” a failure but they were also “a summer excursion” “at the public expense” (“Preservation”).

Holmes has pointed out that Davy was already facing public ridicule in September 1824 as evinced in the *John Bull* periodical which presented Davy as a “humbug” of the age and social climber lounging “into a room with what he thinks is an elegant languor” (*Age* 413; “The Humbugs” 1: 90). By August 1825, *The Times* reported that Davy’s method was a complete failure and again in October, since although the protectors prevented corrosion they had a side effect of attracting weeds and barnacles (James, “Davy” 222). Ships returning from long journeys found Davy’s method seemed to make the problem worse, and Davy’s failed attempts to use science to help the Admiralty damaged his reputation. Davy replied to these criticisms by *The Times* on 17 October, demanding that the “erroneous” and “false” statements on his experiments should be rectified with an insertion of five points including that “it is not true that the President of the Royal Society has made any voyages at the public expense” (*DL*). Davy’s “Copenhagen” poem, therefore, is similar to Davy’s 14i poems that

sought to promote a natural philosopher's views as powerful, despite criticism of his trip to France during the Napoleonic Wars.

"On the Bubbles," dated December 1823, is an unusual poem in Davy's oeuvre because it is a satirical poem, which may have also been kept by him as a response to those who ridiculed his research on copper-bottom ships a year later (14e 182–0).<sup>245</sup> Davy recalls Byron's *Don Juan* stanza in the first Canto that derides but does not denounce human aspiration. Byron's poem describes how man:

[...] likes particularly to produce  
Some new experiment to show his parts;  
This is the age of oddities let loose,  
Where different talents find their different marts[.] (128.1019–22)

Four stanzas later Byron lists the "patent age of new inventions" that came about from scientific enterprise and experimentation, including "Davy's lantern" (132.1052). Davy later quoted a stanza on angling from *Don Juan* in his *Salmonia* published in 1828 (3). "On the Bubbles" is perhaps a response to Byron's mock stanza on aspiration. Written largely in rhyming couplets over nineteen lines, Davy describes how, despite criticism that nothing can "work," there are techniques that have produced various household items, including metal goods (2). He makes it clear that he echoes the stanza on "the age" from *Don Juan* in the first line:

This is the age for humbug &  
cant  
Whoever proposes that nothing  
can work  
We have [\*] now for  
All [\*] sorts of things  
From cheese & milk making  
up to steam wings  
We ~~make~~ forge gold out of [\*]  
a wonderful story  
And Bromeeggan loses her gilding  
& glory.

---

<sup>245</sup> See Appendix 5d for my transcription.

Gold is shortly to come from  
 the mexican works  
 In such plenty that no  
 one will use silver forks. (1–8)

Davy points to the processes and methods that have made possible “all sorts of things” and, with bathos, comes to focus on metallurgy. “Bromeggan” refers to Birmingham where innovative silver metal-working processes such as Matthew Boulton’s were experiencing foreign competition from Mexican gold mines.<sup>246</sup> In the next two lines, Davy lists the metals used in households, including copper. He then explains that:

We have copper that will not  
 dissolve in the sea.  
 The patent secures it quite  
 from decay  
 And makes it in voyages  
 bright as the day[.] (11–3)

Davy echoes Byron’s categorisation in *Don Juan* that this is a “patent age” and discusses the fact that copper does not dissolve in sea water, such as perhaps copper-bottom ships of the Navy voyaging “in the sea” (11–2). Byron’s reference to the “patent age” points to the rights granted to those who have produced celebrated inventions and discoveries. He perhaps alludes to Davy who declined to place a patent on his safety lamp, claiming that he wanted it to “serve the cause of humanity” but to also avoid resolving a patent issue with Stephenson (J. Davy 2: 51; James, “How Big”). In Davy’s poem, the remark that there is a patent that “secures” copper “from decay” could be an indirect mention of Scottish metallurgist David Mushet who claimed that he had invented a system of protecting the copper-bottom ships similar to Davy’s process, and had patented the process (James, “How Big” 217). In contrast to “Copenhagen,” “On the Bubbles” has a light-hearted tone, where the collective pronoun “we” implies his continuing

---

<sup>246</sup> For more on Boulton’s industrial work with Mexican mining, see Doty.

confidence in his perspective, which he used in his lectures, presenting himself as a knowledgeable natural philosopher who can change society.

In contrast to these poems on particular instances of Davy's career, a large proportion of his poetry in notebook 14e shifts away from the personal and reflects upon the incomprehensible and universal notion of death and immortality. Most of Davy's final poetry can be read in the context of Andrew Bennett's argument that Romanticism demonstrated an "impulse" to write for posterity, and that this desire is "most clearly and most thoroughly theorised and practised" in the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron (*Posterity* 2). According to Bennett, for Wordsworth, the Romantic culture of posterity was "crucial to his poetry" through his exploration of familial survival, such as in "Tintern Abbey" (115). For Coleridge, afterlife is explored through the indeterminacy of speech and sound, which can destabilise literal survival. Keats examines posterity in his poetry through the literal and physical body and corpse (156–7). Bennett suggests that the culture of posterity preoccupied Romanticism overall, such as the work of Shelley and Byron whose work emphasises the "centrality" of writing for legacy (199).

Following Bennett's argument that Romantic writing may be characterised by the need to write for or about a textual afterlife, I demonstrate that Davy's poetry, which focuses on either or both mortality and legacy, has some affinity with the Romantic culture of posterity. In the 14e notebook, Davy's poems tend to contrast the beauty and tenderness of youth with the sublime of a lasting legacy, while also conveying his understanding of the universal truths of life and death. For example, he explores these ideas in his two poems on the life of Byron written in 1823 and on his death in 1824, both of which make obvious his personal

affection for Byron (14e 108–6; 14e 162–1).<sup>247</sup> “Lord Byron written Whilst Living” describes the poet using Burkian aesthetics of the small and beautiful, concentrating on Byron’s symbolic “wreath,” later his “laurel crown,” a Classical emblem for a poet (1, 23). The wreath is woven with a range of “blossoms” such as “jasmine & the rose,” and suits, or is “well fitted” for, his “curling ringlets” (3–5, 8–9). In contrast to glorifying Byron’s physical features and beauty, Davy uses the sublime aspect of nature in “On the Death of Lord Byron, composed at Westhill in the great storm Nov. 1824.” Byron is likened to “some great comet” with rays whose “glory” was chained by gravitational pull to the sun, but is only “passing by” (9, 17, 20).<sup>248</sup> Although John Davy published the poem in *Memoirs*, and both Fullmer and Jenkins have commented on the poem in their overviews of Davy’s poetry, a close reading of the poem could reveal the way in which Davy suggests that Byron leaves behind a legacy that parallels his own (*Memoirs* 2: 168–9; Fullmer, “Poetry” 122–3; Jenkins 139).

In the same notebook in which Davy considers the challenges in his career and tries to define the life and legacy of Byron, Davy’s eight poems that use the pronoun “we” avoid the personal. I will now argue that as Bennett characterises for Romantic writing, Davy’s eight poems seek to “survive” “beyond the particular contingent circumstances of the author’s life” by examining the abstract and complex relationship between mortality and the hope for an afterlife (4). Davy’s poems demonstrate his awareness of the disparity between the self as both powerful and mortal and in response, creatively re-unify the self as a product of the immortal natural world.

---

<sup>247</sup> For my transcription of these, see Appendix 5e to 5g.

<sup>248</sup> There are different version of the poem’s stanzas in the notebook where Davy also notes that the poem is inspired by the “dazzling intellectual brightness” of Byron’s poetry such as “Cain & Manfred” (14e 131).

## 5.2 Uncertainty, Knowledge, and Immortality

I now suggest that, conscious of his own mortality, in notebook 14e Davy wrote and kept philosophical poems that reassured him of a posthumous existence, despite his physical condition and his failing career. I focus on Davy's eight poems in notebook 14e that use the collective pronoun "we" and define humanity as intellectual beings possessing minds that are abstract, indefinite, and immortal, like the power that underlies the natural landscape. I argue that Davy's poems tend to express a universal notion of the possibility of life after death through a Platonist perspective on the origins of humanity and the afterlife.

Before examining this reassuring Platonic philosophy in Davy's poems, I first want to contextualise these verses and suggest that they may have been written in response to Davy's own physical deterioration and doubt of recovery. Having suffered heart problems and a stroke in 1826, Davy left for the Continent in January with his brother John hoping the climate would help him recover from a life-threatening illness. Davy became preoccupied with his own physical well-being, changed his diet, and followed medical advice in the hope of keeping his arterial system in balance. His letters to Jane in 1827 conveyed his hopefulness that foreign climes would aid his deteriorating health. In Ravenna on 30 March, Davy described to her that although the disease caused numbness in his left hand: "I am regular in my endeavours to subdue it" (*DL*). At times Davy became despondent, such as on 19 May, writing from Laybach that despite his new diet and the physician's advice, even the landscape in "this the most genial of all months has not restored me to the perfect use of my limbs" (*DL*). Davy became preoccupied with his physical condition and restoring his failing health when

writing from Salzburg on 1 July 1827 to his old mentor Davies Gilbert who would succeed him as President of the Royal Society when Davy resigned in November:

the tendency of the system to accumulate blood in the head still continues, and I am obliged to counteract it by a most rigid vegetable diet, and by frequent bleedings with leeches and blisterings [*sic*], which of course keep me very low. (*DL*)

Davy's "low" feelings from loss of blood may well have reminded him of his own powerlessness, resulting in a series of pessimistic poems that consider the inevitability of death and the consolation that there is an immortal essence within nature.

It is notable that the eight poems in notebook 14e and his Anna poems are almost the only verses by Davy that use the collective personal pronoun of "we."<sup>249</sup> While Davy's Anna poems describe the pleasures of his youthful past and contrast this with the reasoned calm he has gained since leaving Bristol, twenty five years later, his final poems emphasise his belief that the powers which underlie nature can give hope of immortality. These eight poems are: "Thought" written in Ravenna in March 1827 (183–2);<sup>250</sup> and untitled poems with the first line: "Nought do we truly know of Man" (176–5); "But could the essence of the Almighty mind" (174); "We know not whence our origin we drew" dated 12 February 1825 (169), "And when the light of life is flying" dated 1825 (167); "It is alone in solitude we feel" written in Ulswater on 25 August 1825 (166);<sup>251</sup> "Our real knowledge is but to be sure" dated 19 April 1827 (150–49); and "In ignorance of all things we assume" written on 1 March 1827 (138–7).<sup>252</sup> The poems are largely short and untitled but, as this section will demonstrate, show that Davy thought carefully about how to

---

<sup>249</sup> "On the Bubbles" does also use the collective personal pronoun of "we."

<sup>250</sup> John Davy published this manuscript poem in *Memoirs* but altered the first four lines presumably because they are incoherent (2: 230).

<sup>251</sup> The three stanza poem "And when the light of life is flying" and "It is alone in solitude we feel" are also published in *Memoirs* to convey Davy's "lofty aspirations" in contrast to his "serious" and "meditative" letters to his mother (2: 216–8).

<sup>252</sup> The poem "In ignorance of all things we assume" is published by John Davy to show Davy's "unstudied energies" of "his mind" (2: 229–30).

convey his conviction that humanity is born from an immortal and powerful force in nature.<sup>253</sup>

Although the tone of Davy's eight poems range from sombre grief on the limits of mankind to wonder in what may exist beyond human understanding, taken as a whole they possess an acceptance that there is transience to all living things. The poem "Thought" contemplates the mortality of humanity and finds that the mind is a flawed representative of the divine power in nature. "Nought do we truly know of Man" contrasts the ignorance of man with the "presiding principle" in the body and the "constant law of things" (4, 9). The less coherent poems "But could the essence of the Almighty mind" and "We know not whence our origin we drew," also find it difficult to express the disparity between man's ignorance and the certainty of an afterlife. "And when the light of life is flying" and "Our real knowledge is but to be sure" are sombre poems on impending death and hope for a spiritual world. The long and formally well-constructed poems "It is alone in solitude we feel" and "In ignorance of all things we assume" hold characteristics that link all these eight poems together. Davy emphasises that while all living things must undergo decay and death, the vitality of nature and the imagination can point to a reassuring belief that an afterlife exists.

Biographers have transcribed and published many of the 14e poems to convey Davy's contradictory emotions of sadness and optimism during his penultimate trip through mainland Europe. Yet few have analysed these for ways in which Davy conceives of life, death, and immortality. For Knight, Davy's poems after 1824 tried to come to terms with death such as in "And when the light of life is flying" where Davy also uses the analogy of the sublime with the "lightning from the gloomy storm" (12) as a symbol for hope amongst the darkness (*Humphry*

---

<sup>253</sup> For my transcriptions of these eight poems, see Appendix 5h to 5o.

149). Knight also points out that after 1826 Davy's health worsened and the poems he composed while on the Continent show that he was preoccupied with the "transience of things" in nature (*Humphry* 151). Holmes also regards Davy's poems at Ravenna in 1827 as metaphysical and often cold, though sometimes interrupted by "outbursts of feeling" and a search for consolation such as in "Oh couldst thou be with me, daughter of heaven" written in April (*Age* 416; 14e 152–1).<sup>254</sup> This hopeful tone, however, may be due to the fact that the poem is largely a version of a fragment written during Davy's second trip through the Continent from 1818 that has seven preceding lines on decay such as that "time has wither'd all the beauteous flowers" (3) that once symbolically crowned his youthful head (14g 25–6).<sup>255</sup>

I now explore three interlinked elements in Davy's eight poems that together convey his notion that despite humankind's flaws "we" have a sense of the incomprehensible and unknowable that holds nature together. The first common element I examine in the eight poems is the way in which Davy draws upon Plato's philosophies to claim that an intangible power holds the universe together. The second common element I explore is Davy's concession that while he and humanity lack total knowledge, there is a common joy in understanding and comprehending the natural world. The third most prevalent philosophy in his poems is that despite the certainty of death, one can take hope in immortality. As my following analysis argues, the poems using the collective pronoun "we" offer

---

<sup>254</sup> There is also a simple tender poem written in 1828 for "Pappina" whom the speaker hopes to kiss (*Age* 422; 14e 130). The poem may have been written for Josephine Dettela, the daughter of the owner of his lodgings in Illyria, but Holmes makes clear that Davy's feelings were not "a grand passion" (*Age*, 423). Davy described Josephine to Jane Davy as an "innocent little girl" during his penultimate trip on 25 September 1827 and again during his final tour of the Continent that she "made some days of my life more agreeable [sic]" on 20 January 1829 (*DL*).

<sup>255</sup> Davy also characterises Byron's youthful head in "Lord Byron, Written Whilst Living 1823" (14e 108–6) as metaphorically adorned by a "luxuriant wreath" of "splendid & most glorious hues" and "the fairest sweetest flowers of spring" (1–3). In this way Davy's poems in the 14e notebooks subtly link the poet's fame in 1823 to Davy's perception of his past.

both a morose and a hopeful tone as Davy explores his unorthodox religious and philosophical ambitions to portray both the joys and decay of life. I will also trace the way in which Davy was sceptical of and distanced himself from Christian doctrine in his presentation of death and the afterlife.

Davy's poems written during his penultimate trip through the Continent offer his Platonist views on immortality. Overall, his poems claim that there is a supersensible entity in nature, which is a single intelligence. I explain below that Davy presents his Platonic ambition for transcendence and reshapes this into an anxiety concerning the loss of a coherent self. This anxiety, as Laura Quinney has noted, is apparent in the work of Shelley, Wordsworth and Blake. Platonism shaped both the philosophical systems of Neoplatonism and Christianity, regarding the material world as a degraded version of a perfect and transcendent archetype that can be adumbrated with reason (Quinney, "Romanticism"). Coleridge's Platonism is also an important comparison to Davy's philosophies, since Coleridge discussed Spinosism and immanence in his letters to Davy. As scholars have already argued, Romantic poets drew upon Plato's ideas that each person possesses a soul seeking to re-ascend to its "οἶκος" or home to which it belongs.<sup>256</sup> This longing for transcendence is evident Romantic poetry on the individual's relationship to nature and personal salvation. Coleridge sought to combine Christianity and Platonism through the idea that God is transcendent and that there can be a metaphysical conception of the Trinity where we are fallen relational aspects of the supersensible God (Hedley 19, 36–40). Although critics such as Douglas Hedley have already examined Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* (1825) in order to trace his ultimate religious beliefs, my chapter on Davy's

---

<sup>256</sup> For more on Romantic Platonism, see Hedley 18–75; Vigus; Quinney, *William* 66–89; and Quinney, "Romanticism."

personal writings follows Ben Brice's assertion for Coleridge that, while his published work affirms his religious views, his poetry and letters convey the ways in which that "he was not entirely convinced" of these beliefs and felt a "pained acknowledgement of uncertainty and doubt" with his Christian reading of nature (9). In contrast to Coleridge, who in December 1813 sought to accept orthodox Christian ideas including original sin and personal salvation during his illness from opium addiction, I will later reveal that Davy's failing health resulted in sceptical poems on Christianity.<sup>257</sup> According to Brice, Coleridge's poetry conveys his uncertainty to embrace both Christian orthodoxy such as free will and a Kantian scepticism of divine symbolism. Davy's poetry in notebook 14e similarly demonstrates his own anxious hope for spiritual unity while trying to recover from his "paralytic symptoms" and "some organic defect in the Cerebral structure" of his brain (25 September 1827; *DL*). Davy turns to Platonist ideas that could be confirmed in nature for reassurance of an afterlife.

Davy's Platonist notion of the supersensible is explored in his poem titled "Thought" written in March 1827. Here Davy claims "human intellect" when compared to the "One" "power divine" (8–9):

Is but a type, as feeble as that image  
Of the bright sun seen on the bursting wave  
Bright but without distinctness[.] (9–11)

Human intellect is an imperfect "type" of the powers that are apparent in the world, literally made a flawed representative of this force through the punctuated break in the middle of line nine. The imperfections of man are related to an "image" or reflection of the sun on the wave. The disparity is furthermore emphasised in the way in which Davy contrasts the "feeble" and indistinctness of the mind to the

---

<sup>257</sup> See Brice 147, 150; and Coleridge's notes on his previous religious views of Unitarianism, Spinosism and Platonism in February 1805 (*Notebooks 2*: 2448).

vigorous movements of the “bursting wave,” which for Davy is itself powered by the “divine” principle of life.

The first few lines in his other poems again maintain that man has little knowledge and sense experience of that which underlies nature. In the untitled poem with the first line “Nought do we truly know of Man,” from the beginning Davy asserts that humankind has little understanding of their abilities. The poem continues that in spite of this “we see / Though dimly, in the constant laws of things / [...] an intelligence, a power” (3–5). Once again, Davy draws a distinction between the imperfection of man and a vital divine power in the way that all men can only “dimly” perceive an all-pervasive control and influence on the world (4). In the second line of the poem, “But could the essence of the Almighty mind,” Davy points to how “We ne’er can know” or understand the perfect intelligence that holds nature together. In the poem titled “Fragment” from 1825 the first line points to this ignorance (“We know not whence our origin we drew”) and again in another poem written on 1 March 1827 the first line claims that “In ignorance of all things” we reason according to what might please us. These poems at once hint to a divine and powerful consciousness that presides in the world, as well as to the insignificance of men and their limited sensual experiences of this force.

Although Davy’s Platonist interpretation of the world is hinted at in his earlier poems, such as in Bristol, his commitment to such ideas is evident in the final stage of his life. As I discussed in Chapter One, in Bristol, Davy associated with and emulated the work of his once radical friends Southey and Coleridge. His poetry during this time blends pantheism, Spinosism and Platonism, which may have influenced the poets’ admiring comments on Davy’s poetry.<sup>258</sup> It is evident in

---

<sup>258</sup> For more on Coleridge and Pantheism, see McFarland, *Coleridge*; Berkeley; and Class 23, 129, 139.

his letters and private notes that Davy did not conform to a particular religious doctrine, viewing them as successive historic ideas. In regards to pantheism, Davy wrote to his new wife, Jane, in April 1813 distancing himself from such deification of nature when claiming that she is the “personification of the spirit of the woods” (DL). Davy explained that such “Idolatry” “is the earliest form of religion,” reminding her that he does not hold this ancient form of faith. Yet biographers of Davy have made clear that Davy held a personal natural theology similar to pantheism. Knight wryly states that on Sundays Davy would have probably “preferred to worship God with fishing rod in hand” (175). Davy’s devotion to nature as derived from a supersensible entity recalls but also redeploys the inductive argument of Newton that the existence of God can be proved by explanatory reasoning of nature (Brice 54–63). Before further exploring Davy’s eight poems, I will now explain that while Newton found his own mathematical laws made it probable that there is an “intelligent and powerful being,” in notebook 14e Davy is sceptical that religious doctrine could be the best form of devotion (Newton, *Mathematical* 2: 544–5).

Despite his allusions to pantheism, Spinosism and Platonism in his poetry, it is difficult to outline Davy’s religious views. His early scepticism to Christian doctrine is apparent in a draft letter to an unknown person in a personal notebook used before 1800 in which he tries to refute his or her Quaker beliefs (13e 3–14). Surprised by the Quaker’s conviction that the human mind has a “spiritual influence,” and that followers commit to the revelation of the New Testament, Davy agreed that Christianity “is distinguished from all others, by the grand and comprehensive truths which forms its basis” (3). However, Davy’s letters and poetry did not offer his commitment to the Trinity, a fundamental concept in Christianity. His scepticism of the religion is evinced by his statement that the New Testament was a product of inspiration by the human mind that “is liable to

influence,” highlighting that there are a multitude of interpretations of Christianity, including Methodism and Roman Catholicism (9). In contrast to these interpretations, he stated that a “moderate degree of rational Scepticism is useful to man,” and “Truth bright, permanent and immutable as the meridian sun, shall enlighten and rejoice Mankind” (14). Once again, Davy revered nature for revealing the truths of the universe and confirming the existence of a supersensible being. Davy’s devotion to nature was later apparent in his lectures at the Royal Institution, where he argued for a link between natural theology and chemistry in his lectures by stating that the universe followed “the designs of a perfect intelligence” (*Discourse* 26). He made it clear that chemistry and its inventions worked with the constant laws within nature, which is itself a manifestation of the divine will. Such rhetoric was shaped by his public career that demanded he present himself as a conservative natural philosopher for his audiences.<sup>259</sup>

The differences between Davy’s public rhetoric, and private religious and philosophical ideas are apparent when acknowledging that in his geology lectures of 1805 Davy directed his “clearest criticism,” according to Siegfried and Dott, at Plato who “attended to the observations of nature less than any of his contemporaries” (xix; *Geology* 28). Davy challenged Plato’s “abstracted metaphysics” of archetypes and a higher reality: “He promises a reality, he presents a dream” (28). This public attack against Plato’s indistinct and hypothetical theories presented Davy as a confident and assertive philosopher who believed in certainty and verifiable facts. However, Davy continued to be alive to Platonist ideas, as evident in Coleridge’s comment to Davy on Platonic thought in 1809. After he had read an account of Davy’s new lectures of the season at the

---

<sup>259</sup> For more on this, see Golinski, *Science* 197; and Levere, *Affinity* 42, 45, 49.

Royal Institution, Coleridge wrote to the chemist on 30 January stating that he had some doubts on his comparison between the “Discoverers of Science, and the Miltons, Spinozas” (*Collected 3*: 172). Coleridge did find that the lecture convinced him that there is a “Supreme-Reason, as super-essential to the world of the senses” and that the mind was an “exponent” of this reason.<sup>260</sup> In contrast to Davy’s strident criticisms on Plato in his geology lectures, Coleridge deduced in Davy’s rhetoric evidence in support for a Platonist appreciation of nature. Indeed, such a philosophy suffused Davy’s poetry in 1827.

Much like contemporary poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, Davy’s 1827 poems convey that his philosophies were open to changes and re-evaluation. Quinney has explained that Wordsworth’s poetry shows his lack of confidence that “the self is the locus of vitality and meaning” (*Poetics* 65). His empiricist concept of the mind as a tabula rasa in his early version of *The Prelude* contrasts with the later books that adopted Platonism (Quinney, *William* 85). By the time Davy composed the poems in notebook 14e on the Platonist notion that there was a supreme and supersensible reason, Davy had distanced himself from fixed Christian doctrine. In a note between his poems in notebook 14e, Davy outlined a “New Theory of Religion,” stating that “the Xtn religion” can be compared to the historic devotion of “the Gods of Greece” (118–7). Davy suggested that “all religions may be false: but virtuously true” since “The energy of imagination makes what was first idea more vivid” until it becomes “Reality” in the mind if “people believe them.” Despite viewing religion doctrine as delusion, Davy did however believe in the immortality of the “Thinking Principle” or the mind, which he claimed some believe lived on in heaven or hell. However, like his letter to the

---

<sup>260</sup> Coleridge’s admiration for Davy’s research as confirmation of his own metaphysics has been discussed by Ishikura.

anonymous Quaker, Davy's faith in immortality derives from his understanding of nature. He ended the note by describing the sun as the "most perfect emblem of infinite existence" (118). For Davy, nature can give an analogical assurance that there is an eternal life for the mind.

At the heart of Davy's religious devotion is the idea that natural forms could confirm the power and immortality of humanity. In 1827, Davy communicated these thoughts to Thomas Poole from Ravenna on 14 March. Davy described his exhaustion yet impatience at his physical incapacity from an illness "threatening the loss of power and of life." In hoping to be "able to do something more for science, and [...] for humanity" he submitted to a changed diet and "solitude and repose," "believing that the Great Source of intellectual being so wills it for good" (DL). Davy's conception of a "Great Source of intellectual beings" echoes his belief in "Mont Blanc" and in his poem "Thought" that there is a supersensible being that is not a single entity. For humanity, it is a source of our mental power. Defining and unifying humanity as "intellectuals," Davy suggested that while the body can break down, the mind could give personal salvation by returning to its source in the afterlife.

Davy's belief that there is such an afterlife in these poems became more pronounced during his final trip to the Continent in 1828, from which he was never to return. In a letter to Poole from Rome on 6 February 1829, three months before he died, Davy again outlined his philosophy on an eternal supersensible entity:

I have a conviction full on my mind, that intellectual beings, spring from the same breath of infinite intelligence, and return to it again, but by different courses. Like rivers born amidst the clouds of Heaven, and lost in the deep & eternal ocean – some in youth, rapid and short lived torrents; some in manhood, powerful and copious rivers; and some in age, by a winding and slow course, half lost in their career, and making their exit through many sandy & shallow mouths. (DL)

Davy defined the three stages of human life, youth, adulthood and age as comparable to the rapidity, power, and slow course of rivers. He further gave a unity to all of life by blending together ideas from Christian orthodoxy and Platonism to assert that humanity or “intellectual beings” come from an “infinite intelligence” and that these beings were like rivers “born” from the “clouds of Heaven” that ultimately return to their source. Life, defined by intellect, is born of and returns to an unfathomable “infinite” source. Here, Davy recalled his early conception of humanity as graduated from an eternal source as explored in his “Mont Blanc” poem in 1814, yet further shaped this into an emphatic Platonist belief that each person’s mind will ultimately return to this infinite and immortal source.

Having read Davy’s philosophical novel, *Consolations*, Georges Cuvier deemed him a “dying Plato,” discovering two aspects of Davy that are also apparent in his 1827 poetry: melancholy for the mortality of man, yet a Platonic hope that the mind will ultimately return to its source (qtd in Knight, “Scientist” 67). Conscious of his own mortality as his health deteriorated, Davy looked for consolation in a Platonic outlook that unified man with immortal and powerful nature. Davy’s failing health and weakness as a “dying” man is evident given that his later letters and drafts of *Consolations* are written in the hand of Tobin, who accompanied Davy as his amanuensis. Unlike Davy, Coleridge valued Plato’s philosophies because to the poet Platonism anticipated the doctrines of Christianity, such as that God was “Life or Power, which Plato calls the Spirit” (Coleridge, *Lectures* 208; Vigus 21, 97). Davy’s poetry, on the other hand, which rarely refers to the supersensible entity as “God,” acts as reassurance that there is a universal afterlife. These imply Davy’s Platonist view of nature. Although his religious convictions are not fully outlined in his notes and poems, he clearly

became sceptical of Christian doctrine. Indeed his *Consolations*, as Golinski has explained, uses multiple characters that adhere to a plethora of beliefs such as Catholicism, Platonism, materialism, presenting a text with “uncertainties and ambivalences” (Golinski, “Romantic” 14).

Although in some ways Davy’s 1827 poetry foreshadows his ideas in *Consolations*, a second important aspect of these poems is the confidence that knowledge can be attained by appreciating and understanding nature in spite of the awareness that humanity possesses little ability to comprehend it completely. Echoing the assurances in his lectures, Davy continued to promote a reasoned perspective as powerful in his poems. In “It is alone in solitude we feel” Davy intertwines his melancholic tone that the “eye of the worldly man is insect like” and his feelings of isolation with vivid descriptions of the landscape and the intensity of the underlying principle which holds the universe together (22). In “Thought,” the bright sun is reflected in the wave and “in passing” shows “its glorious / ~~origin~~—& eternal source. —>” (12–3). Man possesses only fleeting views of the sun since its orbit means it moves beyond his observations. Davy’s insertion of “& eternal source” at the end of the line emphasises the intransience of nature in contrast to man. In the poem “Nought do we truly know of Man,” the divine order underlying nature is omnipresent and connects the speaker with both the internal and external. Not only “do we see” the laws of the nature but this power (3):

is the principle of life &  
 thought  
 Nay life itself e’en as in our own  
 minds  
 There is a one presiding principle  
 Which for the body acts. (5–9)

Although in the beginning of the poem, Davy claims that all men possess little self-awareness, line seven assertively states that an all-pervasive power exists, made

particular yet impersonal with the determiner “a” and singular “one” to emphasise the uniqueness of the power that can be felt and experienced by all and everything. Davy emphasises its omnipresence since man has a total affinity with nature, which commands thought and the body. The “principle of life” defines and directs all of humanity.

Davy’s personal prepositions in his *Annual Anthology* poems make him a commentator on society, yet in his final poems the collective “we” suggest a change in his poetical style and personal attitude. Like Davy’s “It is alone in solitude we feel,” “Sons of Genius” published in the *Annual Anthology* offers a guiding principle for the mind of reason (AA 1: 93–9). With the repetition of third person plural pronouns of “theirs” and “to them,” the poem observes and describes those who possess such genius (37–44). Through the repetition of the collective pronoun “we” in his later poem “It is alone in solitude we feel,” Davy writes from the position of authority and experience. Yet his emphasis that knowledge is attained through autonomy or “solitude” tempers his vivid descriptions of nature and the collective tone of the poem (1, 21). Davy builds his belief that his philosophical speculations connect him with the rest of humanity through the mutual experience of the attainment of knowledge. The second line states that isolation enables one to connect to the world and feel “what powers belong to us,” connecting “us” to our common experiences as sensitive and capable beings. In this way, the poem becomes a celebration of how and what one attains through understanding the principles of the natural world.

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth finds the Platonic concept of “Nature” that “Thrusts forth upon the senses” can make “visible” the glorious faculty of imagination (bk. 13, 89–90). Rather than being overwhelmed or guided by a more powerful force, the Platonic entity awakens the mind to its own faculties (Quinney,

*Poetics* 418). In Davy's poetry, the supersensible and immortal entity within nature remains a superior force that guides and defines the workings of the mind. While critics have shown that Coleridge viewed nature as echoes of a divine spirit, he also found difficulty in reconciling the Kantian disavowal of God represented in nature with the Newtonian interpretation of God as the will that originated natural laws (Brice 187). In contrast, Davy commits to the belief that human perception of nature is flawed, yet are echoes of the power that underlies the natural world.

In addition to the contrast between humankind's ignorance and the vitality of the natural world, the third distinct element to these poems is the persistent idea of the certainty of death and the hope for immortality. The three quatrains and alternate rhyme scheme in the poem "And when the light of life is flying" begins with the darkness of his mind and the universal feeling of decay and death. The poem later tries to balance this despondency with the richness of the imagination and quicker pace of tetrameter, in contrast to his usual pentameter in his poetry. In the first quatrain, Davy immediately immerses the reader in his dejected mood:

And when the light of life is flying  
 And darkness round us seems to close  
 Nought do we truly know of dying  
 Save sinking in a deep repose[.] (1–4)

Signalling the theme of transience, the feminine rhyme of "flying" and "dying" conveys the idea that life is temporary as it departs from the speaker (1, 3). The feeling that "darkness round us seems to close" implies that death is like the night and instils a sense of confinement. With the rhyme between "close" and "repose" Davy stresses the finality of death and the act of reflection on death as a "deep repose" similar to death itself (2, 4). Though the rest of the poem also describes the body as a "decaying form" to convey the impermanence of life, Davy also points to the "hope" that the spirit is also "undying" (9–10). Life beyond death is

imaginable as the “lightning from the gloomy storm,” which breaks the darkness of the night, as well as the speaker’s mind, with the reassurance that the soul or the spirit can attain similarly sublime “glory” (11).

In two of his other poems in 1827 Davy continues to emphasise the certainty of death and acknowledge the possibility for immortality. “Our real knowledge is but to be sure” describes how the history of all mankind can be traced to the first man, Adam, who in gaining knowledge “knew / That He must die” (16–7). In contrast to this undeniable truth for humanity (made all the more assertive with his underlined words), Davy finds consolation since “Christian faith” gives “back his innocence and his hopes” of a spiritual “immortality” (18–22). As in his note on “A New Theory of Religion,” the poem uses scripture and Christian beliefs to suggest that Christianity is a heartening idea that can bolster humankind. Davy makes no direct reference to established Christian beliefs in the poem “In ignorance of all things we assume” that also describes how man possesses little knowledge and a transient life, but can still infer the existence of immortality. While Davy claims that life is “a spark a fire a flame,” he then points to how that which is “fiery” belonging “to the earth” is “transient” like “lightning” and a “meteor’s blaze” (9–16). Although he questions this analogy between the unknown and abstract notion of immortality, and the physical and temporary, Davy deepens the comparison by suggesting that the eternal source of light, the sun, lies within unknown space. Davy compares the sun to the spirit, which resides in the body:

And that which kindleth the  
whole frame of nature  
Has no known abode, although its  
source  
Is everlasting. (20–2)

Davy suggests that a deeper understanding of the universe can further the link between the flame and the immortal soul, since, like the afterlife, we can only

imagine the presence of the sun. He also subtly suggests that to understand the external world is to understand the self. Within the twenty-eight line poem, Davy proposes that humankind is ignorant, and despite this triumphantly uses his knowledge of the natural world to refine the analogy of the sun as comparable to the mind and the soul.

Many of Davy's poems in the 14e notebook, such as "In ignorance of all things we assume" precede ideas on immortality with an emphasis on mortality. This particular poem triumphantly claims that though man is ignorant, though nature is "transient," and though our body "lives to decay," the imaginative understanding that there lies an unknown and unbounded source of life can provide consolation that there is an "eternity" (16, 22, 28). At the end of the poem Davy compares the essence of the world to humankind's "life of thought," which like the eternal spirit passes beyond temporal boundaries as the mind "blend[s]" "a life, a day an age" and the future with the "past" (25–8). Like an analogy that provides links between disparate ideas, the final lines convey the unfettered mind considering together the different temporal categories of "a life, a day[, and] an age." The poem is exultant in contrasting the decay and terminal nature of life with the possibility of the immortality of the mind, ending with the word "eternity" (28). The eight poems tend to end with a reaching for more or toward an aspiration, usually by placing variations of the word immortal or immortality at the end of a line or the poem. "Thought" concludes that the mind has a "glorious and eternal source," the untitled poem with the first line "But could the essence of the Almighty mind" ends with "we do not wholly die," and finally in "It is alone in solitude we feel" the speaker finds that the landscape awakens "Imagination wild & interminable" (10, 12 34). The eternal essence underlying nature is also an everlasting source for the imagination.

When writing to Jane on 30 March 1827 from Ravenna on the recent death of Sir George Beaumont, the art patron, landscape painter and a close friend of Wordsworth, Davy hoped Beaumont was spared physical suffering. He finds consolation in the idea that the “mind is superior to body” and can reveal that:

intellectual or moral or religious enthusiasm destroys physical pain & the imagination is the only creative faculty of our nature. (DL)

Once again, Davy echoes his note on “A Theory of Religion” by suggesting a difference between “intellectual,” “moral,” and “religious” approaches. Perhaps self-consciously reflecting upon his own pain and poems on metaphysical ideas, Davy offers the idea that the different types of “enthusiasm” derived from the mind can overwhelm the body’s sensuous experiences. In Bristol, Davy was careful to ensure that his short poem on breathing in nitrous oxide conveyed his ability to regulate this experience.<sup>261</sup> Thirty years later, Davy sees enthusiasm as a healing process.

As also apparent in his eight poems, for Davy the imagination can transcend physical decay and act as a means to exist beyond one’s body. In all of Davy’s poetry however, immortality, is confirmed by what is evident in the real. The 1821 poem “Eagles” also found in notebook 14e echoes Keats’s “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles” published in *The Examiner* in 1817, where the poet likens himself to a sick eagle yearning to reach higher in the sky in order to show the contrast between the speaker’s felt mortality and the immortality of the statues (Bennett, *Posterity* 149). Davy’s “Eagles” poem describes the poet as one who also feels his own mortality since he must turn away from the “mighty birds” as they “upward rose” (1). He experiences an “excess of pain” in his eyes from “the scorching rays” (6–7). At the end of the poem, this moment is made analogous to his hope for

---

<sup>261</sup> See Chapter Two; and Mee, *Enthusiasm* 82–128.

immortality. Like the eagles, Davy's imagination allows him to "look on splendours brightest day" and "Soar upwards full in the immortal ray," yet these rays are like "The light of life-joy & immortality [,.]" "broken & prismatic seen through tears" (16, 18, 22-3). Davy imagined hope of freedom lets his mind "soar upwards" beyond the corporeal. His physical tears, whether from joy or sadness, curb the imagined joy for a spiritual existence.

Both Wordsworth and Davy held the Platonic view that the soul or an innate part of humanity belongs in a realm beyond the world. In contrast to Wordsworth's suggestion in "Ode: Intimations to Immortality" that his memory of questioning the "sense and outwards things" (145) hints to the immortality of the soul, Davy's poems privilege the external world as evidence of the eternal spirit that holds all living things together (*Poems 2*: 155). Davy's Platonic concept of an immortal force allows him to present the idea that humanity is comprised of intellectual beings who can gain transcendence in the afterlife. Although Davy's eight poems affirm a spiritual Platonist relationship between nature and man, Davy makes this an anxious notion with the recognition of the limits of all men in comparison to a far more powerful will.

### **5.3 Reconsidering Poems of the Past**

This section argues that in notebook 14e Davy reflects on his past poems and ideas to strengthen his speculations that the mind is immortal and comparable to a force in nature that is "above / Our sense & reason" ("The Sybil's Temple" 126 line 22). As Davy travelled through the Continent in 1827 he included sixteen poems in his series of "verses" in his notebook that are copies of, revise, or reconfigure his ideas from his earlier poetry (14e 186). I read two of these closely and explain why

Davy may have wished to keep some of the others in his notebook.<sup>262</sup> I first examine the note above “Virtue the daughter of the skies supreme” and read the poem closely for the way in which they refer to and echo his poems published in the *Annual Anthology*. After comparing it to “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount,” I reveal that the 14e poem focuses on the moon as reassurance that the mind can achieve immortality (136–5).<sup>263</sup> I then explain that Davy’s poem “The massy pillars of the earth” recalls “The Spinosist” (composed in 1799) while registering a comparison between the immortal power of the human mind and the natural world (74–2). Davy returns to his past ideas in his verses and changes some of the ideas in his poetry written between 1799 and 1800 to emphasise his new preoccupation on the possibility of an afterlife.

Above the manuscript poem “Virtue the daughter of the skies supreme,” which describes a moonlit scene in Mondsee in Austria on 28 June 1827, Davy writes: “thought of early youth 32 years ago, when I was 18 & versified then in Annual Anthology 1799” (14e 136–5). Finding that the darkened landscape in Mondsee inspires him to recall his life in Bristol, he first describes the analogy that virtue “may be compared to the full moon guiding the pilgrim in his nightly journey” that points to the “brighter and more certain sun” setting in the west (136). As John

---

<sup>262</sup> The other fourteen poems are: five poems written at Baths of Lucca in 1819 with the first lines “And may note all this varied life of Man,” “Again that lovely orb—<lamp> from half its orb,” “He who passes from flower to flower,” “I catch but dimly inspirations faint” and “Thou loveliest form of the celestial world” which I examine in my previous chapter (14e 160; 154–3; 90; 82; 80); a poem similar to the “Moses” fragments in defining the self by the state of mind (“Laybach” 148); “Evening at Nice 1814” (126); “The Sybil’s Temple” (126–5), and four untitled poems similar to his *Annual Anthology* poems as they reflect on Davy’s youth and the springtime with the first lines “I lingered through a happy summers [*sic*] day” (122), “Time was when all was fresh” (92–1), “Cast thine eyes upward in the vault of heaven” (87) and “In youth when spring and summer reign” (78); and two poems like “The Spinosist” on the immortality of the mind. These two poems are untitled but have the first lines “Then on his soul flashed the bright images” (168) and “Ye lovely hills that rise in majesty” (97). In the notebook, there are also more fragments of the epic “Moses” (65–57) and another version of a poem to Anna Beddoes’s daughter titled “To a child; daughter of T. and A. B.” (51–0).

<sup>263</sup> Davy’s “The Song of Pleasure,” published in the *Annual Anthology*, was also written out in loose-leaf by Tobin and is in the Royal Institution archives. Although it is not dated, the paper has the watermark 1828, suggesting that Davy recalls his past poem while on the Continent and had asked his amanuensis, Tobin, to copy it out.

stated when publishing this comment, Davy took “unceasing enjoyment” from natural forms and forces such as the sun and moon, reimagining them as guiding principles for morality (*CW* 1: 363–4, 374). John Davy may have avoided publishing the sixteen-line poem below this comment since, despite its pentameter and alternate rhyme scheme, the poem is difficult to transcribe and syntactically irregular.

Before discussing the way in which Davy’s untitled poem with the first line “Virtue the daughter of the skies supreme” can be compared to his previous poetry, I first want to examine Davy’s poem “Ode to St. Michael’s Mount” to clarify what Davy may have meant with his reference to his verses in the *Annual Anthology*. The ode, composed in 1796 and published in 1799, venerates the moon as a means to gain intellectual insight (172–6). Davy focuses on the mount, which reminds him of his youth and his exploration of the landscape during his childhood in Cornwall. The rhyme scheme of aabccb gives the poem a playful tone, and the repetition of a predominately masculine rhyme assertively conveys his belief that he has gained joy from the beautiful aspects of the scene, as well as rational insights from its sublime powers. The speaker is inspired:

When the white Moon with glory crown’d  
The azure of the sky around  
Her silver radiance shed  
When shone the waves with trembling light  
And slept the lustre palely bright  
Upon thy tower-clad head. (31–6)

Here the moon possesses its own glory and has unbounded powers that can affect both the natural landscape and the speaker. The moon shines upon the fixed and still mount, so that the mount is modified by the pale and delicate moonlight resting on the natural form. The stillness of the scene is countered by the “trembling” of the moonlight on the waves. Like the moon, the sea also

possesses a power: its movement changes the appearance of the moonlight suggesting that the scene is a manifestation of Newtonian active principles which underlie the natural world and all its various forms. In the next stanza, Davy suddenly claims that in his youth such a sight prompts the “flow” of “pleasures” and a “glow” in his “bosom,” suggesting a connection between sensibility and the external world (34–5). Davy makes clear that the perception of these forces, such as moonlight, induces a physical and psychological effect.

While in 1799 Davy claims in his apostrophic poem to St Michael’s Mount that the moon gives him mental and physical inspiration, the moon in “Virtue the daughter of the skies supreme” is a hopeful reminder of the immortality of humankind. Chapter One and Two have already shown that light in Davy’s poetry, and in particular sunlight, is a source of intellect and inspiration. This idea is continued and is explicit in Davy’s note above his 1827 poem with the astronomically factual statement that the moon’s “light was but a faint reflection” of the sun (135). The sun remains the focus of adoration in this statement since the moon redirects the sun’s intensity on the landscape. Although Davy gives an accurate account about the moon’s position relative to the sun, his note does not fully outline the importance of the moon in that moment. This suggests the poem beneath the comment instead expresses the speaker’s admiration for the moon and its effect on the landscape and on him. The poem is thus perhaps an exploration of his “thought,” which he had “versified” in the 1799 *Annual Anthology*.

In Davy’s note above his 1827 poem, the moon is comparable to the influence of “virtue” on the “pilgrim,” who can in turn be compared to Davy and his own journey and turn to a religious devotion in his poetry for a supersensible power (14e 136). As I have explained in Chapter Three, Davy’s poems took part in the cult of sensibility, epitomised by both Thomas Brown and Charlotte Smith, by





letter is painful and injurious” to him (*DL*). In contrast to the language of mortality, the final line of the poem marks a beginning of the “fair dawning of a glorious day” (16). Similarly, in the poem “In ignorance of all things we assume” Davy contrasts the mortality of humanity with the eternity of the soul and the sun. The moon and the sun in his poem on virtue are metaphorical symbols for humankind and a subsequent eternal existence, though he is tentative in outlining what this eternal existence holds. However, he makes clear in the poem “Then on his soul flashed the bright images” that this afterlife is possible by the “undying power” of the mind, a concept that characterises most of his final poetry in his notebook (14e 168 line 7).

Davy included in his series of poems in notebook 14e an undated poem “The massy pillars of the earth,” which John Davy suggests may have been written in about 1815 (Knight, *Humphry* 137; *Memoirs* 2: 95). Remarkably similar to Davy’s “The Spinosist,” the 1815 poem is a variation of Davy’s materialism in his poem on Spinosist philosophy in claiming that there are “eternal laws” governing the universe, and that nothing can be destroyed to imply humankind’s immortality (17). Holmes regards “The massy pillars of the earth” to be “somewhere between Romantic pantheism and the old Enlightenment deism” and that its “hymn-like” form suggests a “deliberate performance” (*Age* 360–1). However, Davy’s final poems do not dwell on personal salvation or atonement, which suggests his ultimate commitment to non-Christian religious views. “The massy pillars of the earth” first offers the idea that there are balances of forces within nature and that all living things are indestructible. Davy then assertively contemplates the possibility of life after death in the sixth stanza:

If matter cannot be destroyed,  
The living mind can never die:

If een [*sic*] creative when alloyed,  
How sure its immortality. (21–4)

In the stanza's first line, Davy recalls Lavoisier's assertion of the conservation of mass in his *Elements of Chemistry* (22–3). In this way, Davy makes immortality a rational idea by comparing this chemical idea to the workings of the brain. However, the stanza struggles to hold both Davy's confidence and hesitancy with regard to immortality. First suggesting that if "matter" is imperishable than so is the "living mind," he extends this analogy in a somewhat confused line that notes that the mind is "alloyed," a metallurgical idea of creating a non-pure substance, to allude to the Platonist concept of the mind created as a flawed type of an eternal power. Despite his confident analogy between matter and the mind, as outlined in his earlier poem "The Spinosist," the stanza begins with the indeterminate condition. The analogy is still a hypothesis that cannot be confirmed. Davy underlines the words "living mind" and "never dies" to convey his own certainty, yet the eye-rhyme between "die" and "immortality" disrupts this link since death does not pertain to the eternal character of the mind.

In contrast to Davy's certainty in "The Spinosist" of an afterlife, "The massy pillars of the earth" speculates on the existence of an abstract immortality. In Chapter Three, I explained that "The Spinosist" describes the decay of the body with the reassuring idea that the human consciousness continues to exist in a different realm. In the final stanza of the poem since "All, All is change" and despite mortality where one can "die in agony," mankind returns to an "etherial" [*sic*] realm from which they will "feed the solar rays" and "the earth" (5, 40–4). Davy writes that "To die" is "To give to Nature all her / stolen powers" (37–8). He imagines death as a return to "Nature," capitalising the word to indicate that this is a metaphysical return to "that powerful will" that controls the universe (9). Davy's

poem in notebook 14e is devoid of corporeal death or pain, perhaps as comfort for the physical effect of Davy's failing health. Like his other poems in notebook 14e, the final stanza instead makes the analogy that life is like the "changeful light of even" and immortality is the "eternal sun" rising in the morning (29, 32). Once again, the natural landscape can demonstrate and reassure him with the idea that humanity has an existence beyond death.

So far, I have shown that when Davy collected or copied out his verses in notebook 14e, he also revised his previous metaphysical philosophies according to his central preoccupation concerning what it meant to be immortal. The two poems I have examined seek to persuade, like the "lingering ray" of the moon in "Virtue the daughter of the skies supreme," that there is life beyond mortal decay (13). However, Davy also copied out poems with philosophies that reminded him of his previous ideals. In notebook 14e, his "Moses" epic that takes up fifteen pages continues to posit the intense relationship between the mind and the power of nature. In one scene where Moses visits the Priests at their temple, Davy contrasts their claustrophobic and mystical surroundings with Moses's belief in God's presence:

His temple is the Heaven, whence His life  
Flows into nature, and is felt and seen  
In sunbeam and in Cloud, and in the balm  
Of calming breezes, and reviving dew[.] (14e 63)

In these fragments of "Moses," Davy defines the essence of God in terms of his own natural theology by proposing that Moses can take solace in a pantheistic or Spinosist belief that God is present or is nature. Nature can be "felt" and can heal the physical body with the "balm" of the breeze and the "reviving" dew. The participle verbs of "calming" and "reviving" emphasise the flowing of "His life" into and within all of nature. Through his mind and the body, Moses can experience the

supersensible being and “His” influence. Davy’s particular worldview continues in the extracts where a gentle stream provokes the emotive response of “peace and love / And joy” (58). These feelings are as “immortal as Nature / And as the elements unchangeable” giving the mind the same energy and immortality as the external world (58–9).

Davy also “copies” out other poems into his notebook from earlier parts of his life that suggest nostalgia for his youth and life in England. “To the Wandle or Vandalis” written in 1825 describes his return to the river near London and reminisces that “twenty summers” ago he saw the summertime natural scene of flowers, ripened fruit, and agriculture (14e 122). Similarly, Davy’s undated and untitled poem in the same notebook, with the first line “Time was when all was fresh,” contrasts the “fresh[ness]” of youth with the vast “unknown” such as the “attractive power which moves” the stars, which inspires awe and emotion (1, 7, 17). His poem on Anna Beddoes’s daughter describes her physical youth using spring as an analogy for her beauty (14e 51–0). Despite these hope-filled verses, Davy also includes in his notebook two poems written at the Baths of Lucca that, as I explored in my previous chapter, consider his mortality and impermanence (14e 160; 154–3). Overall, the poems in notebook 14e are a group of verses with various philosophies on the nature of the supersensible entity governing nature, which convey either Davy’s certainty or his doubt on these ideas. Aware of the disunity of his philosophies in his life, he collects them together to show his enduring belief in the immortality of nature. As the next section demonstrates, Davy’s poems also become hesitant in the way they contrast the undying power of the mind to the physical decay of humankind.

## 5.4 Mortality and Hesitancy

There are fourteen largely messy and reworked poems in notebook 14e in which Davy deliberates on the body's decay, pain, and death.<sup>264</sup> Although this is not a discrete set of fragmentary poems since they are interspersed between other poems analysed in previous sections, the fourteen poems tend to be located in the middle or at the end of the series of verses in the notebook and are similar in describing the failing body and mind. In some of the carefully constructed poems, the persisting physical references contrast with Davy's abstract philosophies on the afterlife. For example in "Thought," a poem with fourteen quatrains and an alternate rhyme scheme, he compares the search for immortality and the mind's undefined and pleasurable plans with the destructiveness of Imperial Rome and the mortality of man (121–8).<sup>265</sup> Most of the fourteen poems explore the failing vitality of the body in a single long stanza. As we have already seen, Davy used a range of poetic forms, such as the ode and the epic, to offer the idea that with the power of the sublime, the mind can gain transcendence and immortality. His final poems on the body's decay, without the reassuring framework of a guiding principle on the immortality of the mind, become hesitant and uncertain in their language, and have a nondescript fragmentary form when confronting his own experiences of mortality.

In what follows, I first explore two poems that contrast the physical decay of the body with the possibility of immortality, offering an optimistic tone with a

---

<sup>264</sup> These are "The Human intellect when [\*] like" (14e 148); "The one [\*] [\*] has never" (148–7); "The pleasures past which never can return" (135–4); "Thought" (121–18); "Verses" (116); "Ashburnham Place" (104); "Copenhagen" (100–98); "Around his brow there shone no laurel wreath" (94); "Time was when all was fresh" (92–1); "The effect of tears in calming the mind" (89–3); "So green the grass [\*] in the mountains [*sic*] brow" (88); "Reposing his gray and silvery hairs" (77–6); "Oh, let the breeze" (56); and "Though grey thy hair, thine eye is bright" (54).

<sup>265</sup> There is another poem titled "Thought" in the notebook, presumably titled to suggest that Davy wrote these poems in a fleeting moment of reverence (183–2). Many of his later poems in the notebook are in iambic pentameter and were not reworked, suggesting Davy's confidence in composing whole and carefully formed verses.

structured poetic form. Both “Oh, let the breeze” and “Copenhagen” subtly hint at the way in which the poet’s failing health can be restored by the natural elements (14e 56; 100–98). Both of these are in Tobin’s handwriting, suggesting that Davy employed Tobin to copy out his more structured poems. “Oh, let the breeze” contains a balladic first stanza (and continues with stanzas of similar length with shorter alternate lines and regular rhyme scheme) to convey his joy in writing the poem “at the end of a fever” (14e 56). Davy calls for the breeze, the hill and the stream to heal his “feeble” body and his mind’s “doubtful doom” (7, 10):

Oh, let the breeze

Oh, let the breeze play upon my brow  
 Upon some wood clad hill  
 And let a gentle stream beneath me flow,  
 A gently murmuring rill.

There let me find with new born pleasure  
 The most exalted human pleasure;  
 Let health my feeble body bless,  
 Health in all her loveliness!

There let recovery come  
 To fix my doubtful doom;  
 And let me, like the sportive boy,  
 Feel life an everflowing will of Joy! (1–12)

In a Wordsworthian request that echoes “Tintern Abbey”, Davy hopes for nature to give a therapeutic strength and joyfulness to the body and mind. He anticipates that the body will respond to its surroundings to “find,” be “bless[ed],” and “let [...] come” invigoration and comfort from his feelings of weakness and his troubled mind. The poem also privileges childhood as a state of health and pleasure where the mind can locate a “new born pleasure” from nature like the joy of a “sportive boy.” The nurturing role of nature is subtly established in the use of the word “rill” that flows beneath the poet, possibly echoing Davy’s “The Spinosist” where life begins with the tenderness of a mother’s “living rill” (24).

Both Wordsworth in “Tintern Abbey” and Davy in his poem repeat the word “let” to summon the healing force of nature. Wordsworth assures his sister that with isolation and the beauty of nature she can find relief from the harshness and “dreary intercourse of daily life” (131):

Therefore let the moon  
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;  
And let the misty mountain-winds be free  
To blow against thee[.] (134–7)

Wordsworth’s use of prepositions and conjunctions, according to Christopher Ricks, conveys how and why the poet creates relationships in his verse, which for John Jones conveys a “logical, knitted quality” (Jones 207; Ricks 120). For example, the moment of “therefore” in “Tintern Abbey” lifts the reader away from thought on the “sneers” of men, and transfers them to the natural forces. Nature acts as a support that can “blow against” them and as a companion that can “[s]hine on” Dorothy during her solitary walk (133, 137). The image is knitted together with the internal rhyme of “thee” and “free” (136, 7). As in Davy’s “Oh, let the breeze,” nature acts upon the passive body as a source of comfort. Davy’s attention to the potential of nature however suggests the poet’s need to escape his mortality felt in his “feeble body” (7). The short poem does not establish whether nature can provide him with a “recovery” and holds a paradoxical faith in both a return to a mortal health as well as the hope of feeling the immortal “everflowing” will of nature (9, 12).

“Copenhagen,” which was discussed in the first section, offers comfort that despite the physical decay of one’s body, nature can reassure that humanity can achieve immortality. In blank verse with a few trochaic rhythms, Davy creates analogies between the burning of substances (a sight familiar to the experimental chemist), the rise, and fall of passionate emotion, and youth and age. At first, Davy

claims that despite the brightness of all “variety of forms,” they have the same final “melancholy hue,” like that of ashes, to connote the death of all living things (3, 5). He then compares this to the vitality of the body and later to the liveliness of the ocean:

The Auburn, flaxen, and the ebon hair  
 Take the same hoary hue. The blooming cheek  
 Of beauty, the bronzed ~~brow~~<brow> of manly vigour <strength>  
 And <the> smooth front of Wisdom, sadly show  
 The same deep furrows. Intellect alone,  
 Does not so quickly waste itself[.] (8–13)

The poem is illuminated with images of light and colour to convey the transient and exhilarating experience of emotion that can be physically felt in the body. Humankind, itself a “variety of forms” with “auburn, flaxen, and the ebon hair,” possess an all-consuming passion that can manifest in the body to give a “blooming cheek” and “bronzed brow” (8–10). Like ashes, the vivid shades of hair degrade to a grey “hoary hue” and youthful faces are marked with “deep furrows” of age (9, 12). Davy then establishes a difference between such strong emotions and “Intellect alone” (12). The latter is clearly a singular and distinct aspect of the mind autonomous to the body since it “[d]oes not so quickly waste itself” away (13).

In contrast to images of the transience of the body, the next section of the poem reveres this immortal aspect of the intellect. By varying the rhythm in the following three lines that describe the movement of light on the ocean’s waves, Davy hints to the liveliness of passion and the endurance of the mind:

That <tranquil> light which in the ocean springs ~~of life~~  
 When living myriads in succession quick  
 Sport in the wave – it ~~lasts~~<lives>; and in the storm  
 And change of things appears more ~~brilliant~~<beautiful>  
 Triumphant oer the elements. (14–8)<sup>266</sup>

<sup>266</sup> The crossed out and inserted words are in Davy’s handwriting.

As is often the case in Davy's poetry, intellect is compared to the light on the moving sea, which is itself an embodiment of unpredictable emotions. The shining light possesses a tranquilly imitated in line fourteen with the rhythm of iambic pentameter. With the final word "springs," the next line leaps into a description of the unpredictable behaviour of countless living things that "[s]port in the wave" as well as the liveliness of the mind. While the poem claims that all living things ultimately perish and have a lifeless existence, the mind and the intellect can outlast the body and the sway of passion's "storm." As opposed to his Cornwall poems such as his ode to St. Michael's Mount where the young Davy celebrated the "white foaming billows" of the deep since it inspired him to "DIVINE PHILOSOPHY," "Copenhagen" presents us with a mature poet who believes intellect will endure; it "lives," despite the sublime storm of tumultuous passion (AA 1: 60 lines 46, 63). While the young Davy was concerned with nature as a source of inspiration in his Cornwall poems, it is clear that in his later poems he looked to nature to point to what lay beyond knowledge and death. In "Copenhagen," the image of the exuberant storm can illustrate the triumph of the mind over mortality. Davy continues to revere nature, particularly the sea and light, but sees it as a restorative and hope-filling force against the fear of physical decay.

Many of the fragmentary and significantly re-worked poems in notebook 14e in Davy's handwriting also emphasise the physical degradation and pain of the poet or project this onto an anonymous character. The anxious poems explore the experience of pain in a male or female character, and show Davy's revisions where he inserts expressions of pain and mortality. The poems on the pain of a third person tend to be untitled, fragmentary, and difficult to follow. I now focus on three poems of this kind to reveal that Davy tries and perhaps fails to incorporate expressions of a pain-filled existence, with his belief that nature can offer





Davy's claim, as in his other poems, is that the experience of understanding nature is to elevate oneself from the oppression of earthly cares and pain. This is subtly apparent by the vast and all-encompassing descriptions of the sky, made distinct from the claustrophobic sounds and sights of pain-riddled men. Given the inferred connection between these concerns of men, Davy's manuscript poem only implies that to interpret nature is to transcend the burden of mortality and the "groan" and "shrieks" of pain.

The final poem in notebook 14e regards the way that nature acts as a means to transcend the speaker's own painful existence. Here Davy's revisions convey his earnest concern over his own mortality. Written while he was at Salzburg on 29 June 1827 and with the first line "The pleasures past which never can return" the poem contains reworking and revisions that reveal Davy's anxiety over his failing health (14e 135–4). Davy tries and fails to follow an iambic pentameter as he seeks to forget his physical and emotional pain. He shows a desire for tenderness, with the consolation that the mind can enter a realm where imagined natural forms reassure and give "calm relief" (20):

Salzburg 29 June 27

The ~~memory of~~ pleasures past which never  
 can return.  
 Like <[\*]> ashes in the heart remain  
 And without flame or glow [\*] <ever> burn.  
 But then [\*] [\*] from earthly storm  
 And have when [\*] with <deepest holy> [\*] glowing  
 I pressed thee <willing> to my eager arms.—  
 <Alas> Whilst tears of purest grief are flowing  
 How ~~bright [\*] vision~~ <few [\*] apparitions> of thy <unseen [\*]> charms  
 Waken in my mind, a rainbow bright  
 Upon the dark & falling storm.  
 And ~~little rests in~~  
 I seem to know thee blest in Hopes bright  
 As was the beauty of thy earthly form  
 For the ~~[\*\*]~~, one fault alone  
 Were thine. To love ~~[\*][\*][\*]~~.—

~~Which~~  
 Waken in my <exhausted suffering> mind—a vision bright ~~So~~  
~~bright~~  
 Bright but not burning <placed> [\*] yet were  
 Through <[\*]> tears it shows a <glorious> rainbow bright  
 Upon the ~~dark~~<gloomy cold> & falling storm  
 Age of <wretched> desolation  
 Of [\*] sickness ~~coldness~~ grief  
 And like <a living> power <[\*]> & divine  
 Gives to my wearied bosom calm relief  
 And seen from <highest> heaven itself to shine[.] (1–20)

Davy acknowledges that he possesses a heavy reminder that the past “can never return.” Rather than focussing on the “~~memory~~” of pleasures past, the actual experience of these are still physically felt, “[I]ike [\*] ashes” that “in the heart remain.” As in “Copenhagen,” Davy is preoccupied with the devastation of youthful passions, leaving the mature poet with the deathly feeling of something that once existed and animated his physical body. He inserts the words, “<exhausted suffering>,” to describe his mind. This suggests his intention to shape the tone of the poem around the experience of pain rather than the abstract ideas of death, nature, and immortality apparent in “Copenhagen” and other poems discussed in this chapter. Like the unknown figure, the “living power” within nature in this poem fills his feeling of emptiness with mental respite since it can “Waken in my mind, a rainbow bright” and “Gives to my wearied bosom calm relief” (9, 20). Nature alleviates the poet’s body and mind. Such an immediacy contrasts with Davy’s other poems on the abstract effect of nature on the intellect and emotion. In “The pleasures past which never can return,” Davy’s most intimate and personal final poem, nature is an imagined construct through which he can find respite from his physical body and dejected mind.

Davy’s letter to Jane, written on 30 June 1827, the day after he composed the poem, conveys the extent to which he became concerned with his deteriorating physical body after a serious stroke:

I am now more melancholy than usual for the state of my eyes obliges me almost to renounce my favourite amusement fishing which was a good resource to me & which I think greatly strengthened my arm & hand. (*DL*)

Not only aware of his failing eyes and weakened right arm and hand, Davy feels the loss of experiences that brought him pleasure and physical recuperation. Davy's poem begins with the same poignant sentiment for the loss for "pleasures past" (1). Although many of the lines vary in length, suggesting that it is an unfinished poem, the following on his need for comfort in iambic pentameters epitomises the well-formed and persistent physical references through which Davy comes alive:

I pressed thee <willing> to my eager arms.—  
<Alas> Whilst tears of purest grief are flowing[.] (6–7)

Though it is unclear who or what he addresses, the sudden physical presence of the speaker as well as of the addressee is literally emphasised through the stressed syllables on "pressed" and "arms" in line six, and on "tears" in line seven, all of which are a product of his "grief." The need for a physical connection "pressed" to his body highlights a search for tenderness in contrast to his continual language of loss during his physical "desolation" (6, 17). His "willing" arms, like Keats's 1819 fragment "This living hand, now warm and capable" that as Shahidha K. Bari has argued "can feel itself feeling," revives the speaker from his impassive observation of the world, to testifying to his living, corporeal existence (xix). In their poems, both Keats and Davy are conscious that they suffer from a debilitating disease that brings them close to death, where the fragment as a form implies their transience.

Davy's poems present him as a philosophical writer afflicted with a slow deteriorating disease and preoccupied in his final years with the idea of physical decay and immortality. Where his earlier poetry is suffused with the confidence on

the potential and power of the mind to transcend and therefore be an equal to the forces that underlie nature, Davy's final poetry leaves a legacy of a desire to heal human suffering through the hope of an afterlife. The idea of the powerful immortality of the world gives relief to the mind of the dying poet. In contrast to his other poems that end with ideas on eternity or the word "immortality," Davy's series of poems finishes with a poem that confronts the decay of the body as he approaches the end of his life. In the final line, Davy deletes "of immortality," and inserts and underlines "above mortality" (14e 13–4 line 30). He concludes the poem with the desire to not experience death, but rather to ruminate on what lies "above" or beyond death.

In my chapter, I have revealed that Davy's poems in notebook 14e search for the wholeness of the self and that he was sceptical of Christian doctrine. Despite physical decay, failings in his career, and the passing of spring-like youth; Davy posits that the mind is reassuringly derived from the infinitely eternal and powerful natural world, which suggests his commitment to a Platonic conception of the afterlife. Although Davy's search for a wholeness of the self resulted in two publications *Salmonia* and *Consolations* that philosophise on the history of the earth, different religious doctrines, and immortality, his notebook 14e poems foreshadow these published texts. This search for wholeness through his poems is evident in a letter to Jane on 20 April 1828 during his final trip to the Continent. Davy first assured her that his "spirits are improved" and hoped "to try the full effect of warm bathing" at the Baths of Ischel in Austria. He also notified her that in "Salmon fishing" he would like the insertion of "Western" next to

“Christian World,” a change that would later appear in the second edition of *Salmonia* (DL).<sup>267</sup> While editing his penultimate philosophical text, Davy also described another book:

Now for a little matter touching my book[,] on reading the poems with care I wish them omitted entirely[.] passages from them may serve for titles pieces in another edition: but they are not to my present taste which is very fastidious. & I find even in the poem on the Vandalis many faults.

Most likely referring to *Consolations* that he was writing during this time, Davy changed his mind about including his poems, including “Vandalis” composed in 1825 that is in notebook 14e (122). This poem recalls Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” since Davy describes his revisiting to a natural landscape after twenty years and recalls his experiences of “a happy summers [sic] day” to suggest that loss of that moment (3). Although Davy does not include his poems in his *Consolations*, and while we may not be able to find out what the other poems that he referred to in his letter to Jane are, the letter serves to remind us that at least one poem in notebook 14e, like *Salmonia* and *Consolations*, played a part for Davy seeking to reunify his life and philosophies into a single body of work.

---

<sup>267</sup> See Davy, *Salmonia* 155.

## CONCLUSION

My thesis has demonstrated that in his published and manuscript poetry, Davy responds to and redeploys a range of literary and scientific discourses that also influenced both Romantic poetry and science. By investigating for the first time Davy's poetry and its relation to his career and Romantic-period writing, there are two aspects to my thesis. Firstly, I have shown that Davy's understanding of different aspects of natural philosophy governs his redeployment of scientific and medical ideas in his poetry. Secondly, I have shown that to examine Davy's poetry requires a reconsideration of the range of Romantic literary writing and the ideas that influenced these. Although Davy's poetry remained largely unpublished in his lifetime, it can be held to represent the interrelations between complex literary and scientific ideas in the Romantic period.

In order to examine Davy's manuscript poems, of which there are at least one hundred and sixty, I have transcribed, selected and examined his poems in different groups, such as by their textual proximity, and compared these groups to specific changes in Davy's life, career and personal philosophies. Beginning with his first published poems in the *Annual Anthology* in 1799 and 1800, Chapter One discussed the literary and scientific ideas in these poems, which his Bristol social circle recognised, presenting Davy as Cornish and a knowledgeable natural philosopher intensely connected to the natural world. In these poems, Davy brought together his knowledge of Longinus's, Burke's and Kant's concepts of the sublime, Brown's and Hartley's physiological theories on the connections between the body and the mind, and Cornish history and geology. It was in this period of Davy's life that he received appreciative comments on his poetry from his literary friends Southey and Coleridge. Though Davy's published poetry showed his

confidence in celebrating the physically and mentally exhilarating effects of poetry and natural philosophy, his manuscript poetry demonstrates his difficulty in reconciling different literary and scientific concepts into verse. Chapter Two explored Davy's manuscript poetry composed during this period, arguing that Davy sought to present the sublime as both physiological and transcendent when combining Spinosist philosophy, Orientalist ideas, different concepts of the sublime, and his knowledge of medicine during his research on factitious airs.

These two chapters discuss poems that provide an insight into Davy's relationships with contemporary literary writers. The poems reveal that he sought to emulate the epic-writer Southey in "Moses," and that the poem "The Spinosist" on Spinosism and Platonism was influenced and read by Coleridge. However, it is evident that Davy did not merely emulate these poets. He also presents experiences of the sublime using ideas from his medical work at the Pneumatic Institute. These years of poetical collaboration and inspiration at Bristol were formative for Davy's poetry given that he redrafted and revised "The Spinosist" for publication in 1823 and sections of his epic "Moses" in his 1827 notebook. He also continued to write poetry in his personal notebooks that re-appropriates ideas that can be found in the writings of his friends and acquaintances, such as in Charlotte Smith's lyrics, as discussed in Chapter Three.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, worried that Davy's new role in conservative circles would change him when he left Bristol in 1801, Southey disparagingly remarked on Davy's lack of patriotism in his letter to Edith Southey on 25 September 1813 that he "ought not have" asked for special permission to travel to France during the Napoleonic Wars (SL 2308). Southey's observation of a change in Davy, in some ways, can be found in his poetry, which came to be suffused with the same rhetoric for natural philosophy that he expounded

during his public lectures and in his chemical research at the Royal Institution in London. In the third chapter, Davy's poems composed after leaving Bristol for London were examined to illustrate the ways in which Davy also wrote emotional and personal lyrics on a single specific, feminine figure, Anna Beddoes. Two of the poems on Anna demonstrate Davy's growing belief in the "master law" of reason of the mind, which redeploys his assertive rhetoric on the role of chemistry in his lectures at the Royal Institution ("To ~~Anna~~—Maria B."; 13g 160 line 12). A comparison between his lectures and the lyric, as epitomised by Smith's poems and Wordsworth's Lucy poems, first demonstrated the commonalities between these two forms of writing. However, in comparing these to Davy's more emotive lyric, "Vauxhall," I explained that he experimented with the lyric by also composing a poem that conveyed his mourning for Anna's presence. In London, Davy continued to write poems that were influenced by Wordsworth's Lucy poems and "Tintern Abbey," as well as the emotive yet self-conscious lyric personas of Smith's sonnets.

As Chapter Four revealed, Davy's poetry during his first two trips through the Continent examines the harmonies in nature, where the first series of poems drew upon his rhetoric in his geology lectures from 1805. Although Davy's knowledge of geology needs to be further explored by historians of science, Davy's belief in observation, imagination and analogy as methodological guides for a geologist informs his presentation of the foreign natural landscapes in his poetry in 1813 and 1814. Davy's Baths of Lucca poems written during his second tour reemphasises that, like his lyrics on Anna, Davy continued to compose personal and hesitant poems on the internal workings of the mind and body. Finally in Chapter Five, the decision to place Davy's verses in groups is again confirmed by Davy's own collection of poems in a single notebook, bringing together verses on different aspects of Davy's life and new poems on his Platonic philosophy of an afterlife,

tempered with his scepticism of Christian doctrine. Davy's literary and philosophical efforts in his final years, like his previous poems, are comparable to the struggles of his literary contemporaries, such as Coleridge, who sought to blend his faith in a personal God, natural theology and a Kantian scepticism of divine symbolism in nature.

Having examined Davy's published and manuscript poems in groups, this thesis demonstrated their diversity as responses to and reflections upon complex Romantic literary and scientific ideas. Grouping Davy's poetry is useful given that it avoids a monolithic view of "Romanticism," of Davy's career, and of Romantic-period writing. The approach of this thesis was to draw upon criticism that has already revealed the range and development of Romantic poetry, such as Coleridge's works. Brice, Stokes and Class have shown the shifts in Coleridge's philosophical thinking, including the differences between his published poetry and manuscript works that showed "uncertainty and doubt" on his newfound acceptance of Christian orthodoxy from 1813 (Brice 9). I situate Davy as a Romantic writer responding to his unorthodox independent scheme of education, medical career, chemical research and as a public lecturer. Davy's knowledge of scientific and literary concepts that is apparent in his poetry and that influenced each other, such as the sublime and irritability, illustrates the diversity of Romantic literary writing. By exploring Davy's poetry alongside literature that now defines Romanticism and his scientific research and publications, which shaped the role of chemistry in the Romantic period, it is hoped that this thesis can give a more holistic understanding of the range of writings that shared ideas and influenced each other in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Davy's poems, largely unpublished in his lifetime and neglected in modern criticism, also give a more nuanced interpretation of his life and career, which has

so far been understood through the lens of his public role as a chemist. His poems reveal his perspective, comparable to that of his Romantic literary contemporaries such as Wordsworth, in the conviction that humanity can perceive the truths in nature, whether this be the natural laws that control a scene, or the origins of human intellect. While Davy read the work of contemporary poets who were concerned with the limitations of human perception, he also held an optimistic view of the relationship between the capability of human intellect and the power of the natural world. This confidence was presumably informed by his research in natural philosophy that could demonstrate the powerful position of a reasoned perspective and when his experiments could result in a new understanding of the natural world. With the great number of poems from his teenage years and throughout his life, presumably kept by Davy to aid his posthumous reputation, we can rehabilitate Davy's writings to understand him as a unique figure who contributed to the interdisciplinary culture of the Romantic period.

## APPENDIX

### Explanation of Editorial Symbols

<word>	A later insertion by Davy or his contemporaries
[word]	A reading editorially supplied
[*]	An illegible word
[*]	An illegible word crossed out

As I describe in my chapters, other crossings-out, dashes and devices are either by Davy, his amanuensis or John Davy.

### Appendix 1

#### Appendix 1a

#### “Bright bursting thro the awful veil of Night” (RI MS HD 13f 67–8)

Bright bursting thro the awful veil of Night.  
 The Lunar Beams upon the Ocean play;  
 The Watry Billows shine with trembling light  
 Where the swift Breezes skim along the sea

— —

The Glimmering stars in yon Etherial ~~sky~~ plain  
 Grow pale & fade before the lucid beams  
 Save where fair beams shining oer the Main  
 With paler light & fainter Radiance gleams

— —

Now contemplation rules the lofty Mind  
 And bids the Soul resume her native fires  
 No longer to her little Earth confin'd  
 To the high heavenly regions she aspires.—

#### Appendix 1b

#### “Bright beaming thro’ the awful veil of Night” (RI MS HD 13f 139)

Bright beaming thro’ the awful veil of Night  
 The Lunar beams upon the Ocean play  
 The Watry billows shine with trembling light  
 Where the swift breeze skim along the sea  
 The Glimmering stars in yon Etherial Sky  
 Grow pale & fade before the Lucid beams  
 Save where fair Venus shining over the Main  
 With paler light & fainter Radiance Gleams.  
~~The Moon shines~~ slumbers on Old Michaels Steep  
~~And gilds his Mossy~~ <ivied> ~~Rocks & ivied~~ Towers.  
 Old Michael rising from the briny deep.  
 Fair Peace Harmony & beauty reign <are displaced> supreme.  
 Oer Natures face who softly seems to sleep.  
 In all Her Grandeur all Her charms assay’d

Upon the placid Bosom of the Deep.  
 All but the troubled Mind of Restless Man  
 Tis lulld in silent & in soft repose.  
~~Now from the West along the~~

### Appendix 1c

#### “Thou ocean dark & terrible in storms” (RI MS HD 13d 1–3)

Thou ocean dark & terrible in storms  
 My eye is closed upon thee, & I view  
 The light of other days, the sunbeams <dance>  
 Upon thy waves: the purple cloud of morn  
 Hang oer thy rocks resplendent.

~~The days of youth  
 Crowd rapid in my mind & with them bring  
 The varying scenes of rapture & delight  
 Scenes beloved  
 Scenes of youth, awakened into life  
 What varying thoughts what mingled feeling  
 crowd.~~

Within my throbbing breast  
 Ye have awakened rapture. ~~Many days  
 Of storms & sunshine~~ Round me crowd  
 Tumultuous passions, all the joys & cares  
 Of infancy. The glittering dreams of youth  
 Ambitions & energie.—

Here my eyes  
 First opened on the daylight. [\*] my ears  
 First heard the gently soothing sounds  
 of love  
 Here first a mothers care ~~attuned my  
 life~~ <awoke my sense>.—  
 To ~~pleasure~~ <mild enjoyment>  
 Here first I wood thee

Here first I wood thee Nature  
 in the forms  
 Of majesty & freedom & thy charms  
 Soft mingling with the sports of infancy  
 Its kindling social passions & its wants  
 Intense & craving kindled into one  
 Supreme emotions. ~~Hence arose to life  
 Sublimest thoughts a living energy~~  
 Hence awoke to life  
~~The sense of beauty~~  
 sublimest thoughts a living energy.  
 That still within my bosom ~~throbs~~ <slows> & still  
 Its objects varying has impelled my mind  
 To various action.

~~Many days are past  
 Since last my wet eyes saw the~~

~~Moonbeams gild Beloved since  
Thy whitely foaming waves~~

And I am attuned.

Here my opening mind.—

~~First~~ In the mingled <expressive> harmony of voice  
And speaking countenance; ~~expressive~~ <astonished> read  
Another's thoughts.—

---

~~Ambitious then~~

~~Confiding in my powers I w~~

Many days

Are past O scene beloved scene last my eyes

Many days are past, beloved scene

Since last my —

Many days are past

Beloved scene since last my wet eyes saw

The moonbeams gild thy whitely foaming waves.

Ambitious then confiding in her powers

Spurning her prison onward flew my soul

To mingle with her kindred In the breeze

That wafts upon its wings futurity

To hear the voice of praise.—

And Not in vain

Have those high hopes existed ~~not in vain~~

Not in vain

~~Amidst the change of life my soul~~

~~Has — a~~

~~im'd~~

The dew of labor has oppressed my brow

On which the rose of pleasure never glowd.

For I have tasted of that sacred stream

Here thro' the trembling moonshine of the grove.

My earliest lays were wafted by the breeze

And here my kindling spirit learnt to trace

The mystic laws from whose high energy

The moving atoms in eternal change

Still rise in animation.—



The eternal link of thoughts where form  
 resolves  
 Have ever acted & are acting still.—  
 Whilst age round age & worlds-round  
 worlds-resolves.—

2 Linked to the whole the human mind  
 displays  
 1 No sameness & no <deep> identity ~~divine~~  
 4 <&> Changeful as [\*] the surface of the  
 seas

3 Impressible as is the ~~blue~~-[\*] moving sky  
 To scattered thoughts some unknown laws  
 are given

By which they join & move in  
 circling life.—  
 Being of aggregate the power of  
 the love.

Gives it ~~the life~~ <the> joy of moments  
 , bids it rise.

In the wild forms of mortal things  
 to move  
 Fixd to the earth below the  
 eternal skies.—

[\*]<To> breath <the> ether; & to feel the  
 forms

Of orb'd beauty through its organs  
 thrill

To press the limbs of life with  
 rapture warm  
 And drink of transport from  
 a living rill.—

To view the heavens with ~~solar~~<morning>  
 radiance ~~white~~ bright  
 Majestic mingling with ~~still~~<the>  
~~blue sea-ocean blue~~.—

-filled by the a thousand silver  
 streams

& played upon by ten thousand  
 cloudless breezes

To view the ~~meadows~~<forests> green  
 the mountains white

The peopled plains of rich  
 & varying<ed> hue.—

To feel the social flame to give  
 to man

The thousand signs of ~~kindling~~<burning> energy,  
 The nothingness of human words to scan  
 The nothingness of human <things> [\*] to  
 fly.—

To live in forests mingled with  
~~the whole~~  
 Of natures forms to ~~die beneath~~  
 [\*] feel the breezes play  
 O'er the parched ~~forehead~~-<brow> to see  
 the planets roll.

oer their grey head their life  
 diffusing ray  
 To die in agony & In many days  
 To give to Nature all her  
 stolen powers  
 Etherial fire to feed the solar  
 rays  
 Etherial dew to feed the  
 earth in showers.

---

### Appendix 2c

#### “My eye is wet with tears” (RI MS HD 13c 139–6)

My eye is wet with tears  
 For I see the white stones  
 That are covered with names —  
 The stone of my forefathers  
 graves.—

---

No grass grows upon them  
 For deep in the earth  
 In darkness & silence the organs  
 of life  
 To their primitive atoms return

---

Through ages their ~~air has~~  
 <Has> been moist with their blood  
 Through ages the seeds of  
 the thistle has fed  
 On what was once motion & ~~life~~-<form>

---

The white cloud that floats  
 through the heavens  
 Is pregnant with ~~what~~  
 that which was life  
 And the moon beams  
 that whiten it came  
 From the breath & the spirit  
 of man.—

---

Thoughts roll not beneath  
 the dust.—  
 No feeling is in the

cold grave.—  
 Neither thought nor feeling  
 can die —  
 They have leaped to other  
 worlds —  
 They are far above the skies.  
 They kindle in the stars  
 They dance in the light of  
                   suns.  
 <Or> They live in the comets  
                   white haze

~~Or far beyond visible  
 things—~~

~~They are mingled with  
 unknown life.—~~

These poor remains of the  
 frame  
 Were the source of the  
                   organs of flesh  
 That feel the controul of  
 my will  
 That are active & mighty  
 in me —

They gave to my body  
~~matter~~ form  
 Is there ~~might~~ <is nought> in your  
 dying ~~forms~~ limbs  
 That gave my spirit  
~~energy~~ life —

~~Was~~ The blood that  
 rolled through  
~~your~~ <their> veins —  
 Of infant <Was the> germ of my  
 <bodily> power —

~~—~~  
 Their spirits gave me no germ  
 of kindling energy.—

## **Appendix 2d** **“Outline” (RI MS HD 13c 17, 19–21)**

— Book 1st —

Zipporah & the six other daughters of Jethro <priest>  
 <Of> Midian in watering their fathers flock are  
 insulted by some Shepherds Moses protects

them & assists them in watering their  
flocks they take him to their fathers  
house—description of Pastoral scenery—  
Of the patriarchal manners Jethro a  
Man of Energy receives Moses with  
affection —

## 2

Moses relates his history of his  
the great festival of the God of  
nature customs of the midianites  
Moonlight scene & reflections of  
Jethro on the system of the  
Universe —  
History of Moses. His earliest  
impressions connected with Pharaoh  
Daughter: His knowledge of his  
family. &c .—

3 Growing love of Moses & Zipporah  
Moses agrees to stay with Jethro  
their happy pastoral life.—  
Moses in wandering in the desert  
falls down the cataract meets  
with Miraim, she tells him of  
a light of glory surrounding his  
body believes himself under  
the immediate inspiration of  
the deity, His dreams. Theory  
of Jethro.—He resolves to  
return to Egypt.—

4. ~~Opens with his speech to~~  
Pharaoh

Meets Aaron sees his mother  
secret confid-conference at  
the Pyramids. Goes & speaks  
to Pharaoh who was the  
companion of his youth  
Jacobinical sentiments pharaoh  
calls the magicians / reference  
to these in Lf: visits  
Pharaohs Daughter she supplicates  
him—the plagues—  
lamentation for the death  
of the first born —

5 March through the  
desert, ~~Moses~~-miraculous appearance  
of the son of god destruction  
of pharaoh & his army  
Moses's song

## Amalek overcome

6 Meeting of Jethro his  
counsels..

institution of laws. Battle  
with the ~~beribites~~ communion  
with god on Mount  
Sinai.—end—  
Mosaic acc<sup>t</sup> of creation

— Moses—A great but enthusiastic man

— Zipporah—His superior in reasoning  
powers & in sensibility

Pharoah A despot.—

— Jethro—a Wonder a Philosophic priest

Joshua.—A Hero i.e. a murderer

[\*]

Miriam the prophetess the  
sister in law of Aaron —

A wonderful woman.—

— Amalek

miriam —

Amalek conquered & ~~Mo-se-s's-son-g~~

**Appendix 2e**

**“The sun had scattered from the midst of heaven” (RI MS HD 13c 17)**

—Moses—

Book I

[\*]

The sun had scattered from the midst of heaven

Over the desert skirts his parching light

Beneath the green palms now ~~the patient sheep~~

whose shading leaves

Waved to the mountain breeze,

the thirsty sheep

Reposed & watchful as the ~~day flees round~~ <loud & shrilling sound>

~~Was heard and their warm nostrils~~ <Approached of the brown [\*], hid>

~~beneath the~~

soil

their parched lips

~~The mossy soil~~

beneath the mossy soil.—

**Appendix 2f**

**“She led the way the maiden light of foot” (RI MS HD 13c 24–6)**

She led the way the maiden light of foot

~~From the burning light of heaven sequestered~~

They passed through palm groves

from the burning light



**Appendix 2g****“Now to the wanderers dull and tearful eye” (RI MS HD 13c 148–5)**

Now to the wanderers dull and tearful eye  
 Oft turned towards the blue & misty Nile  
 The unfinished piles shone dimly visible  
 In the last rays of evening, His tired feet  
 Moved on so wearily that scarce the sound  
 Of life or motion shook the parched air  
~~Suspended motionless above the sands~~  
 He long had travelled. For the fear of death  
 And rapid vengeance served his youthful

limbs

No pleasant feelings cheered him

for the thoughts

The renovated thoughts of former days rose in  
 their dimness—But they mingled  
 not with the dark unknown  
 future. Still He travelled till  
 before him spread the mighty  
 desert to its skirted bounds  
 where the green verdure grew  
 he bent his steps whilst above  
 him rolled diffusive of creative light  
 in their immeasurable rounds  
 the glorious stars.—

To him no more the mighty past arose  
 Majestic with its splendid images  
 No more to him the obscurity of time  
 was bright & splendid  
 Weary & faint despair was on his mind  
 A vacancy of thought, a painful listlessness  
 Such as the fever worn wretch  
 —who long—  
 In agony, & felt the blood roll  
 burning through his Veins

Through the high palms the trembling moon  
 beams shone

And pleasant o'er the wanderers <burning cheeks> passed  
 the cool breeze

of evening moist with dews.—

Upon his ear fatigued by silentness  
 Rushed the wild murmurings of a  
 mountain stream.—

Whose waters sparkling with the  
 yellow light <ray> rolled through

~~Rolled through dark woods~~

gave life & beauty to a thousand  
 flowers





## Appendix 3

### Appendix 3a

**“To Anna-Maria B.” (RI MS HD 13g 160–56)**

To Anna-Maria B.

When in lifes first golden morn  
I left my stormy native shore  
My pathway was without a thorn  
With roses it seemed covered o'er.

Ambition thrilled within my brest  
My heart with feverish hope beat high  
Hope alone disturbed my rest  
Hope only bade me heave a sigh.

In pride of untried power, my mind  
A visionary empire saw.  
A world in which it hoped to find  
Its own high strength a master law.

Its love was wild its friendship free  
Its passions changeful as the light  
That on an aprils day you see  
Changeful and yet ever bright.

Years of pain have passed away  
Its former lineaments are gone  
Hope gives it not a gentler lay  
Ambition rules it not alone.

The forms of Holy truth severe  
Are the fair thoughts with which it glows  
And if it ever feels a tear  
That tear in purest passions flows

Fled is its anguish and its joys  
Is such as reason may approve  
No storming its quietness destroy  
Yet it is ever warm with Love.

Its pleasures fate & nature give  
And fate and nature will not fly  
It Hopes in usefulness to live  
In dreams of endless bliss to die.

Written in the coach Dec. 25  
1803 Passing from Bath to Bristol

**Appendix 3b**  
**“To Anna Maria B.” (RI MS HD 13g 166–4)**

To Anna Maria B.

Think not that I forget the days  
 When first through rough unhaunted ways  
 We moved along the mountains side  
 Where Avon meets the Severn tide  
 When in the spring of youthful thought  
 The Hours of Confidence we caught  
 And natures children free and wild  
 Rejoiced, or grieved, or frowned or smil’d  
 As wayward fancy charmed to move  
 Our minds to hope, or fear, or love.—

Since that time of transient pleasure  
 Eight long years have filled their measure  
 And scenes and objects grand and new  
 Have crowded on my dazzled view  
 Visions of beauty, types of heaven  
 Unasked for kindness freely given  
 Art!—Nature, in their noblest dress  
 the City and the wilderness.  
 The world in all its varying forms  
 Contentments calms, Ambitions storms. — —

Yet still in such a busy scene  
 And such a period passed between  
 The recollections never die  
 Of our early sympathy  
 And in the good that warms my heart  
 Your friendship bears a living part,  
 With many a thought & feeling twined.  
 of influence healthy, noble kind,  
 Virtues from your example taught,  
 And without saws or precept taught. — — — —

The proof, this tranquil moment gives  
 How vivid the remembrance lives  
 For e’en in Natures forms, I see  
 Some strong memor<i>als of thee.  
 The autumnal foliage of the wood  
 The tranquil flowing of the flood  
 The down with purple heath oer spread  
 The awful Cliffs gigantic head,  
 The moonbeam in the azure sky  
 Are blended with thy memory. — — — —

Glenarm—august 1806 by  
 Moonlight a view of the Cliffs & Sea —

**Appendix 3c**  
**“Vauxhall” (RI MS HD 15e 1–4)**

Vauxhall

The light was glimmering through the trees  
 As raised by magic power  
 And balmy was the waning breeze  
 And full of hope the hour.

—

Cloathd in loveliness by pleasure  
 Before me lightly flew  
 In jocund pace, to jocund measure  
 A gay & motley crew

Among them forms of beauty strayd  
 Fair as the morning beams  
 And in such fairy tints arrayed  
 As warm the Poets dreams

With flowing locks that rested free  
 Upon the soft & fragrant air  
 With sweetest smiles of Harmony  
 And bosoms heaving full & fair

No rapture kindled in my breast  
 Unmoved the scene I saw  
 From fountains of delusive Art  
 No streams of natural love can flow

By me unnoticed passed the dream  
 Of Midnight revelry  
 As passes the first twilight gleam  
 Oer the half closed sleepy eye.

—

Away in Quietness I shall  
 To seek a soul to Nature dear  
 And if a transient joy I felt  
 It were that Anna was not there

## Appendix 4

### Appendix 4a

#### “Mont Blanc” (RI MS HD 14i 2)

Mont Blanc 2  
January 5<sup>th</sup> 1814. 4 o'clock. In the Carriage

With joy I view thee, bathed in purple light  
 Whilst all around is dark, With joy I see  
 Thee rising from thy sea of pitchy clouds  
 Into the middle heaven,  
 As if a temple to th'eternal rais'd  
 By all the earth; framed of the pillar'd rock  
 And canopied with everlasting snow,  
 That lovely river rolling at my feet  
 Its bright green waves, & winding midst the rocks  
 Brown in their winters foliage, gain'd from thee  
 Its flood of waters; and through a devious <course> maze  
 Though it has lav'd the fertile plains, & wash'd  
 The cities walls, and mingled with the streams  
 Of lowland origin, yet still preserves  
 Its native character of mountain strength,  
 Its colour, and its motion. Such are those  
 Amongst the generations of mankind,  
 To whom the stream of thought descends from heaven  
 With all the force of reason, and the power  
 Of sacred genius. Through the world they pass  
 Still uncorrupted; and on what they take  
 From social life, bestow a character,  
 Of dignity: Greater they become,  
 But never lose their native purity.

### Appendix 4b

#### “The Canigou” (RI MS HD 14i 5–6)

THE CANIGON<U> Canigou oriental Pyrenees  
 January 26<sup>th</sup>  
 Morning

In th' eastern sky the stars their lustre loose  
 In more diffused light as if their orbs  
 Had melted into air and formed the day  
 Above the heavens receive a brighter tint  
 Of purest azure & beneath they glow  
 With lovely tints which every instant change  
 More purple & more orange and a gleam  
 Of golden light pours on the tranquil main  
 I cast my eyes upon the western coast  
 And low<o!> thy giant form O Canigou!  
 As if a new creation of the day

Framed of the morning cloud for ever fixed  
 And gilded by th'expiring morning star  
 So bright thy glittering snows appear they seem  
 To form another dawn. Thy base is dark  
 Rising through mists that mingle with the wave

### Noon

The orb of light its flood of lustre pours From  
 the mid heavens upon the tranquil sea  
 Without a tide whose silver mirror spreads  
 Reflecting forms of mountain majesty  
 Along th'Iberian coast & more remote  
 In gentle agitation feels the breeze  
 That to its deep & lovely azure gives  
 The life of motion All the morning mists  
 Have vanished & the midday sun beams sleep  
 Upon thy snows or glitter where the streams  
 They feed with crystals waters pour in foam  
 [\*][\*] Amidst thy dark deep glens: Thy shaggy woods  
 Where the bright pine & darker cork trees blend  
 Their varied foliage form a boundary  
 Where winter seems to mingle with the spring  
 And lower still the Olive tree appears  
 The work of culture & the leafless vine  
 And the green meadow where the torrents sleep  
 Or moved-obedient to the wants of man.  
 Nature in savage wildness mountain strength  
 Breaths in one picture with the forms of art  
 And all that stamp the social character  
 A cities walls majestically rise  
 The guardian of a realm where sounds of war  
 Harm the ear Along the sandy shore  
 The path the Carthaginian trod appears  
 When from the Pyrenees his veterans pour'd  
 To try the strength of Rome & shed profuse  
 Her patriot blood at Canna, On the wave  
 Triumphant ride the fleets of Oceans Queen  
 My heart throbs quicker & a healthful glow  
 Fills all my bosom Albion thee I hail  
 Mother of hero's mighty in thy strength  
 Deliverer. From thee the fire proceeds  
Withering the tyrant Not a fire alone  
Of war destructive but a living light  
Of honor glory & security  
A light of Science liberty & peace. [*underlined with pencil*]

### Evening

A moment past, the sky was bright & clear  
 But now a mist obscures the ambient air;  
 The mist becomes a cloud which gathers round





It breathes profound in lovers sighs  
 Dove like upon the dark abyss  
 Of Life it rests & never dies.

From it the poets glories rise  
 Which pass beyond our human being  
 To things of other worlds & skies  
 Carrying the prophets gift of seeing.

By it the ~~ruddy~~<clotted> blood that stains  
 The Hero's laurels glows-like flame  
 Or kindles in the warriors veins  
 The never dying love of fame.

In it the statesman rules & lives  
 And the low multitude controuls  
 Fixed to the impulse that he gives  
 As the firm earth around its poles.

This magic ~~life~~<light> of life is thine  
 And what if given in excess?  
 It is excess of fire divine  
 Which reason always can repress.

Let not this gift which is from heaven  
 Shine as a meteors transient light  
 Or as the lightnings flashes given  
 Amidst the gloom to pain our sight.

Let it on friendships tranquil hours  
 A stedfast mayday sunshine beam  
 Marking a field of fruits & flowers  
 Such as the Bards elisian dream.

To kindness proferred kindness give  
 And fresher will the feeling flow  
 Affections offered gifts receive  
 And still more precious gifts bestow.

Failings forget & let the beam  
 Of charity on all be cast  
 And think that life's quick troubled stream  
 To made more troubled by the blast.—

When touched by timid fingers weak  
 Throw that Affection's like the rose  
 It wounds but press its thorns they break  
 And all its odour sweeter flows.

When the thunder cloud is darkest  
 It is nearest to its fall

And the gloom thou sadly markest  
To no inmate of thy soul.

Passions <beams> rays when too centered  
Raise a tempest in the mind  
But by rain & clouds attempered  
They leave fertility behind.

The torrent roaring from the moun-  
tain  
Which ravages a hundred fields  
Conducted tranquil from its fountain  
Bloom freshness, verdure, plenty yields.  
H. D.



**Appendix 5c**  
**“Copenhagen” (RI MS HD 14e 100)**

Whatever burns, consumes: Ashes remains.  
 And though in beauty and in loveliness,  
 And infinite variety of forms, <Beings>  
 The primitive substance <Matter> shone; their relics sad  
 Have the same pale and melancholy hue.  
 Such are the traits strong passions leave behind;  
 Consumers of the mind and of the form.  
 The Auburn, flaxen, and the ebon hair  
 Take the same hoary hue. The blooming cheek  
 Of beauty, the bronzed ~~brow~~ <brow> of manly vigour <strength>  
 And <the> smooth front of Wisdom, sadly show  
 The same deep furrows. Intellect alone  
 Does not so quickly waste itself; and like  
 That <tranquil> light which in the ocean springs ~~of life~~  
 When living myriads in succession quick  
 Sport in the wave it ~~lasts~~ <lives>; and in the storm  
 And change of things appears more ~~brilliant~~ beautiful  
 Triumphant oer the elements.

**Appendix 5d**  
**“On the Bubbles” (RI MS HD 14e 182–0)**

Dec 1823  
On the Bubbles  
 This is the age for humbug &  
 cant  
 Whoever proposes that nothing  
 can work  
 We have [\*] now for  
 All [\*] sorts of things  
 From cheese & milk making  
     up to steam wings  
 We ~~make~~ <forge> gold out of [\*]  
 a wonderful story  
 And Bromeeggan loses her gilding  
     & glory.  
 Gold is shortly to come from  
     the mexican works  
 In such plenty that no  
 one will use silver forks.  
 Our plate will be [\*] into  
~~pans~~ saucepans & kettles.  
 We shall laugh at the ~~fools~~  
 sages who hoarded their metals  
 We have copper that will not  
 dissolve in the sea.  
 The patent secures it quite  
 from decay



countenance  
 Thrown its chastened & more ~~mellow~~  
 tranquil tints  
 And not in vain has given thy  
 raven looks  
 Some hues of wisdom in their silver  
 light  
 Such as well may suit & harmonise  
 Not [~~^~~] <with the> fragrant unguents of  
 the south  
 Nor the rich <roses> ~~myrtle~~ ~~risen~~ or  
 [~~^~~][~~^~~] the myrtle  
 Which pleasures sons assume  
 But rather with the darker  
 laurel crown  
 In which some purple amaranths  
 are twined.  
 The flowers & leaves of immortality  
~~And~~ which may prepare thee for  
 immortal palms  
 And Christian songs of triumph.—

#### Appendix 5f

#### “On the death of Lord Byron” (RI MS HD 14e 162–1)

On the death of Lord Byron  
 composed at Westhill in the  
 great storm Nov. 1824

1

Gone is the Bard, who like a powerful  
 spirit  
 A beautiful but fallen child of light  
 Of fiery seraphs the aspiring peer  
 Seemed fitted by his return to inherit  
 A wilder state than that the genial  
 strife  
 Of mighty Elements have given our sphere  
 Fixd in a stated round its course to  
 run

A chained slave around the master sun

2

Of some great comet He might well  
 have been  
 The habitant, that through the mighty  
 space  
 Of kindling ether rolls, now visiting  
 Our ~~little world~~ glorious sun. By wondering myriads  
 seen  
 Of planetary beings. Then in rapid  
 race  
 Vying with light in swiftness like a



In this our twilight  
 Shall distinctly see what  
 we imagine  
 And but gladly hope  
 The world immutable in which  
 alone  
 Wisdom is found, the life  
 & light of things  
 The breath divine creating  
 power divine  
 The One of which the human  
 intellect  
 Is but a type as feeble  
                   as that image  
 Of the bright sun, seen on  
                   the bursting wave  
 Bright but without distinctness  
 [\*] yet ~~imaging~~—<in passing showing> its glorious  
~~origin~~—& eternal source.—>

March 18—27  
 Ra.

**Appendix 5i**  
**“Nought do we truly know of Man” (RI MS HD 14e 176–5)**

Nought do we truly know of Man  
 Of Nature. Of their birth & origin  
 And distances & end yet do we see  
 Though dimly, in the constant laws  
   of things  
 An [\*]—an intelligence, a power  
 Which is the principle of life &  
   thought  
 Nay life itself e’en as in our own  
   minds  
 There is a one presiding principle  
 Which for the body acts. E’en so in  
   this  
 The visible universe, a spirit moves  
 Omnipotent.  
 And in the birth of Man &  
 in his history.  
 There is destiny [\*] forth  
 a knowledge of futurity.  
 Which is to us omniscience  
 All [\*] hopes too possess  
 All that is necessary for [\*] [\*]  
 Not gained by long experience  
   in the path  
 The painful paths of practice











Nothing is lost. The etherial fire  
Which from the farthest star descends  
Through the immensity of space,  
Its course, by worlds attractive bends

To reach the earth. The eternal laws  
Preserve one glorious wise design;  
Order amidst confusion flows  
And all the system is divine.

If matter cannot be destroyed,  
The living mind can never die:  
If een creative when alloyed,  
How sure its immortality.

Then think that intellectual light  
Thou loveds't on earth is burning still  
Its lustre pure and more bright,  
Obscure no more by mortal will.

The things most glorious on the earth  
Though transient & short lived they seem;  
Have yet a source of heavenly birth  
Immortal: not a fleeting dream.

The lovely changeful light of even  
The fading gleams of morning skies;  
The transient rainbow tints of heaven,  
From the eternal sun arise.

**Appendix 5r**  
**“Oh, let the breeze” (RI MS HD 14e 56)**

Oh, let the breeze

Oh, let the breeze play upon my brow  
Upon some wood clad hill  
And let a gentle stream beneath me flow,  
A gently murmuring rill.

There let me find with new born pleasure  
The most exalted human pleasure;  
Let health my feeble body bless,  
Health in all her loveliness!

There let recovery come  
To fix my doubtful doom;  
And let me, like the sportive boy,  
Feel life an everflowing will of Joy!

Written at the end of a fever which lasted 40 days

### Appendix 5s

#### **"The effect of tears in calming the mind" (RI MS HD 14e 89–3)**

The effect of tears in calming the mind

Dark was her front whilst she wildly  
[\*]

E'er the full tear began to flow  
Thus the cloud is formed  
On the mountains dark brow  
E'er the melting of its Alpine snow  
E'er the torrent begins to fall below

—  
But the winds are hushed as the rain  
descends  
pours down

And the mists disappear  
And [\*] <Nature> dark & angry [\*]  
Begins to shine forth in sunshine  
clear  
So her anger was soaked & softened her face  
~~And softened her voice~~  
As she felt the balm of the healing  
tear.

—  
Fair as those hills in which the brightest  
green  
And purple of the heath are so intensely [\*]  
Not scarce the [\*] [\*] is seen  
In Nature boundaries are rarely fixed  
And never in the beautiful. No [\*]  
So seem to mingle with the sombre sky  
[\*] [\*] o'er hills in [\*] far away  
[\*] in the [\*] of [\*] [\*] seem to die

### Appendix 5t

#### **"Reposing his gray silvery hairs" (RI MS HD 14e 77–6)**

Reposing his gray silvery hairs  
Upon a damsels knees Who is  
herself placing her bright locks  
On a wondrous lyre but with  
fingers  
Red [\*] searched through her  
auburn locks  
All seeking those [\*] used [\*]  
That breed in lofty heads.  
Yet deem not this as sole occupation  
Or low or mean.



And like <a living> power <[\*]> & divine  
Gives to my wearied bosom calm relief  
And seen from <highest> heaven itself to shine

## LIST OF WORKS CITED

### ARCHIVES

[Beddoes, Anna]. "When all around grew dear and dark." Poem to Humphry Davy.

N.d. RI MS HD 26H/8. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

Beddoes, Anna. "How oft the little sportive child." Poem to Humphry Davy. 26

December 1804. RI MS HD 26H/9. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

---. "Lost scenes by thee, so sweetly traced." Letter and poem to Humphry Davy.

26 December 1806. RI MS HD 26/10. Royal Institution of Great Britain,  
London.

Bristol Library Society Register. 1799. B7467. Bristol Central Library, Bristol.

---. 1799-1800. B7468. Bristol Central Library, Bristol.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Letter to Davy. 1 January 1800. RI MS HD 27c/1a.

Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

---. Letter to Humphry Davy. 9 October 1800. RI MS HD 27c/6. Royal Institution of  
Great Britain, London.

---. Letter to Humphry Davy. 2 December 1800. RI MS HD 27c/8. Royal Institution  
of Great Britain, London.

[Davy, Humphry]. "Life." N.d. MS Lt q 48 f26r. Web. Brotherton Collection,

University of Leeds, Leeds.

Davy, Humphry. "Lo oer the Earth, the kindling spirits pour." N.d. RI MS HD

26H/15. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

---. Notebook. [1795–1796]. RI MS HD 13f. Royal Institution of Great Britain,  
London.

---. Notebook. [1795–1797]. RI MS HD 21a.

---. Notebook. [1795–1800]. RI MS HD 13h.

- . Notebook. [1799-1800]. RI MS HD 20a.
- . Notebook. [1799–1800]. RI MS HD 20b.
- . Notebook. [1799–1800]. RI MS HD 22a.
- . Notebook. [1799–1802]. RI MS HD 13c.
- . Notebook. [1800]. RI MS HD 13d.
- . Notebook. [1800]. RI MS HD 13e.
- . Notebook. [1800]. RI MS HD 20c.
- . Notebook. [1800]. RI MS HD 21b.
- . Notebook. [1800–1801]. RI MS HD 22b.
- . Notebook. [1803–1812]. RI MS HD 13g.
- . Notebook. [1803–1809]. RI MS HD 13j.
- . Notebook. [1804–1819]. RI MS HD 13a.
- . Notebook. [1804]. RI MS HD 15e.
- . Notebook. [1805]. RI MS HD 15f.
- . Notebook. [1806]. RI MS HD 15b.
- . Notebook. [1806?]. RI MS HD 15a.
- . Lectures 1811–12. [In Faraday’s handwriting.] RI MS HD 4A. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.
- . Notebook. [1810–12]. RI MS HD 13i.
- . Notebook 1812–14. RI MS HD 12.
- . Notebook. 1813–1819. RI MS HD 14i.
- . Notebook. 1814–1815. RI MS HD 15c.
- . “Further Experiments and Observations on Iodine.” 22 March 1814. MS MM/15/1. Royal Society, London.
- . “Further Experiments and Observations on Iodine.” 23 March 1814. MS PT/8/25. Royal Society, London.

---. "Some Experiments on the Combustion of the Diamond." 30 April 1814. MS  
PT/8/28. Royal Society, London.

---. "What is there in life's stormy day." 24 August 1819. RI MS HD 26H/12. Royal  
Institution of Great Britain, London.

---. Notebook. 1819, 1828. RI MS HD 14g.

---. Notebook. 1827–1828. RI MS HD 14e.

---. "The Song of Pleasure." 1828. RI MS HD 26H/1. Royal Institution of Great  
Britain, London.

---. Notebook. 1828–1829. RI MS HD 14h.

Gillray, James. "Scientific Researches! – New Discoveries in PNEUMATICKS!"  
Cartoon. May 1802. RIIC 0488. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

"Oh! Were I rich in nature's lore." Poem to Humphry Davy. 1801. RI MS HD  
26H/13. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

Paris, John Ayrton. *The Life of Sir Humphry Davy*. London: Colburn and Bentley,  
1831. Print. RI MS MF F8. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

"Rude Winter! Iron-sceptred power." Poem to Humphry Davy. 13 November 1804.  
RI MS HD 26H/14. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

Southey, Robert. Letter to Humphry Davy. 4 May 1799. RI MS HD 27B/1. Royal  
Institution of Great Britain, London.

"Thou to whom heaven its noblest gifts assigned." Poem to Humphry Davy. 11  
May 1804. RI MS HD 26H/6. Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

"Whene'er you speak, heav'n how the listening throng." Poem to Humphry Davy.  
14 February 1814. RI MS HD 26H/11. Royal Institution of Great Britain,  
London.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. London: Oxford UP, 1953. Print.
- . "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor." *The Kenyon Review* 19:1 (1957): 113–30. Print.
- . "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age." *Romanticism Reconsidered*. Ed. Northrop Frye. New York: Columbia UP, 1963. 26–53. Print.
- . "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric." *From Sensibility to Romanticism*. Ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1965. 527–60. Print.
- . *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. London: Oxford UP, 1971. Print.
- Alexander, Meena. *Women in Romanticism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989. Print.
- Allard, James Robert. *Romanticism, Medicine and the Poet's Body*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Allen, Richard. *David Hartley on Human Nature*. Albany: U of New York P, 1999. Print,
- Almeida, Joselyn M. "Conquest and Slavery in Robert Southey's *Madoc* and James Montgomery's *The West Indies*." Pratt, *Robert Southey* 151–66.
- Altieri, Charles. *Enlarging the Temple: New Directions in American Poetry During the 1960s*. London: Associated UP, 1979. Print.
- Amigoni, David. "Narrating Darwinian Inheritances: Fields, Life Stories and the Literature-Science Relation." *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 11 (2010): n. Pag. Web. 1 December 2012.

- Andrews, Kerri. "‘Herself [...] Fills The Foreground’: Negotiating Autobiography in the *Elegiac Sonnets* and *The Emigrants*." *Charlotte Smith*. Labbe. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008. 1328. Print.
- Ashfield, Andrew and Peter De Bolla, ed. *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Axelsson, Karl. *The Sublime: Precursors and British Eighteenth-Century Conceptions*. Oxford: Lang, 2007. Print.
- Baillie, Joanna. *The Collected Letters of Joanna Baillie*. Ed. Judith Bailey Slagle. 2 vols. New Jersey: Associated UP, 1999. Print.
- , ed. *A Collection of Poems: Chiefly Manuscript, and from Living Authors*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823. Print.
- Bainbridge, Simon. *Napoleon and English Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- . *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic War: Visions of Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- . *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008. Print.
- Barbauld, Anna Letitia. *Poems*. London: Johnson, 1773. Print.
- . *The British Novelists: With an Essay, and Prefaces*. Vol. 36. London: Rivington, 1810. Print.
- . *Selected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft. Ontario: Broadview, 2002. Print.
- Barbier, Carl Paul. *William Gilpin: His Drawings, Teachings, and Theory of the Picturesque*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1963. Print.
- Bari, Shahidha K. *Keats and Philosophy: The Life of Sensations*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

- Barker-Benfield, G.J. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 1992. Print.
- Barrell, John. *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972. Print.
- . *Poetry, Language, and Politics*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988. Print.
- . *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1991. Print.
- Beddoes, Thomas. *Observations on the Nature and Cure of Calculus, Sea Scurvy, Consumption, Catarrh and Fever*. London: Murray, 1793. Print.
- . *Where Would Be the Harm of a Speedy Peace?* Bristol: Biggs, 1795. Print.
- . *A Word in Defence of the Bill of Rights against Gagging Bills*. Bristol: Biggs, 1795. Print.
- . *Medical Cases and Speculations*. Bristol: Bulgin and Rosser, 1796. Print.
- , ed. *Contributions to Physical and Medical Knowledge*. London: Longman and Rees, 1799. Print.
- . *Notice of Some Observations Made at the Pneumatic Institute*. Bristol: Biggs and Cottle, 1799. Print.
- . *Essay on the Causes, Early Signs and Prevention of Pulmonary Consumption*. Bristol: Biggs and Cottle, 1799. Print.
- . *Hygeia: or Essays Moral and Medical, on the Causes Affecting the Personal State of our Middling and Affluent Classes*. 3 vols. Bristol: Mills, 1802–3. Print.
- . *Rules of the Medical Institution for the Benefit of the Sick and Drooping Poor*. Bristol: Mills, 1804. Print.

- Beddoes, Thomas and James Watts. *Considerations on the Medicinal Use of Factitious Airs*. London: Johnson and Murray, 1794. Print.
- Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1983. Print.
- . "Anxiety and Interchange: Daniel Deronda and the Implications of Darwin's Writing." *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* 19:1 (1983): 31–44. Print.
- . *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. Print
- . "Translation or Transformation? The Relation of Literature and Science" *Literature and Science*. Ed. Sharon Ruston. Cambridge: Brewer, 2008. 173–95. Print.
- Beer, John B. *Coleridge the Visionary*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1959. Print.
- . *Romantic Consciousness: Blake to Mary Shelley*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003. Print.
- Bennett, Andrew. *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print
- Bergstrom, Carson. *The Rise of the New Science: Epistemological, Linguistic, and Ethical Ideals and the Lyric Genre in the Eighteenth Century*. Lewiston and Lampeter: Mellen, 2002. Print.
- Berkeley, Richard. *Coleridge and the Crisis of Reason*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Berman, Morris. *Social Change and Scientific Organization, 1799–1844*. London: Heinemann, 1978. Print.
- Bernhardt-Kabisch, Ernest. *Robert Southey*. Boston: Twayne, 1977. Print.

- . "‘When Klopstock England Defied’: Coleridge, Southey, and the German/English Hexameter." *Comparative Literature* 55:2 (2003): 130–63. Print.
- Bewell, Alan. *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989. Print.
- Beyer, Werner W. "Coleridge’s Early Knowledge of German." *Modern Philology* 12 (1955): 192–200. Print.
- The Bible*. Notes by Gordon Campbell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print. Authorized King James Vers.
- Blight, John Thomas. *A Week at the Land’s End*. London: Longman, 1861. Print.
- Bolton, Carol. "Thalaba the Destroyer: Southey’s Nationalist ‘Romance.’" *Romanticism on the Net* 32–3 (2003): n. Pag. Web. 10 July 2010.
- Borlase, William. *The Natural History of Cornwall*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1758. Print.
- . "Of the Quantity of Rain fallen at Mount Bay in Cornwall and of the Weather in that Place." *Philosophical Transactions* 54 (1764): 59–60. Print.
- . "Meteorological Observations at Ludgvan in Mount’s Bay, Cornwall." *Philosophical Transactions* 58 (1768): 89. Print.
- . "Meteorological Observations for 1769, Made at Bridgewater, Somersetshire; and at Mount’s Bay, Cornwall." *Philosophical Transactions* 60 (1770): 228. Print.
- . "Meteorological Observations for 1770 at Ludgvan in Mount’s Bay, Cornwall." *Philosophical Transactions* 61 (1771): 195. Print.
- Bostetter, E. E. *The Romantic Ventriloquists*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1963. Print.
- Bradshaw, Michael. "Imagining Egypt: Walter Savage Landor’s Gebir." *La Questione Romantica* 12 (2005): 49–64. Print.

- . "Hedgehog Theory: How to Read a Romantic Fragment Poem." *Literature Compass* 5:1 (2008): 73–89. Print.
- Brayshay, Mark. *Topographical Writers in South-West England*. Exeter: U of Exeter P, 1996. Print.
- Brewster, Scott. *Lyric*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print.
- Brice, Ben. *Coleridge and Scepticism*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2007. Print.
- Brinkley, Robert and Keith Hanley. Introduction. *Romantic Revisions*. Ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992, 1–17. Print.
- Brougham, Henry. Rev. of Humphry Davy's 1807 Bakerian Lecture. *Edinburgh Review*. 12 (1808): 394–401. Print.
- Brown, John. *The Elements of Medicine*. Trans. Thomas Beddoes. 2 vols. London: Johnson, 1795. Print.
- Brown, Thomas. *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Tait, 1820. Print.
- . *A Treatise on Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Ed. Levi Hedge. 2 vols. Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown, 1827. Print.
- Brydone, Patrick. *A Tour through Sicily and Malta*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Chambers, 1774. Print.
- Buckland, Adele. "Losing the Plot: the Geological Anti-narrative." 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 11 (2010): 1–16. Web. 31 May 2013.
- Budge, Gavin. "Indigestion and Imagination in Coleridge's Critical Thought." *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense, 1780–1830*. Ed. Gavin Budge. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007. 141–81. Print.

- . "Erasmus Darwin and the Poetics of William Wordsworth: Excitement without the Application of Gross and Violent Stimulants." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30:2 (2007): 279–308. Print.
- . *Romanticism, Medicine and the Natural Supernaturalism: Transcendent Vision and Bodily Spectres, 1789–1852*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Print.
- Bunkse, Edmunds. "Humboldt and an Aesthetic Tradition in Geography" *Geographical Review* 71:2 (1981): 379–94. Print.
- Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. London, 1790. Print.
- . *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Ed. A. Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Butler, Joseph. *The Analogy of Religion*. Ed. Joseph Angus. London: Religious Tract Society, [1736]. Print.
- Butler, Marilyn. *Romantic Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760–1830*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982. Print.
- Buzard, James. "The Grand Tour and After (1660–1840)." *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 37–52. Print.
- Byron, Lord. *Don Juan*. London: Onwhyn, 1819. Print.
- . *The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals*. Ed. Rowland E. Prothero. 5 vols. London: Murray, 1898–1904. Print.
- Calé, Luisa. "A Female Band Despising Nature's Law': Botany, Gender and Revolution in the 1790s." *Romanticism on the Net* 17 (2000): n. Pag. Web. 31 May 2011.

- Cameron, Sharon. *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1979. Print.
- Canning, George. *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*. London: Wright, 1801. Print
- Carlyon, Clement. *Early Years and Late Reflections*. 4 vols. London: Whittaker, 1836–58. Print.
- Cartwright, F.F., “Humphry Davy’s Contribution to Anaesthesia.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 43:7 (1950): 571–8. Print.
- Chandler, James. *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. Print.
- Chard, Chloe. Introduction. *Transports: Travel, Pleasure, and Imaginative Geography, 1600–1830*. Ed. Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 117–50. Print.
- Class, Monika. *Coleridge and Kantian Ideas in England, 1796–1817*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. Print.
- Coburn, Kathleen. Introduction. *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. Vol 1. London: Routledge, 1957. xvii–xli. Print.
- Colbert, Benjamin. *Shelley’s Eye: Travel Writing and Aesthetic Vision*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. Print.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Poems*. 2 ed. London and Bristol: Cottle and Robinsons, 1797.
- . *Biographia Literaria: or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*. 2 vols. London: Rest Fenner, 1817. Print.
- . *Aids to Reflections in the Formation of a Manly Character*. London: Taylor and Hessey, 1825. Print.
- . *The Friend*. Ed. B. Rooke. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969. Print.

- . *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956–71. Print.
- . *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 5 vols. London: Routledge, 1957–2002. Print.
- . *Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion*. Ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann. London and Princeton: Routledge and Paul, 1971. Print.
- . *Essays on his Times in the Morning Post and the Courier*. Ed. David V. Erdman. London and Princeton: Routledge and Paul, 1978. Print.
- . *Poetical Works 1: Poems (Reading Text): Part 1*. Ed. J. C. C. Mays. London and Princeton: Routledge and Paul, 2001. Print.
- . *Poetical Works 1: Poems (Reading Text): Part 2*. Ed. J. C. C. Mays. London and Princeton: Routledge and Paul, 2001. Print.
- . *Coleridge's Notebooks: A Selection*. Ed. Seamus Perry. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.
- Collini, Stefan. Introduction. *The Two Cultures*. By C. P. Snow. Ed. Stefan Collini. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. vii-lxxi. Print.
- Cronin, Richard. *The Politics of Romantic Poetry: In Search of the Pure Commonwealth*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. Print.
- . "Joseph Cottle and West- Country Romanticism." *The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge* 28 (2006): 1–12. Print.
- Crouch, Laura E., "Davy's *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry*. A Possible Scientific Source of Frankenstein." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 27 (1978): 35–44. Print.
- Curran, Andrew S. *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011. Print

- Curran, Stuart. "Mothers and Daughters: Poetic Generation(s) in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 63:4 (2000): 575–90. Print.
- . *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.
- Curry, Kenneth. "Southey's Madoc: The Manuscript of 1794." *Philological Quarterly* 22 (1943): 347–68. Print.
- Davies, G. L. Herries. *Whatever is Under the Earth: The Geological Society of London, 1807–2007*. Bath: Geological Society, 2007. Print.
- Davy, Humphry. "Experimental Essays on Heat, Light, and on the Combination of Light, with a New Theory of Respiration, and Observations on the Chemistry of Life." *Contributions to Physical and Medical Knowledge*. Ed. Thomas Beddoes. London: Longman and Rees, 1799. 5–147. Print.
- . *Researches, Chemical and Philosophical; Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Nitrous Air, and its Respiration*. London: Johnson, 1800. Print.
- . "An Account of Some Experiments in Galvanic Electricity" *Journals of the Royal Institutions of Great Britain* (1802): 165–7. Print.
- . *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry*. London: Johnson, 1802. Print.
- . "Parallels Between Art and Science." *The Director: A Literary and Scientific Journal*. Ed. T.F. Dibdin. London: Longman, 1807. Vol. 2. 193–8. Print.
- . *The Bakerian Lecture: On Some Chemical Agencies of Electricity*. London: Bulmer, 1807. Print.
- . "The Bakerian Lecture: On Some New Phenomena of Chemical Changes." *Philosophical Transactions* 98 (1808):1–44. Print.
- . *Elements of Chemical Philosophy*. Vol.1 London, 1814. Print.

- . *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry*. London: Longman, 1814. Print.
- . "Hints on the Geology of Cornwall." *Transactions of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall* 1 (1818): 38–50. Print.
- . "Report on the State of the Manuscripts of Papyrus, Found at Herculaneum." *Quarterly Journal of Literature, Science and the Arts*. Vol. 2. London: Murray, 1819. 154–61. Print.
- . *Six Discourses Delivered Before the Royal Society at their Anniversary Meetings*. London: Murray, 1827. Print.
- . *Salmonia; or Days of Fly Fishing in a Series of Conversations with some Account of the Habits of Fishes Belonging to the Genus Salmo*. London: Murray, 1828. Print.
- . *Consolations in Travel, or Last Days of a Philosopher*. London: Murray, 1830. Print.
- . *The Collected Works of Sir Humphry Davy*. Ed. John Davy. 8 vols. London: Smith and Elder, 1839. Print.
- . *Fragmentary Remains, Literary and Scientific of Sir Humphry Davy, with a Sketch of his Life and Selections from his Correspondence*. Ed. John Davy. London: Churchill, 1858. Print.
- . *Humphry Davy on Geology: The 1805 Lectures for the General Audience*. Ed. Robert Siegfried and Robert H. Dott. London: U of Wisconsin P, 1980. Print.
- . *The Letters of Humphry Davy*. Ed. Tim Fulford, Jan Golinski, Frank James, David Knight and Sharon Ruston, *n.d.* Web. 11 April 2011.
- Davy, John. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy*. 2 vols. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Longman, 1836. Print.
- Dawson, Gowan. "Literature and Science under the Microscope." *Journal of Victorian Culture* 11:2 (2006): 301-15. Print.

- . "‘By a Comparison of Incidents and Dialogue’: Richard Owen, Comparative Anatomy and Victorian Serial Fiction" *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 11 (2010): 1–18. Web. 19 October 2012.
- De Almeida, Hermione. *Romantic Medicine and John Keats*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.
- Dibdin, Thomas. *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*. 2 vols. London: Major, 1836. Print.
- Dixon, Thomas. *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- . "Patients and Passions: Languages of Medicine and Emotion, 1789–1850." *Medicine, Emotion, and Disease, 1750–1950*. Ed. Fay Bound Alberti. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 22–52, Print.
- Doty, R. G. "‘A Mint for Mexico’: Boulton, Watt and the Guanajuato Mint." *The British Numismatic Journal* 56 (1986): 124-47. Print.
- Duff, David. *Romanticism and the Use of Genre*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.
- Duffy, Cian. *Shelley and the Revolutionary Sublime*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.
- . "Interrogating the ‘Valley of Wonders’: Some Romantic-Period Debates about Chamonix-Mont Blanc." *Romanticism’s Debateable Lands*. Ed. Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 148–59. Print.
- Duffy, Cian and Peter Howell. Introduction. *Cultures of the Sublime: Selected Reading*. Ed. Cian Duffy Peter and Howell. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 1–14. Print.
- Duncan, Archibald. *The Mariner’s Chronicle: Being the Most Interesting Narrative of Shipwrecks, Fires, Famines*. Vol. 1. London: Cundee, 1804. Print.

- Economides, Louise. "‘Mont Blanc’ and the Sublimity of Materiality." *Cultural Critique* 61 (2005): 87–114. Print.
- Eustace, John. *A Classical Tour through Italy*. Vol. 2. Paris: Baudry, 1837. Print.
- Everest, Kelvin. "‘Ozymandias’: The Text in Time." *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Bicentenary Essays* Ed. Kelvin Everest. Cambridge: Brewer, 1992. 24–42. Print.
- Fara, Patricia. *Newton: The Making of Genius*. London: Picador, 2002. Print.
- . *Sex, Botany and Empire: The Story of Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks*. New York: Columbia UP, 2004. Print.
- Faraday, Michael. *Curiosity Perfectly Satisfied: Faraday’s Travels in Europe 1813–1815*. Ed. Brian Bowers and Lenore Symons. London: Peregrinus, 1991. Print.
- Faubert, Michelle. *Rhyming Reason: The Poetry of Romantic-Era Psychologists*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009. Print.
- Ferguson, Frances. *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Ferry, Anne. *The Title to the Poem*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996. Print.
- Fissell, Mary. *Patients, Power and the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Bristol*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. Print.
- Foote, George. "Sir Humphry Davy and His Audience at the Royal Institution." *Isis* 43 (1952): 6–12. Print.
- Fosso, Kurt. *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning*. New York: State U of New York P, 2004. Print.
- Fulford, Tim. *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.

- . General Introduction. *Romanticism and Science, 1773–1833*. Ed. Tim Fulford. Vol.1. London: Routledge, 2002. 1–49. Print.
- , ed. *Romanticism and Science, 1773–1833*. Vol.1. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- . “Radical Medicine and Romantic Politics.” *Wordsworth Circle* 35:1 (2004): 16–21. Print.
- . “Plants, Pagodas and Penises: Southey’s Oriental Imports.” Pratt, *Robert Southey* 187–202.
- . “Coleridge’s Sequel to *Thalaba* and Robert Southey’s Prequel to *Christabel*.” *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient: Cultural Negotiations*. Ed. David Vallins, Kaz Oishi and Seamus Perry. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. 39–70. Print.
- Fulford, Tim and Kitson, Peter J., eds. *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780–1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.
- Fulford, Tim, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson. *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- . Introduction: Bodies of Knowledge. *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*. Ed. Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 1–32. Print.
- Fullmer, June Z. “The Poetry of Sir Humphry Davy.” *Chymia* 6 (1960): 102–26. Print.
- . *Sir Humphry Davy’s Published Works*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969. Print.
- . “Humphry Davy, Reformer.” *Science and the Sons of Genius: Studies on Humphry Davy*. Ed. Sophie Forgan. London: Science Reviews, 1980. 59–94. Print.

- . *Young Humphry Davy: the Making of an Experimental Chemist*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2000. Print.
- Gascoigne, John. *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and its Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.
- Garrod, H. W. *The Profession of Poetry and Other Lectures*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1929. Print.
- Gilbert, Davies. *The Parochial History of Cornwall*. 4 vols. London: Nichols, 1838. Print.
- Gibson, Marion, Shelley Trower and Garry Tregida, eds., *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.
- Gill, Stephen. *Wordsworth: The Prelude*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. Print.
- Gilpin, William. *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales*. London: Blamire, 1789. Print.
- Gilroy, Amanda. ed., *Romantic Geographies: Discourse of Travel, 1775–1844*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. Print.
- Godwin, William. *The Diary of William Godwin*. Ed. Victoria Myers, David O’Shaughnessy and Mark Philp. Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010. Web. 23 April 2012.
- Goellnicht, Donald. *The Poet-Physician: Keats and Medical Science*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1984. Print.
- Golinski, Jan. *Science as Public Culture: Chemistry and Enlightenment in Britain, 1760–1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
- . “Humphry Davy’s Sexual Chemistry.” *Configurations* 7 (1999): 15–41. Web. 5 December 2010.

- . "The Literature of the New Sciences." *The New Cambridge History of English Literature: The Romantic Period*. Ed. James Chandler. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 527–52. Web. 5 December 2010.
- . "Humphry Davy: The Experimental Self." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45:1 (2011): 15–28. Print.
- . "Romantic Science: Humphry Davy's Consolation in Travel." Lindberg Lecture. University of New Hampshire, New Hampshire, United States. 11 April 2013. Lecture. 1–18. Web. 21 May 2013.
- Goslee, Nancy Moore. "Shelleyan Inspiration and the Sister Arts." *The Unfamiliar Shelley*. Ed. Timothy Webb. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. 159–82. Print.
- Gray, Thomas. *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Churchyard*. London, 1751. Print.
- . *Designs by Mr. Bentley, for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray*. London, 1753. Print.
- Greetham, David. "What is Textual Scholarship?" *A Companion to the History of the Book*. Ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathon Rose. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Grinnell, George. *The Age of Hypochondria: Interpreting Romantic Health and Illness*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
- Griswold, Rufus Wilmot. *The Poets and Poetry of England in the Nineteenth Century*. Philadelphia: Carey, 1846. Print.
- Habib, M. A. R. *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Print.
- Haney, David P. *The Challenge of Coleridge: Ethics and Interpretation in Romanticism and Modern Philosophy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2001. Print.
- Harrison, Joseph. *The Floricultural Cabinet, and Florist's Magazine*. Vol 24. London: Whitaker, 1833–1859. Print.

- Hartley, David. *Observations on Man: His Frame, His Duty and His Expectations in Two Parts*. London, 1749. Print.
- Hatherell, William. "Words and Things': Locke, Hartley and the Associationist Context for the Preface to Lyrical Ballads." *Romanticism* 12:3 (2006): 223–35. Print.
- Haven, Richard. "Coleridge, Hartley and the Mystics." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20:4 (1959): 477–94. Print.
- Hawley, Judith., General Introduction. *Science as Polite Culture*. ed. *Literature and Science, 1660-1832*. Vol..1 London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003. xix–xxxviii. Print.
- Hazlitt, William. *Lectures on the English Poets Delivered at the Surrey Institution*. London: Taylor, 1818. Print.
- . *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits*. London: Colburn, 1825. Print.
- Hedley, Douglas. *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
- Henderson, Andrea K. *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774–1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- Heringman, Noah, "The Rock Record and Romantic Narratives of the Earth." *Romantic Science: the Literary Forms of Natural History*. Ed. Noah Heringman. Albany: State U of New York, 2003. 53–84. Print.
- . *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology*. New York and London: Cornell UP, 2004. Print.
- Hickey, Alison. "Coleridge, Southey 'and Co.': Collaboration and Authority." *Studies in Romanticism* 37:8 (1998): n. Pag. Web. 10 July 2010.

- Higgitt, Rebekah. *Recreating Newton: Newtonian Biography and the Making of Nineteenth-Century History of Science*. London: Pickering and Chatto. 2007. Print.
- Hindle, Maurice. "Nature, Power, and the Light of the Sun." *Blackheath Poetry Society*, 2002. Web. 16 October 2012.
- . "Humphry Davy and William Wordsworth: A Mutual Influence." *Romanticism* 18 (2012): 16–29. Print.
- Holmes, Richard. *Coleridge: Early Visions, 1772–1804*. New York: Pantheon, 1989. Print.
- . *Coleridge: Darker Reflections*. London: Harper Collins, 1998. Print.
- . *Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*. London: Harper Press, 2009. Print.
- . "Humphry Davy and the Chemical Moment." *Clinical Chemistry* 57:11 (2011): 1625–31. Print.
- Homans, Margaret. *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980. Print.
- Hoyle, Charles. *Exodus: An Epic Poem*. London, 1807. Print.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. 3 vols. London: Noon, 1739–40. Print.
- Hunt, Lynn and Margaret Jacob. "Somatic Affects: The Affective Revolution in 1790s Britain." *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34:4 (2001): 491–521. Print.
- Hunter, Michael. *Editing Early Modern Texts: An Introduction to Principles and Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Hutton, Ronald. "Druids in Modern British Fiction: the Unacceptable Face of Celticism." Gibson, *Mysticism* 23–37.

- “Imitation: Sapphics, the Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder.” *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*. London: Wright, 1801. Print.
- Inglis, Gavin. “On the Origin of Hot Springs.” *The Philosophical Magazine*. Ed. Alexander Tilloch. Vol. 51. London: Taylor, 1818. 107–8. Print.
- Ishikura, Waka. “Coleridge, Davy, and the Science of Method.” *The Coleridge Bulletin* 24 (2004): 22–7. Print.
- Jackson, J. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Critical Heritage*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Jackson, Noel. “Critical Conditions: Coleridge, ‘Common Sense,’ and the Literature of Self-Experiment.” *ELH* 70:1 (2003): 117–49. Print.
- . *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. Print.
- James, Frank A. J. L. “Davy in the Dockyard: Humphry Davy, The Royal Society and the Electro-Chemical Protection of the Copper Sheeting of His Majesty’s Shops in the Mid 1820s.” *Physis* 29 (1992): 205–25. Print.
- , ed. *‘The Common Purposes of Life’: Science and Society at the Royal Institution of Great Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. Print.
- . “How Big is a Hole?: The Problems of the Practical Application of Science in the Invention of the Miners’ Safety Lamp by Humphry Davy and George Stephenson in Late Regency England.” *Transactions of the Newcomen Society* 75 (2005): 175–227. Print.
- , ed. *Christmas at the Royal Institution: An Anthology of Lectures by M. Faraday*. London: World Scientific, 2008. Print.
- . *Michael Faraday: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.
- Janowitz, Anne. *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Jay, Mike. *Emperors of Dreams: Drugs in the Nineteenth Century*.

Cambridgeshire: Dedalus, 2000. Print.

---. *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr Beddoes and*

*His Sons of Genius*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2009. Print.

Jenkins, Alice. "Humphry Davy: Poetry, Science and the Love of Light." *1798: The*

*Year of Lyrical Ballads*. Ed. Richard Cronin. London: Macmillan, 1998. 133–

50. Print.

Johnston, Kenneth R. *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*. New

York and London: Norton, 1998. Print.

Jones, John. *The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination*.

London: Chatto and Windus, 1964. Print.

Jones, Mark. *The 'Lucy Poems': A Case Study in Literary Knowledge*. Toronto and

London: U of Toronto P, 1995. Print.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trans. Eric Matthews and

Paul Guyer. Ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.

Kautz, Beth Dolan. "Spas and Salutary Landscapes: The Geography of Health in

Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy*." *Romantic Geographies*. Ed.

Amanda Gilroy. Manchester, Manchester UP, 2000. 165–81. Print.

Kelly, Theresa. *Wordsworth's Revisionary Aesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,

2010. Print.

Kneale, J. Douglas. "'Between Poetry and Oratory': Coleridge's Romantic

Effusions." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York:

Bloomsbury, 2010. 121–46. Print.

Knell, Simon J., *The Culture of English Geology, 1815–1851*. Aldershot: Ashgate,

2000. Print.

Knight, David. "The Scientist as Sage." *Studies in Romanticism* 6 (1967): 65–88.

Print.

---. "Davy and Faraday: Fathers and Sons." *Faraday Rediscovered: Essays on the*

*Life and Work of Michael Faraday*. Ed. David Gooding and Frank A.J. L.

James. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985. 33–49. Print.

---. *Humphry Davy: Science and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.

---. "Higher Pantheism." *Zygon* 35:3 (2000): 603–12. Print.

---. "Humphry Davy, the Poet." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 30:4 (2005):

356–75. Print.

---. "Chemists Get Down to Earth." *The Making of the Geological Society of*

*London*. Ed. C.L. Lewis and S. J. Knell. Bath: Geological Society, 2009. 93–

103. Print.

Knowles, Claire. *Sensibility and Female Poetic Tradition, 1780–1860: The Legacy of Charlotte Smith*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

Labbe, Jacqueline. *Romantic Visualities: Landscape, Gender and Romanticism*.

Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998. Print.

---. Introduction. *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*. Ed. Labbe. London:

Pickering and Chatto, 2008. 1–12. Print.

---. "Revisiting the Egotistical Sublime: Smith, Wordsworth, and the Romantic

Dramatic Monologue." *Fellow Romantics: Women and Men Romantic Poets*.

Ed. Beth Lau. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009. 17–38. Print.

La Boulinière, P. *Itineraire Descriptif et Pittoresque des Hautes Pyrenees*

*Francois*. 3 vols. Paris, 1826. Print.

Lavoisier, Antoine. *Elements of Chemistry in a New Systematic Order*. Trans.

Robert Kerr. Edinburgh: Creech, 1790. Print.

- Lawlor, Clarke. *Consumption and Literature: the Making of the Romantic Disease*. Basingtoke: Palgrave, Macmillan 2006. Print.
- Lawrence, Christopher. "The Power and the Glory: Humphry Davy and Romanticism." *Romanticism and the Sciences*. Ed. Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. 213–27. Print.
- Leader, Zachary. *Revision and Romantic Authorship*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. Print.
- Leask, Nigel. *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
- . *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.
- . "Southey's *Madoc*: Reimagining the Conquest of America." Pratt, *Robert Southey* 133–50.
- . "Robert Burns and Scottish Common Sense Philosophy." *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense, 1780–1830*. Ed. Gavin Budge. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007. 64–87. Print.
- Lefebure, Molly. "Humphry Davy: Philosophic Alchemist." *The Coleridge Connection: Essays for Thomas McFarland*. Ed. Richard Gravil and Molly Lefebure. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990. 83–110. Print.
- Levere, Trevor H., *Affinity and Matter: Elements of Chemical Philosophy, 1800–1865*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971. Print.
- . "Humphry Davy and the Idea of Glory." *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 18 (1980): 247–67. Print.
- . *Poetry Realised in Nature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Early Nineteenth-Century Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981. Print.

- . "Dr. Thomas Beddoes: The Interaction of Pneumatic and Preventive Medicine with Chemistry." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 7.2 (1982): 137–47. Print.
- . "Dr. Thomas Beddoes (1750–1808): Science and Medicine in Politics and Society." *British Journal for the History of Science* 17.2 (1984):187–204. Print.
- . *Chemists and Chemistry in Nature and Society, 1770–1878*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1994. Print.
- . *Transforming Matter: A History of Chemistry from Alchemy to the Buckyball*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Levine, George. Introduction. *One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987. 3–32. Print.
- . *Darwin and the Novelists*. Chicago, London: U of Chicago P, 1988. Print.
- . *Darwin Loves You: Natural Selection and the Re-enchantment of the World*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006. Print.
- Levinson, Marjorie. *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. Print.
- . *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of Form*. Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina, 1986. Print.
- . "Pre- and Post- Dialectical Materialisms: Modeling Praxis without Subjects and Objects." *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 111–27. Print.
- . "A Motion and a Spirit: Romancing Spinoza." *Studies in Romanticism* 46:4 (2007): 366–408. Print.
- . "What is New Formalism?" *PMLA* 122 (2007): 558–69. Print.
- . "Of Being Numerous: Counting and Matching in Wordsworth's Poetry." *Studies in Romanticism* 49:4. (2010): 633–57. Print.
- Locke, John. *An Essay on Human Understanding*. London, 1690. Print.

- Lockhart, J. G. *Life of Sir W. Scott*. Vol.10. Edinburgh: Murray, 1839. Print.
- Longinus. "On Sublimity." *Classical Literary Criticism*. Trans. D. A. Russell. Ed. D. A. Russell and Michael Winterbottom. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. 143–87. Print.
- Magnuson, Paul. *Reading Public Romanticism*. Princeton and Chichester: Princeton UP, Princeton, 1998. Print.
- Makdisi, Saree. *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.
- Mandell, Laura. "Putting Contents on the Table: The Disciplinary Anthology and the Field of Literary History." *The Poetess Archive Journal* 12 April 2007. Web. 01 February 2013.
- Manly, Susan. *Language, Custom and Nation in the 1790s: Locke, Tooke, Wordsworth, Edgeworth*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Markley, A. A. "Charlotte Smith, the Godwin Circle, and the Proliferation of Speakers in *The Young Philosopher*." *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*. Ed. Jacqueline Labbe. London: Pickering and Chatto. 87–100. Print.
- Matthews, Geoffrey and Kelvin Everest. Introduction. *The Poems of Shelley*. Ed. Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest. Vol. 1. London: Longman, 1989. xii–xxxii. Print.
- McFarland, Thomas. *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969. Print.
- . *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Modalities of Fragmentation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981. Print.
- McGann, Jerome. *A Critique of Textual Criticism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. Print.

- . *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. Print.
- . *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. Print.
- Mee, Jon. *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- Mellor, Anne K. "Coleridge's 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' and the Categories of English Landscape." *Studies in Romanticism* 18:2 (1979): 253–70. Print.
- . *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. London: Routledge, 1988. Print.
- . *Romanticism and Gender*. London, Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Miller, Christopher. *The Invention of Evening: Perception and Time in Romantic Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- Miller, David. "Between Hostile Camps: Sir Humphry Davy's Presidency of the Royal Society of London, 1820–1827." *British Journal for the History of Science* 16 (1983): 16–22. Print.
- Milligan, Barry. *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1995. Print.
- Moore, D. "Devolving Romanticism: Nation, Region and the Case of Devon and Cornwall." *Literature Compass* 5 (2008): 949–63. Web.
- . "'The Romance of Real Life': Richard Polwhele's Representation of the Literary Culture and Language of Cornwall." *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History*. Ed. Shelley Trower. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 41–58. Print.
- . "Fingal in the West Country: the Poems of Ossian and Cultural Myth-making in the South West of England, 1770-1800." Gibson, *Mysticism* 99–116.
- Moran, Joe. *Interdisciplinarity*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

- Morus, Iwan Rhys. "Radical, Romantics and Electrical Showmen: Placing Galvanism at the End of the English Enlightenment." *Notes & Records of the Royal Society* 63 (2009): 263–75. Print.
- Myers, Greg. "Fictionality, Demonstration, and Forum for Popular Science: Jane Marcet's Conversations on Chemistry." *Natural Eloquence: Women Reinscribe Science*. Ed. Barbara T. Gates and Ann N. Steir. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1997. 43–60. Print.
- Newton, Issac. *Opticks: or, A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*. London: Innys, 1718. Print.
- . *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Trans. Andrew Motte. 2 vols. London: Motte, 1729. Print.
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. *Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's Opticks and the Eighteenth Century Poets*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1946. Print.
- . *Mountain Gloom and Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinitude*. Seattle and London: U of Washington P, 1997. Print.
- Nosan, Gregory. "Pavilions, Power, and Patriotism: Garden Architecture at Vauxhall." *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550–1850*. Ed. Michel Conan. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002. 101–22. Print.
- O'Conner, Ralph. *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802–1856*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2007. Print.
- . "Facts and fancies: the Geological Society of London and the Wider Public, 1807–1837." *The Making of the Geological Society*. Ed. C. L. E. Lewis and S. J. Knell. Bath: Geological Society, 2009. 331–40. Print.
- Oerlemans, Onno. *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature*. Toronto and London: U of Toronto P, 2002. Print.

- Olson, Richard. *Scottish Philosophy and British Physics 1750–1880: A Study in the Foundations of the Victorian Scientific Style*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975. Print.
- O'Neill, Michael. "'The Tears Shed or Unshed': Romantic Poetry and Questions of Biography." *Romantic Biography*. Ed. Arthur Bradley and Alan Rawes. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. 1–19. Print.
- Paris, John. *The Life of Sir Humphry Davy*. London: Colburn and Bentley, 1831. Print.
- Parker, W. M., "Lady Davy in Her Letters." *Quarterly Review* 300 (1962): 79–89. Print.
- Parrish, Stephan. "The Whig Interpretation of Literature." *Text* 4 (1988): 343–50. Print.
- Pennant, Thomas. *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*. Ed. Andrew Simmons. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1998. Print.
- Perry, Seamus. Textual Note. *Coleridge's Notebooks: A Selection*. Ed. Seamus Perry. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. xix–xxiii. Print.
- Pfau, Thomas. *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma and Melancholy, 1790–1840*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005. Print.
- Pinch, Adele. *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996. Print.
- Piper, H. W. *The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of Imagination in the English Romantic Poets*. London: Athlone, 1962. Print.
- Pladek, Brittany. "'Soothing Thoughts': Romantic Palliative Care and the Poetics of Relief." *NASSR* 23 (2012): 403–13. Print.
- [Polwhele, Richard]. "The Pneumatic Revellers." *Anti-Jacobin Review* 6 (1800): 109–18. Print.

- Polwhele, Richard. *The Fate of Lewellyn*. Bath: Crutwell, 1777. Print.
- . *The Idyllia, Epigrams, and Fragments, of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, with the Elegies of Tyrtæus, Translated from the Greek into English Verse*. Exeter: Thorn, 1786. Print.
- . *Poems, Chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall*. 2 vols. Bath: Cruttwell, 1792. Print.
- . *Historical Views of Devonshire*. 5 vols. Exeter: Cadell, Dilly, and Murray, 1793. Print.
- . *The History of Devonshire*. 3 vols. London: Cadell, Johnson and Dilly, 1793–1806. Print.
- . *Essays by a Society of Gentlemen, at Exeter*. Exeter, 1796. Print.
- . *The History of Cornwall*. 7 vols. London: Cadell and Davies, 1803–7. Print.
- . *Poems*. 5 vols. London: Rivingtons, 1810. Print.
- . *Biographical Sketches in Cornwall*. 3 vols. London: Nichols and Son, 1831. Print.
- . *Reminiscences, in Prose and Verse*. Vol. 1. London: Nichols and Son, 1836. Print.
- Pope, Alexander. *The Works of Alexander Pope*. Ed. Joseph Warton. 2 vols. London: Bathurst, 1797. Print.
- Porter, Roy. *Health for Sale: Quackery in England, 1660–1850*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989. Print.
- . *Doctor of Society*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- . *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity*. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.
- . *The Creation of the Modern World: the Untold Story of the British Enlightenment*. New York: Norton, 2000. Print.

Pratt, Lynda. "Revising the National Epic: Coleridge, Southey and Madoc."

*Romanticism* 2.2 (1996): 149–163. Print.

---, ed. *Robert Southey and the Contexts of English Romanticism*. Aldershot:

Ashgate, 2006. Print.

"Preservation of Ships' Copper." *The Times* 16 October 1824: 2. Print.

Priestley, Joseph. *Experiments and Observations Relating to Various Branches of*

*Natural Philosophy*. London: Johnson, 1774–1786. Print.

Quinney, Laura. *The Poetics of Disappointment*. Virginia: U of Virginia P, 1999.

Print.

---. *William Blake on Self and Soul*. London: Harvard UP, 2009. Print

---. "Romanticism, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism." *A Companion to Romantic*

*Poetry*. Ed. Charles Mahoney. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 412–24. Print.

Rawes, Alan. *Romanticism and Form*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Print.

Regier, Alexander. *Fracture and Fragmentation in British Romanticism*.

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. Edinburgh, 1785. Print.

Reid, William Hamilton. *The Rise and Dissolution of the Infidel Societies in this*

*Metropolis*. Ed. Victor E. Neuburg. London: Woburn, 1971. Print. Rpt. 1800.

Reiman, Donald H. *The Study of Modern Manuscripts: Public, Confidential and*

*Private*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993. Print.

---. "Nineteenth-Century British Poetry and Prose." *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to*

*Research*. Ed. David Greetham. New York: MLA, 1995. 308–30. Print.

Reiman, Donald H. and Neil Fraistat. Editorial Overview. *The Complete Poetry of*

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. Vol 1.

Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000. xix–xxxix. Print.

- Rev. of *Exodus: an Epic Poem, in Thirteen Books*, by Charles Hoyle. *The Edinburgh Review* 22 (1808): 362–70. Print.
- Rev. of *Parochial History of Cornwall, Founded on the MS. Histories of Mr. Hals and Mr. Tonkin. With Additions and Various Appendices*. By Davies Gilbert. *The Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (1838): 273–8. Print.
- Richards, Robert J. *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2002. Print.
- Richardson, Alan. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.
- . *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010. Print.
- Richardson, Alan and Sonia Hofkosh. Introduction. *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture: 1780–1834*. Ed. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1996. Print. 1–14.
- Ricks, Christopher. *The Force of Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1984. Print.
- Rose, Ruth O. "Poetic Hero-Worship in the Late Eighteenth Century." *PMLA* 48:4 (1933): 1182–202. Print.
- Rosner, Lisa. "Eighteenth-Century Medical Education and the Didactic Model of Experiment." *The Literary Structure of Scientific Argument: Historical Studies*. Ed. Peter Dear. Philadelphia: U Philadelphia P, 1991. 182–94. Print.
- Ross, Catherine E. "'Twin Labourers and Heirs of the Same Hopes': The Professional Rivalry of Humphry Davy and William Wordsworth." *Romantic Romantic Science: the Literary Forms of Natural History*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2003. 23–52. Print.
- Rousseau, George. *Enlightenment Crossings: Pre- and Post-Modern Discourses*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991. Print.

- . *Nervous Acts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Emile*. Trans. and Ed. Christopher Kelly and Allan Bloom. New England: New England UP, 2012. Print.
- Rudd, Andrew. "'Oriental' and 'Orientalist' Poetry: The Debate in Literary Criticism in the Romantic Period." *Romanticism* 13:1 (2007): 53–62. Print.
- Rudwick, Martin. "The Foundation of the Geological Society of London: Its Scheme for Co-operative Research and its Struggle for Independence." *British Journal for the History of Science* 1:4 (1963). 325–55. Print.
- . *Bursting the Limits of Time: The Reconstruction of Geohistory in the Age of Revolution*. Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 2005. Print.
- Russell, Gillian and Clara Tuite. Introduction. *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770–1840*. Ed. Claire Russell and Clara Tuite. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 1–23. Print.
- Russett, Margaret. *De Quincey's Romanticism: Canonical Minority and the Forms of Transmissions*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Ruston, Sharon. *Shelley and Vitality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.
- . Introduction. *Literature and Science*. Ed. Sharon Ruston. Woodbridge : Brewer, 2008. 1–12. Print.
- . "The Art of Medicine: When Respiring Gas Inspired Poetry." *The Lancet* 381 (2013): 366–7. Print.
- . *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- . "From 'The Life of the Spinosist' to 'Life': Humphry Davy, Chemist and Poet." *Literature and Chemistry: Elective Affinities*. Ed. Margery Skagen and

- Margareth Hagen, Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, forthcoming. n. Pag. Print.
- . "'High' Romanticism: Literature and Drugs." *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, forthcoming. n. Pag. Print.
- Ryan, Vanessa. "The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:2 (2001): 265–79. Print.
- Saglia, Diego. "Words and Things: Southey's East and the Materiality of Oriental Discourse." Pratt, *Robert Southey* 167–86.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. Print.
- Saussure, Horace-Bénédict de. *Relation abrégée d'un Voyage a la Cime du Mont-Blanc en Août 1787*. Geneva, Chez Barde, 1787. Print.
- Schaffer, Simon. "Genius in Romantic Natural Philosophy." *Romanticism and the Sciences*. Ed. Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1990. 82–98. Print.
- Schillingsburg, Peter. *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning*. Michigan: U of Michigan P, 1997. Print.
- Search, Edward. *The Light of Nature Pursued*. Vol. 1. London: Jones, 1768. Print.
- Sha, Richard. "Towards a Physiology of the Romantic Imagination." *Configurations* 17:3 (2009): 197–226. Print.
- . *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750–1832*. Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2008. Print.
- Shaffer, Elinor. "*Kubla Khan*" and the Fall of Jerusalem: the Mythological School in *Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature, 1770–1880*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975. Print.

- Shapin, Steven, and Simon Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton UP, 1985. Print.
- Sharrock, Roger. "The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to Lyrical Ballads." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 17:1 (1962): 57–76. Print.
- Shaw, Philip. *The Sublime*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*. London: Hookham, 1817. Print.
- . *The Poems of Shelley*. Ed. Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest. 3 vols. London: Longman, 1989– . Print.
- . *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman Neil Fraistat, and Norma Cook. 3 vols. Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001–2013. Print.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus: The 1818 Version*. Ed. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Peterborough: Broadview, 1994. Print.
- . *Shelley and His Circle, 1773–1822*. Ed. Kenneth Cameron and Donald H. Reiman. Vol. 6. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1961. Print.
- Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001. Print.
- Shuttleworth, Sally. *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make Believe of a Beginning*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Print.
- . *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840–1900*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.
- Siegfried, Robert and Robert H. Dott. Introduction. *Humphry Davy on Geology: The 1805 Lectures for the General Audience*. By Humphry Davy. Ed. Robert

Siegfried and Robert H. Dott. London: U of Wisconsin P, 1980. xiii–xliv.  
Print.

[Simond, Louis]. *Journal of a Tour and Residence in Great Britain during the Years 1810 and 1811*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Ramsey, 1815. Print.

Simond, Louis. *A Tour in Italy and Sicily*. London: Longman, 1828. Print.

“Sir Humphrey Davy.” *The Times* 19 October 1813: 3. Print.

Siskin, Clifford. *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998. Print.

Slagle, Judith Bailey. *Joanna Baillie, a Literary Life*. Madison: Fairleigh, 2002.  
Print.

Sleigh, Charlotte. *Literature and Science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.  
Print.

Smith, Charlotte. *Elegiac Sonnets*. London, 1784. Print.

Smith, Christopher. “Robert Southey and the Emergence of *Lyrical Ballads*.”  
*Romanticism on the Web* 9 (1998): n. Pag. Web. 31 May 2011.

Smith, James Edward. *Flora Britannica*. Vol. 1. London: Davis, 1800. Print.

Smith, Jonathan. *Fact and Feeling: Baconian Science and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1994. Print.

Snow, C.P. *The Two Cultures*. Ed. Stefan Collini. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. Print.

Snow, Stephanie. *Operations Without Pain*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.  
Print.

---. *Blessed Days of Anaesthesia: How Anaesthetics Changed the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Sotheby, William. *Farewell to Italy and Occasional Poems*. London, 1818. Print.

---. *Italy and other Poems*. London: Murray. 1828. Print.

- Southey, Charles Cuthbert, ed. *The Life and Correspondence of the Late Robert Southey*. 6 vols. London: Longman, 1849–50. Print.
- Southey, Robert. *Poems*. 2 vols. Bristol: Biggs and Cottle. 1799. Print.
- , ed. *Annual Anthology*. 2 vols. Bristol: Biggs and Cottle, 1799-1800. Print.
- . *Thalaba the Destroyer*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1809. Print.
- . *Madoc*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1815. Print.
- . *The Minor Poems of Robert Southey*. Vol 2. London: Longman, 1823. Print.
- . *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey: Collected by Himself*. 10 vols. London: Longman, 1838. Print.
- . *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey*. Ed. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Parker. Web. March 2011.
- Speck, W. A. *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2006. Print.
- Spinoza, Benedictus. *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Trans. Samuel Shirley. Leiden: Brill, 1991. Print.
- . *The Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*. Ed. Seymour Feldman. Trans. Samuel Shirley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. Print.
- Stafford, Fiona. "Scottish Romanticism and Scotland in Romanticism." A *Companion to European Romanticism*. Ed. Michael Ferber. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Print.
- Stafford, William. *English Feminists and Their Opponents in the 1790s: Unsex'd and Proper Females*. Manchester, Manchester UP, 2002. Print.
- Stansfield, Dorothy A. *Thomas Beddoes M.D., 1760–1808: Chemist, Physician, Democrat*. Dordrecht and Lancaster: Reidel, 1984. Print.

- Stillinger, Jack. *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.
- Stokes, Christopher. *Coleridge, Language and the Sublime*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- Tanselle, G. T. "The Varieties of Scholarly Editing." *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. Ed. David Greetham. New York: MLA, 1995. Print.
- Taylor, William. *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich*. Vol. 1. Ed. J.W. Robberds. London: Murray, 1843. Print.
- "The Humbugs of the Age." *The John Bull Magazine*. Vol. 1. No. 3. London: Smith, 1824. 89–92. Print.
- "The Pneumatic Revellers: An Eclogue" *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*. Vol. 6. No. 2. London: Whittle and Chapple, 1800. 109–18 Print.
- Thomas J. *Ancient and Modern History of Mount's Bay*. Penzance: Thomas, 1831. Print.
- Thompson, Carl, ed. *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives: An Anthology*. Nottingham: Trent, 2005. Print.
- Thomson, James. *The Seasons: A Poem*. London: Millan, 1730. Print.
- Tobin, John. *The Honey Moon: A Comedy, in Five Acts*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1805. Print.
- Todd, A.C. *Beyond the Blaze: A Biography of Davies Gilbert*. Truro: Barton, 1967. Print.
- Tompkins, J. M. S. "In Yonder Grave a Druid Lies." *The Review of English Studies* 22:85 (1946): 1–16. Print.
- Trower, Shelley. "Nerves, Vibrations and the Aeolian Harp." *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 54 (2009): n. Pag. Web. 10 April 2010.

- . *Senses of Vibration: A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound*. New York and London: Continuum. 2012. Print.
- . "Geological Folklore: Robert Hunt and the Industrial, Aesthetic and Racial Composition of 'Celtic' Cornwall." Gibson, *Mysticism* 117–29.
- Tucker, Herbert. "Southey the Epic-Headed." *Romanticism on the Net* 32-33 (2003): n. Pag. Web. 10 July 2010.
- Underwood, Ted L. "The Science in Shelley's Theory of Poetry." *Modern Language Quarterly* 58:3 (1997): 299–321. Print.
- . "Skepticism and Surmise in Humphry Davy." *Wordsworth Circle* 34.2 (2003): 95–103. Print.
- . *The Work of the Sun: Literature, Science and Political Economy, 1760–1860*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.
- Vandenabeele, Bart. "Beauty, Disinterested Pleasure, and Universal Communicability: Kant's Response to Burke." *Kant-Studien* 103:2 (2012): 139–270. Print.
- Vickers, Neil. "Coleridge, Thomas Beddoes and Brunonian Medicine." *European Romantic Review* 8.1 (1997): 47–94. Print.
- . *Coleridge and the Doctors, 1795–1806*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.
- Vigus, James. *Platonic Coleridge*. London: Legenda, 2009. Print.
- Weiskel, Thomas. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976. Print.
- West, Sally. *Coleridge and Shelley: Textual Engagement*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. Print.
- Wheeler, Kathleen M. *The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry*. Harvard: Harvard UP, 1981. Print.

Whiting, Thomas. *Mathematical, Geometrical, and Philosophical Delights*. London, 1798. Print.

Wiley, Michael. *Romantic Geography: Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998, Print.

Williams, Helen Maria. *A Tour in Switzerland*. Dublin: Wogan, 1798. Print.

Wimsatt, William K. *Literary Criticism: A Short History*. New York: Knopf, 1957. Print.

Wimsatt, W. K. and Monroe Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3–18. Print.

Withering, William. *A Systematic Arrangement of British Plants*. Vol. 2. Birmingham: Rivington, 1812. Print.

Wolfson, Susan J. *Formal Charges: Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999. Print.

---. "Wordsworth's Craft." *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth*. Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 108–24. Print.

Wordsworth, Dorothy. Letter to Lady Beaumont. 25 July 1804. TS. Letter 178 of *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787–1805)*. Ed. Ernest de Sélincourt. Clarendon, 1935. 405. Print.

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*. Bristol: Longman, 1798. Print.

---. *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*. 2 vols. London: Longman, 1800. Print.

---. *Lyrical Ballads with Pastoral and other Poems*. 2 vols. London, Longman, 1802. Print.

---. *Poems, in Two Volumes*. 2 vols. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1807. Print.

- . *The Miscellaneous Poems of William Wordsworth*. 4 vols. London: Longman, 1820. Print.
- . *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. 5 vols. London: Longman, 1827. Print.
- . *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill. London and New York: Norton, 1979. Print.
- . *The Prelude: 1798–1799*. Ed. Stephen M. Parrish. New York: Cornell UP, 1977. Print.
- . *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787–1805)*. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1935. Print
- . *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years (1829–1834)*. Part 2. Ed. Alan G. Hill. Vol 5. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979. Print.
- . *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797–1800*. Ed. James Butler and Karen Green. New York: Cornell UP, 1992. Print.
- Wordsworth, William and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*. Bristol: Cottle, 1798. Print.
- Wright, A. J. "Davy Comes to America: Woodhouse, Barton, and the Nitrous Oxide Crossing." *Journal of Clinical Anaesthetic* 7 (1995): 347–55. Print.
- Wu, Duncan. *Wordsworth's Reading, 1770–1799*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. Print.
- Wyatt, John. "George Bellas Greenough: A Romantic Geologist." *Archives of Natural History* 22 (1995): 61–71. Print.
- . *Wordsworth and the Geologists*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Youngquist, Paul. *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism*. Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 2003. Print.

Zimmerman, Sarah M. "‘Dost thou not know my voice?’ Charlotte Smith and the Lyric’s Audience." *Romanticism and Women Poets: Opening the Doors of Reception*. Ed. Harriet Kramer Linkin and Stephen C. Behrendt. Kentucky: UP of Kentucky, 1999. 101–24. Print.

---. *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History*. USA: State U of New York P, 1999. Print.