Edward Thomas' 'Romanticism'.

Martin Brooks, BA (HONS), MA.

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I dedicate this work to the memory of Elizabeth Wilson (1950-2019).

Float this
Significant fragments
Window frame
Imprint
Against erasure
Black on black

But then
Stars he said
Or lights
Dogged randomness
Your storehouse kept full
Any which way

Elizabeth Wilson, Untitled (1989).

Abstract.

This is a thesis about the links between Edward Thomas' (1878-1917) criticism and his poetry. It identifies two major strands of Thomas' criticism which inform his poetry: his critical ideas of what different Romantic-period poets had accomplished; and his specifically late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' literary theory of what poetry ought to be. In doing so, this thesis is the first to demonstrate the importance these parts of Thomas' criticism have to his practice as a poet. It demonstrates how they enabled Thomas to develop the particular ideas of what poetry is and does which make him distinctive among early twentieth-century poets.

This thesis is in four chapters. Chapter One sketches the critical background to the thesis. It documents the longstanding critical debate of how Thomas' poetry might fit within narratives of Modernism and Romantic-period poetry and then proceeds to outline the cultural links which make Thomas' literary theory 'Romantic'. Three subsequent chapters each focus on the links between Thomas' criticism of a different Romantic-period poet, his own poetry, and the wider context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry. Chapter Two discusses Thomas' work on and after Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). It shows how Thomas' unique critical approach to Coleridge forms a part of his own poetry which distances him from poets who became associated with Modernism and from other early twentieth-century writers whose jingoistic attitudes were amplified by the First World War. Chapter Three concerns connections between Thomas' poetry and his criticism on Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). It shows that Thomas used his writing on Shelley to work out a theory of how poets should use symbols in their work. It explores how Thomas' subsequent use of this theory in his own poetry differentiates him from French Symbolist poets and their anglophone admirers. The fourth chapter discusses the impact of Thomas' criticism of John Keats (1795-1821) on how his own poetry represents individuals losing their identities. The chapter shows that Thomas' uniqueness as a Keats critic generated the

critical positions that differentiate his poetry from how some key Modernist poets were depicting individual identity as unstable. In using these four chapters to explore Thomas' poetry in relation to his criticism and literary theory, this thesis will provide a new account of his complex connections to the development of English poetry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Chapter One: Edward Thomas' 'Romanticism'.

Introduction.

This thesis demonstrates the significance of how the poetry of Edward Thomas (1878-1917) responds to his 'Romantic' literary theory and to his literary criticism of British Romantic-period poetry. The dates of the British Romantic period are not exact, but critics have identified the period with the few decades before and after the start of the nineteenth century. Stuart Curran, the prominent historian of Romantic-period poetry, states in *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1986) that ''The Romance revival … has marked the period from 1790 to 1825 indelibly with its name'.[1] Thomas, however, saw the 'romantic revival' as beginning with the period of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and continuing into the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period. He writes in his account of a walking tour in England, *The South Country* (1909):

> First, the literary and philosophical movement imperfectly described as the romantic revival and return to Nature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Poets and philosophers need private incomes, State porridge and what not, but literature and philosophy is a force, and for a century it has followed a course which was entered in the period of the French Revolution.[2]

As this extract shows, Thomas considered literature to proceed from 'the romantic revival' but he did not accept critical accounts in which this 'literary and philosophical movement' was 'imperfectly described'. This thesis examines how Thomas responded to the continuity with his own, distinctive critical interpretations of why Romantic-period

[1] Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York, NY, and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 158.
[2] Edward Thomas, *The South Country* (Toller Fratrum, Dorset: Little Toller Books, 2009), 129.

poets are important. It then shows how his lyric poetry 'follow[s] a course' by including the traits and priorities which he had outlined as being his Romantic-period inheritance.

When this thesis looks at Thomas' lyrics, it focuses on how his poems work to depict a single speaking voice. Thomas' interpretation of these generic rules for lyric, as this thesis will show, are related to a wider late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century focus that some critics were calling 'Romanticism'. This thesis examines what makes Thomas' literary theory 'Romantic', doing so to then demonstrate how this part of his theory led to him identifying several different ways that Romantic-period poets constructed voices that could represent them in their poems. Tracing connections between Thomas' criticism of Romantic-period poetry and his own work as a poet, this thesis then shows that his poetry involves equivalent depictions of speaking voices. As it documents the critical foundation of the voices in Thomas' poems, this thesis establishes how his poetry takes its place among the social and literary developments of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English poetry.

To say how Thomas' lyric includes equivalents to the different types of voices that his criticism found in Romantic-period poetry, this thesis describes first-person perspectives in lyric poems with the term 'persona'. Chris Baldick writes in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) that a persona is the 'assumed identity or fictional "I" (literally a "mask") assumed by a writer'.[3] In this thesis the term 'persona' is used to signify that Thomas' speaking voices can be distinguished from one another, although they can also be considered as depictions of aspects of Thomas himself. It also underscores that these voices have no necessary connection to Thomas' identity, nor to that of any other person. It is a use of 'persona' which helps to show Thomas' own theory of poetry. In his critical study of how men have written poetry about women, *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (1910), Thomas notes that the first-person perspectives presented in lyric poems do not have an inherent connection to the poet. He writes that an ideal poetry would involve poems that:

[3] Chris Baldick, 'Persona', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 190 (190).

> live themselves, and they enchain us, from beginning to end in their own unfleshly world; and supposing that some material circumstances were the seedground of the immortal and ethereal flower, and that these circumstances were placed before us, we should be very little the wiser, nor probably could the poet himself offer us any help.[4]

This thesis discusses the ways that Thomas' poems 'live themselves' by examining the different ways their personae describe themselves and their scenes. To examine these differences, it looks at what it refers to with the critical term 'thought'. As Jonathan Culler writes in *Theory of the Lyric* (2015), individual personae show 'thought', or 'the characteristics of this persona, especially the motives and circumstances of this act of speech'.[5] Personae are not literally people, and they do not have their own consciousness or unconsciousness which is independent of their presentation in the poem. They are artistic constructions variously depicted as aware or unaware of all or some of their mental activity. In Thomas' prose and poetry, this thesis argues, the focus on the importance of using personae converges with the body of critical approaches that other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were calling 'Romanticism'. Therefore, to say how Thomas' poetry responds to his criticism, this thesis explores how the personae in his lyrics combine his descriptions of what Romantic-period poets had done with his 'Romantic' theory of what present-day poets should do.

This thesis contributes to the existing understanding of Thomas by examining how his own practice as a poet reflects the ideas that he developed in his lifetime's work as a literary critic. Thomas was a latecomer to poetry who spent most of his adulthood writing literary essays and criticism. He wrote twenty-nine principal books of prose that were published in his lifetime. The essay collections *A Literary Pilgrim in England* (1917) and *The Last Sheaf* (1928) and the short stories of *Cloud Castle and Other Papers*

[4] Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (New York, NY: Lane, 1911), 18-19.
[5] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 109.

(1922) followed posthumously. These thirty-two books were written alongside his primary source of income, which was writing literary reviews for newspapers and magazines. His archivist and biographer R. George Thomas estimated that the volume of his reviewing between 1900 and 1914 is 'a minimum of 1,122 reviews – just over a million words'.[6] In December 1914, after fourteen years of writing about poetry, Thomas began to compose his own. By his death on 9 April 1917 he had written over 140 lyric poems. These are often referred to as his 'adult' or 'mature' poems. A small number of these poems were published before his death. There were two pseudonymous poems in his anthology *This England: An Anthology from Her Writers* (1915), then the private edition of *Six Poems* (1916), three poems in the February 1917 number of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, and eighteen poems in a contribution to *An Annual of New Poetry* (1917). After his death the poems were issued in collected in a number of editions. The sixty-four poems in *Poems* (1918) were previously unpublished, and there were fifty-three further unpublished poems among the seventy-one in *Last Poems* (1918). Between them, the editions of *Collected Poems* published in 1920, 1928, 1949, and 1978 then provided seven more poems.[7] As this brief account shows, the shape of Thomas' career is that his prose developed before his poetry. Accordingly, this is a thesis which discusses how Thomas' lyric poetry was a development from his earlier career as a critic.

Thomas Including His Critical ideas of Romantic-Period Poets in His Poetry.

As a poet, Thomas included statements that his poetry responds to critical ideas about poets and poetry. 'Words' (26-28 June 1915) is an *ars poetica* focused on the persona's desire to write 'As poets do'.[8] In this poem the word 'poets' represents Thomas' ideas of Romantic-period poets. The persona's search for inspiration matches up to Thomas'

[6] R. [Richard] George Thomas, 'Introduction', in *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*, ed. by R. George Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 1-19 (9).
[7] Edna Longley, 'Note on the Text of this Edition', in Edward Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, ed. by Edna Longley (Tarset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2013), 25-27 (25).
[8] Edward Thomas, 'Words', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 91-93 (93).

account of how and why the Romantic-period poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) described inspiration in the 'Ode to the West Wind' (1819). These links between 'Words' and Thomas' criticism begin when the persona represents inspiration as English words choosing to whistle through him:

> Out of all of us
> That make rhymes,
> Will you choose
> Sometimes -
> As the winds use
> A crack in a wall
> Or a drain,
> Their joy or their pain
> To whistle through -
> Choose me,
> You English words?[9]

The persona uses a simile to describe how the words could 'choose me', saying that they may blow through him like winds blow through gaps and cracks. As M. H. Abrams writes in 'The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor' (1957), several Romantic-period poems present the wind as a metaphor for poetic inspiration: 'the wind is not only a property of the landscape, but also a vehicle for radical changes in the poet's mind'.[10] The simile that begins 'Words' is a comparable representation of wind as an inspiration. In its representation of the persona's mental activity, the simile can be paired with Thomas' discussion of Shelley in *Feminine Influence on the Poets*. Thomas discusses how the representation of wind in the 'Ode to the West Wind' shows a trace of Shelley's 'personality':

> the desire … to extend the personality in such a way that it can be said, Not all of me shall die when the breath goes finally out of my body … Shelley

[9] Ibid.
[10] M. H. [Meyer Howard] Abrams, 'The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor', *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 1984), 25-43 (26).

> heard it in that universal west wind that made him feel his own weakness and yet cry to the wind: 'Make me thy lyre even as the forest is', and 'Drive my dead thoughts over the universe like withered leaved to quicken a new birth'.[11]

In this passage Thomas describes a combination of 'desire' and 'weakness' leading Shelley to ask that the wind will blow through him and let him become 'thy lyre', the instrument of lyric verse. Thomas' description of the 'Ode' outlines a pattern of 'thought' that reappears in 'Words' when the persona asks words to make him a poet. The persona says that he is weak before the words, having no control over them. Then, he desires that they will use him for poetry. With his combination of weakness, desire to be a poet, and attention to the wind, the persona corresponds to Thomas' interpretation of 'weakness' and 'desire' combining in the 'Ode to the West Wind'. When the persona describes wanting to act 'As poets do', he highlights that poets can be models for other, later poets. This focus on poets as models shows how Thomas' poetry is concerned with using his critical ideas about why their poetry is important. When the persona suggests that it is necessary to do as other poets have done, the depiction of his mental activity has already made him be an articulation of Thomas' critical position on what happens in the 'Ode to the West Wind' when Shelley 'fe[lt] his own weakness and yet cr[ied] to the wind'.

'Words' does not discuss Shelley, nor does it show Shelley, nor does it give any indication that it is set in a time or space that Shelley inhabits. In this respect, 'Words' is representative of Thomas' poetry: Thomas does not speak in the voice of Romantic-period-poets, but constructs personae whose mental activity, their 'thought', is modelled on his critical insights into Romantic-period poetry. His poetry is focused on portraying these different types of mental activity. It is a focus exemplified by 'Ambition' (23 January 1915). In 'Ambition' the persona is portrayed shifting between two different

[11] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 66-67.

types of 'thought'. Both have equivalents in styles which Thomas' criticism associates with Romantic-period poetry:

> A train that roared along raised after it
> And carried with it a motionless white bower
> Of purest cloud, from end to end close-knit,
> So fair it touched the roar with silence. Time
> Was powerless while that lasted. I could sit
> And think I had made the loveliness of prime,
> Breathed its life into it and were its lord,
> And no mind lived save this 'twixt clouds and rime.
> Omnipotent I was, nor even deplored
> That I did nothing. But the end fell like a bell:
> The bower was scattered; far off the train roared.
> But if this was ambition I cannot tell.
> What 'twas ambition for I know not well.[12]

The persona first says that he is 'lord', 'prime', and 'Omnipotent'. His perspective, based on a belief that he can be a part of all that is before him, recalls the style that Thomas called 'visionary' in the poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850), especially Wordsworth's 'Ode (There was a time)' (1802-1804), which is also known as the 'Ode; Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'. In his lecture, 'Wordsworth', the literary critic A. C. Bradley states that Wordsworth 'apprehended all things, natural or human, as the expression of something which, while manifested in them, immeasurably transcends them'.[13] Thomas' *Morning Post* (10 June 1909) review of Bradley's lectures singles out 'Wordsworth' and the 'visionary' power for agreement. He states that Bradley 'gets decidedly nearer to a clear statement of the peculiar "visionary" power by his mind than anyone else has done'.[14] Comparable to Thomas' endorsement of Bradley's interpretation of Wordsworth as one who might see 'all things'

[12] Edward Thomas, 'Ambition', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 59 (59).
[13] A. C. [Andrew Cecil] Bradley, 'Wordsworth', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 99-148 (127).
[14] Edward Thomas, 'Oxford Lectures on Poetry', *The Morning Post* (10 June 1909), 2 (2).

with a transcendent vision, the persona in 'Ambition' relates all existence back to himself. He thinks that he has 'the loveliness of prime' and he has 'Breathed its life into it and were its lord'. However, 'Ambition' then represents a shift in the persona's perception of the scene. The persona stops looking out as though he is 'prime' and is portrayed as becoming unsure about what is real.

This new uncertain perspective recalls Thomas' account of another Romantic-period poet. It echoes how he said John Keats (1795-1821) represented the uncertainty that comes after a mysterious experience. When the train is 'far off', 'the end fell like a bell'. The persona is then portrayed as unsure over how real his 'visionary' experience was: 'What 'twas ambition for I know not well'. These lines express the persona's uncertainty in language which Thomas associated with the change of perspective in Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819). In the 'Ode' the speaker ceases identifying with the other-worldly nightingale: 'Forlorn! The very word is like a bell | To toll me back from thee to my sole self!'[15] In his critical study, *Keats* (1916), Thomas focuses on how the result of identifying with the mysterious nightingale is psychological uncertainty. He states that the change into uncertainty makes the ending of the 'Ode' distinctive: the poem shows how identification with 'inaccessible, inhuman things' then 'comes to an end … with a question'.[16] In 'Ambition' the phrase 'fell like a bell' and the uncertainty in the persona's statement that he 'know[s] not well' match with Thomas' emphasis on the question which ends the 'Ode': 'Was it a vision, or a waking dream? | Fled is that music: – Do I wake or sleep?'[17] Each persona responds to their mysterious experience by questioning their relationship to reality. In 'Ambition' this echo of Thomas' interpretation of the 'Ode to a Nightingale' arrives and underscores that the poem depicts a change in the persona's 'thought'.

As this brief reading of 'Ambition' shows, the portrayal of the persona's 'thought' is intertwined with echoes of how Thomas had critiqued Romantic-period poetry. The

[15] John Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale.', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Jeffrey N Cox (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 2009), 457-460 (460).
[16] Edward Thomas, *Keats* (Cheltenham: Cyder Press, 1999), 51, 54.
[17] Keats, *Poetry and Prose*, 460.

persona's mental shifts can be mapped on to a transition between Thomas' arguments about Wordsworthian 'visionary' belief and Keatsian uncertainty. This thesis' work is in exploring how Thomas' poems construct these depictions of personae's mental activity which are inflected by his critical interpretations of Romantic-period poetry. By showing how Thomas' poems integrate the judgments he made in his prose, this thesis will demonstrate that his place in literary history is based on his poetry reconciling his ideas of Romantic-period poets with his late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' interpretation of the lyric.

Edward Thomas' 'Romanticism': The Critical Heritage.

Poets and critics who have written on Thomas' poetry have principally situated his work within narratives of Modernism and the enduring influence of Romantic-period poetry. Unlike this thesis, these authors have not related his prose or poetry to currents in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century 'Romanticism'. The following discussion will set out how Thomas' critics have attempted to reconcile his poetry with their narratives of a 'modern sensibility', or of Modernism, or have constructed narratives about him reworking Romantic-period poetry (which they can label 'Romanticism' or 'the Romantics') without also considering late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century attitudes on 'Romanticism'. The discussion will indicate where this thesis complements or revises these writers' approaches to Thomas' works.

The earliest example of a critical study that defines Thomas' poetry in relation to a narrative of what other poets had done is John Middleton Murry's 'The Poetry of Edward Thomas'. This essay was first published in the magazine *The Nation* (1919) and was then reprinted in Middleton Murry's *Aspects of Literature* (1920). Middleton Murry defines Thomas' poetry in opposition to a Wordsworthian style that he treats as representative of Romantic-period poetry. Thomas' poetry is said to be unlike Wordsworth's 'visionary' perspective, which Middleton Murry calls the style of 'what went

before'.[18] Middleton Murry represents this view of Romantic-period poetry with an echo of Wordsworth's 'Ode (There was a time)': 'So, it seems, a hundred years have found us out. We come no longer trailing clouds of glory'.[19] As 'Ambition' shows, Thomas' poetry can present 'visionary' ideas as part of personae's mental activity. But Middleton Murry does not discuss whether the ways that Thomas' poetry presents, questions, and replaces 'visionary' perspectives might also be links to Romantic-period poetry. Instead, Middleton Murry writes that without a 'visionary' type of perspective, Thomas' poetry is divided from all Romantic-period poetry. Middleton Murry writes that Thomas' is a poetry which exhibits the modern consciousness 'of perpetual instability' that separates 'our time … from what went before and from what will come after'.[20] Because he lacks 'visionary' certitude, Thomas is designated 'our chosen spirit' and shows how people lived in the early-twentieth century, revealing the 'very texture of the life of the soul'.[21] The distinction that Middleton Murry makes between 'our time' and 'what went before' helpfully underscores that Thomas' prose and poetry are not directly linked to Romantic-period poetry. The narrative of 'our time' being divided from the past calls underscores that Thomas' work on Romantic-period poetry is mediated by shifts in critical attitudes and different narratives of epochal change.

Middleton Murry's essay helpfully shows that Thomas' writing is mediated by historical changes. However, it reveals the problem of critics trying to disconnect and differentiate Thomas' work from earlier attitudes. As David Perkins writes in *Is Literary History Possible?* (1992), any narrative of literary history is necessarily 'an incomplete but not otherwise incorrect representation of the past' with an imposed beginning and end.[22] Middleton Murry does not consider how the features of Thomas' poetry that he

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[18] John Middleton Murry, 'The Poetry of Edward Thomas', in *Aspects of Literature* (London: Collins, 1920), 29-38 (34).
[19] Ibid., 31. Middleton Murry echoes Wordsworth's 'Ode (There was a time)' (1802-1804), 'And not in utter nakedness, | But trailing clouds of glory do we come | From God, who is our home' (ll. 62-64). William Wordsworth, 'Ode (There was a time)', in *The Major Works including* '*The Prelude'*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 297-302 (299).
[20] Middleton Murry, 'The Poetry of Edward Thomas', 34, 32.
[21] Ibid., 31, 30.
[22] David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 35.

labels 'our time' might express or reflect earlier critical attitudes. These include late nineteenth-century statements that people had already either moved on from Wordsworthian assuredness or were never really represented by it. Such statements are prominent in the works of Matthew Arnold. They appear in 'Memorial Verses April 1850', in the essay 'Heinrich Heine' (1863) ('Wordsworth … voluntarily cut himself off from the modern spirit'), and in lines 77-80 of 'Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann"' (1849):

> Too fast we live, too much are tried,
> Too harass'd, to attain
> Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
> And luminous view to gain.[23]

Arnold's writing about Wordsworth shows that it is not a strictly twentieth-century problem to believe yourself disconnected from a Romantic-period 'sweet calm'. The epochal break between Thomas and the impact of Romantic-period poetry is not as clear-cut as Middleton Murry asserts. Moreover, other twentieth-century critics were looking at how the new century could include continuities from Wordsworth's 'visionary' project. For instance, Arthur Quiller-Couch's 'Preface' to *The Oxford Book of Ballads* (1910) declares a wish for readers to 'ramp … through this book – "trailing clouds of glory"'.[24] Therefore, when Middleton Murry uses definite historical divisions to oppose Thomas' poetry against Wordsworthian 'visionary' certitude, he does not conclusively separate Thomas from Romantic-period poetry. Instead, Middleton Murry's essay shows that firm historical narratives can obscure the connections between Thomas' poetry, his criticism, and other critics' judgments of how literary developments were descending from Romantic-period poetry.

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[23] Matthew Arnold, 'Heinrich Heine', in *Essays in Criticism* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1889), 156-193 (177); Matthew Arnold, 'Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann"', in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1840-1867 with an Introduction by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch*, ed. by Humphrey Sumner Milford (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 174-179 (176).

[24] Arthur Quiller-Couch, 'Preface' in *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. by Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1910), vii-xvi (xvi).

Middleton Murry is not the only author who has combined the issue of 'our time' – what it is and when it starts – with the issue of where to place Thomas within received literary histories. In *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932) F. R. Leavis writes that Thomas' poetry epitomises a break from the past and shows a 'modern' outlook. He sees this break for the same reason that Middleton Murry does: Thomas' poetry includes uncertainty which precludes Wordsworthian 'vision'. Leavis alludes to another title of the 'Ode (There was a time)', 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', and writes that 'The intimations that come … are not of immortality'.[25] Thomas is said to instead show 'a representative modern sensibility'.[26] This sensibility is a 'modern disintegration' expressed through fragmentary insights which 'accumulate':

> A characteristic poem of his has the air of being a random jotting down of chance impressions and sensations, the record of a moment of relaxed and undirected consciousness. The diction and movement are those of quiet, ruminative speech. But the unobtrusive signs accumulate, and finally one is aware that the outward scene is accessory to an inner theatre.[27]

With this fragmentary style, Leavis writes, Thomas' poetry 'records the modern disintegration, the sense of directionlessness'.[28] Leavis' interpretation treats the idea of poems that show 'inner theatre' as a 'modern sensibility'. Leavis combines poems that imitate consciousness, or show 'inner theatre', with poems that do not show visionary certitude, and states that both of these qualities are 'modern'. H. Coombes, author of *Edward Thomas: A Critical Study* (1956), labels Leavis' representation of how Thomas' poetry is new and 'modern' as persuasive. He writes that 'Dr. Leavis's note seem to me to be *the* one to which everyone interested in Thomas can be recommended, the more so for its context in the account of the general situation in poetry during the first quarter

[25] F. R. [Frank Raymond] Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), 57.
[26] Ibid., 47, 57.
[27] Ibid, 55.
[28] Ibid., 57.

or so of the century'.[29] Coombes, Leavis, and Middleton Murry all argue that the techniques and expressions of Thomas' poems are features of a 'modern' break from the past. This break is predicated on opposing Thomas' poetry to a picture of Romantic-period poetry that is dominated by a single element, Wordsworthian 'visionary' poetry. It is a perspective to which this thesis responds by showing how Thomas' criticism mediates between Romantic-period poetry in its plenitude and his own poetry.

Authors who have labelled Thomas' poetry 'modern' have done so by describing a historical break in literature. They have said that this break places his poetry in opposition to key texts in Romantic-period poetry. Other authors have shown a different approach to situating Thomas as a twentieth-century poet. They have refocused the historical narratives around his poetry from it being 'modern' to questioning whether it is Modernist. Instead of opposing Thomas' poetry against Romantic-period poetry, they have looked to whether his poetry does the same work as important Modernist texts. In *The Poetry of Edward Thomas* (1980) Andrew Motion describes Thomas as 'anticipating' the qualities of Modernist poetry: Thomas is seen 'drawing much from the Georgians but also anticipating the Modernists in several important respects'. [30] These 'respects' include components of poetry that *New Bearings* calls 'modern': 'miniature fragments', 'collage and montage', and a 'sense of insecurity and isolation'.[31] Motion sees similarities to Modernism but does not call Thomas a Modernist poet. He argues that because Thomas' poetry is unlike the landmark texts T.S. Eliot's (1888-1965) *The Waste Land* (1922) and the Imagist anthology *Des Imagistes* (1914) it is not, then, Modernist poetry:

> Where he gives only 'disconnected impressions', they provide a series of fragments; where he subtly upsets conventional forms and modes of depiction, they radically reshape them; and where he establishes a national context for his work, they create a cosmopolitan one. No matter how much one insists on the similarity in intent, the differences in degree are significant. But while they make it impossible to call him a covert Modernist, they are not

[29] H. [Harry] Coombes, *Edward Thomas: A Critical Study* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), 191-192.
[30] Andrew Motion, *The Poetry of Edward Thomas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991), 11, 2.
[31] Ibid., 3-4.

> absolute enough to brand him as a pure and simple Georgian either. He built his poems in the same wide gap between the two camps that he had occupied in a theoretical sense during his years as a reviewer.[32]

When Motion discusses Thomas and Modernism, he helpfully shows a precedent for discussing how Thomas' poems can be set in a wider historical context due to how they show the critical positions that 'he had occupied as a reviewer'. Jan Marsh shows a different approach to Thomas and Modernism in *Edward Thomas: A Poet for his Country* (1978). She attempts to place his poetry into a narrative of Modernism. However, she overlooks the provenance of his poetic style because she does not weigh his critical positions. Marsh states that Thomas should be seen as an equal of key early twentieth-century Modernist poets because his prose and poetry use a speech-like diction. She connects Thomas' development of a 'plain, unrhetorical style' in prose to the growth that enabled Ezra Pound (1885-1972) to be 'the originator of modernism':

> Pound's early work was post-Victorian … but from 1909 his verse took on a contemporary cast … And when in 1912-13 Edward Thomas began to alter the nature of his prose writing … he was clearly mirroring the changes that were taking place elsewhere in literature.[33]

Thomas' move to a speech-like prose style is said to have led to 'his eventual appearance as a modern poet'.[34] The word 'clearly' takes on a lot of importance when Marsh uses it to state connections between Thomas' poetry and developments among Modernist poets. It has to surmount the possibilities of Romantic-period ideas continuing directly or indirectly into early twentieth-century criticism. For instance, in the 'Preface' to the second edition (1800) of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) Wordsworth declares his goal of using 'a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation' and rejecting

[32] Ibid., 8.
[33] Jan Marsh, *Edward Thomas: A Poet for his Country* (London: Elek, 1978), 95.
[34] Ibid.

'arbitrary and capricious habits of expression'.[35] When Marsh cites a change in Thomas' diction as evidence that he responded to the same ideas as Pound, 'the originator of modernism', her argument does not overcome Thomas' approving account of the 'Preface' in *Walter Pater: A Critical Study* (1913).[36] Therefore, when Marsh and Motion compare Thomas' poetry to the qualities which they assign to Modernism their results highlight, in different ways, that his critical prose is an important gauge for how his poetry reconciles with narratives of poetic movements.

Authors have described relationships between Thomas' poetry and Romantic-period poetry. Some have done so without describing his critical discussions of what Romantic-period poets accomplished or describing how late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets selected, framed, and adapted Romantic-period writing. In *Edward Thomas: A Critical Biography* (1973) William Cooke uses the same methodology when he considers how Thomas' poetry responds to both Romantic-period poetry and poetry by the American, Robert Frost.[37] Cooke treats Thomas as having the same unmediated access to Romantic-period poetry as he would to the ideas and words of his close friend, Frost. Both sources, Cooke writes, supply Thomas with the words and forms that he used 'with an exceptional fidelity to his own thought, feeling, and observation'.[38] When Cooke discusses Thomas' poetry as a response to Romantic-period poetry, then, he does not present Thomas' critical writing as context to these literary interactions. In a similar turn, in *The Imagination of Edward Thomas* (1986) Michael Kirkham discusses Thomas' poetic responses to Romantic-period poetry without raising Thomas' critical writing on poetry from the period. Kirkham instead says that Thomas' poetry is a personal reaction against 'Romantic yearning', or 'the Wordsworthian tradition', and is an attempt to expose 'to critical analysis Romantic habits of mind to which [Thomas] knew

[35] William Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Lyrical Ballads*"', in *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. by Nowell C. Smith (London: Frowde, 1905), 11-41 (15).
[36] Edward Thomas, *Walter Pater: A Critical Study* (London: Secker, 1913), 209.
[37] William Cooke, *Edward Thomas: A Critical Biography 1878-1917* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 163-208.
[38] Ibid., 190.

himself to be intermittently addicted'.[39] Kirkham's narrative thus assigns a single, psycho-biographical interpretation to how Thomas' poetry responds to Romantic-period poetry, reading its verbal traces in Thomas' poetry as representations of Thomas' self-dissatisfaction. When Kirkham focuses on 'visionary' perspectives, his treatment of Thomas and Romantic-period poetry does not consider how Thomas' literary criticism might mediate the presence of Romantic-period ideas, nor how 'Romanticism' might be formulated of diffuse, complementary, and contradictory elements.

In 1924 Arthur O. Lovejoy published the influential essay 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', which argues for a 'plurality of Romanticisms, of possibly quite distinct thought-complexes, a number of which may appear in one country'.[40] Lovejoy underscores that 'Romanticism' is not a fixed concept. Several studies of Thomas' prose and poetry bear out Lovejoy's point. They look to how Thomas' interpretation and adaptation of Romantic-period poetry were affected by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideas of poetry. These studies include work by John Burrow, Lucy Newlyn, and Edna Longley. These critics assess Thomas' links to Romantic-period writing by exploring the multiple continuities and discontinuities that might exist between his criticism, his poetry, and poetry from the Romantic-period.

In the essay 'Keats and Edward Thomas' (1957) Burrow discusses the possible relationships between poetry by Thomas and by John Keats. He does so by foregrounding Thomas' interpretation of the poet in his critical study, *Keats*. Burrow works to 'assess the contribution made by the reading of Keats to his own poetry'.[41] He presents *Keats* as the source of Thomas' method for presenting personae in lyric poetry, a technique where the first-person speaker's consciousness is shown in 'a monologue growing out of, and developing in terms of, the details of a described scene'.[42] Burrow describes *Keats* as integral to all of Thomas' lyric poetry, writing that his poetry 'does

[39] Michael Kirkham, *The Imagination of Edward Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 12, 60.
[40] Arthur O. Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', *PMLA*, 39:2 (June 1924), 229-253 (236).
[41] John Burrow, 'Keats and Edward Thomas', *Essays in Criticism*, 7:4 (October 1957), 404-415 (405).
[42] Ibid., 410.

perpetually reflect the idea of Keats which found expression in [his] unassuming critical essay'.[43] Stating that *Keats* is ubiquitous in Thomas' poetry obscures other possible interactions between his criticism and poetry. These interactions can include Thomas' interpretations of other Romantic-period poets contributing to the representation of personae in his poetry. Moreover, Burrow's emphasis on links between Thomas and Keats omits that Thomas did not see poets as necessarily connected to the personae they make. Thomas had said that poems need not be related to any 'material circumstance' of their creation.[44] This omission leads to Burrow stating that the personae were Thomas' attempts to 'faithfully' reproduce his own 'observations and feelings', that Thomas' poetry uses 'methods of reproducing faithfully observations and feelings'.[45] Despite Burrow's essay being unreliable on how Thomas may be linked to personae, it is helpful for underscoring that Thomas' poetry includes personae. Although Burrow focuses on *Keats* to the exclusion of Thomas' other criticism, his essay draws attention to how Thomas' criticism of Romantic-period poets can be a source behind how his poems present personae.

Newlyn has shown that Thomas' poetry can be read in connection with his work on many different Romantic-period writers. She looks at his critical and personal prose works and discerns how they mediate several different Romantic-period writers. In 'Hazlitt and Edward Thomas on Walking' (2006) Newlyn draws attention to how Thomas' prose accounts of pedestrian journeys show him adapting Romantic-period writing. The essay explores how 'Quotations and echoes … show how deeply the patternings of Hazlitt's prose impressed themselves on Thomas's memory'.[46] Newlyn writes that *The Icknield Way* (1916) and *In Pursuit of Spring* (1914) involved Thomas developing ways of seeing the world which recall William Hazlitt's essays. She suggests that Thomas' use of 'the language of ordinary life' may be read as a reception of Wordsworth, Samuel

[43] Ibid., 415.
[44] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 18-19.
[45] Burrow, 'Keats and Edward Thomas', 414.
[46] Lucy Newlyn, 'Hazlitt and Edward Thomas on Walking', *Essays in Criticism*, 56:2 (April 2006), 163-187 (169).

Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), and Hazlitt. Thomas' descriptions of walking in the countryside, Newlyn writes, reveal 'the depth of his affinity' with all three Romantic-period writers' different use of 'anti-establishment poetics':

> Such remappings of the literary canon come as second nature to this writer who saw literature and land almost as one substance. Here, they guide the reader on a pilgrimage towards the birthplace of *Lyrical Ballads*, outlining an anti-establishment poetics which symbolically culminates in Nether Stowey, as both origin and destination. Coleridge is the ostensible object of the pilgrimage, but what Thomas explores in *In Pursuit of Spring* is the depth of his affinity with *three* writers who, in 1798, shared a passionate conviction that the language of ordinary life could be the stuff of poetry.[47]

Newlyn's work opens up the grammar, syntax, and focus of Thomas' personal prose to inquiries of how the ways he describes himself relate to his interpretations of these Romantic-period writers. In a later essay '"The shape of the sentences": Edward Thomas's tracks in contemporary poetry' (2007), Newlyn then writes that his poetry relates to his interpretations of Romantic-period poetry. Newlyn describes Thomas' poetry 'cherishing little-regarded things' as a development from his Romantic-period attitudes in his personal prose, which she says shares with Wordsworth and John Clare 'a preference for the humble details of rustic life'.[48] His poetry presents these details in a mimetic syntax which is said to carry 'the freight of complex patterns of thought'.[49] Newlyn's work helpfully underscores that Thomas' prose and poetry can present narrators and personae as having 'complex patterns of thought' in ways which are tied to his reading of Romantic-period poets. This thesis responds to her methodology by examining how Thomas' criticism differentiates Romantic-period poets and supplies his poetry with a range of strategies for constructing personae.

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[47] Ibid., 181.
[48] Lucy Newlyn, '"The shape of the sentences": Edward Thomas's tracks in contemporary poetry', in *Branch-Lines: Edward Thomas and Contemporary Poetry*, ed. by Guy Cuthbertson and Lucy Newlyn (London: Enitharmon Press, 2007), 65-82 (75).
[49] Ibid., 72.

Edna Longley, editor of Thomas' *Poems and Last Poems* (1973) and *Annotated Collected Poems* (2008), has looked to how the multiple different Romantic-period 'echoes' in his poetry are mediated by a combination of his critical writing and 'contemporary fashions'.[50] In *Under the Same Moon: Edward Thomas and the English Lyric* (2017) Longley describes how Thomas' poetry includes 'Remixing the Romantics', a process with which his poetry makes 'Romantic aesthetics undergo a modern metamorphosis'.[51] She presents Thomas as 'remixing' Romantic-period poetry by adapting Romantic-period 'structures of thought as they affect poetic genre and form' to represent experiences and priorities which are specific to the early twentieth-century.[52] Therefore, Longley helpfully shows that, to Thomas, Romantic-period poetry was not just a matter of words. Her work shows that Romantic-period poetry supplied Thomas' poetry the opportunity to adapt a wide range of forms, generic rules, ideas, and verbal structures into new expressions.

However, this thesis aims to rebalance Longley's suggestion that the adaptation of Romantic-period 'structures of thought' into a non-Wordsworthian period means that 'the fallout of Romantic "vision" contributes to Thomas's relativistic dialectics about perceptions, and to the shifting perspectives within and between his poems'.[53] Longley's suggestion that all late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interpretations of Romantic-period styles can be seen as compensating for such a 'fallout' inhibits the appreciation of Thomas' poetry as the product of his criticism of Romantic-period poetry. Thomas does not state that his poetry is an attempt to recover or compensate for Wordsworth's 'visionary' style. In fact, he suggests in *Maurice Maeterlinck* (1911) that although 'we now have no fixed morality, no defined consolation, promise, or hope' there may yet be an increase in the importance of 'humanity' which brings 'great changes'.[54]

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[50] Edna Longley, *Poetry in the Wars* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1986), 70.
[51] Edna Longley, *Under the Same Moon: Edward Thomas and the English Lyric* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2017), 65.
[52] Ibid., 82.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Edward Thomas, *Maurice Maeterlinck* (London: Methuen, 1911), 240.

Moreover, a focus on compensating for Wordsworth can obstruct critical enquiry into how Thomas' writing keeps some ideas of different Romantic-period poets separate. If Thomas does not say, for instance, that Keats' representations of the senses or Coleridge's representations of war are related to Wordsworthian 'vision', then why should his critics seek to say that they are necessarily related in his writing?

This thesis negotiates the issues and opportunities which Longley's criticism raises, and it does so by exploring the range of different ways that Thomas' criticism was a filtering process which brought aspects of Romantic-period poetry into his own poetry. It builds on Longley's suggestion that a Romantic-period 'structure of thought' can include critical ideas from later than the Romantic-period. It develops from that suggestion by freeing Thomas' 'Romanticism' from necessarily being related to Wordsworthian 'vision', instead only tracing that particular relation where Thomas' critical comments leave it warranted. By doing so, this thesis demonstrates how Thomas' poetry involves combinations of the critical positions he took on Romantic-period poets with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism' in his literary theory.

Methodology.

This thesis answers the following research questions: what is the importance of how Thomas' lyric poetry responds to his criticism of Romantic-period poetry; and how does the relationship between his prose and poetry articulate what late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics could call 'Romantic' ideas about poetry?

These questions are concerned with how Thomas' poems can draw on and articulate his other pieces of writing. This thesis' methodology for answering them can be shown by outlining its similarities and differences to two different sets of critical theory which handle these types of connections between texts. The first is the body of theory that deals with intertextuality. Like this thesis, 'intertextual' theorists seek to understand the ways in which the language within a given text connects to instances

external to that text. Intertextual theories look for how a single given text reveals the presence of an indefinable and potentially-infinite 'intertext' of communicative acts. By contrast, this thesis traces relationships between a definite range of texts. Therefore, the first portion of this methodology will clarify how it is that this thesis looks at relationships between texts without taking part in the indefiniteness and infinity of 'intertextual' theories.

Once this methodology has clarified its distance from intertextual theories, it will demonstrate how this thesis employs a type of 'close-reading' with a focus on Thomas' work as a critic. This close-reading is focused on Thomas' lyric poetry. As I will outline in relation to a summary of close-reading methodologies, the close-reading in the thesis is developed from how theories of 'influence' use close-reading to compare poems with discrete earlier sources. It is a development because this thesis does not attempt to use close-reading to say that another writer has influenced Thomas' poetry. Instead, this thesis uses close-reading to say how Thomas' poems articulate two important strands of his criticism. These strands are his judgments of the generic rules of lyric poetry, which I will show are related to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism', and his judgments of how particular Romantic-period poets had represented themselves in their poetry. The use of close-reading in this thesis, then, stands out as it particularly focuses on how the ways that Thomas' lyrics depict personae can represent both the generic rules of lyric and the ideas of different poets' achievements that he had defined as a critic.

Theories of intertextuality consider the different ways that a text can be regarded as connected to all or any texts. Julia Kristeva introduced the term 'intertextuality' into francophone literary criticism in her paper 'Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman', presented in 1966 and then published in *Critique* in 1967.[55] The term came into anglophone criticism with the translation of Kristeva's essay 'The Bounded Text' in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980). In 'The Bounded Text'

[55] Marko Juvan, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*, trans. by Timothy Pogačar (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 97.

Kristeva describes how every part of any given text is to be held in relation to other acts of communication.[56] The given text does not communicate on its own terms, nor does it make reference to any external reality. Rather, it is 'a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text', being a site where 'several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another'.[57] Kristeva's theory of intertextuality treats the social text of commonplace ideas, received wisdom, innuendo, and generic rules as an anonymous 'intertext' which pervades the given text. Instead of showing that one writer has used language in a way influenced by one other writer, these 'utterances' show that the given text expresses attitudes and ideologies which occur in the surrounding society.

When they treat texts as expressions of a surrounding society, theories of intertextuality can undo the suggestion that the given text represents its one writer. In the essay 'From Work to Text' (1971), Roland Barthes emphasises that the unspecified social traces are central to intertextually reading a given text. Barthes writes that 'The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text … the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet, *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas'.[58] In Barthes' model of intertextuality the given text is seen as completely 'the text-between of another text'. Accordingly, his approach to intertextuality does not seek to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant citations. As Barthes writes in 'The Struggle with the Angel' in *Image Music Text*, he no longer tries to define '*from where* the text comes (historical criticism), nor even *how* it is made (structural analysis)'.[59] Instead of interpreting the given text, Barthes' intertextuality

[56] *Desire in Language* is a collection of essays translated from the French. 'The Bounded Text' first appeared, in French, in Julia Kristeva, *Sèméiôtikè: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1969).
[57] Julia Kristeva, 'The Bounded Text', in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 36-63 (36).
[58] Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 155-164 (160).
[59] Ibid., 126-127.

treats that text as an uncertain expression of what communicative acts the reader may connect to it.

With Barthes' theories, intertextuality stresses the uncertainty of 'the text as taken up in an *open* network which is the very infinity of language'.[60] As Graham Allen writes in *Intertextuality* (2000), the indefinite networks that Kristeva and Barthes describe are Poststructuralist theories of intertextuality because they 'disrupt notions of meaning'.[61] These theories of intertextuality deny that the given text can make reference to concepts outside of the text. Instead of making reference to definite concepts or texts, the given text shows the presence of an infinite 'network' or 'intertext'. Their different approaches to an 'intertext' raise the issues of both whether and how intertextual theories can interpret the given text. In the essay 'The Death of the Author' (1968) Barthes writes that there is no correct interpretation of a text. He writes that when intertextuality overthrows the notion that only the author can say what the given text's correct interpretation is, then 'the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile'.[62] Instead of searching for a correct interpretation, Barthes' model of intertextuality holds that the readers of a text are 'the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination'.[63] The reader will be able to follow the traces of the 'intertext' in whichever directions they choose. In Poststructuralist models of intertextuality, as Barthes' work exemplifies, there is no stability that makes the given text have a correct 'meaning', or reference to a concept outside of the 'intertext'.

By contrast with Poststructuralist intertextuality, the Structuralist intertextuality of Michael Riffaterre tries to translate definite interpretations of the given text out from the indefinite 'intertext'. Riffaterre's project is an example of Structuralist intertextuality attempting to 'locate and even fix literary meaning'.[64] Riffaterre treats the given text as

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[60] Ibid., 126.
[61] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (Abingdon, and New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 4.
[62] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, 142-148 (147).
[63] Ibid., 148.
[64] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 4.

being able to communicate a single given concept, which he calls the 'matrix from which the whole poem derives'.[65] His Structuralist model of intertextuality is thus focused on how a reader can convert the indefinite 'intertext' into the single, correct interpretation. Riffaterre says that seeing the given text as indefinite is a mistake which follows from the reader's 'failure to recognize a verbal sign for what it is and/or improper identification of its referent'.[66] The reader relates the given text to the indefinite network of language usage that they exist in, which Riffaterre calls the 'sociolect'.[67] Riffaterre theorises that recognition and interpretation should happen when a reader has enough experience of their 'sociolect' to see 'ungrammaticalities', which are prominent and unusual uses of language. The salience of the 'ungrammaticalities' guides interpretation because 'what is in context ungrammatical will be found to be grammatical elsewhere, within the intertext'.[68] Using their 'literary competence', an ability which Riffaterre does not define, the reader will sift through 'grammatical' and 'ungrammatical' words by reading 'with the descriptive systems, with themes, with his society's mythologies, and above all with other texts' all in mind.[69] Riffaterre's model of intertextuality is an example, then, of how Structuralist intertextuality can attempt to create stability or certitude in interpreting the given text. However, this certitude is translating the indefinite 'intertext' into a single concept that the given text can communicate, and not identifying specific texts to which the given text may definitely respond.

I have given examples of both Poststructuralist and Structuralist theories of intertextuality to clarify that this thesis does not look to an indefinite or infinite 'intertext' that surrounds Thomas' poetry. This thesis seeks to situate Thomas' poetry as a response to a definite group of texts: his literary theory and his criticism of Romantic-period poetry. It does so by looking for affinities between Thomas' critical positions on

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[65] Michael Riffaterre, 'Interpretation and Undecidability', *New Literary History*, 12:2 (Winter 1981), 227-242 (230).
[66] Riffaterre, 'Interpretation and Undecidability', 227.
[67] Michael Riffaterre, 'Intertextuality vs Hypertextuality', *New Literary History*, 25:4 (Autumn 1994), 779-788 (781).
[68] Riffaterre, 'Interpretation and Undecidability', 233.
[69] Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington, IN, and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), 5.

different Romantic-period poets and the construction of the persona in his lyric poems. Instead of prioritising new interpretations of what Thomas communicates in or with his lyric poems, this thesis emphasises how unpicking his construction of personae reveals his poems' connections to his literary theory and his criticism of Romantic-period poetry.

The methodological nuance which underpins this thesis' emphasis on construction is revealed by a comparison to how Culler describes critics' use of 'interpretation' in reading lyric poetry.[70] The goal of 'interpretation', Culler writes in *Theory of the Lyric*, is to 'discover a meaning' in a lyric; by contrast, the goal of 'Poetics' is in 'asking what are the conventions that enable this work to have the sorts of meanings and effects it does for readers … to understand the techniques that make meaning possible, techniques that belong to the generic tradition'.[71] Stressing Culler's division between 'interpretation' and 'Poetics' – which, as he warns, is not a firm division – helps to clarify that this thesis is centred on examining the critical positions which inform Thomas' composition of different types of personae and not on showing that what the personae say must communicate a particular sentiment.

As such, this thesis does not emphasise interpreting the content of a lyric expression. Nor does it emphasise interpreting how the appearance of speech in Thomas' lyric poems generates new insights into his biography or into the social ideas and ideologies which circulated in his lifetime. Neither does it seek to impose a new voice on his lyrics. It does not emphasise personal affective responses to Thomas' lyrics as the starting-point for its inquiry, a critical style which Rita Felski promulgates in her account of Actor-Network Theory, *The Limits of Critique* (2015).[72] Nor does it remove personae altogether by instead asking which real-world contexts readers could fit the poem to by using it as a guide or script for their own expression, a model of reading which the aesthetician Kendall L. Walton calls 'thoughtwriting'.[73] Rather, this thesis prioritises

[70] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 5.
[71] Ibid., 6.
[72] Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago, IL, and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015). In particular, see chapter five, '"Context Stinks!"'
[73] Kendall L. Walton, '*Thoughtwriting* – In Poetry and Music', in *In Other Shoes: Music, Metaphor, Empathy, Existence* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54-74.

examining the different methods that Thomas' poems use to represent voices speaking. By doing so, this thesis situates Thomas' lyric within the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development of the lyric. It looks to how critical attitudes current in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism' guide Thomas' literary awareness of the lyric genre's conventions, and then how his criticism of different Romantic-period poets supplies him strategies for using the genre.

These 'strategies' are templates for personae. In *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (2007), Mutlu Konuk Blasing describes the representation of a voice speaking as the central convention of lyric poetry. This voice is the persona. It is not a real person but the product of 'a formal practice'.[74] It will be the imitation of a subjectivity, 'a generic "I", not to be confused with an extralinguistic entity'.[75] This thesis differentiates the personae in Thomas' lyric poetry by their different styles of 'thought'. In this thesis I define 'thought' as all of the mental activity that personae are depicted as having. This definition of 'thought' enables this thesis to foreground that personae are constructions and to distinguish them by discussing how they are portrayed as being either aware or unaware of their mental activity.

This thesis' emphasis on artistic representations of mental activity raises the issue of whether its method relates to Neurocriticism. Neurocriticism is a type of criticism which involves critics discussing creative writing in relation to the types of cognitive activity that occur in real brains. These critics include Alan Richardson, who writes of Romantic-period poetry 'while looking to work in the cognitive neurosciences as a source for new perspectives', and Ellen Spolsky, who interprets 'the permanent supplementarity of meaning that destabilizes all meaning' as a 'necessary and innate [aspect] of our genetically inherited epistemological equipment'.[76] This thesis does not attempt Neurocriticism, nor does it attempt to reconcile a theory of personae with a theory of

[74] Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 2.
[75] Ibid., 27.
[76] Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 12; Ellen Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modern Mind* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 192.

Neurocriticism. It does not treat personae as though they have real brains or an existence off the page. Showing its contrast to Neurocriticism helps to underscore that this thesis treats personae as literary constructions, and it uses the term 'thought' to describe the literary techniques used in the artistic depiction of their mental activity. Therefore, with 'thought', it explores how Thomas' criticism of Romantic-period poetry contributes to the artistic portrayal of personae with different focuses, limits, and biases in the mental activity that they may be aware or unaware of.

To this thesis, Thomas' lyrics portray 'thought' when personae speak about their reality. The persona and the reality are interknit. The reality is only visible through how the persona describes it, and the persona is only visible because they describe the reality. This mutual relationship between persona and scene is an important topic within the study of lyric poetry. In *The Three Genres and the Interpretation of Lyric* (1983) William Elford Rogers explains that lyrics can be distinguished by how they make 'reciprocal' arrangements between the persona and the scene, 'a relation between mind and world such that each determines the other'.[77] Rogers makes this relation central to his method, stating that 'the question of reciprocity' is a way of 'articulating the differences between poems'.[78] This thesis takes impetus from the ideas of both Blasing and Rogers. In this first chapter it will go on to show how Thomas' literary theory explores the presentation of different speaking voices and their possible relationships to the scenes they inhabit. It will show how ideas germane to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism' guide Thomas' argument that lyrics present personae in what he calls 'worlds'.[79] To Thomas, a poem is a 'world' when it is a vignette which depicts a persona's 'thought' through how that persona describes a scene or topic. In the

[77] William Elford Rogers, *The Three Genres and the Interpretation of Lyric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 69.
[78] Ibid., 269.
[79] I discuss the term 'world' to a greater extent in the next section of this chapter. To substantiate my present attention to the term, a representative sample of Thomas using 'world' in his reviews and critical studies is: Edward Thomas, 'William Morris', *The Bookman*, 41:246 (March 1912), 300-301 (300); Edward Thomas, 'Poems and Legends', *The Bookman*, 46:276 (September 1914), 251-252 (251); Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 18-25, 87, 261-262, 315; Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies, His Life and Work* (London: Hutchinson, c. 1909), 307; Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 28; and Edward Thomas, *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study* (London: Secker, 1912), 152-153.

three subsequent chapters, which discuss relationships between Thomas' poetry and his criticism of different poets, this thesis then explores how Thomas' criticism says Romantic-period poets made distinctive 'worlds'. These chapters will demonstrate that Thomas' poetry features equivalents of the different ways that personae can give description which he had defined in that criticism.

This thesis' focus on personae who inhabit 'worlds' involves it finding some separation between Thomas' poetry and the physical reality that he actually lived in. This critical approach is to respond to Thomas' arguments that lyric 'worlds' function as pieces of the poet's experience of reality chipped off and crystallised. This thesis explores the purposes of Thomas' position that these 'worlds' enable lyric poems to be autonomous from the poet's social, biographical, and historical contexts. Its focus on 'thought' allows the thesis to demonstrate that Thomas' criticism and poetry claim autonomy for the lyric in ways which delineate different sets of meanings for words and phrases by following one or more of his specific critical interpretations of Romantic-period poetry. This awareness of autonomy connects the thesis to a concern over autonomy in several studies of the lyric. In *Fictions of Autonomy* (2013), Andrew Goldstone identifies an emphasis on autonomy as a key train in literary Modernism, and writes that this emphasis varies 'according to their contexts – according, that is, to what modernist writers, in particular times and places, most urgently seek autonomy *from*'.[80] It involves literary works recreating and confronting their social embeddedness so that autonomy becomes a 'relatively independent mode of relation with the very domains that seem to constrain it'.[81] By contrast to this view of autonomy as a state which is sought from circumstances, this thesis supplies a positive view of autonomy which is a critical tool designed to unpick and exhibit the intricacies in Thomas' use of literary theory. It argues that Thomas' criticism and poetry create specific sets of potential meanings that are localised around the figure of the persona. These sets can be brought

[80] Andrew Goldstone, *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to De Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.
[81] Ibid., 10, 15.

to bear on social circumstances, and in some of Thomas' poems there are prominent allusions to urgent situations such as the First World War (these allusions are discussed in the second chapter). However, rather than remaking specific social circumstances to then stay 'relatively independent' from them, this thesis reads Thomas' autonomy as a way of showing types of people who respond to types of social circumstances.

This approach is not to claim that such a mode of autonomy, one which explores genres of people and of situations, is the only mode that could potentially be applied to Thomas' poetry. An interrogative framework such as Shira Wolosky uses in 'The Claims of Rhetoric: Toward a Historical Poetics (1820-1900)' (2003) or Michael Davidson in '"Hey Man, My Wave"! The Authority of Private Language' (1984) could see poetic form and specific historical circumstances as mutually informing. It would then question the assumptions involved in the claim, central to Thomas' 'Romanticism', that a poem uses a given set of meanings in a way that reveals the persona, not the historical reality of poets, critics, and social pressures that grouped those meanings together.[82] However, after Virginia Jackson's essay, 'Who Reads Poetry?' (2008), which questions whether the influence of lyric poetry on criticism has led to critics habitually seeing apparently first-person speech as a coherent lyric statement of a persona's 'subjective experience', what this thesis' genre-like mode of autonomy does achieve is a precise focus on how Thomas' poems work to generate that type of coherence.[83] In 'After the Critique of Lyric' (2008), Rei Terrada writes, similarly to Jackson, of how lyric criticism routinely presupposes that lyric has a 'deep and unique connection' to 'the human mind', a position which 'continues to imply that lyric is a crucial part of human nature'.[84] This argument about critics' habitual actions makes this thesis' positive view of autonomy especially helpful. By focusing attention on how Thomas derived formal and semantic means for writing lyrics from his work as a critic, and then how he worked them into imitations of coherent

[82] Shira Wolosky, 'The Claims of Rhetoric: Toward a Historical Poetics (1820-1900)', *American Literary History*, 15:1 (Spring 2003), 14-21; Michael Davidson, '"Hey Man, My Wave!" The Authority of Private Language', in *A Guide to 'Poetics Journal': Writing in the Expanded Field 1982-1998*, ed. by Lyn Hejinian and Barrett Watten (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 202-214.
[83] Virginia Jackson, 'Who Reads Poetry?', *PMLA*, 123:1 (January 2008), 181-7 (184).
[84] Rei Terrada, 'After the Critique of Lyric', *PMLA*, 123:1 (January 2008), 195-200 (198).

personal speech in his poems, this thesis shows that there is no 'deep and unique connection' so much as a group of manufactured and stylised representations of what different types of 'thought' might be. This approach to autonomy achieves the thesis' overarching goal, which is to examine the plurality of ways that Thomas' poetry extends out from the most distinctive, idiosyncratic parts of his criticism of Romantic-period poets.

To read Thomas' criticism as a source of how personae are shown in his poetry, this thesis develops the close-reading methodology that Lucy Newlyn uses to study Romantic-period poetry. Close-reading is a term associated with the New Criticism, a movement of mid-twentieth-century anglophone critics including Yvor Winters, Kenneth Burke, Cleanth Brooks, and John Crowe Ransom.[85] The New Critical close-reading involves, in Burke's description of methodology in his essay 'Symbolic Action in a Poem by Keats' (1945), the critic choosing to 'Suppose that we had but this one poem … so that we could treat it only in itself, as a series of internal transformations to be studied in their development from a certain point, and without reference to any motives outside'.[86] This thesis does not subscribe to the perspective that a poem is alone. Therefore, it does not use a New Critical version of close-reading. It rather uses close-reading to see how Thomas' poems can reflect the other work undertaken by Thomas the critic and theorist. This close-reading is focused on how the patterns of language in Thomas' poems can differentiate personae and connect them to his various critical works.

Newlyn's close-reading approach focuses on how the language that poems use to present their speakers can show traces of other identifiable texts. She presents this approach as a response to the methodology outlined in Harold Bloom's theories of influence. In *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion* (1986) and *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader* (1993), she respectively makes 'revisionary moves to'

[85] Andrew DuBois, 'Introduction', in *Close Reading: The Reader*, ed. by Frank Lentricchia and Andrew Dubois (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-40 (3).
[86] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (New York, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1945), 450.

and 'side-steps' Bloom's theory of the 'Anxiety of Influence'.[87] In *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975), Bloom describes how relationships of 'influence' between specific writers involve 'anxiety' over earlier 'strong poets'.[88] The psychological 'anxiety' provides poets creative stimulation to emulate what had gone before; the new poetry that they write is then their 'simultaneously intentional and involuntary' mis-interpretation, or '*clinamen*', of the 'strong poet' whom they emulate.[89] Newlyn changes the focus of how 'influence' interprets earlier texts into new poetic expressions. Her work does not occur within the psychological frame of 'anxiety'. Newlyn instead uses the historicising frame of how writers from a time period regarded the purpose and possibilities of poetry. In *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader* she writes that the historical frame enables a focus on verbal links between poems:

> Bloom's use of Freudian theory pushes the phenomenon of influence-as-anxiety firmly into the unconscious, where it happens behind the screen of verbal borrowings easily discernible to the reader. This makes his method unhelpful as a model for discussion of echoes and allusions themselves, which we might think of as the audible traces of other writers, as opposed to 'the hidden roads that go from poem to poem'.[90]

This thesis' close-reading methodology follows how Newlyn focuses on a specific range of relationships that occur in a historical context and on how they are shown by 'the audible traces of other writers'. In *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader* Newlyn looks to relationships between Romantic-period poems and the works of John Milton (1608-1674), setting them against Romantic-period attitudes. In *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion* she uses the same method to show the friendship between

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[87] Lucy Newlyn, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xv; Lucy Newlyn, *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.
[88] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997); Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading: With a New Preface* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[89] Bloom, *Anxiety*, 44-45.
[90] Newlyn, *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader*, 15.

Wordsworth and Coleridge as the context of 'the literary collaboration it generated'.[91] Newlyn also uses this method in her work on Thomas. In 'Hazlitt and Edward Thomas on Walking' she explores how Thomas' essay-writing style reflects his reading of Hazlitt and the historicising frame of early twentieth-century attitudes to being English. Hazlitt's 'view of England was instrumental in shaping Thomas's', which Newlyn demonstrates by discussing how 'Quotations and echoes … show how deeply the patternings of Hazlitt's prose impressed themselves on Thomas's memory'.[92] This thesis borrows her close-reading method but develops it by changing the focus. Instead of looking at how Romantic-period writers were 'impressed on' Thomas' writing, this thesis explores how Thomas' poetry shows the impressions of his theory of lyric and his criticism of Romantic-period poets.

Newlyn's close-reading is driven by two types of verbal relationship, 'allusion' and 'echo'. In this thesis' reading of Thomas' poetry, 'allusions' to and 'echoes' of texts that he had critiqued are markers that can indicate the presence of the ideas and conclusions that he expresses in that criticism. Therefore, defining these verbal relationships produces the critical tools that this thesis uses to observe Thomas' poetry having influence from his criticism. 'Allusion' and 'echo' can be seen as versions of a type of verbal relationship called 'quotation'. This methodology defines 'quotation' as a sign-posted act of verbal transplantation. 'Quotation' uses punctuation and attribution to mark language off from other voices in the text. It then gives the appearance of, as John Hollander writes in *The Figure of Echo* (1981), 'the literal presence of a body of text'.[93] By contrast with 'quotation', 'allusion' and 'echo' use ambiguity to connect texts. 'Allusion' involves language or forms that call attention to the presence of an external text. For instance, an 'allusion' may involve the persona saying the title of another work or the name of an author. As Newlyn underlines, these connections involve an

[91] Lucy Newlyn, 'Preface to the Second Edition', in *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion*, vii-xxxiv (viii).
[92] Newlyn, 'Hazlitt and Edward Thomas on Walking', 168-169.
[93] John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1981), 64.

'indeterminacy' that is not present in 'quotation'.[94] This is not the intertextual indeterminacy involved in Riffaterre's 'literary competence', which is a process of readers choosing some texts to relate to a given text, but rather the indeterminacy of how a specific range of alluded-to texts can be said to impact on the given text. 'Allusion' transforms prior texts into being part of present texts. As Newlyn recognises, this transformative activity modifies and unbalances the texts. An 'allusion', then, is a combination of signalling and ambiguity which connects 'two different contexts, each modifying the other'.[95]

'Echo' covers unsignalled verbal similarities between texts. While an 'allusion' can call attention to how the reader can interpret the alluded-to text's involvement in the given text, an 'echo' does not draw attention to a textual relationship. Rather, 'echo' indicates a tacit piece of ambiguous connectivity in the given text. As it is latent, 'echo' can problematise the question of whether the writer intended for it to be present in the text. As Richard Gaskin notes in *Language, Truth, and Literature: A Defence of Literary Humanism* (2013), however, discussing an author's intentions is just another way of discussing a given text's 'meaning': 'Of course no one is interested in what [Publius Papinius] Statius "had in mind" in any sense going beyond the meaning of the work'.[96] When this thesis considers the aspects of a poem that could be called 'meaning', however, it only does so with a focus on what is revealed about the poem's construction. In this thesis, then, 'echoes' are not analysed for their 'meaning'. They are regarded as potential markers of how the representation of personae in Thomas' lyric poems involve the strategies that he outlined in his criticism of different Romantic-period poems. Accordingly, the thesis only focuses on the 'echoes' of a specific range of texts, which are Thomas' critical remarks and the poems that he made those remarks on. The thesis uses these 'echoes' as indicators of Thomas' reading practice, treating them as clues which help with its main work: showing how and what happens when the personae in

[94] Newlyn, *'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader*, 11.
[95] Ibid., 5-6.
[96] Richard Gaskin, *Language, Truth, and Literature: A Defence of Literary Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 217.

Thomas' poetry present 'thought' in the same ways that he said Romantic-period poets had done.

'Thought', 'Romanticism', and Thomas' Theory of Lyric Poetry.

> For the most part his poetry has been what nearly all would agree to call lyrical … If it is of the essence of the lyric that it should have an independent life singing itself into the brain of the reader with no aid of past knowledge or present thought, but directly through the door of the individual spirit, then no question but Mr. de la Mare's poems are the purest lyrics.[97]

This quotation is from Thomas' December 1910 review of *Poems* (1910) by Walter de la Mare. While Thomas did not write a manifesto of his literary theory, his ideas for what lyric could accomplish and how poets might use it are apparent in his reviews and his critical studies. The core of his approach is present in the *Poems* review above: lyric poetry should show 'an independent life' which depends on nothing but 'the individual spirit'. Readers should not need to know that a lyric poem makes reference to a person (including the poet) or an event lodged in 'past knowledge', nor should they need to know about a trend or development in the zeitgeist, which Thomas refers to as 'present thought' in the *Poems* review. Instead, Thomas writes, readers should be able to read the lyric poem and receive a picture of the 'independent life's' own mental activity.

This section of the thesis will trace the historical context and the critical work which are the foundation of Thomas' observation that a lyric poem shows an 'individual spirit'. First, the section demonstrates that Thomas' idea of an 'individual spirit' uses ideas that other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics and poets were labelling as characteristic of a literary style which they were calling 'Romanticism' and

[97] Edward Thomas, 'Songs of Childhood. By Walter Ramal. Longmans. Poems by Walter de la Mare.', excerpted in *Edward Thomas on the Georgians*, ed. by Richard Emeny (Cheltenham: The Cyder Press, 2004), 113-115 (114).

were using to redefine the purpose and working of lyric poetry. Then, the section shows that Thomas' theory of what poetry fundamentally is, a 'natural spirit of poetry', is part of a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical discussion about what 'Romanticism' is as a style of poetry. Thereafter, the section shows how Thomas theorised that poems ought to be made. It sets out his theory of how a lyric poet's thinking certain things in a particular way may be converted into the artistic imitation of mental activity which Thomas calls an 'individual spirit' in a 'world'.

Thomas' theories of poetry and its 'individual spirit[s]' express ideas that other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were associating with the term 'Romanticism'. Thomas' similarities to this 'Romanticism' are his critical ideas which say that lyric poetry should focus on showing personae and that each persona should be an 'independent' and coherent 'life'. However, it was not only 'Romantic' critics who discussed whether and how poetry could show personae. In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period, the Modernist movement emerged and, in literature, took a focus on how and why poems present personae. Yet, and as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, there are two main points on which Thomas and the 'Romantic' critics are pointedly unlike these Modernist critics. These points are that, by contrast to Thomas and 'Romantic' critics, Modernists writers did not present their theories as indebted to and stemming from Romantic-period poetry and they were less inclined to state that personae must appear as fully coherent lives, 'independent' from the reader having to know anything external to the poem to then interpret what kind of persona it shows.'

Several prominent Modernist poets publicly rejected using Romantic-period poets as authoritative precedents for their theories. In 'Reflections on Contemporary Poems' in *The Egoist* (September 1917) the major Modernist poet, playwright, and critic T. S. Eliot provides a key example. Eliot describes a trend in which 'contemporary verse has tried to escape the rhetorical, the abstract, the moralizing, to recover (for that is its purpose)

the accents of direct speech'.[98] When Eliot describes the background to this trend he does not treat Romantic-period poets as important precedents. Eliot says that in Wordsworth's poetry 'the emotion is of the object and not of human life' and that the result of this judgment is that Wordsworth's work is less important than work by earlier poets, such as John Donne (1572-1631), who show that 'the emotion is definitely human, merely seizing the object in order to express itself'.[99] When Thomas outlines the function and purpose of lyric poetry he is unlike Eliot because he emphasises links between his critical positions and Romantic-period poetry. These links form much of the discussion that follows in this chapter.

Thomas' theory of lyric also differs from theories which became prominent in the literary Modernism emerging in Britain. The crucial difference is that Thomas' theory foregrounds the coherent 'individual spirit[s]'. These 'spirits' are in contrast to the representation of unstable and fragmentary personae in several Modernist works. The contrast is apparent in a comparison of Thomas' representation of a self-doubting and wandering persona in 'The Other' (c. December 1914) to Eliot's representation of self-doubt and journeying in his landmark poem, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1910-1911). The speaking voice in 'Prufrock' has an unstable identity of 'a hundred visions and revisions' (l. 35); it shifts in tense, describes desires to be inhuman ('I should have been a pair of ragged claws | Scuttling' (ll. 73-74)), and disrupts spatial and temporal reference with the repeated fragment of indefinite women who 'come and go | Talking of Michelangelo' (ll. 13-14, 35-36).[100] By contrast, 'The Other' has a consistent narrative of a single persona walking. It shows how the persona changes from perceiving himself in solitude as 'an old inhabitant of earth' (l. 80) to defining himself by his relationship to a doppelgänger.[101] Although this persona experiences a change in how he regards himself, he does not doubt the idea that people can have identities. When set against the similar

[98] T.S. [Thomas Stearns] Eliot, 'Reflections on Contemporary Poetry', *The Egoist*, 4:8 (September 1917), 118-119 (118).
[99] Ibid.
[100] T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', in *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 9-14 (9-12).
[101] Edward Thomas, 'The Other', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 40-42 (42).

themes in 'Prufrock', 'The Other' exemplifies that Thomas' lyric exhibits the changes that occur in 'individual spirit[s]' rather than using either those changes, or broader social changes, as precipitating a complete collapse of the possibility of consistent identity.

It is a little-studied but crucially important point that Thomas' theory of lyric and 'individual spirit[s]' matches to what several late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century authors were identifying as a 'Romantic' trend in poetry. In *The Essential Characteristics of the Romantic and Classical Styles* (1880) C. H. Herford describes a trend called the 'Romantic style'. Herford uses the label 'Romantic' to refer to activity taking place in late nineteenth-century poetry, not in a retrospective of Romantic-period poets. He writes that 'Romanticism' is an 'unfettered' expression of the poet's character and motivations: 'every deviation from the normal structure of verse, even by a nearer approach to the unfettered language of prose, has an irregular, piquant, and essentially Romantic effect'.[102] Herford's book shows that critics and poets could associate the 'arbitrariness of fancy', 'eager uncritical delight', and 'variety, irregularity and contrast' with an ongoing 'Romantic style'.[103] Herford's description of 'Romanticism' suggests the same focus on innovative and personal expression that the poet and biographer William Sharp (also known as 'Fiona Macleod') describes in the 'Dedicatory Note' to his *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* (1888). Sharp writes that 'there is a Romantic Revival imminent in our poetic literature', and that this 'Revival' will include poets showing their own individuality through the ways their poems represent people having 'knowledge and experience'.[104] Sharp writes that his *Romantic Ballads* anticipates how a late nineteenth-century 'Romantic Revival' will involve seeing 'all the rays of human knowledge and experience' as 'an overwhelmingly vivid beam of light' from which it is in 'endeavours to translate something of its radiance, that the idiosyncrasies of the true poet find fit development'.[105] Herford characterises 'Romanticism' as the rendering of idiosyncrasy,

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[102] C. H. [Charles Harold] Herford, *The Essential Characteristics of the Romantic and Classical Styles: With Illustrations from English Literature* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co.; London: Bell, 1880), 26.
[103] Ibid., 19, 28.
[104] William Sharp, 'Dedicatory Note', in *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* (London: Scott, 1889) v-xiii (v, viii).
[105] Ibid., viii-ix.

and Sharp looks at how it combines idiosyncrasy with human 'knowledge and experience'. Their works indicate a trend of writers connecting 'Romanticism' to innovative poetic representations of people's different personalities and perceptions.

Writing twenty-two years after Herford's *Essential Characteristics*, and fourteen after Sharp's *Romantic Ballads*, the American critic Henry A. Beers gives a similar account of the 'romantic spirit' contributing 'eager experiment', 'curiosity', and 'subjectivity' to poetry. In *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* (1902) Beers describes this 'spirit' as a 'common' quality in nineteenth-century poetry:

> Most of the poetry of the century that has just closed has been romantic in the wider or looser acceptation of the term. Emotional stress, sensitiveness to the picturesque, love of natural scenery, interest in distant times and places, curiosity of the wonderful and mysterious, subjectivity, lyricism, intrusion of the ego, impatience of the limits of the *genres*, eager experiment with new forms of art – these and the like marks of the romantic spirit are as common in the verse literature of the nineteenth century as they are rare in that of the eighteenth.[106]

Together, Herford, Sharp, and Beers give a sense of what the adjective 'Romantic' could indicate when late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics used it. They do not do as Middleton Murry did in writing on Thomas and associate 'Romantic' with Wordsworth's 'visionary' poetry.[107] Instead, these writers show that in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period the term 'Romantic' could be a focus on poetry deviating from generic and thematic rules so that it would show, in Beers' phrase, 'subjectivity, the continual presence of the man in the work'.[108]

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[106] Henry A. Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1902), 227.
[107] Middleton Murry, 'The Poetry of Edward Thomas', 34.
[108] Beers, *A History of English Romanticism*, 69.

Several early twentieth-century critical works frame 'Romanticism' as poetry that uses innovation to show the persona's personality and perceptions. *Style* (1897), by Walter Raleigh, describes how the 'Romantics' are a loose group of writers active in his present day. They are the 'individualist, anarchic' poets who 'dwell apart, and torture their lives in the effort to attain to self-expression'.[109] Raleigh's early twentieth-century study, *Milton* (1900), suggests that the poet whom *Style* labels the 'individualist' seeking 'self-expression' is fundamental to English poetry. Raleigh writes in *Milton* that 'The English genius in poetry is essentially metaphysical and romantic'.[110] Looking back to poetry of the Romantic-period informed these critics' discussions of what is 'Romantic' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry. Likewise, Arthur Symons roots his present-day picture of all English poetry to how Romantic-period poets show that poetry captures instances that represent a person's consciousness. He writes in *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry* (1909) that Romantic-period poets made poetry 'a personal confession', 'an evocation', or '"an instant made eternity"', and that 'in studying this period we are able to study whatever is essential in English poetry; that is, whatever is essential in poetry'.[111] For Raleigh and Symons, 'Romanticism' is a poetic style which is focused on, above all else, making poems of 'self-expression'.

The same focus on showing personality is also seen in attacks on early twentieth-century 'Romanticism'. T. E. Hulme shows as much in his lecture 'Romanticism and Classicism' (c. 1912) when he argues that 'Romanticism' is an uncritical focus on what poets themselves perceive: 'the sloppiness which doesn't consider that a poem is a poem unless it is moaning or whining about something'.[112] Hulme argues for a new kind of 'Classicism', one which is less concerned with authoritative themes and forms than it is with describing an object or idea with exactitude. He writes the 'Classical' artist 'will

[109] Walter Raleigh, *Style* (London, and New York, NY: Arnold, 1897), 37.
[110] Walter Raleigh, *Milton* (London: Arnold, 1913), 256.
[111] Arthur Symons, 'Introduction', in *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry* (London: Constable, 1909), 3-20 (20).
[112] T. E. [Thomas Ernest] Hulme, 'Romanticism and Classicism', in *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. by Herbert Read (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 111-140 (126).

get an exact curve of what he sees whether it be an object or an idea in the mind'.[113] Hulme's project, then, is to dispel the focus on poets' psychological responses to objects and ideas which leads 'Romantic' poets to write poetry 'to do with infinity, with mystery or with emotions'.[114] Although Hulme attacks it, he shows that 'Romanticism' was an important literary trend where works express 'thought'. This trend continued to exist in the period after the First World War. It occurs in the lecture series *Romanticism* (1927) by Thomas' friend and correspondent Lascelles Abercrombie. Abercrombie provides a 'rough and ready' account of how 'Romanticism' is a tendency for poetry to show the persona's mental activity: 'romanticism is a withdrawal from outer experience in order to concentrate on inner experience'.[115] As with the critics who preceded him in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period, Abercrombie treats 'Romanticism' as a style that uses verbal and formal idiosyncrasy to represent the psychological 'inner experience' of the voice which speaks in the text.

These writers who discussed 'Romanticism' were not minor figures, and they worked for a long time to bring 'Romanticism' to the attention of their readers and audiences. The chronological spread of the works by Herford, Sharp, Beers, Raleigh, Symons, Hulme, and Abercrombie from 1880 to 1927, show that 'Romanticism' remained an important topic in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discussions of what poetry might be and do. When poetry presented innovative language, presented personae's personality and perspectives, or departed from established principles of form, critics and poets were able to describe it as 'Romantic' and as an inheritance from Romantic-period poetry.

As Herford's and Hulme's titles reveal, critics often drew on a binary of two attitudes, 'Romanticism' and 'Classicism'. The essayist and critic Walter Pater (1839-1894) used this binary to offer an important definition of 'Romanticism' which emphasised poets writing in new ways. Pater's definition then persisted through the

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[113] Ibid., 132.
[114] Ibid., 133.
[115] Lascelles Abercrombie, *Romanticism* (London: Secker, 1927), 51.

early twentieth century. As Adam Parkes outlines in *A Sense of Shock* (2011), although Pater died in the 1890s his importance as a critic grew posthumously.[116] The trajectory that Parkes outlines is shown by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics including Edmund Gosse, Lionel Johnson, and Thomas himself. Each writes of the continuing importance of Pater's ideas after his death.[117] To Thomas, Pater's posthumous fame had made him 'our modern English half-hero, half-martyr of Style'.[118]

Pater's description of 'Romanticism' comes in his essay titled 'Romanticism', first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* (November 1876) and then republished as the 'Postscript' in *Appreciations: with an Essay on Style* (1889). Pater says that the terms 'Classical' and 'Romantic' are a binary representing two opposite 'tendencies in the history of art and literature'.[119] He attaches 'Classicism' to 'those qualities of measure, purity, temperance', and to the authoritative and familiar forms 'of the old, immemorial, well-recognised types in art and literature'.[120] 'Romanticism', by contrast, Pater attaches to art which is new and unusual: 'It is the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the romantic character in art'.[121] The corresponding 'romantic temper' which drives late nineteenth-century artists is 'the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty', a desire to create 'new pleasures'.[122] The 'romantic humour', with Pater using 'humour' in the sense of 'disposition', is able to create these new pleasures from 'the quaintness or singularity of its circumstances or expression'.[123] Pater's account of 'Romanticism', then, outlines a trend synonymous with artistic creativity and self-expression. He says

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[116] Adam Parkes, *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 45-76.
[117] Edmund Gosse, *A Short History of Modern English Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1898), 383; Lionel Johnson, 'Mr. Pater and His Public', in *Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers*, ed. by Thomas Whittemore (London: Matthews, 1911), 14-19 (18).
[118] Thomas, *Pater*, 1.
[119] Walter Pater, 'Postscript', in *Appreciations: with an Essay on Style* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1890), 253-274 (253).
[120] Ibid., 257, 270.
[121] Ibid., 258.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 267.

that this trend is ongoing in poetry as an 'ever-present, an enduring presence, in the artistic spirit'.[124]

Pater's definition of 'Romanticism' as an artistic trend influenced several early twentieth-century critics who used the definition as an authoritative reference. Symons, for instance, uses Pater's terms to look back and argue that Romantic-period poetry has qualities which remain 'essential' in early twentieth-century poetry. He writes that this early twentieth-century 'Romantic' poetry is distinguished by 'the quality of its imagination … which adds strangeness to beauty'.[125] Likewise, Oliver Elton notes in *A Survey of English Literature, 1830-1880* (1920) that Pater's 'phrase the "union of strangeness and beauty" has become current since'.[126] And in *Words and Idioms* (1925) the Anglo-American lexicographer Logan Pearsall Smith quotes from the 'Postscript' as part of his attempt to define 'Romanticism': 'Is it, as Pater said, the addition of strangeness to beauty'.[127] As these authors' use of his terms show, Pater's connection between 'Romanticism' and artistic innovation was current in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary criticism. His ideas of 'Romanticism' contributed to critics' discussions of how works were to be 'Romantic' when poets created and innovated in attempts to represent their own character.

Thomas is also an example of a critic using Pater's work to connect the term 'Romanticism' to writers representing their mental activity. Writing on Pater's use of 'Romantic', Thomas connects the term to Pater's lifelong interest in 'the uniqueness of the individual'.[128] His critical study *Walter Pater* discusses Pater's use of a 'Classical' and 'Romantic' binary in the essay 'Sir Thomas Browne' (1886). Thomas looks at how Pater frames Browne's *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or, a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk* (1658) as having grown from once being 'Romantic' to then having a

[124] Ibid., 255.
[125] Symons, 'Introduction', 14.
[126] Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature, 1830-1880*, 2 vols (London: Arnold, 1920), I, 286.
[127] Logan Pearsall Smith, *Words and Idioms: Studies in the English Language* (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1925), 117.
[128] Thomas, *Pater*, 29.

'Classical' stature for later artists. In 'Sir Thomas Browne' Pater writes that 'at its best, romantic literature (and Browne is genuinely romantic) in every period attains classical quality, giving true measure of the very limited value of those well-worn critical distinctions'.[129] Thomas quotes this sentence verbatim from Pater.[130] He then highlights that Pater associates 'the best romantic literature in every age' with 'the importance of individual temperament'.[131] Thomas connects the assessment of the 'best romantic literature' to a sentence that Pater writes four pages later in the essay: in writing 'the appropriate means of cognition must lie among the elements of what we call individual temperament, so that what looks like a pre-judgment may be really a legitimate apprehension'.[132] When Thomas quotes Pater's phrase 'individual temperament' he connects 'Romanticism' with a need that for artworks to show an individual perspective. His reading of 'Sir Thomas Browne' sees Thomas take part in the critical trend of orienting 'Romanticism' away from just gesturing to the Romantic-period poets and toward writers representing individualistic perspectives.

As Thomas, Pater, Symons, and other critics show, 'Romanticism' could involve poems expressing the character and perceptions of an 'individual spirit'. As suggested by Thomas' review of de la Mare's *Poems*, quoted from at the start of this section, critics could also tie the 'individual spirit' to the period's new definitions of lyric poetry. Several late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics who wrote studies of the history and purpose of lyric poetry said that the genre had become focused on representing the poet's individual personality and perceptions. Although these critics often rooted this characteristic of lyric as a development from Romantic-period poetry, their studies frame lyric as losing Romantic-period connections to musical forms and gaining an emphasis on showing the poet's personality through an idiosyncratic use of words and forms. As late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were working to establish the generic

[129] Water Pater, 'Sir Thomas Browne', in *Appreciations*, 127-166 (161).
[130] Thomas, *Pater*, 193.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Pater, 'Sir Thomas Browne', 165.

rules of lyric poetry, then, their work was characterising the genre with the ideas of creativity and expression that other critics were calling 'Romantic'.

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics who led lyric away from Romantic-period connections to musical forms often framed their work as a response to Wordsworth, who had given an influential definition of the 'Lyrical' 'mould' in his 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815). In the 'Preface' Wordsworth identifies six 'moulds', or types, of poetry: the Narrative, the Dramatic, the Lyrical, the Idyllium, the Didactic, and Satire. The 'Lyrical' 'mould' is dependent on music: 'The Lyrical – containing the Hymn, the Ode, the elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable'.[133] As musical accompaniment is often unavailable, Wordsworth states that lyrics must be written for their recitation to be musical on its own. These musical poems can have some freedom from strict meter to allow 'an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject', Wordsworth writing that 'the law of long syllable and short [should] not be so inflexible … as to deprive the reader of a voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem'.[134] When Wordsworth defines the 'Lyrical' 'mould', then, he gives a musical poetry with three core properties: the poems are to be written to be spoken aloud; the poems are to be written in forms which are associated with musical accompaniment; and they should allow the reader to express their own response to 'the subject'. This definition produces a poetry which is focused on either accommodating or mimicking music in a way that lets the reader express himself. In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism, critics could dispute Wordsworth's definition of 'Lyrical' poetry and argue that lyrics ought to be focused on accommodating or mimicking the way that the poet perceived a topic.

Several critical studies written in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period show how lyric was being disentangled from Wordsworth's idea of a musical lyric. Introducing his anthology of *English Lyric Poetry, 1500-1700* (1897), the American critic

[133] William Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Poems*"', in *The Major Works*, 626-639 (627).
[134] Ibid., 629-630.

Frederic Ives Carpenter states that 'the term "Lyric" in modern times has always been of uncertain usage', and that its late nineteenth-century use is distinguished from 'the stricter sense of the term' in which Wordsworth 'asserts that in all lyric kinds, "for the production of their full effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable"'.[135] Carpenter argues that in the ongoing deviation from Wordsworth's arguments, poets have become able to use lyric as a meditative 'poetic form and mood *par excellence*'.[136] Other writers also adapted Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *Poems* into a statement which supports poets expressing the distinctiveness of their perceptions. In *Lyric Poetry* (1913) Ernest Rhys treats the 'Preface' as a point of conversion, writing that it is where lyric poetry stops being set to musical accompaniment: 'With Wordsworth, we may think the converting of the lyrical to the sublyrical, the verse of sung-melody and pure vocal rhythm to that of reflective and meditative expression was complete' because 'he required "nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject"'.[137] Rhys is an example of a writer adapting Wordsworth into a source of support for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideas of lyric. Rhys' adaptation is merging Wordsworth's critical statements with an interpretation of Wordsworth's poetry. It happens when Rhys treats the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* as evidence that Wordsworth's use of the 'Lyrical' 'mould' did not require the 'accompaniment of music' which the 'Preface' to *Poems* says is necessary. By arguing that Wordsworth's career actually marks the change from 'lyrical to the sublyrical', Rhys turns *Lyrical Ballads* and *Poems* into Romantic-period precedents for the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century idea that lyric poetry is primarily about showing the character of the voice that speaks in the poem.

Rhys and Carpenter show that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics could orient ideas of what lyric poetry is and does away from Romantic-period theory and toward the same concepts which other critics were calling an ongoing 'Romantic'

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[135] Frederic Ives Carpenter, 'Introduction', in *English Lyric Poetry, 1500-1700*, ed. by Frederic Ives Carpenter (London: Blackie, 1897), xix-lxvxxi (xx-xxi).
[136] Ibid., xx.
[137] Ernest Rhys, *Lyric Poetry* (London, and Toronto: Dent, 1913), 289, 293.

style. One key trend in this reorientation of lyric is emphasising that the rhythms and patterns of the words that personae in lyrics 'speak' are representative of the persona's mental activity. Rhys describes how these patterns have become the tools lyric poets use to show individuality and 'emotion'. George Meredith was 'most individual – in a sense more lyrical – when he was occupied with his characters, and evoking his own emotion … There the rhythm is with Meredith'; Matthew Arnold, likewise, was 'at his best with individual melody and forms of verse'; and Coventry Patmore introduced 'new rhythms into English … for the expression of those highly elusive feelings'.[138] Rhys reveals a trend of lyric poems drawing authority from Romantic-period poetry so that they could then stands as depictions of mental activity. The trend is visible in *An Essay On the Nature of Lyric Illustrated by the History of English Poetry* (1909) by the poet Gerald Gould, where Gould writes the objective of poetry is to 'possess the "saving grace" of thought', where 'thought' is a process which articulates what the poet 'feels' as 'emotion'.[139] Gould frames his theory of what a lyric poem reveals about its poet as having developed from Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *Poems*. The 'Preface', Gould writes, is a point of 'separation' between lyric and musical forms, and, following, 'It is of the nature of lyric to be infinitely adaptable and for ever modern'.[140] As Carpenter, Rhys, and Gould show, then, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism of the lyric includes the same trends that other writers were labelling as 'Romanticism'. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism' and lyric were coexisting attempts to frame the poetry which expresses a poet's own perspective as a development from Romantic-period poetry.

[138] Ibid., 352, 353, 356-357.
[139] Gerald Gould, *An Essay On the Nature of Lyric Illustrated from the History of English Poetry* (London: Fifield, 1909), 20.
[140] Ibid., 59.

Thomas and Connections to Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth- Century 'Romanticism'.

To this point, this thesis' historical picture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry and criticism has had two focuses. The first has been identifying a 'Romantic' style in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English poetry which led to poets aiming to depict personae's mental activity and to use words and forms in creative ways. This style drew on Romantic-period poetry for authority. The second focus has been sketching out the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical tendency to offer definitions of lyric poetry which promoted 'Romantic' qualities. To situate Thomas' literary theory within this historical account of literary criticism, I will now show that his description of a 'natural spirit of poetry' bridges between late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century descriptions of both 'Romanticism' and his theory of lyric. I will do so by setting Thomas' writings in the context of his praise for how the critic A. C. Bradley argued that the interpretation of Romantic-period poems can underscore the presentation of personae in early twentieth-century lyric.[141]

Thomas' description of the 'natural spirit of poetry' describes how poetry can be focused on showing the 'thought', or the complete mental activity, of the voice that speaks the poem. It is a description which can be matched to Bradley's arguments about 'pure poetry'. Bradley was the 1901-1906 Oxford University Professor of Poetry, and his arguments about poetry respond to an academic milieu concerned with how late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' ideas might affect poetry and society. Thomas' similarity as a critic to Bradley, and his self-declared admiration for Bradley's arguments, situate his literary theory among the work being undertaken by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' critics.

The Oxford Professor of Poetry before Bradley was William John Courthope, who held the chair 1895-1901. Courthope had presented a socially conservative and

[141] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 84.

'Classical' view on the binary of 'Romanticism' and 'Classicism'. His critical study *The Liberal Movement in English Literature* (1885) notes with alarm that the 'Liberal tendency to encourage romantic feeling' could 'either be so chastened by judgment and reflection as simply to intensify the pleasures of the imagination or, if unchecked by reason, may ripen into revolt against the whole order of existing society'.[142] His work is an attempt to leave the 'romantic feeling' suitably 'chastened' by 'Classical' imperatives. Courthope's Oxford lectures, *Life in Poetry: Law in Taste* (1901), relocate his treatment of 'Romanticism' into an academic context. They warn of 'Romanticism' as a corrupting tendency. For instance, in 'Poetical Expression' Courthope detects in Wordsworth's poems an 'eccentric or monastic principle at work, which leads men to pervert metre into a luxurious instrument for the expression of merely private ideas'.[143] Courthope writes that poems should rather use established 'Classical' themes and forms because 'only in imaginative creations, metrically expressed, can society behold the image of its own unity, and realise the objects of its own spiritual existence'.[144] Such poems would be models of what people have experienced as collectives, and not representations of the poet's individuality. As he argues for these 'Classical' ideals, Courthope's professorship is marked by his focus on rejecting the 'Liberal' and 'Romantic' tendencies that he detected in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing. It is a rejection which establishes the context of academic debate on 'Romanticism' to which Bradley's lectures then respond.

Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909) go against Courthope's handling of 'Romanticism' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry. In his inaugural lecture, 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake', Bradley presents a theory of 'pure poetry' which outlines the importance of poetry representing the poet's personality. Bradley frames this theory as a development from Romantic-period poetry. His theory of 'pure poetry' says that the speaking voice in a poem should describe experiences in an individualistic

[142] William John Courthope, *The Liberal Movement in English Literature* (London: Murray, 1885), 121-122.
[143] William John Courthope, 'Poetical Expression', in William John Courthope, *Life in Poetry: Law in Taste: Two series of Lectures Delivered in Oxford 1895-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 63-88 (83).
[144] Ibid., 84.

and idiosyncratic way which reveals the character of the poet. 'Pure poetry' is where Thomas' own theory of lyric connects into the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical discussion about the importance of 'Romanticism'. Thomas cemented his place in the 'Romantic' critical trend when he publicly approved of and echoed Bradley's theories.

In 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake' Bradley describes 'pure poetry' as a refined version of what he characterises as Wordsworth's Romantic-period rejection of the 'mere decoration' in 'poetic diction'.[145] Developing from what he says Wordsworth had argued, Bradley says that when poets use the words which come to them intuitively then their work will have a 'magical effect' and 'reveal' aspects of their personality:

> And so when Wordsworth inveighed against poetic diction, though he hurled his darts rather wildly, what he was rightly aiming at was a phraseology, not the living body of a new content, but the mere worn-out body of an old one. In *pure poetry* it is otherwise. *Pure poetry is not the decoration of a preconceived and clearly defined matter: it springs from the creative impulse of a vague imaginative mass pressing for development and definition.* If the poet already knew what he wanted to say, why should he write the poem? The poem would in fact be already written. For only its completion can reveal, even to him, exactly what he wanted … The growing of this body into its full stature and perfect shape was the same thing as the gradual self-definition of the meaning. And this is the reason why such poems strike us as creations, not manufactures, and have the magical effect which mere decoration cannot produce. (Italics supplied.)[146]

This quotation sees Bradley ground his description of 'pure poetry' in Wordsworth's work. He describes this Romantic-period root as an authority for getting rid of words and forms

[145] A. C. Bradley, 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 3-34 (23).
[146] Ibid., 23-24.

which are only 'the decoration of a preconceived' theme. By contrast to poems which describe preconceived and established themes, 'pure poetry' is the expression of the poet's 'imaginative mass'. Thus, 'pure poetry' is the instinctive use of language which gives an impression of the character or type of personality that a poet possesses. Making reference to *Hamlet* (c. 1602), Bradley states that poetry succeeds when the poet is represented by 'the speaker at the moment of his existence' who can, akin to Hamlet in *Hamlet* 2. ii. 574, 'unpack his heart with words'.[147] By avoiding the deliberate use of established 'poetic' subjects and words, the poet will allow their work to grow into a 'perfect shape' that will correspond to 'the meaning'. This 'meaning' will reveal the character of the poet, 'even to him', when it shows 'exactly what he wanted'. The theory of 'pure poetry', then, looks back to Romantic-period poetry to then emphasise the importance of poems representing only the poet's personality, or 'vague imaginative mass'.

Thomas' review of the *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* praises Bradley's theory, which he attributes to Bradley alone ('for the honesty and freshness of his contribution we cannot be too grateful'). Thomas quotes a passage of the lecture 'Shelley's View of Poetry' that espouses the same concepts as 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake', and he singles these concepts out for praise:

> Poetry (I must exaggerate to be clear), psychologically considered, is not the expression of ideas or of a view of life; it is their discovery or creation, or rather both discovery and creation in one […] in 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear' […] What was brought to them was the huge substance of Shakespeare's imagination, in which all his experience and thought was latent.

[147] Ibid., 20; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by G. R. Hibbard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 235.

> This too short passage further illustrates the quality of Dr. Bradley's mind. It is suggestive, not creative. He is feeling, and helping us to feel, a way to a truer attitude to poetry, and doubtless his ideas are destined to find fuller and more notable expression, but for the honesty and freshness of his contribution we cannot be too grateful.[148]

Having praised these concepts, Thomas develops their counterparts in his own criticism. He generates an equivalent of 'pure poetry' and the 'vague imaginative mass' in his study of *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, which also quotes from Bradley's Oxford lecture 'Hamlet'.[149] Thomas' equivalent theory is the 'natural spirit of poetry'. He presents this theory in a discussion of John Clare's poem 'Song (Love lives beyond the tomb)' (c. 1845-1850).[150] He writes:

> This and perhaps all of his best poems show Clare as one of those who have in them the natural spirit of poetry in its purity, so pure that perhaps he can never express it quite whole and perfect. They are songs of innocence, praising a world not realised, or, it is more reasonable to say, a world which most old and oldish people agree to regard as something different. For such a writer the usual obstacles and limits are temporary or do not exist at all, and as with children the dividing line between the real and the unreal, either shifts or has not yet been made.
>
> …
>
> What they [poets] say is not chosen to represent what they feel or think, but is itself the very substance of what had before lain dark and unapparent, is

[148] Thomas, 'Oxford Lectures on Poetry', 2.
[149] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 238-239.
[150] Date from Eric Robinson and David Powell, 'Notes', in John Clare, *Major Works including selections from 'The Shepherd's Calendar'*, ed. by Eric Robinson and David Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 485-504 (494n338-427).

> itself all that survives of feeling and thought, and cannot be expanded or reduced without dulling or falsification.[151]

Thomas repeated the first portion of this excerpt from his 24 May 1910 *Daily Chronicle* review of *Poems* (1910) by Frances Cornford. There, he had begun the first paragraph 'If we see a hundred books of verse in a year seldom more than one has the natural spirit of poetry in such purity as Mrs. Cornford's "Poems"'.[152] Otherwise, the passage is largely unaltered between the May *Daily Chronicle* review and its later appearance in *Feminine Influence*, which was published in November 1910.[153] Its repetition in *Feminine Influence* indicates Thomas' continuing interest in a 'natural spirit of poetry' and its 'purity'. As the 'natural spirit' is opposed to direct statements of what poets 'feel or think' it resembles Bradley's theory of 'pure poetry'. Bradley, as Thomas had praised, had rejected calculated statements of what poets 'already knew exactly'. In alignment with what he had highlighted in Bradley's *Oxford Lectures*, Thomas writes in the Cornford review and *Feminine Influence* that poetry should involve a fundamental part of the poet's personality becoming apparent in their description of a topic or scene.

Thomas' links to Bradley's work tie his own theories of poetry to the ongoing academic conversation about the importance of 'Romanticism' and Romantic-period poetry for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers. Bradley's lectures are a rejection of the positions taken by Courthope, his predecessor as Professor of Poetry. They emphasise the importance of Romantic-period poetry and the ideas that Courthope had dismissed as 'romantic feeling'. Bradley refines Romantic-period arguments about poetry into a theory that 'pure poetry' should show the poet's fundamental character. When Thomas then describes an ideal of poetry, his theory matches to 'pure poetry' and follows the direction of his earlier praise for Bradley's ideas. The connections to Bradley show Thomas using what late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics could call

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[151] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 84, 86.
[152] Edward Thomas, 'Poems, by Frances Cornford', excerpted in *Edward Thomas on the Georgians*, 62-64 (62).
[153] 'List of New Books', *The Athenæum*, 4333 (12 November 1910), 592-593 (592); 'Advertisement', *The Manchester Guardian* (15 November 1910), 7 (7).

'Romanticism' to argue that a poet's use of language should be an undiluted expression of their identity, that which 'cannot be expanded or reduced without dulling or falsification'.

Thomas' Lyric.

This part of the thesis will focus on how Thomas theorised that the essential character of the poet, their part that 'cannot be expanded or reduced without dulling or falsification', becomes converted into the 'individual spirit' or 'independent life' that Thomas said lyric's generic rules require. The discussion will show that Thomas draws on Romantic-period poetry to theorise that lyric poets may be represented by 'independent' lyric lives. To do so, the discussion will focus on Thomas' arguments about how poets should use language to create 'worlds' which present personae and their 'thought'.

Thomas' descriptions of lyric make the genre perfectly suited to showing a persona's mental activity. In a 27 August 1901 *Daily Chronicle* review of 'New Verse', Thomas writes that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century views of lyric are descendent from the work of 'great' Romantic-period poets. Their work has 'revealed' to him that lyric poetry can express any 'mode of thought and emotion':

> Early last century … the lyric was asserting a supremacy which it has never lost. The very dramas of the day were often lyrical, and had only lyrical good qualities. 'Prometheus Unbound' is actually called by Shelley a 'lyrical drama'. The noblest literary achievements were in the lyric. So puissant was it that its caress entrapped philosophy. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and their great contemporaries revealed its adaptability to every mode of thought and emotion. The names of those who followed them are on every lip, and in many hearts. Today at least the place of the lyric seems assured.[154]

[154] Edward Thomas, 'From review of new verse', *A Language Not to be Betrayed: Selected Prose of Edward Thomas*, ed. by Edna Longley (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1981), 62-64 (62).

This description of lyric shows three parts of Thomas' attitude to poetry. He writes that lyric is the supreme genre of poetry; that its supremacy comes from its unlimited ability to represent the different 'thoughts and emotions' that a person can have; and that this unlimited ability was demonstrated by the different ways that Romantic-period poets represented their individual selves. These three parts of Thomas' attitude underlie his argument, made in the same review, that 'the lyric will prosper, at least so long as individualism makes way in literature'.[155] Thomas' description of what lyric poetry does is tied to poems representing the different mental activity of the personae who speak them. And when he presents this outlook on lyric, he connects it to lessons learned from how the 'great' Romantic-period poets of history created representations of their different personalities in their lyrics.

In an unpublished 1910s poem that he gave to his daughter Bronwen, Thomas portrays the lyric genre's ability to represent people as a tireless force.[156] The 'music' of the constellation Lyra is infinite:

> This is the constellation of the Lyre:
> Its music cannot ever tire,
> For it is silent. No man need fear it:
> Unless he wants to, he will not hear it.[157]

In this poem lyric is said to let any 'man' use it. Similarly, when Thomas writes about how lyric works and what it does, he focuses on it because it lets poets fashion their psychological idiosyncrasies into poetry. Thomas theorises that lyric is able to convert the poet's own personality and perceptions into a depiction of the persona's mental

[155] Ibid., 62-63.
[156] The poem is ink on paper and headed with an ink drawing of the five-starred constellation Lyra. The paper was detached from Bronwen Thomas' autograph book and on its reverse is a pencil drawing signed 'Catherine W. Alexander, August 15th, 1915'.
[157] Cardiff, Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/2/129/1.

activity. Therefore, his critical position is that personae can represent the impulses and habits that he believed to constitute a person's fundamental character, but without being directly or definitely tied to any actual person. Lyric possesses its 'supreme' importance because it converts real-world personalities into the 'independent lives' that speak and are seen in poems.

Thomas differentiates between the poet who writes the poem and the persona that the lyric depicts speaking when he describes successful lyrics as their own 'worlds'. As previously noted, 'World' is one of Thomas' key critical terms. He writes in his *Bookman* review (March 1912) of *The Collected Works of William Morris*, volumes nine to twelve (1910-1915 (1912)) that 'there can be no room for work which does not find or create a world in which it and the reader can live'.[158] In his discussions of lyric Thomas uses 'world' to say how the poet is separate from the poem's representation of a subjectivity, which Thomas calls an 'individual spirit' and which I have discussed as a 'persona'. For Thomas, a 'world' is a coherent vignette of a persona revealing 'their' consciousness as they describe a subject; the persona may represent the poet, but it is not necessarily connected to him. To describe Thomas Carew's 'A Song (Ask me no more where Jove bestows)' (1640) Thomas says the poem is detached from people and events in reality.[159] With 'no signs of personality or locality' the 'first lines, perfect in their music of sound and suggestion, take us at once into their own world, and the rest has no business except to keep us there'.[160] When it presents its 'own world', Carew's 'Song' demonstrates that 'worlds' can be detached from the material world because 'how little need the lyric has of the best that is thought and said in the world'.[161] All that lyric poems have to do, Thomas writes, is 'keep us there' witnessing how the persona reveals itself by describing its subject.

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[158] Thomas, 'William Morris', 300.
[159] For the publication history and dating of Carew's poetry see Rhodes Dunlap, 'Introduction', in Thomas Carew, *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque 'Coelum Britannicum'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), xiii-lxxx.
[160] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 261-262.
[161] Ibid., 262.

In the discussion of Carew's 'Song', Thomas says that 'worlds' do not need to use fashionable or authoritative words, 'the best that is thought and said'. To make the poem its own 'world' the poet should only use their own 'instinctive' language. Thomas presents the theory of how 'instinctive' language becomes a 'world' as a development from Romantic-period poetry. In his critical study *Maurice Maeterlinck* he writes that Romantic-period poets were able to make 'worlds' that represent their own 'intensity of mood':

> In the mainly instinctive use of his language the words will all support one another … Any writer whose words have this power may make a poem of anything – a story, a dream, a thought, a picture, an ejaculation, a conversation. Whatever be the subject, the poem must not depend for its main effect on anything but the humanity of the reader. It may please for the moment by the air of some irrelevant and transitory interest – political interest, for example; but, sooner or later, it will be left naked and solitary, and will so be judged, and *if it does not create about itself a world of its own it is condemned to endure the death which is its element. The worlds of living poems may be of many different kinds. As a rule they are regions of the earth now for the first time separated from the rest and made independent* … Wordsworth writes a poem in the hope of making it give the same impression as a certain hawthorn-tree gives to him; Keats because he cannot dismiss from his mind the words, 'Dost thou not hear the sea?'; [Robert] Burns because a girl pleases and evades him. Anything, however small, may make a poem; nothing, however great, is certain to. Concentration, intensity of mood, is the one necessary condition in the poet and in the poem. (Italics supplied.)[162]

[162] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 27-28.

In Thomas' argument above, a writer who uses language in an 'instinctive' way is able to make a representation of their 'mood'. This representation is 'separated' from reality into a complete and 'independent' 'world' on its own, a vignette containing a coherent imitation of a psyche. Thomas' making such 'worlds' is unlike the emerging Modernist poets, who could use 'juxtaposition' and multiple perspectives to 'challenge the reader to re-establish a coherence of meaning from fragmentary forms'.[163] Their work could separate the notion that the poem is speech from the need for a persona. Poets such as Eliot and Pound could present multiple possible fragmentary identities within a poem, upsetting what Pound describes in 'French Poets' (1918) as 'in inferior minds a passion for unity, that is, for a confusion and melting together of things which a good mind will want kept distinct'.[164] By contrast, Thomas' theory supports poems which show how a persona's perspective coheres and which reveal that persona's way of seeing the 'world'. Thomas' theory of 'worlds', then, has a broadly historical significance and a technical literary critical significance. For history, Thomas' theory shows a disagreement with what would become Modernist approaches to poetry and an agreement with the representations of coherent and unfragmentable individual selves ('that cannot be expanded or reduced without dulling or falsification') in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism' and approaches to Romantic-period poetry.[165] For literary criticism, it shows a focus on the poet arranging words into 'instinctive' rhythms so that the speaking voice's description of a topic has consistent syntax and semantic elements that 'will all support one another'.

Thomas' theory of a poet's 'instinctive' use of language is a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development from Romantic-period poetry. It looks back to and revises the principles of poetry that Wordsworth offered in the 'Preface' (1800) to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) (Wordsworth would revise and expand this 'Preface' for the 1802 third edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. However, Thomas worked from the

[163] Chris Baldick, 'Modernism', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 159-160 (160).
[164] Ezra Pound, 'French Poets', in *Make it New* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), 159-247 (211).
[165] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 87.

1800 'Preface'. This version history is apparent from Thomas' quotation of the 1800 'Preface' in *Feminine Influence on the Poets*).[166] In the 'Preface' Wordsworth argues that poets should remove 'arbitrary and capricious diction' from their work and then replace this diction with 'a selection of language really used by men' in 'common' and 'rural life'.[167] In a 1 January 1907 review of William Butler Yeats' *Poems, 1899-1905* (1906) Thomas writes that the early twentieth century is a time when Wordsworth's theories have assumed a new importance: 'We are struck now more than ever by the beauty of the ordinary speeches which, in their naturalness and real poetry, prove as much as Wordsworth's preface that the speech of poetry can be that of life'.[168] Thomas states that Yeats' *Poems* shows that the goals of speech-like poetry which Wordsworth highlighted are correct. However, he does not suggest that Wordsworth found the right way to achieve these goals. Thomas treats the 'Preface' as an authority for clearing out fashionable diction from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry, but he disagrees that poets must then use a 'rural' language. To show how Thomas' theories of 'instinctive' language are progressions from Romantic-period theory I will briefly describe the 'Preface'. I will then show how Thomas' theory of lyric poems using 'instinctive' language to make 'worlds' revises Wordsworth's positions.

The 'Preface' rejects the late eighteenth-century 'Classical' styles that Bradley refers to as 'poetical diction' and which, as David Duff writes, could have the appearance of 'a repressive critical ideology'.[169] In opposition to poets who would 'separate themselves from the sympathies of men … to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation', Wordsworth writes that poets should 'chuse [sic] incidents and situations from common life' and then interpret these scenes in the 'language really used by men'.[170] Wordsworth argues in the 'Preface' that the ensuing 'Low and rustic' themes and language will show an essence of how humanity is

[166] Ibid., 36 (Thomas quotes 'strengthened and purified' instead of the 1802 'Preface's' 'ameliorated').
[167] Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Lyrical Ballads*"', 13-15.
[168] Cardiff, Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/3/3/1/4, f. 1.
[169] David Duff, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31.
[170] Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Lyrical* Ballads"', 14.

connected to nature 'because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature'.[171] By using a diction which resembles the speech of rural life, the poet may show 'the passions of men'. These 'passions' are part of a transcendental stuff common to all men and to all of the nature. What Wordsworth was trying to do, then, was use rural speech in a way which connects 'what is really important to men' up to 'those beautiful and permanent forms of nature'.[172] As Stephen Gill writes, the purpose of the 'Preface' was to shift early nineteenth-century poetry from its ornate register into a rural register which could represent these transcendental connections: 'Feeling was both subject-matter and aesthetic agent, and rectification of feeling was the goal'.[173]

Thomas takes Wordsworth as an authority, but not a model. He adapts Wordsworth's principles away from promoting rustic speech and toward the words that a writer would use 'instinctively'. Wordsworth writes that a writer should model a single type of speech, which is that of rural labouring men, but Thomas says the writer should model the rhythms of their own speech. His work aligns with an observation that Herford had made in his important study *The Age of Wordsworth* (1897), 'a little book which is familiar to students of the history of English Literature', as Bradley calls it.[174] Herford notes that in practice Wordsworth had not modelled any rural speech, that 'Wordsworth, in fact, with all his extreme advocacy of rustic speech, never appreciated' that 'the speech of rustics is for him little more than the negative ideal of a speech purified from all that is artificial and trivial'.[175] As Herford had suggested, the 'Preface' had less of a positive impact – it had not proved to writers in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century that they must mimic the speech of country folk – than it had a negative impact, showing that poetic diction need not be 'artificial'. Thomas turned Wordsworth's rejection of poetic diction away from the countryside. Instead of trying to say that poems will

[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 155.
[174] Bradley, 'Wordsworth', 99.
[175] C. H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth* (London: Bell, 1908), 157-158.

show an abstract or special connection between all the parts of the natural world, Thomas uses the 'Preface' to argue against ornate language and say that poems should be speech-like because then they will represent the personality in its own 'world'.

Accordingly, in *Pater* Thomas fits Wordsworth around his own axiom that 'writing stands for thought, not speech'.[176] With 'thought' Thomas refers to the complete mental activity of the voice in the text. Thomas writes that the goal of 'literature' is to 'justly represent "the conscious motions of a convinced intelligible soul"', which is a quotation of Pater's *Plato and Platonism* (1893), so that the writer will 'give that intimate effect "as if he had been talking"'.[177] Thomas is not concerned with making writing resemble talk, but making it resemble the cogitations which underpin your conversation. And he makes Wordsworth into an authority for this principle. In the 'Preface' Wordsworth writes disapprovingly that the 'curiously elaborate … poetic diction' of Thomas Gray's sonnet 'On the Death of Richard West' (1742) was an attempt to weep something other than 'natural and human tears'.[178] Thomas alludes to this disapproval in *Pater*. But, instead of arguing that 'On the Death of Richard West' stops us from seeing how 'the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature', Thomas writes that 'What Wordsworth condemns in that sonnet of Gray's beginning [quotes the opening two lines of 'On the Death of Richard West'] is due to the remoteness of the words, not from speech, but from thought'.[179] When it has been moulded into part of Thomas' literary theory, the 'Preface' has become part of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism'. It no longer uses rural language to be part of a divine spark in nature. Instead, the 'Preface' has become a buttress to a theory that poems ought to have speech-like rhythms so that they will give the effect of a voice speaking with its own subjectivity.

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[176] Thomas, *Pater*, 219.
[177] Ibid, 218.
[178] Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Lyrical Ballads*"', 19-21.
[179] Thomas, *Pater*, 209.

Thomas has another key axiom in *Pater*: 'Rhythm is of the essence of a sincere expressive style'.[180] This is an axiom about how poets can make the speech-rhythms which Thomas argued are necessary for writing to portray a voice speaking and revealing its own mental activity. When he offers this axiom, Thomas says that poets should use their own 'instinctive' speech patterns as a base for their poetry. To Thomas, the rhythms and combinations of favourite words which make a person's speech may be taken and used to give the effect of a subjectivity describing a scene or a topic. This effect, of a subjectivity letting you look out from inside their eyes and know what they 'think', is what creates the poem's 'own world'. In *Pater* Thomas writes that speech-like rhythms in prose and poetry create such a 'world' because they can reveal 'all that [the writer] is and all that he will become':

> Literature is further divided in outward seeming from speech by what helps to make it in fact more than ever an equivalent of speech. It has to make words of such a spirit, and arrange them in such a manner, that they will do all that a speaker can do by innumerable gestures and their innumerable shades, by tone and pitch of voice, by speed, by pauses, by all that he is and all that he will become.[181]

This quoted passage is especially important for understanding Thomas' prose and poetry because it lists the elements of what he calls a 'rhythm' in speech. Therefore, it suggests the elements of speech that speech-like writing has to emulate and arrange. Thomas draws attention to the possibilities of different syntax and grammar ('arrange them in such a manner') and connotations of words ('gestures' and 'shades') being affected by stress patterns ('tone and pitch of voice') and by meter, both consistent ('speed') and interrupted ('pauses'). Combined, the emulation of these factors allows writing to represent a vignette of an 'intensity of mood'. When they are emulated in Thomas' lyric

[180] Ibid., 218.
[181] Ibid., 210.

poetry, then, they serve to depict personae's mental activity. As it explores his poetry, this thesis focuses on how these factors contribute to the individuating rhythms and phrasings which Thomas says create the effect of a lyric poem being a 'world of its own … separated from the rest and made independent', and how Thomas' use of them can reveal that the personae who give voice to the 'worlds' are constructed in ways which evoke his criticism of different Romantic-period poets.[182]

As well as habitual words and rhythms in speech, people can also have favourite literary works. Thomas theorises that poets can make a 'world' which contains, adapts, or responds to literary sources. This literary, assimilative aspect of Thomas' theory is important to this thesis because it underscores how his poems to respond to literary works, themes, and ideas, which is a key focus of this thesis. For Thomas, favourite books are like favourite words because the writer must make them reflect the subjectivity of the voice who uses them. Accordingly, his literary reviews praise poets who adapt other writers' perspectives into their own work. His 5 September 1912 *Daily Chronicle* review of *Fires, Books II and III* (1912) by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson departs from his customary antagonism to Gibson's poetry, which he says is often a 'false poetical' piecemeal of 'rich words', of 'goodly rhymes', and 'romantic subjects'.[183] By contrast to that piecemeal, Gibson succeeds and writes the 'best' poetry in the collection when he begins 'thinking Wordsworthily'.[184] The praise given to Gibson is for how the poet has brought consistency to his poetry by using a style which is like Wordsworth's. Thomas is not suggesting that Gibson has pretended to literally be Wordsworth. Thomas' theory of literary assimilation does not look for writers who merely copy the lives or works of earlier poets. His acclaim for the inclusion 'by no mere echo, of the devotion to high things in Coleridge, in Shelley, and in Mr. [Algernon Charles] Swinburne' in Alfred Noyes' *Forty Singing Seamen and Other Poems* (1907) is due to there having been 'none to use

[182] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 28.
[183] Edward Thomas, 'Fires. Books II. and III., by Wilfred Wilson Gibson', excerpted in *Edward Thomas on the Georgians*, 150-152 (150).
[184] Ibid., 152.

them [other poets' styles] and yet be so little overpowered by the master's sentiment as well'.[185]

When poets make allusions, an activity which involves pointing out the ambiguous presence of another work in their own poetry, Thomas praises their resistance to being 'overpowered' by those works. The Noyes review shows as much. His review of Pound's *Personae* (1909) emphasises the power metaphor and describes how Pound must 'battle' his literary references. *Personae* was published with in-line and end notes that variously evoke and outright state the literary sources that the collection's poems allude to. Thomas responds to this strategy of overt allusion by describing the poems in *Personae* as sites where Pound must 'battle with words, the beautiful, the soiled, the rare, the antique words'.[186] Thomas writes of the 'battle' as Pound having to ensure that each literary reference only represents what the persona of each *Personae* poem 'thinks'. He frames Pound's success with the same focus on an own 'world' as his discussions of Romantic-period poets in *Maeterlinck*, writing that the poems of *Personae* see Pound 'hold us steadily in his own pure, grave, passionate world'.[187] These reviews show that Thomas expected literary references to above all show the personae's 'thought'. In this regard, he treats literary material the same as he treats speech-rhythms. Poets must master them by making them reveal 'thought', therefore using lyric to make an artistic representation of a self whose words reveal their own 'world'.

To conclude this chapter, I will present an example of how Thomas used his 'Romantic' literary theory of 'individual spirit[s]' in their 'own worlds' when he drafted his lyric poetry. Thomas' drafting and revision of 'It Rains' (11-13 May 1916) show him making a vignette of a persona experiencing a scene. Thomas crafts this 'world' by altering the order and rhyme of the words and amending their echoes of earlier literary works. The changes enable 'It Rains' to present the 'thought' of a persona who is 'Sad,

[185] Edward Thomas, 'Mr Noyes's Poems', *The Bookman*, 32:196 (January 1908), 173-174 (173).
[186] Edward Thomas, 'Two Poets', *The English Review*, 'Seventh Number' (June 1909), 627-632 (627).
[187] Ibid., 628.

too, to think that never, never again, || Unless alone, so happy shall I walk | In the rain'.[188]

'It Rains' was drafted in Thomas' 1916 drafting and trigonometry exercises notebook, which is now archived by the National Library of Wales.[189] Although the drafts of 'It Rains' are replete with editorial changes, this discussion will just show how Thomas rewrote the third, final stanza. This stanza is well-suited to showing Thomas' writing process because its revisions are in five discrete stages. The stages can be clearly distinguished by the dates that Thomas puts at the headers of the pages, and by his swapping between pencil and pen. The first stage is the sketch of the poem that Thomas wrote in fountain pen on 11 May 1916. It is a list of key ideas:

> In the rain. On its invisible stalk.
> ~~The parsley flower~~
> ~~I & imagery~~[?] ~~and the twilight and the parsley flower~~
> That twilight hides
> ~~In the twilight~~ the little parsley flower.[190]

On 12 May 1916 Thomas then wrote the first full draft of 'It Rains'. This draft, which Thomas wrote in fountain pen and then amended with pencil, is reproduced below. Underlined square brackets denote superscript:

> It rains & no one walks within the fence
> ~~Thru~~ [<u>among</u>] the old ~~apple~~ orchard's untrodden dense
> Forests of parsley. The great diamonds
> Of rain in grass blades there is none to ~~broke~~[?] break
> Or the fallen petals further down to shake.

[188] Edward Thomas, 'It Rains', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 121 (121).
[189] Aberystwyth, The National Library of Wales, NLW MS 229221A.
[190] Ibid., f. 20^{v}.

And I am nearly as happy as possible
While I search the wilderness in vain tho well,
And to think of 2 walking & kissing there
Drenched yet forgetting the kisses of this rain:
Sad also to think that never again,

Unless alone, so happy shall I walk
In the rain. The parsley flower above its stalk
That twilight has ~~made~~ [fined] now invisible
Figures ~~and stands suspended~~ [suspended there] so ghostly pale,
My spirit hovering on promises frail.[191]

Thomas then planned out a revision to the final stanza. This plan is the third stage of drafting. It is written in pencil. It can be dated to after the above first full draft of 'It Rains' because it includes new phrases that Thomas then introduces into later full drafts. The third stage:

In the rain [as I turn away] On its fine stalk
That twilight fines to nothing ~~the pa~~ the parsley flower.[192]

Thomas then redrafted the entire third stanza in pencil. This revision, the fourth stage in the drafting process, sees him rework the stanza according to the third stage plan. Thomas moves the phrase 'the parsley flower' to the end of the thirteenth line and inserts the phrase 'as I turn away' into the twelfth line:

Unless alone, so happy should I walk

[191] Ibid., f. 21^{r}.
[192] Ibid., f. 20^{v}.

In the rain, as I turn away, on its fine stalk
That twilight ~~fined~~ fines to ~~nothing~~ [naught], the parsley flower
Figures suspended there so ghostly pale
My spirit hovering on promises frail.[193]

The fifth, final stage of revision to stanza three in the notebook is the second full draft of 'It Rains'. This draft is written in pen. Thomas dates it as '11.12.13. v. 16.'[194]:

Unless alone, so happy shall I walk
In this rain. When I turn away, on its fine stalk
Twilight has fined to naught, the parsley ~~flo~~ flower
Figures, suspended ~~there as~~ [still and] ghostly white,
The past hovering as it revisits the light.[195]

Aside from the struck-through deletions and the phrase 'this rain' (later 'the rain'), the stanza in this draft is the same as the fair copy that Thomas put in *Poems* (1917).[196]

When Thomas implements the third stage's planning in the fourth stage revision, he makes edits which take advantage of the AABCC stanza form and reflect the persona's perception of the 'white' flower 'suspended' alone in the darkness. Thomas moves the flower and the stalk into different clauses, suggesting that they are separate objects. The pattern includes the insertion of 'naught' into line thirteen. This insertion makes a rhyme with the preceding end-rhymes, 'walk' and 'stalk'. Together, 'walk', 'stalk' and 'naught' suggest an additional A end-rhyme is occurring in line thirteen. Against these A rhymes, the phrase 'the parsley flower' juts out as the unrhymed B line. Neither stanza one nor stanza two has this conflict between A rhyme and B rhyme in the

[193] Ibid., f. 21^{r}.
[194] Ibid., f. 22^{r}.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Don. d. 28, f. 42; Edward Thomas, 'It Rains', in *Poems* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1917), 28 (28).

B line. In the fourth revision of stanza three, then, the conflict between the rhymes suggests that 'the parsley flower' is unconnected to the surrounding phrases. Like the persona's description of what he sees, the phrase appears to be 'suspended there', dangling on its own outside of the rhymes. The change sees Thomas adapting the clause order and the rhythm in a way which corresponds to the persona's mental activity, echoing the perceptions the persona describes experiencing.

The drafts show that Thomas made changes which affect how 'It Rains' suggests other literary works. While the initial sketch of 'It Rains' describes the flower and the twilight, it does not include the depiction 'of 2 walking & kissing there'. This depiction came in the first full draft, which was the second stage of revision. Thomas' adding the depiction of lovers suggests that he found a literary theme that could make the sketch into a poem. The theme of lovers and memory was popular in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry, and this popularity is reflected by the several critics who discuss 'It Rains' as a literary echo. These critics include Marsh (an echo to 'On A Midsummer Eve' (1913), by Thomas Hardy), Longley (to 'At Castle Boterel' (1913), by Hardy), and Judy Kendall (to 'All Last Night' (1908), by Abercrombie).[197] This theme echoes the work of other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets. However, it is first and foremost what gives shape to the persona of 'It Rains' 'thinking' about his memory. Without the persona remembering lovers, there would be no memory for the flowers to evoke. Thomas said that poems which quote, allude, or echo must 'battle' against the weight of literary associations so that they show the 'thought' of the persona rather than of another writer. The theme in 'It Rains' does exactly what Thomas had written that literary references should be made to do.

Thomas also took more precise steps to 'battle' with language. He replaces vague words that his criticism associates with poetic diction, swapping them for precise words which reveal what the persona 'thinks'. In the second full draft, which is the fifth stage of the revision, Thomas changes the C lines. He alters the ending of line fourteen from

[197] Marsh, *Edward Thomas*, 201-202; Longley, 'Notes', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 294; Judy Kendall, *Edward Thomas's Poets* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), 124.

'pale' to 'white' and rewrites line fifteen from 'My spirit hovering on promises frail' to 'The past hovering as it revisits the light'. Where 'spirit' suggests a general affinity between the flower and the persona, 'past' shows the persona's 'thought' being affected by his memories. The change replaces literariness with precision. 'Spirit' is a word that Thomas' criticism associates with poetry and says poets often use. He describes its repetition in 'She Was a Phantom of Delight' (1803), by Wordsworth, as 'In Wordsworth's poetry then it frequently happens that a woman is the embodied spirit of a place'; he writes that Shelley 'usually depicts himself, and even himself in such a way as to suggest not a man, but rather a spirit'; and, quoting 'Spirit and sense are as one' in 'Tenebrae' (1880) he states that 'Swinburne's great admiration for Shakespeare's phrase, "spirit of sense", caused him to repeat and vary it beyond all reason both in verse and prose'.[198] Thomas' deleting the literary word 'spirit' for the more descriptive word 'past', then, is another correspondence to the principles that he had outlined in *Pater*. The deletion shows Thomas upholding the principle that writing should represent the mental activity of the voice in the text and that any literary-fashionable words which do not represent that mental activity will 'have only an isolated value; they are labels'.[199]

All of the changes that Thomas makes to the third stanza of 'It Rains' involve him applying the 'Romantic' principles of his literary theory to his own work as a poet. As this chapter has shown, his literary theory expresses points that other critics were making in their discussions of a 'Romantic' style in poetry and of how lyric poetry had developed after the Romantic-period poets. Like those critics, Thomas looked back to Romantic-period works for the authority and examples which let him say that lyric poetry must be focused on showing personae's mental activity. This 'Romantic' focus is the core of his theory and his practice of lyric poetry.

[198] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 73-74, 222; Thomas, *Keats*, 36-37; Thomas, *Swinburne*, 135.
[199] Thomas, *Pater*, 219, 213.

Chapter Descriptions: Critical Sources for the Personae in Thomas' Poetry.

So far, this thesis has shown how Thomas' literary criticism and poetry take part in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism'. Now, it will begin to connect his 'Romanticism' to the impact his criticism of Romantic-period poets had on his poetry. To do so, it presents three chapters which each discuss how Thomas' critical positions on different Romantic-period poets are distinctive and how his poetry then articulates the same points that he generated when he wrote on those poets.

Chapter Two concerns Thomas' criticism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. By relating Thomas' poetry to his Coleridge criticism, the chapter shows how he builds on Romantic-period poetry, responds to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social change, and anticipates the developments of Modernist poetry. It looks at how Thomas' criticism parses Coleridge's oneiric and supernatural poetry; how Thomas reflects Coleridge's judgment of being able to 'see, not feel' and what this means for the idea of 'feeling' in Thomas' poetry; and, how his criticism of Coleridge's wartime poetry is a site where Thomas developed a distinctive model for representing English history as a way of belonging to the land which subverts jingoistic attitudes arising from the events of the First World War. In each of these strands, Thomas' criticism and poetry are unique among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing, and they reveal how his 'Romantic' focus situates his work in between Romantic-period poetry and Modernism.

Chapter Three tackles Thomas' criticism on Percy Bysshe Shelley. It focuses on how Thomas developed critical positions on how poetry can use symbols, and what symbols ought to do, in his writings on Shelley. The chapter focuses on how Thomas opposes two views of symbols, the 'symbolism' of the nineteenth-century French Symbolists and the 'symbolical' work of Shelley. By exploring how Thomas objected to French Symbolism, the chapter clarifies that he endorsed Shelley's 'symbolical' poetry for how it represents what personae are 'thinking'. The chapter pays particular attention to how Thomas' criticism adapts the sources that he wrote on, showing that he mistranslates and misquotes writers, and how these adaptations affect his arguments.

The chapter then shows how Thomas' poetry presents the same 'symbolical' style which he defined by writing on Shelley. It sketches how his poetry features symbols by depicting personae as saying that objects represent their 'thought'. By establishing that Thomas' poems echo his criticism on Shelley, the chapter demonstrates how his poetry frequently uses 'symbolical' description to represent what happens when personae use their imaginations. Therefore, as the chapter shows, an investigation of Thomas' criticism on Shelley's symbols reveals the ways in which his own poems involve a theory of what the imagination is and how it works.

Chapter Four focuses on how Thomas used his criticism of John Keats to generate ideas about how and why poems represent individuals losing their identities, and how these ideas distinguish Thomas from how several key Modernist poets wrote about loss of identity. The chapter is focused on Thomas' critical study of the poet, *Keats* (1916), and how Thomas is distinctive for focusing on Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness'. The chapter investigates how Thomas creates a specific version of Keats through his misreading of the poet's letters. It shows that Thomas interpreted Keats' letters to come to a position that the poet was obsessed with dying and used 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' to represent death extinguishing his identity in poems. The chapter then frames *Keats* as a work where Thomas clarifies an ideal way for poets to write 'passive' and 'receptive' poetry, and it shows how Thomas then uses these developments as a basis for personae in his own poetry. It reveals how Thomas' relationship to Keats makes his poetry distinct from some of the major ways Modernist poets were depicting identities being lost in early twentieth-century society. By exploring what makes *Keats* a distinctive piece of criticism on the poet, this chapter is able to show how Thomas' poetry draws on his ideas of Keats to make an equally distinctive version of 'passivity'.

Chapter Two: Thomas and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

This chapter demonstrates how Thomas' poetry is involves the critical positions that he took on the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It shows that Thomas' poetry includes three different types of personae with qualities that he associates with Coleridge. In the order the chapter discusses them, the three types are: personae who experience nature as dreamlike or ghostly; personae who experience nature as an absence of 'feeling'; and personae who respond to war by saying that they belong to the countryside and its history.

Although the chapter highlights Coleridge's importance to Thomas, it is primarily a chapter about the relationships between Thomas' critical prose and his poems. It considers how his prose responds to other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical views on Coleridge.[1] By doing so, it shows how Thomas could use his writing about Coleridge as a space for developing his own ideas of how poems might show personae and what purposes poems might serve. When it traces these ideas in Thomas' poems, this chapter argues that their importance is in showing how Thomas' poetry relates to wider trends in English literary history. Their presence reveals that Thomas' poetry revises ideas that he found in Romantic-period poetry, and that it does so in ways which can reflect late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social changes but which do not take part in the more radical changes that several important Modernist poets were starting to make within English literature.

The Context of Dreamlike and Supernatural Poetry.

This first discussion focuses on defining Thomas' critical ideas about Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural styles of poetry and demonstrating how they contribute to

[1] This late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical situation is inventoried in volumes one (covering criticism published 1793-1899) and two (1900-1939) of Richard Haven and others, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Scholarship*, 3 vols (Boston, MA: Hall, 1976-1996).

his own poetry. It examines two accounts of Coleridge written by Thomas. These are 'The Oxford *Coleridge'*, his 1913 review of *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1913), and *In Pursuit of Spring* (1914), a fictional account of a bicycle journey from London to Nether Stowey, Somerset, where Coleridge lived 1797-1799. It shows how *In Pursuit of Spring* includes most of 'The Oxford Coleridge', and how the book alters the review by adding echoes and quotations of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan; Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment.' (1798). Between 'The Oxford *Coleridge*' and *In Pursuit of Spring*, Thomas' criticism of Coleridge has two key features: that 'Kubla Khan' is an important poem that exemplifies a dreamlike style which could be used in present day writing; and that Coleridge's poetry frequently combines menacing, supernatural details with comforting details, which show people believing themselves to be safe and contented. As I will show, these two features are distinctive – no other critic was saying these things in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period – and they became part of Thomas' lyric poetry.

By discussing these two features, the chapter shows how Thomas' criticism of a particular Romantic-period poet affects his own poetry's relationship to broader trends in English poetry. The chapter relates Thomas to other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics writing about Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural styles. This frame lets the chapter clarify the distinctiveness of Thomas' criticism on Coleridge. The chapter then shows how the critical positions which Thomas took specifically in relation to Coleridge situate his own criticism and poetry in the wider context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English poetry.

Thomas' criticism is distinctive for suggesting that Coleridge opposes nature against people. In Thomas' criticism, Coleridge's dreamlike poetry is 'fantastic' and makes nature impossible to predict, and the poet's supernatural poetry presents ghostly details which are in conflict with people's comfort. These positions are distinct from how other critics were writing about Coleridge's dreamlike poetry. They either rejected the dreamlike 'Kubla Khan' as incomplete or positioned it as an important but general precedent for poets using idiosyncratic diction. When they wrote about Coleridge's

supernatural poetry, they discussed how it depicts ghosts but did not, as Thomas did, argue that Coleridge's poems only present these details to undermine people's comfort.

Thomas uses the same dissonance between nature and people that he found in Coleridge in constructing personae for his own poetry. His poems can portray dreamlike frames of reference and combinations of supernatural and domestic detail interrupting people's intentions and relationships. Because these poems reflect the critical positions that he developed writing on Coleridge, they show how Thomas' uniqueness as a critic of the poet affects his own relationship to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry. Although Thomas' poetry maintains the focus on personae which is crucial in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism', the result of the positions that he took on Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural poems is that his 'Romanticism' is neither Romantic-period nor Modernist, but exists between them.

When Thomas' poems are dreamlike or supernatural they can be seen to repurpose Romantic-period arguments that nature contains a deliberate agency or power. These arguments are fundamental to the poetry of Coleridge and of William Wordsworth. For instance, Coleridge presents the suggestion that 'what is all of animated nature' reveals 'one intellectual breeze, | At once the Soul of each, and God of all?' in 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) and that nature includes 'secret ministry' in 'Frost at Midnight' (1798).[2] Wordsworth, moreover, presents the agency inside nature as the basis of all morality. The description of Mount Snowdon in *The Prelude* (1850) reveals 'The power' (XIV, 86) which 'that peace | Which passeth understanding, that repose | In moral judgments which from this pure source | Must come' (XIV, 126-129).[3] In *Biographia Literaria* (1817) Coleridge argues that Wordsworth's representations of this agency in nature raise poetry so that it is linked with God. He writes of Wordsworth's 'Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word', which Coleridge defines as 'a

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Eolian Harp', in *The Major Works including 'Biographia Literaria'*, ed. by H. J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27-29 (28-29); Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', in *The Major Works*, 87-89 (87).

[3] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth (London: Penguin Books, 1995). I quote the 1850 *Prelude* because the 1805 text was not discovered until 1926, nine years after Thomas' death.

repetition in the finite mine of the eternal act of creation in in the infinite I AM'.[4] Thomas' poetry repurposes these arguments by making them part of dreamlike and supernatural poems. When Thomas' poems reflect his critical positions on dreamlike and supernatural poetry, they add the Romantic-period idea that nature contains a power. However, by mixing the dreamlike and supernatural with powers, these poems displace Wordsworth's and Coleridge's intentions that powers in nature benefit people. Thomas' poems depict these powers as stopping personae from being able to predict nature, from being comfortable in it, or from becoming part of it.

Thomas composed his poems at the same time as the idea that nature is not motivated to benefit people was gaining importance in poetry. This idea saw poets deny that nature contains any agency or power. It contributed to the confederation of poets and ideas that would later be Modernism. Later studies recognise this contribution by enfolding it into narratives of Modernism. Pericles Lewis writes, for instance, that 'If the romantics pursued a "natural supernaturalism", for the modernists it was no longer nature but society that embodied the power once understood as supernatural. Theirs was a social supernaturalism'.[5] These narratives can focus the idea onto Modernist attitudes to nature, as Lewis does, or expand it into a larger claim such as Peter Gay's argument that 'most modernists were … working to destroy religion rather than to create a new one'.[6] When the idea emerged, it was in the work of a wide range of poets with a multiplicity of potential goals for poetry spread amongst them. However, its appearances in anglophone poetry were generally preceded by its nascency in the materialism of nineteenth-century French Symbolist poetry. That poetry had involved statements such as '*Le Ciel est mort. – Vers toi, j'accours! … ô matière'* (The Heavens are dead. –

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[4] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*', in *The Major Works*, 155-482 (410, 313).

[5] Pericles Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4. Lewis' description, which is specifically focused on work by T. E. Hulme and Philip Larkin, contrasts to Hugh Kenner's description of Wallace Stevens' poetry, 'The Stevens world is empty of people. This is because he is in the Wordsworthian line, a Nature poet, confronting an emptied Nature, but a Nature without Presences, no longer speaking'. Hugh Kenner, *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1975), 75.

[6] Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy: From Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond* (London: Heinemann, 2007), 29.

Towards you, I go! … o matter') in 'L'Azur (1864) by Stéphane Mallarmé.[7] As T. S. Eliot shows in 'Preludes', this idea could suggest a deliberate attempt to undermine Romantic-period poets' arguments that a power might exist in nature. 'Preludes' echoes Coleridge's hierarchy of the imagination which repeats the 'I AM' and the lesser 'fancy, or the aggregative and associative power'.[8] It subverts this hierarchy when it frames the desire for an infinite 'thing' as merely the persona's fancy:

> I am moved by fancies that are curled
> Around these images, and cling:
> The notion of some infinitely gentle
> Infinitely suffering thing.[9]

A jarring echo of Coleridge's terminology, 'Preludes' treats the possibility of an 'infinitely gentle | Infinitely suffering thing' as nothing more than a fanciful 'notion'.

By contrast to the rejection of a benevolent power being in nature, Thomas' dreamlike and supernatural poetry takes away the need for the power to be benevolent. It works by combining the unpredictable and uncontrollable aspects of dreamlike and supernatural poetry with the suggestion that there are powers present in nature. It gives these powers those unpredictable and uncontrollable qualities. Therefore, because they are unpredictable as dreams or uncontrollable like the supernatural, the powers no longer appear to be benevolent toward people. As I will argue, Thomas' depictions of dreamlike and supernatural experiences show how his poetry can revise Romantic-period poetry in ways which can anticipate aspects of how Modernist poets could reframe nature but that do not depart from late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century 'Romanticism'.

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[7] Stéphane Mallarmé, 'L'Azur', in *Vers et prose: morceaux choisis* (Paris: Perrin, 1893), 21-23 (22).
[8] Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria'*, 306.
[9] T. S. Eliot, 'Preludes', in *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 15-17 (17).

Defining Dreamlike and Supernatural Poetry.

Before discussing Thomas' criticism in more detail, I will define how I am using the terms 'dreamlike' and 'supernatural'. I will do so by relating my term 'dreamlike' to the ways that Thomas' criticism and poetry describe dreams, and my term 'supernatural' to how Thomas spends most of 'The Oxford Coleridge' discussing the impact of 'ghostliness' on Coleridge's poetry.

Thomas' depictions of dreams are almost a complete opposition to the work of the famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud argues that the 'manifest' content of dreams, which are the parts of the dream consciously remembered, can be interpreted by making comparisons to the dreamer's life experiences which then reveal the meaning of the dream's 'latent' content.[10] By contrast, Thomas does not attempt to interpret individual dreams. For Thomas, dreams are not particular episodes to be interpreted. Instead, dreaming is a framework that affects the experience of wakefulness. It gives wakefulness the oneiric qualities of seeming unreal and unpredictable. I use the term 'dreamlike' to describe how his prose and poetry portray this type of waking experience. I do not use it to try and interpret the potential 'latent' content of any of these experiences. Thomas may have been unaware of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which was only translated into English in 1913. Although Thomas was briefly a patient of the psychoanalyst Helton Godwin Baynes in 1912, his letters do not refer to him undergoing Freudian analysis. His contact with Baynes likely came before the doctor began to use Freudian and, later, Jungian methods. In her biography of Baynes, Diana Baynes Jansen states that Thomas only visited him in the period when 'Godwin first became actively aware of the psychological aspects of medicine'.[11] Accordingly, with the term 'dreamlike',

[10] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by A. A. Brill (London: Allen & Unwin; New York, NY: Macmillan, 1919), 114.
[11] Diana Baynes Jansen, *Jung's Apprentice: A Biography of Helton Godwin Baynes* (Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag, 2003), 84.

I consider how Thomas' writing connects depictions of waking dreams to Coleridge's poetry and not to Freudian theory.

As well as dreams, the other major part of Thomas' keen focus on Coleridge is his argument on how the poet presents supernatural details in nature. In 'The Oxford *Coleridge*', which was published in the April 1913 number of *Orpheus: A Quarterly Magazine of Imaginative Art*, he focuses on describing how Coleridge had a 'characteristic' way of presenting supernatural details.[12] For Thomas, Coleridge habitually presented oppositions between supernatural and comforting details. Coleridge would, he writes, depict 'mildness, meekness, gentleness … his luxury' and have these details be 'relieved' by 'the quality which answers to the ghostliness and wildness of nature'.[13] As Thomas reviews *The Complete Poems* he traces how Coleridge consistently these two types of detail in combination. He argues that as Coleridge developed as a poet, this type of combination became more prominent. For Thomas, then, the prominence of these combinations in Coleridge's poetry is a mark of how the poet had worked so 'the combination was complete' by removing all '*naiveté* and plainness' and 'mere archaism' from his poetry.[14] When Coleridge had advanced his diction, Thomas argues, the combination of supernatural and luxurious detail became the main feature of his poetry. It was 'perfect', and 'in the work of his best period the combination … can be seen'.[15] To Thomas, this combination of two types of details became so prominent in Coleridge's poetry that it is associated with the poet and fundamentally representative of him. Thomas writes that supernatural detail contrasting to and interrupting comfort is a 'peculiar harmony' which shows readers 'the innermost parts of our poetry's holy of holies'.[16] Therefore, Thomas does not look at how Coleridge's poetry presents supernatural details in and of themselves, but always at how the poet places them into

[12] Cardiff, Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/3/3/1/8, ff. 36-42 (f. 39).
[13] Ibid., ff. 40, 41.
[14] Ibid., ff. 39, 42.
[15] Ibid., f. 41.
[16] Ibid., f. 41.

oppositions against the domestic, gentle, and comforting details which could be called 'luxury'.

Thomas' Criticism of Dreamlike Poetry.

Thomas expanded 'The Oxford *Coleridge*' by making it part of *In Pursuit of Spring*, a fiction based on a series of cycling journeys to Somerset, visiting Nether Stowey and the Quantock Hills, which Thomas had undertaken in February and March of 1913. By bringing his critical ideas about Coleridge into the guidebook format of *In Pursuit of Spring*, Thomas adapted them from being reasons for Coleridge's importance among poets into being reasons for travelling to Somerset. As Anne D. Wallace writes, since the seventeenth century, English travel and guidebooks had framed journeys so they were 'not considered useful in themselves, but particular destinations [were] understood to produce particular effects'.[17] Thomas' narrative treats the Somerset countryside as enabling visitors to have the experiences and to see nature in the same way that Coleridge had. As such, he exploits the journeying frameworks of guidebooks so that his critical points about Coleridge appear as desirable endpoints and that the goal of reading poetry is to have the same experiences and gain the same ways of seeing as the poet. In this vein, the narrator describes the goal of his journey, his 'mildly imperative wish', to 'see Nether Stowey, the native soil of "Kubla Khan", "Christabel", and "The Ancient Mariner", where Coleridge fed on honey dew and drank the milk of Paradise'.[18] This narrative sees Thomas present his critical ideas of Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural poetry as showing how Coleridge is an important poet whose works can affect and enhance the ways that people see nature. *In Pursuit of Spring* stands as a monument to Thomas making his critical ideas of Romantic-period poets into ways of seeing which his narrators and personae can use too.

[17] Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 42.
[18] Edward Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring* (Toller Fratrum, Dorset: Little Toller Books, 2016), 37.

In *In Pursuit of Spring* Thomas' critical ideas of Coleridge start to affect how the narrator responds to the countryside. It inserts four of the six pages of 'The Oxford *Coleridge*' as a description of how the countryside near Nether Stowey had 'magic' that 'summon[ed] up Coleridge'.[19] The narrative expands on the review by adding echoes and quotations of 'Kubla Khan' which are not in 'The Oxford *Coleridge*'. This expansion suggests that the dreamlike and supernatural features of Coleridge's poetry are related to the same 'magic' which inspired the poet, but it does not clarify their relationship. Instead, it suggests the dreamlike and the supernatural are separate parts of Coleridge's poetry that both require the narrator's attention because their distinctiveness has made them each representative of the poet's 'genius'. They become more important than Nether Stowey itself, which 'was hardly needed', and they contribute to the narrator saying that he became 'fantastic' and had an experience which he says is like Coleridge's 'genius':

> … above all the abounding honeysuckle, produced an effect of wildness and richness, purity and softness, so vivid that the association of Nether Stowey was hardly needed to summon up Coleridge. The mere imagination of what these banks would be like when the honeysuckle was in flower would be enough to suggest the poet. I became fantastic, and said to myself that the honeysuckle was worthy to provide the honeydew for nourishing his genius; even that its magic might have touched that genius to life – which is absurd.[20]

The narrator's language echoes 'Kubla Khan': 'For he on honey-dew hath fed, | And drunk the milk of Paradise'. This echo indicates he saw the countryside as part of the dreamlike 'Kubla Khan'. When he leaves Nether Stowey the narrator becomes more explicit about what he is doing with Coleridge's poetry. He says that 'Kubla Khan' is a

[19] Ibid., 207-212.
[20] Ibid., 207.

way for him to see the countryside. For the narrator, the spring scene became Coleridge's 'May opium dream':

> Except for Coleridge, I had the road to myself between Nether Stowey and Holford … the very hills, their chasms and processions of beeches, were made unforgettable by his May opium dream of –
>
> 'That deep romantic chasm which slated
> Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
> A Savage place as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon lover.'[21]

This narration portrays an awareness of Coleridge having deepened the narrator's appreciation for the 'unforgettable' scene. It suggests that he has succeeded in his goal; he has gained a new way to look at the English countryside which has come from him considering how Coleridge's dreamlike poetry can make his wakefulness appear unreal.

In Pursuit of Spring was doing something completely new. The book stands out in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism for treating 'Kubla Khan' as a model for how to present having waking experiences in a dreamlike way. Other critics were either focusing on the poem's fragmentary state as a problem or saying that its novelty had broadened what poets might write. By contrast, *In Pursuit of Spring* is focused on how 'Kubla Khan' affects the narrator's perceptions of the countryside. The narrator emphasises how this way of seeing is distinctive, not that he worries it will all fall apart. He even suggests its permanence when he says that it makes the beech trees 'unforgettable'. Thomas' representation of 'Kubla Khan' in *In Pursuit of Spring* contradicts one of the poem's main features, that it is only a fragment of a larger dream which has been forgotten. Coleridge titled the poem 'A Fragment' and provided an

[21] Ibid., 212-214.

introduction which states the poem is only a 'dim recollection' of a dream. The poem itself references its own incompletion: 'Could I revive within me | Her symphony and song'.[22] However, Thomas' narrative shows how he focused on 'Kubla Khan' being a model for dreamlike poetry making nature unpredictable. Thomas emphasises the changes in the persona's perception of nature and not the fragmentariness of the dream. His approach stands out from a tendency in Romantic-period and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics to focus on 'Kubla Khan's' fragmentariness as the poem's chief feature.

In Pursuit of Spring can be said to 'recuperate' 'Kubla Khan' and its fragmentariness from a major line of Romantic-period criticism. This is due to it echoing a central work on Coleridge, William Hazlitt's retrospective essay 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (1817-1823). Thomas knew this essay, evidenced by him quoting from it in *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (1910).[23] In 'My First Acquaintance' Hazlitt describes two journeys to Coleridge. They are the January 1798 journey from Wem to hear Coleridge preaching at Shrewsbury and the May 1798 journey from Wem to visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey before going on together to visit William and Dorothy Wordsworth at Alfoxden.[24] Hazlitt refers to the second journey with a sentence that also describes the narrator's motivation in *In Pursuit of Spring*: 'I was to visit Coleridge in the Spring'.[25] However, the similarity ends there. Unlike *In Pursuit of Spring*, Hazlitt's essay was focused on how Coleridge had shaped his own development as a writer. It was caught between Hazlitt's acknowledgement of Coleridge's influence and his later disdain for the poet's behaviour and dreamlike and supernatural poetry. This disdain was voiced in reviews published in published in *The Examiner* (2 June 1816) and the *Edinburgh Review* (September 1816) Hazlitt had labelled 'Kubla Khan' as 'nonsense verses' (*Examiner*) and containing 'contrary effects' (*Edinburgh*) and 'Christabel' (1797-1800) as

[22] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan', in *The Major Works*, 102-104 (104).
[23] Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (New York, NY: Lane, 1911), 31.
[24] Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-19.
[25] William Hazlitt, 'My First Acquaintance with Poets', in *Essays on Poetry*, ed. by D. Nichol Smith (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1901), 181-207 (195).

'utterly destitute of value' (*Edinburgh*).[26] These remarks were seized on by the critics who came before Thomas and shaped the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reading of 'My First Acquaintance with Poets'. In an 1895 *Fortnightly Review* essay titled 'Coleridge and His Critics', the critic Nowell C. Smith had used 'My First Acquaintance' to argue that Hazlitt saw Coleridge as an enemy no longer worth fighting. Hazlitt, 'once the devotee', had become 'the bitter enemy of Southey and all the rest of the turncoats from radicalism, as he deemed them' and was 'envenomend by dyspepsia' toward Coleridge in 1816.[27] However, Smith writes, by 1823 and 'My First Acquaintance', 'the worst that he said of [Coleridge] was that "his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing – like what he has done"'.[28] This approach to 'My First Acquaintance', treating it as a less an attack on Coleridge than an artefact of animosity, was then broadcast throughout literary studies by Herford's *Age of Wordsworth* (1897). This book was influential and widely-known, as evidenced by a note that A. C. Bradley appended to his lecture 'Wordsworth' (1903): 'I advise any reader who many need the advice to consult Professor Herford's *The Age of Wordsworth*, a little book which is familiar to students of the history of English Literature'.[29] For Herford, 'My First Acquaintance' 'is a critical document of equal importance and fascination, in which the remembered ardour of hero-worship is touched with the subacid of disillusion', its praise for Coleridge 'exaggerated' and 'maliciously' recalled.[30] Smith's and Herford's accounts highlighted Hazlitt's metaphors for Coleridge's having a lack of self-control or purpose, for instance that when Coleridge walked he:

> … continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to another. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time

[26] Quoted in Wu, *Hazlitt*, 190.
[27] Nowell C. Smith, 'Coleridge and His Critics', *Fortnightly Review*, 58:345 (September 1895), 340-354 (344).
[28] Ibid., 348.
[29] A. C. Bradley, 'Wordsworth', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, (London: Macmillan, 1950), 99.
[30] C. H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth* (London: Bell, 1908), 75, 219.

> connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since.[31]

In the face of Smith's and Herford's characterisations of 'My First Acquaintance with Poets', *In Pursuit of Spring* recuperates Coleridge's poetry from the possibility of derision. Rather than attacking 'Kubla Khan' or suggesting an 'instability of purpose', Thomas depicts the narrator becoming 'fantastic' in a way which echoes 'Kubla Khan'. When it is compared to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reception of 'My First Acquaintance', *In Pursuit of Spring* shows Thomas creating the conditions for treating 'Kubla Khan' as a poem that writers and readers may want to use frame their wakefulness with the unpredictability of oneiric states of mind.

Outside of references to 'My First Acquaintance with Poets', Thomas also tacitly reclaims 'Kubla Khan' from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century attacks on its incompletion. These objections to the poem's fragmentariness represented a trait in Coleridge criticism that Matthew Arnold had shaped in his essay (1864) on Joseph Joubert. Arnold spends much of the essay comparing the ways that Joubert's and Coleridge's personalities affected their literary output. He writes that Coleridge was not capable of sustaining his inventions so that they became complete poems or consistent accounts of religious or philosophical principles, and that this incapacity was due to a lack of moral character:

> … that which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus of his continual effort, - not a moral effort, for he had no morals, - but of his continual instinctive effort, crowded often with rich success, to get at and to lay bare the real truth of his matter in hand … Coleridge's great usefulness lay in his supplying in England, for many years and under critical circumstances, by the

[31] Hazlitt, 'My First Acquaintance', 192.

> spectacle of this effort of his, a stimulus to all minds capable of profiting by it[32]

Arnold's argument was a basis for critics to divide up 'Kubla Khan'. The poem could be praised, especially for its strikingly new 'stimulus'. However, at the same time, its incompleteness could be taken as evidence of a failing characteristic of Coleridge's personality.[33] This dividing argument is apparent in the historian E. Beresford Chancellor's description of the poem in *Literary Types: Being Essays in Criticism* (1895). Chancellor writes that, for Coleridge:

> what comes to most people by dint of concentration of energy, came to him without an effort in dreams and such like forms of divine *afflatus*, [as] is attested by the history of 'Kubla Khan' … [but that] an entire lack of moral strength rendered him too enervated to turn such propitious circumstances to an account at once worthy of their origin and of himself.[34]

Before Chancellor, this mould of argument had already influenced a major account of Coleridge's life and works, H. D. Traill's *Coleridge* (1884) in the 'English Men of Letters' series of biographies. Traill decries 'the wild dream-poem *Kubla Khan*' as 'hardly more

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[32] Matthew Arnold, 'Joubert', in *Essays in Criticism* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1889), 265-306 (274-275).

[33] Although he had made it a well-known critical argument, Arnold was not the first to make the point that Coleridge had a weak moral character. The point dates to Coleridge's early fame as a poet, when it circulated among his acquaintances. Robert Southey's 14 February 1803 letter to William Taylor is a prominent example. Southey writes of Coleridge: 'all other men whom I have ever known are mere children to him, and yet all is palsied by a total want of moral strength'. Although suppressed in *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey* (1849) and *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey* (1856), this letter had been reprinted in *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich* (1843) and again, contemporary with Thomas' literary career, in *Letters of Robert Southey: A Selection* (1912). Robert Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. by Charles Cuthbert Southey, 6 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849); Robert Southey, *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by John Wood Warter, 4 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856); J. W. [John Warden] Robberds, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1843), I, 455; Robert Southey, *Letters of Robert Southey: A Selection*, ed. by Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London: Frowde and Oxford University Press, 1912), 160.

[34] E. [Edwin] Beresford Chancellor, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge – Poet', in *Literary Types: Being Essays in Criticism* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895), 172-192 (181).

than a psychological curiosity, and only that perhaps in respect of the completeness of its metrical form'.[35] Similarly, in his controversial[36] study *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School* (1887), the Austrian-German scholar Alois Bradl writes that although 'Kubla Khan' is 'a splendid curiosity' it is still 'a clock with a broken spring; and in spite of all beauty, we miss that which Coleridge himself found missing in [Charles] Lamb's verses – a firm and coherent body of thought'.[37] Likewise, S. L. Bensusan claims in his study, *Coleridge* (1913), that 'it is a matter for regret that the interest taken in 'The Ancient Mariner' and in fragments like 'Kubla Khan' and 'Christabel' has been at the expense of poems like the 'Ode to Dejection' and smaller pieces, gems of poetic thought'.[38] Although some critics in the Modernist atmosphere sustained this line of argument after the First World War – Eliot writes in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933) that unpicking 'the exaggerated repute of *Kubla Khan'* shows that 'Organisation is necessary as well as "inspiration"' – others branched it out into new arguments about what poetic form might be.[39] William Butler Yeats, for instance, suggested the poem was a 'new, pure beauty'.[40] However, when Thomas' representation of Coleridge and 'Kubla Khan' is set against what had gone before – the Arnold line of relating formal fragmentariness to a flaw in the poet's character – then *In Pursuit of Spring* stands out. Rather than claim that 'Kubla Khan's' fragmentariness requires that the poem must be measured against other expectations for poetic form, Thomas explored how the interaction of dreams and wakefulness in 'Kubla Khan' could be a model for dreamlike ways of seeing.

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[35] H. D. [Henry Duff] Traill, *Coleridge* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 60.
[36] The book was given a hostile review by *The Athenæum* in the 18 June 1887 edition. In a letter printed in *The Athenæum* of 2 July 1887 Brandl disagreed that the errors the unsigned reviewer had pointed out were errors, and he blamed his translators for any further 'abbreviations and inaccuracies'. The unsigned response printed underneath states that 'Prof. Brandl says the review "contains many errors", but does not point out any. He only makes more blunders'. 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School', *The Athenæum*, 3112 (18 June 1887), 791-794; 'Prof. Brandl's Life of Coleridge', *The Athenæum*, 3114 (2 July 1887), 20-21.
[37] Alois Brandl, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School*, trans. Lady [Elizabeth] Eastlake (London: Murray, 1887), 186.
[38] S. L. [Samuel Levy] Bensusan, *Coleridge* (Long Acre W. C. [London] and Edinburgh: Jack, 1913), 83-84.
[39] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933) (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 146.
[40] W. B. [William Butler] Yeats, *The Trembling of the Veil* (London: Laurie, 1922), 190.

In the Romantic period and thereafter, 'Kubla Khan's' influence had diffused among sleep-and-waking scenes, and among poets attempting to innovate. For example, Robert Gittings writes that Keats' *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* (1819) 'has the air of setting off into quite uncharted tracts of apprehension, in a way that resembles nothing else except perhaps Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*'.[41] However, prior to Thomas, very few poets had attempted to make 'Kubla Khan' specifically into a model for their poems. In the Romantic period Mary Robinson had used the diction of 'Kubla Khan' in what Newlyn calls a 'collaborative utterance', 'To the Poet Coleridge' (1800).[42] Otherwise, the most prominent attempt to expand Coleridge's poetry might be the narrative poem, 'Geraldine, A Sequel to Coleridge's Christabel' (1838) by Martin Farquhar Tupper.[43] But this is a 'Sequel' to 'Christabel' only. It does not quote, echo, or allude to 'Kubla Khan'. Outside of the Romantic period, the American poet and educator William Burt Harlow also worked with the diction of 'Kubla Khan'. Harlow treats 'Kubla Khan' as incomplete when he attempts to complete it in his privately-printed poem, 'Coleridge's Unfinished Kubla Khan and its completion as it comes to my fancy' (1900). Harlow adds a counterpart to the frame of sleep and wakefulness in 'Kubla Khan', eight pages of verse which describe an opium dream within the opium dream: 'There Kubla dreamed the livelong day, | The poppy's incense faintly rose'.[44] While Robinson had responded to 'Kubla Khan', and Harlow had offered its 'completion', their attempts to use the diction of 'Kubla Khan' to as a model for dreamlike writing are distinctly a minority among the works which position 'Kubla Khan' as an important or influential poem.

The majority of people who championed 'Kubla Khan' were, rather, focusing on how its unusualness had made it revolutionary. They argued that it had broadened the scope of what words, forms, and themes were possible and permissible in English lyric

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[41] Robert Gittings, *John Keats* (Boston, MA, and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1968) 343.
[42] Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 254.
[43] Martin Farquhar Tupper, 'Geraldine, A Sequel to Coleridge's Christabel', in *Geraldine, A Sequel to Coleridge's Christabel: with Other Poems.* (London: Rickerby, 1838), 3-52.
[44] William Burt Harlow, 'Coleridge's Unfinished Kubla Khan and its completion as it comes to my fancy', in *Scenes Abroad and Other Poems* (Somers, CT: Privately Printed for the Author, 1900), 84-94 (86).

poetry. These critics could suggest that all poems written after the publication of 'Kubla Khan' benefited from this broadening of what writers and readers found acceptable. Poems could be seen as having descended from 'Kubla Khan' without having to echo it in any verbal, formal, or thematic way. Ernest Rhys, for instance, calls 'Kubla Khan' 'a music that is beyond words' but with 'accents' that 'have become part of that "language of poetry" which is compounded and enriched century by century'.[45] Similarly, in *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature* (1910) George Saintsbury calls 'Kubla Khan' 'the first note, with its endless echo-promise, of a new poetry', in *The Age of Wordsworth* Herford writes that the dreamlike diction becomes 'the very stuff of poetry', and in *Coleridge & His Poetry* (1911) Kathleen E. Royds states that it 'heralds the complete emancipation of English poetry' from 'the formal, restrained, and artificial diction of the poets of the early part of the eighteenth century'.[46] These critics were focused on describing the impact of 'Kubla Khan's' on the possibilities of diction and form in English poetry. Thomas' close focus on 'Kubla Khan' differentiates him from them too. With *In Pursuit of Spring*, Thomas stands alone for having made 'Kubla Khan' into a model for poems and narratives which show the unpredictability and unreality of dreams interrupting the waking experience of nature.

Thomas' Composition of Dreamlike Poetry.

Thomas' critical ideas about 'Kubla Khan' contribute to his creative writing. His poetry and his fiction about writing poetry depict waking dreams affecting how personae and narrators experience nature. The dreamlike qualities of their experience frame nature as controlling them and affecting the relationships that they have.

'Insomnia' (September 1913) is a short story which depicts the narrator waking up and, for the first time, writing poetry. He says that the dreamlike experience makes

[45] Ernest Rhys, *Lyric Poetry* (London: Dent, 1913), 298-299.
[46] George Saintsbury, *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature (1780-1895)* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 62; Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*, 174; Kathleen E. Royds [Kathleen Innes], *Coleridge & His Poetry* (London: Harrap, 1922), 40.

him into 'prey'. He is hunted by 'anything but sleep, anything real or unreal that comes to sight, touch, or hearing, or straight to the brain'.[47] When it portrays this narrator, 'Insomnia' connects his dreamlike awareness of unreality to a representation of nature as hunting and controlling him. It echoes Thomas' representation of 'Kubla Khan' in *In Pursuit of Spring* by showing that a dream's unpredictable and unreal qualities could affect the experience of nature in wakefulness.

'Insomnia' was first published in *The Manchester Guardian* of 31 March 1914, eight months before Thomas began writing his mature poetry. It reflects an experience that Thomas describes in a September 1913 letter to his friend, the poet Walter de la Mare, when 'in sleepless hours this morning I found myself (for the first time), trying hard to rhyme my mood & failing very badly … I could not complete the first verse or get beyond the rhyme of ember & September'.[48] The letter sees Thomas use a parenthetical aside, 'for the first time', which masks that he had already put some effort into writing poetry. For instance, he had gone so far as to write out fair copies of his juvenilia and, in *Beautiful Wales* (1905), he had printed a composition-presented-as-a-translation that he titled 'Eluned'.[49] Like Thomas' account of being awake and trying to write poetry 'for the first time', 'Insomnia' is literally a poetic awakening. The narrator calls himself an 'unborn poet' and wakes up in the night with a 'compulsion' to compose lines of poetry:

> Gradually I found myself trying to understand this dawn harmony. I vowed to remember it and ponder it in the light of day. To make sure of remembering I tried putting it into rhyme. I was resolved not to omit the date: and so much so that the first line had to be 'The seventh of September'. Nor could I escape from this necessity. Then September was to be rhymed with. The word

[47] Edward Thomas, 'Insomnia', *The Manchester Guardian* (31 March 1914), 18 (18).
[48] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. Lett. c. 376, f. 221.
[49] These manuscript fair copies are held by The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, in the collection of Thomas' letters sent 1896-1900 to his wife, Helen, NLW MS 22914C, ff. 297^{r}-301^{r}.

> 'ember' occurred and stayed; no other would respond to all my calling … This gave me no satisfaction, but I was under a very strong compulsion.[50]

'Insomnia' represents the same type of experience that Thomas describes to de la Mare. In its construction, this narrative echoes Thomas' distinctive focus in *In Pursuit of Spring* on how 'Kubla Khan' provides a dreamlike perspective for describing wakefulness.

'Insomnia' associates the 'compulsion' with the unpredictable, 'expressionless', agency that has turned a robin's song into 'a note touched on the instrument of night by a player unknown to me'.[51] This association makes the narrator's few lines of poetry appear to be the consequence of an 'unreal' agency which he associates with waking dreams. In this regard, the narrator acts as Thomas had described Coleridge's introduction to 'Kubla Khan' as acting. Both the narrator of 'Insomnia' and Coleridge's introduction treat the representation of fragmentariness as evidence that their experience had been taken over by dreamlike qualities. In *Feminine Influence on the Poets* Thomas quotes from this introduction and how 'images rose up' to say that the 'recall' of the unpredictable agency in a dream – rather than the use of deliberate, controlled effort – is what drives 'Kubla Khan':

> The poet says that he slept for three hours 'during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines, if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, which a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation of consciousness of effort. On waking he wrote down the fifty-four lines which survive. Some one called on business, and he could afterwards recall no more except 'some eight or

[50] Thomas, 'Insomnia', 18.
[51] Ibid., 18.

> ten scattered lines and images'. From these fragments he could never integrate the whole.[52]

Thomas treats this failure to 'integrate the whole' as evidence that the fifty-four lines were made by an agency that Coleridge could not control. Similarly, the narrator of 'Insomnia' presents his failure to compose more than three lines as evidence that his poetry has come from an unreal agency in nature. This holistic combination of prose and poetry in 'Insomnia' is consistent with how the narrator of *In Pursuit of Spring* treats 'Kubla Khan' as a complete, not fragmentary, model for imposing dreamlike states over wakefulness. In both 'Kubla Khan' and 'Insomnia', the persona and narrator say that they cannot compose under their own volition. This failure makes the fragmentariness of the poetry they produce be a reflection of how dreaming is an experience beyond their control.

With 'Insomnia', Thomas alters the ideas of agency that Coleridge presents in the 'Introduction' to 'Kubla Khan'. Coleridge represents dreaming as an unpredictable kind of poetic creation which involves 'images ris[ing] up'. 'Insomnia' takes the suggestion that dreaming has unpredictable and unreal qualities and points it toward nature. Thomas merges the unpredictability of dreaming, which Coleridge had described, with the suggestion that nature includes a hidden presence, which echoes descriptions of nature in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry. Both Romantic-period poets had portrayed nature as containing a benevolent presence. See, for instance, the nature 'of such hues | As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes | Spirits perceive his presence' in Coleridge's 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' (1797).[53] By shifting dreamlike qualities onto wakefulness, Thomas creates a view of nature which includes an 'unknown' presence that can hunt and manipulate the narrator. This shift in 'Insomnia' shows how Thomas' writing could use oneiric frameworks to depict nature as having connections and motivations that narrators and personae need not see as beneficial to people.

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[52] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 32.
[53] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'This Lime Tree Bower My Prison', in *The Major Works*, 38-40 (39-40).

Thomas' sonnet 'A Dream' (7, 8 July 1915) shows how his poetry can articulate these critical positions on 'Kubla Khan'. It depicts a persona shifting between 'known' and 'strange' elements of a dream, and it uses language which echoes 'Kubla Khan'. 'A Dream' depicts 'known fields' suddenly becoming a 'strange' scene which 'bemused' the persona and made him 'forget' his friend.[54] Instead of suggesting nature's beneficence, 'A Dream' shows that the dreamlike experience complicates the persona's friendship:

> Over known fields with an old friend in dream
> I walked, but came sudden to a strange stream.
> Its dark waters were bursting out most bright
> From a great mountain's heart into the light
> …
> And by the mighty motion of the abyss
> I was bemused, that I forgot my friend
> And neither saw nor sought him till the end,
> When I awoke from waters unto men
> Saying: 'I shall be here some day again'.[55]

This dream is depicted in language which echoes 'Kubla Khan'. Its 'mighty motion' and 'abyss' echo the 'mazy motion' and 'deep romantic chasm', and its description of the abyssal waters 'Heaving and coiling' suggests how the landscape appears to be alive in 'Kubla Khan': 'As if this earth in thick fast pants were breathing'.[56] It is focused on how this 'strange' scene has affected the persona and his friendship. The persona says that its effect is to make him 'forg[e]t my friend'. He does not try to regain his friendship. Instead, he attempts to regain the dream state when he 'awoke from waters unto men'. His attempt is shown when says that he will be 'here' again. The word 'here', and not

[54] Edward Thomas, 'A Dream', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 96 (96).
[55] Ibid.
[56] Thomas, 'A Dream', 96; Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan', 103.

'there', suggests that the dreamlike experience is part of the same nature where there are 'men' and where fields became 'known'. On waking, then, the persona has located the dream as part of nature, and has begun to reaffirm its power to bemuse him and affect his friendship.

'A Dream' shows how Thomas' poetry characterises dreaming as a layer of unpredictable and unreal qualities which affect wakefulness. It achieves this characterisation of dreaming by how it avoids saying that the dream represents earlier or lived experiences. The persona does not try to interpret what the dream 'means'. He does not give or seek to give any reason why he might want to 'forg[e]t' his friend. Therefore, the poem denies that dreams must communicate the details of any potential 'thought' or earlier experiences which caused them. This representation of dreams follows from Thomas' critical interpretation of 'Kubla Khan'. It can be seen as Thomas' poetry employing his critical interpretations of Romantic-period poetry to keep some aspects of his personal experiences separate from his work as a poet. Thomas had composed 'A Dream' after dreaming about his friend, the poet Robert Frost. Thomas wrote to Frost on 22 July 1915:

> A month or two [ago] I dreamt we were walking near Ledlington but we lost one another in a strange place & I woke saying to myself 'somehow someday I shall be here again' which I made the last line of some verses.[57]

As Edna Longley shows, Thomas had a complicated relationship with Frost. While Frost was outgoing, often confident, and a published poet, Thomas was none of those things. His letters to and about Frost have the appearance of him rejecting what he perceived as an overbearing influence on the poetry that he was beginning to write. Thomas' 13 June 1915 letter to Frost suggests just this sort of frustration in the friendship.[58] He reacted

[57] Robert Frost and Edward Thomas, *Elected Friends: Robert Frost and Edward Thomas To One Another*, ed. by Matthew Spencer (New York, NY: Other Press, 2003), 83.
[58] Edna Longley, *Under the Same Moon: Edward Thomas and the English Lyric* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2017), 180.

to a draft of Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken' (1914) as though the poem had been an attack on him: 'It is all very well for you poets in a wood to say you choose, but don't. If you do, ergo I am no poet'.[59] Been 1915 and 1916 Thomas' letters to other friends also show him rejecting Frost's influence.[60] However, 'A Dream' does not include a link to Frost nor a suggestion that the persona is a poet. It omits those potential details and instead emphasises points which follow from Thomas' work as a critic. Doing so, it displays the traits which distinguish Thomas' poetry from both Romantic-period poetry and Modernism: the dreamlike unpredictability and unreality that Thomas' criticism associates with 'Kubla Khan' become the suggestion that nature can act on people without having to benefit them.

Thomas' Criticism and Composition of Supernatural Combinations.

In 'The Oxford *Coleridge*' and *In Pursuit of Spring* Thomas argues that Coleridge's poetry distinctively presents a 'peculiar harmony' when 'luxury' is routinely 'relieved by … the quality which responds to ghostliness and to the wildness of Nature'.[61] This argument about the combination of two potentially-opposed characteristics is Thomas' sole way of describing how Coleridge wrote supernatural poems. It is significant that Thomas only has one way of discussing these poems because Coleridge had already amplified their importance in his own prose. In *Biographia Literaria* chapter fourteen Coleridge draws attention to how, although 'supernatural agency' is a type of 'delusion', the plan for *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) was that he would contribute poems which present the supernatural as real.[62] These poems would depict 'persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic … to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a

[59] Edward Thomas, *Selected Letters*, ed. by R. George Thomas (Oxford, and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 113.
[60] Thomas, *Selected Letters*, 109; John Moore, *The Life and Letters of Edward Thomas* (London: Heinemann, 1939), 326; Edward Thomas, *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*, ed. by R. George Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 270.
[61] Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring*, 211.
[62] Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria*', 314.

semblance of truth sufficient to procure for … poetic faith' from readers.[63] Thomas' focus on how Coleridge presents combinations of supernatural and domestic details, then, is effectively his response to how the poems of *Lyrical Ballads* had made Coleridge an important figure in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English poetry.

Yet, this is not to say that Thomas' theory of combinations was at all similar to what other people were saying about Coleridge in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period. Coleridge had said that his supernatural poetry combined elements when he described it as showing that 'a legitimate poem' involves all of its 'parts' mutually 'support[ing] and explain[ing] each other'.[64] However, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism was not focused on finding out how the minutiae of Coleridge's supernatural poems were mutually supportive. Instead of asking how the diction and rhythms of Coleridge's poems affect one another in ways which might make supernatural scenes seem real, critics were discussing the importance of his supernatural themes within the history and development of English poetry.[65] Thomas' arguments stand out because they return to the discussion of 'parts' in *Biographia Literaria* and focus on how details interact in Coleridge's poems. Thomas' unique approach emphasises how Coleridge's poetry should be associated with combinations of ghostly detail and luxurious detail.

Although he calls them 'combinations', Thomas is really exploring how Coleridge's poetry includes oppositions. He stands out from other critics writing on the poet and foregrounds that in Coleridge's poetry, the supernatural 'relieve[s]' the 'luxury'. In his own poetry, Thomas presents the same type of combination yet more sharply focused into being an opposition; his poems will frequently show supernatural presences in nature which undermine people's comfort and happiness.

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 318.
[65] Traill, *Coleridge*, 43-50; Brandl, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School*, 197-214; Dowden, *New Studies*, 338-341; Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*, 180-182; Royds, *Coleridge & His Poetry*, 40-45.

Despite Thomas drawing on critical ideas that he developed in relation to Coleridge's Romantic-period poetry, his work as a poet can use the combination of supernatural and comfort in ways which evoke his twentieth-century circumstances. Yet, when they do, they emphasise the role of the countryside as a source for ghostliness. In 'Roads' (22 January 1916) the First World War dead return to near their towns as ghosts. However, they stay outside of the towns. They do not enter into the modern, urban environment. Instead, they modify countryside legends and become disquieting presences in 'The mountain ways of Wales' who 'make loneliness | With their light footsteps' press'.[66] Their 'loneliness' is shown to affect towns and scattering their inhabitants: 'Hushing the roar of towns | and their brief multitude'.[67] In 'Roads' the persona states that the ghosts keep him 'company | With their pattering', and he positions himself as an observer in between the ghosts and the townspeople whom they affect.[68] The contrast between the dead and the living is presented as a consequence of the War, and not a situation which affects the persona.

As the dead affecting the living shows in 'Roads', Thomas' poems can portray English landscapes with supernatural details being present and affecting the personae. In 'The Gypsy' (22 January 1915) the persona combines the activity of a rural fair with a perception that he is like a ghost. Against the bright colours, sounds, and busy activity of the fair – 'pink sham flowers', 'the tambourine', 'a rascally Bacchanal dance', 'Cheap-jack, balloon-man, drover with crooked stick, and steer' – the persona looks at nature and 'thinks' of himself as ghostly:

> …the hollow wooded land,
> More dark and wild than stormiest heavens, that I searched and scanned
> Like a ghost new-arrived. The gradations of the dark
> Were like an underworld of death, but for the spark

[66] Edward Thomas, 'Roads', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 106-108 (107).
[67] Ibid., 108.
[68] Ibid.

In the Gypsy boy's black eyes as he played and stamped his tune[69]

When the persona describes himself as 'Like a ghost', 'The Gypsy' turns the vibrant activity into being what protects the attendees from 'an underworld of death'. The persona shows that he does not enjoy colours, noises, and social activity just for their own sake but for their opposition to and protection from the 'death' in nature. Similarly, in 'Two Houses' (22 July 1915) creeping death undoes domestic comfort. The persona describes how the comfort and richness of the 'sunny bank and the sun' where 'The farmhouse smiles' is arrested by the 'Dark echoes' of a deathly, earlier house:

> But another house stood there long before:
> And as if above graves
> Still the turf heaves
> Above its stones:
> …
> Dark echoes reply,
> And the hollow past
> Half yields the dead that never
> More than half hidden lie:
> And out they creep and back again for ever.[70]

Although Thomas had sharply rebuked Ford Madox Ford in a 1911 review by saying he 'cannot have been well' and was 'most indolent' for writing about 'how Oliver Madox Brown was probably killed by the emanations from a subterranean stable which existed, unknown to him, under his study', 'Two Houses' shows he was evidently content to use a similar scene in his own poetry so long he could frame it in terms of comfort and

[69] Edward Thomas, 'The Gypsy', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 58-59 (58-59).
[70] Edward Thomas, 'Two Houses', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 100 (100).

ghostliness.[71] This opposition between ghostliness and comfort is also found in 'House and Man' (3, 4 February 1915) when the persona observes a house in a wood and says that the occupant 'seemed to hang rather than stand there, half | Ghost-like, half like a beggar's rag, clean wrung'.[72] In 'Roads', 'The Gypsy', 'Two Houses', and 'House and Man', then, Thomas' poetry sharpens the use of combination that he found in Coleridge's poetry into an opposition which involves death and nature undermining people's comfort.

Thomas' intensification of the combination into an opposition is especially apparent when he developed his own short fiction into poetry. The development shows Thomas working to depict nature as motivated but not benevolent to people. When this depiction of nature diverges from Coleridge, it also remains distinct from Modernist ideas that nature does not have motivations. 'The Mountain Chapel' (December 1914) reworks Thomas' short story 'Snow and Sand' (February 1910) into being an opposition between the wind, which is a deathly power, and the congregants of a chapel.

'Snow and Sand' was first published in February 1910 issue of *The English Review*.[73] The narrator of 'Snow and Sand' is a ghost who describes the wind as eternal. He says that the wind appears to speak:

> The wind has as many voices as men have moods, and more … Hundreds of times it is an old wind, so old, that it has forgotten everything except that it is old and that all other things among which it wanders are young and have changed and will change; and it mumbles fitfully that what is young now will in a moment be old, and that to be old is nothing, nothing; and then in one

[71] Edward Thomas, 'An Impressionisticalist.', *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 111:2897 (6 May 1911), 555 (555).
[72] Edward Thomas, 'House and Man', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 60 (60).
[73] 'Snow and Sand' was included in Thomas' collection of short stories, *Rest and Unrest*, published February 1910. While *Rest and Unrest* does not list 'Snow and Sand' as previously published, the book had been slightly beaten into print by *The English Review*. The publisher's listings, 'Duckworth & Co.'s Early Spring Announcements', do not list the book before 12 February 1910. However, as indicated by letters between the contributors Joseph Conrad and Edward Garnett concerning their friendship with the first editor, Ford Madox Ford, the *Review* came out at the start of every month. See 'Duckworth & Co.'s Early Spring Announcements', *The Athenæum*, 4294 (12 February 1910), 177 (177); Douglas Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: A Record of the Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (London: Macdonald, 1948), 143.

> breath it scatters the last handful of the dead tree's dust and flutters the first leaf of spring.[74]

This wind is compared to the mortality of all living things. To the wind, everything else is 'young' and has either 'changed' or 'will change'. It has deathly connotations as it scatters the 'dead tree's dust'. Instead of having 'many voices', the persona of 'The Mountain Chapel' only presents the wind speaking about human mortality. He describes this wind with words that connote death: gravestones', 'shrouded' (connoting funerary shrouds), 'loss', 'shadow', 'eternal', and 'sword'.[75] When it speaks, the wind presents itself as an inhuman power:

> ''Tis but a moment since man's birth
> And in another moment more
> Man lies in earth
> For ever; but I am the same
> Now, and shall be, even as I was
> Before he came;
> Till there is nothing I shall be.[76]

The persona observes how this power will remove the domestic comfort the chapel's congregants enjoy. He emphasises their comforts by saying the sun shines 'cheerfully', the chapel is like a 'cottage', and the grass is 'finest'.[77] But the deathly wind remains outside as 'The whistling grass'.[78] Although the congregants try to 'drown' the wind's sound with their hymns, the persona states that their religion is not as permanent as the

[74] Edward Thomas, 'Snow and Sand', *The English Review*, 'Fifteenth Number' (February 1910), 393-398 (393).
[75] Edward Thomas, 'The Mountain Chapel', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 43-44 (43).
[76] Ibid., 43-44.
[77] Ibid., 44.
[78] Ibid.

wind: 'When gods were young | This wind was old'. To the persona, this wind dominates the picturesque scene as a wild *memento mori*.[79]

Thomas' Dreamlike and Supernatural Poems: Conclusion.

Surveying Thomas' poetry in relation to his criticism of Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural styles of poetry reveals how Thomas is distinct both as a critic of Coleridge and as an early twentieth-century poet. Thomas adopts the unique critical positions of 'Kubla Khan' supplying a framework for poets to representing wakefulness as dreamlike, and of Coleridge's supernatural poetry being based on combinations of supernatural and domestic details which oppose each other.

Thomas' poetry can turn his critical positions on Coleridge's dreamlike and supernatural poetry into new ways of suggesting that nature is motivated or contains a power. It takes the unpredictable and uncontrollable qualities of dreamlike and supernatural experiences and assigns them to powers within nature. By doing so, Thomas' poetry departs from how Romantic-period poets such as Coleridge saw a benevolent power in nature. This departure can suggest the range of ways that several Modernist poets had refused to see nature as benevolent. However, Thomas' dreamlike and supernatural poetry only anticipates that aspect of Modernist poetry. It does not take part in the Modernist project. Thomas' poetry can still represent how personae 'think' about nature in the Romantic-period terms of presences and powers. Although Thomas' poetry revises Romantic-period poetry into a new view of nature, it remained distinct from the more extensive changes that Modernists were making.

Thomas, the Experience of Absence, and 'Dejection: An Ode'.

Critics have argued that Thomas' representation of absence makes him, as Michael Kirkham writes, 'Like a number of modern writers'.[80] These critics have suggested that

[79] Ibid.
[80] Michael Kirkham, *The Imagination of Edward Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 131.

Thomas' depictions of personae whose 'thought' involves an experience of absence are modern because these depictions relate the experience to a wider social situation. Kirkham, for example, argues that the 'pervasive theme of loss' in Thomas' poetry unites 'personal' loss with 'a dying order or life, a world coming to an end' and 'a deterioration of national character or loss of national identity'.[81] This type of argument follows from F. R. Leavis' influential claim that Thomas' poetry 'records the modern disintegration, the sense of directionlessness' with the 'representative modern sensibility' of its personae.[82] However, this part of the chapter challenges these critics' arguments. It disagrees with the claim that the depiction of absence in Thomas' poetry represents an exclusively twentieth-century phenomenon, and it shows how the depiction of absence in Thomas' poetry is indebted to his reading of Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode' (1802).

The critics who call Thomas' depictions of absence modern do so by relating his poetry to Modernist writers. Kirkham relates Thomas to Eliot, and Leavis relates him to Virginia Woolf.[83] These important Modernist writers could treat individuals' inability to define an identity as representative of the disintegrating social order that they live in. See, for instance, the people who 'appear as disembodied parts or ghostly actions' in Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1910-1911), or the lack of fixity in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925):

> But to go deeper, beneath what people said (and these judgements, how superficial, how fragmentary they are!) in her own mind now, what did it mean to her, this thing she called life? … And she felt quiet continuously a sense of their existence and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it … After that,

[81] Ibid., 119.
[82] F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 57.
[83] Kirkham, *Imagination*, 131; Leavis, *New Bearings*, 55.

> how unbelievable death was! — that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all.[84]

In these depictions of absence, the personal experience is related to a corresponding social disturbance. Thomas' poetry is frequently distinct from this trait – which critics such as North ('There is nothing in Prufrock's world or his sensibility to stop the oscillation of part and whole') and Lewis ('the social and spiritual situation of modernity, in which economic values seem to have triumphed and a sense of the sacred is largely absent') associate with Modernism – of poems or fictions relating a character's experience of absence to an absence embedded in the social world they are depicted as inhabiting.[85] Thomas' poetry often focuses on the persona as a locus of absence and frames the surrounding social or natural world as a potential corrective to that absence. The personae are then shown in their awareness that absence individuates them and can isolate them. As this discussion will show, this portrayal of absence reflects Thomas' keen interest in 'Dejection: An Ode'. When Thomas wrote about 'Dejection: An Ode' he especially focused on how the poem treats the persona's experience of absence as an awareness of being unlike other people. To Thomas, the core of being dejected is that the persona knows that he alone has become separate from nature.

'Dejection: An Ode' and Thomas' Criticism.

Thomas saw 'Dejection: An Ode' as Coleridge 'at his best'.[86] In his October 1913 notes for a potential book on the subject of 'ecstasy', Thomas writes that his main qualification for taking on this topic is his familiarity with the 'Ode':

[84] Michael North, *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 77; Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (London: Vintage, 2004), 107-108.
[85] North, *The Political Aesthetic*, 79; Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel*, 64.
[86] Edward Thomas, *A Literary Pilgrim in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 182.

> My chief ground and qualification for this choice was my intimate and long-standing aquaintance [sic] with the opposite of ecstasy. I knew so well the 'grief without a pang' described with some flattery in Coleridge's Dejection; so often had griefs not without a pang appeared to me almost as delights by comparison; so often had I looked at things, unless I am mistaken, as the poet was doing when he said:
>
> I see them all so excellently fair,
> I see, not feel, how beautiful they are.[87]

As well as showing Thomas' interest in 'Dejection: An Ode', the note shows him disposed to turn his interpretations of it into the foundations of his own writing projects. Although other critics were discussing the importance of 'Dejection: An Ode' – for example, Edward Dowden states that it is like 'No other poem' an example of 'helpless and hopeless prostration' – Thomas stands out for his focus on just one idea in the 'Ode', the experience of only being able to 'see, not feel'.[88] As a critic, Thomas took this idea and used it for his own writing about himself, nature, and books.

Thomas' criticism uses the idea of being able to 'see, not feel' in two different ways. It can be a framework which for him reflecting on his own mental activity, and it can be more literary-critical when it describes how writers are unable to make their readers 'feel'. In both cases, Thomas associates 'see, not feel' with the experience of having a lack or flaw.

This use of 'see, not feel' appears in the judgment of other writers that Thomas makes in his September 1910 *Bookman* review of Edith Havelock Ellis' study, *Three Modern Seers* (1910). Thomas writes that the 'seers', James Hinton, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Edward Carpenter, are incapable of 'stimulating' 'any one who has not had the vision himself':

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[87] Quoted in R. George Thomas, *Edward Thomas: A Portrait* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 254-255.
[88] Edward Dowden, *New Studies in Literature* (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), 350.

> They have seen and they know. There are phrases in all of them, especially in Nietzsche, which the reader perceives to have the power of stimulating – but whom?
>
> 'We see them all so excellently fair,
>
> We see, not feel, how beautiful they are!'[89]

Thomas has made the tag 'see, not feel' into a description of these 'seers' failure to communicate what 'They have seen and they know'. In the 'Introduction' to his prose anthology *British Country Life in Spring and Summer* (1907), Thomas echoes the 'see, not feel' tag to say how seventeenth-century prose writers were unsuccessful when they wrote about nature. Thomas writes that there is no seventeenth-century 'prose writer who helps us to *see* Nature clearly and at the same time to *feel* profoundly' (italics supplied).[90]

Alongside using the phrase to suggest flaws in the work of other writers, Thomas could use 'see, not feel' to express his own experience of absence. He does so in *The Isle of Wight* (1911):

> Fortunately there is no such thing as 'scenery alone'. Even to the most stupid or jaded a hillside, a cluster of trees above a lawn, a spread of sea beyond cliffs, is never merely a view. We cannot see with our eyes alone, even if we would. It is most sad when we 'see but cannot feel' that something is fair, but the sadness itself often comes to our relief.[91]

As this passage of *The Isle of Wight* indicates, Thomas focuses on 'see, not feel' as a model for showing absence. As descriptions of what absence is, his echoes, quotations,

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[89] Edward Thomas, 'Three Modern Seers', *The Bookman*, 228:38 (September 1910), 257-258 (257).
[90] Edward Thomas, '*The Book of the Open* Air', in Prose *Writings: A Selected Edition*, ed. by Guy Cuthbertson and Lucy Newlyn, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–), II (2011), 215-246 (219).
[91] Edward Thomas, '*The Isle of Wight*', in *Prose Writings*, II, 363-400 (369).

and allusions to 'Dejection: An Ode' reflect that Coleridge uses the term 'feel' to represent the experience of absence as a personal kind of disorder. In 'Dejection: An Ode', 'feeling' is a kind of connection to nature. Thomas knew about this Romantic-period interpretation of the term 'feeling', and, as I will show, echoes it in his prose writings.

Defining the Term 'Feeling' after 'Dejection: An Ode'.

After 'Dejection: An Ode', the lack of 'feeling' is an awareness of lacking the connection to nature. As Thomas intimates in his criticism, the poem's phrase 'see, not feel' represents the persona measuring himself against his awareness that other people can 'feel' and that he ought to be connected to nature too. The context for this contrast between connection and disconnection is Wordsworth's 'Ode (There was a time)'. As Thomas states in 'The Oxford *Coleridge*', Coleridge had first written 'Dejection: An Ode' as an address to Wordsworth.[92] Coleridge, as Lucy Newlyn writes, had composed the first version of 'Dejection: An Ode', the 'Letter to Sara Hutchinson', as an 'immediate response to the first four stanzas to [William Wordsworth's] *Intimations*', the 'Ode (There was a time)', which were read to him by Dorothy Wordsworth on 4 April 1802.[93] Coleridge then revised the 'Letter' into 'Dejection: An Ode', changing the address from 'Wordsworth' to a 'Lady', and replacing what Newlyn describes as tones of 'Envy, resentment, anxiety, love' for William Wordsworth with 'tact, compliment, public recognition, praise'.[94]

'Dejection: An Ode' responds to the 'Ode (There was a time)' by emphasising the persona's awareness of his disconnection from nature. This awareness is presented as a contrast. The 'Lady', who is substituted into the poem for William Wordsworth, is

[92] Cardiff, Cardiff Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/3/3/1/8, f. 42.
[93] Lucy Newlyn, *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Language of Allusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 62.
[94] Ibid., 61-62.

addressed as 'her [to whom] may all things live, from pole to pole | Their life the life of her living soul!' (ll. 134-135).[95] By contrast, the persona does not perceive himself to be connected to any 'things' that live in nature. He expresses his mental state as an inability to 'feel' nature:

> Those stars, that glide behind them or between
> Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
> Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew
> In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
> I see them all so excellently fair,
> I see, not feel how beautiful they are! (ll. 33-38)[96]

When he states that he can only 'see, not feel' the moon and the stars, the persona emphasises the importance of being able to 'feel'. In 'Dejection: An Ode' 'feeling' is a connection to nature, and it highlights that the representation of 'feeling' in poetry is a way of depicting that connection.

In their prose works, Wordsworth and Coleridge specify the type of connection that 'feeling' stands for. 'Feeling' is a spontaneous response to nature; it shapes the poet's future mental activity; and, it makes the poet be aware of and in affinity with the deeper 'great moving spirit of things' which exists in nature.[97] This model of 'feeling' is twofold. Wordsworth writes that representing 'feeling' in poetry enables readers to take part in the poet's experience of nature and themselves become 'more consonant to nature, that is to eternal nature'.[98] This model of 'feeling' develops from how Edmund Burke had described 'feeling' as automatic in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Both Wordsworth and Coleridge admired Burke publicly.

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[95] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode', in *The Major Works*, 114-118 (118)
[96] Ibid., 115.
[97] William Wordsworth, 'Letter to John Wilson (7 June 1802)', in *The Major Works including 'The Prelude'*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 620-625 (622).
[98] Ibid.

Wordsworth portrays the 'Genius of Burke' in the *Prelude* (1850) (V. l. 512), and Coleridge writes in *Biographia Literaria* of how Burke's works 'are more interesting at the present day than they were found at the time of their first publication'.[99] In *A Philosophical Enquiry* Burke suggests that 'feeling' is an involuntary process which happens spontaneously: 'the cause of feelings which merely arise from the mechanical structure of our bodies, or from the natural frame and constitution of our minds' ought not to be attributed to 'the reasoning faculty' because 'the influence of reason in producing our passions is nothing near so extensive as it is commonly believed'.[100] Building on Burke, Wordsworth and Coleridge treated these connections as spontaneous and involuntary and added the idea that 'feeling' connects people to nature.

In the 'Preface' (1800) to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) Wordsworth describes how 'Low and rustic life' involves 'the passions of men' being 'incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature'.[101] He states that poets should aim to experience this incorporation or connection to the eternal nature and to then derive ways of representing this connection in poetry. To Wordsworth:

> all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings[102]

In this model, a poet's experiencing connections to nature will affect his own mental processes. These processes will in turn affect the poet's later experiences of 'feeling' and

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[99] Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts*, 281; Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria'*, 252.
[100] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful: New Edition*, ed. by Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 38-39.
[101] William Wordsworth, 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. by Nowell C. Smith (London: Frowde, 1905), 11-41 (14).
[102] Ibid., 15.

will affect how he chooses to depict these experiences in his poetry. The poet will be able to reproduce their spontaneous character by using what Wordsworth elsewhere calls 'sincerity', which is a term for the 'internal evidence' with which a piece of writing 'proves the writer was moved'.[103] The poet who represents the 'spontaneous overflow' of connections to nature will then be able to leave his readers 'enlightened, and [their] affections strengthened and purified' (the 1802 revised 'Preface' states 'affections ameliorated').[104] In the 'Preface', then, Wordsworth outlines how poetry involves 'feeling' as the spontaneous experience of being aware and part of nature's eternal, divine foundation.

In *Biographia Literaria* chapter seventeen, Coleridge agrees with Wordsworth that there is a 'natural language of impassioned feeling'.[105] He also agrees that this language can show a connection to an infinite religious presence in nature. However, he disagrees that this language must be that of rural men. For Coleridge, the class of people who can be called 'poets' is not tied to any 'rank, character, or occupation'.[106] Instead, Coleridge writes, poets are those who have a strong faculty of imagination. He writes that 'The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself' which include relating nature to 'processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man'.[107] By responding to nature with the imagination, a poet may then exercise what Coleridge in chapter thirteen calls the 'primary Imagination … a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.[108] Therefore, Coleridge links 'feeling' with the ability to trust and use the imagination as a creative, shaping power. This complex underscores the depiction of being unfeeling in 'Dejection: An Ode'. The loss of an ability to 'feel' (l. 38) involves the loss of 'My shaping spirit of Imagination' (l. 86).[109]

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[103] William Wordsworth, 'Upon Epitaphs (2)', in *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 98-122 (108).
[104] Wordsworth, 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads', 16; William Wordsworth, 'Preface to "*Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*", in *The Major Works*, 595-615 (598).
[105] Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria*', 333.
[106] Ibid., 337.
[107] Ibid., 342.
[108] Ibid., 313.
[109] Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode', 115, 116.

Coleridge's discussion of poetic language is, then, also a discussion of the type of the connection to nature that happens with 'feeling'. In it, Coleridge focuses on how the imagination can spontaneously respond to nature and reveal that people are part of a divine creation.

Thomas was well-versed in these theories of 'feeling'. He describes them in his prose, which can follow them too. He shows his familiarity with the Romantic-period poets' use of 'feeling' when he quotes Wordsworth's description of 'All good poetry' being 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' in *Feminine Influence on the Poets*.[110] Thomas accompanies the quotation with a note that 'Wordsworth is certain that all good poetry is written in this way'.[111] Moreover, Thomas had earlier argued that Coleridge's disagreement with Wordsworth provides a basis for literary theory in the early nineteenth century. He writes in an 8 June 1908 review of *Biographia Literaria* that Coleridge's 'scattered pages on poetic diction, due to his disagreement with Wordsworth's theory, are all that can at present form the basis of any true criticism of Poetry'.[112] As well as describing their theories, Thomas follows Wordsworth and Coleridge in his prose too. He depicts himself 'feeling' involuntarily in response to stimuli and becoming sympathetically connected to an anthropomorphic nature. For instance, in *In Pursuit of Spring* the sight of a 'sham', a 'tower and many ruined arches', produces 'the kind of feeling which the real thing would have produced' and in *The Heart of England* (1906) 'I felt a kind of exalted and almost cheerful gloom as I stepped out and saw that it was raining and would go on raining. O exultation of the sorrowful heart when Nature also seems to be sorrowing!'[113]

Thomas' attention to and use of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's theories of 'feeling' as connection reveal his closeness to his Romantic-period forebears and show how this closeness distances him from other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers.

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[110] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 36.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Cardiff, Cardiff Special Collections and Archives, 424/3/3/1/4, ff. 68-69 (69).
[113] Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring*, 200; Edward Thomas, *The Heart of England* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 7.

He rejects Walter Pater, for example, as 'not one in whom good matter and deep feeling could have rapidly made a "good style" by chemical combination'.[114] Although Thomas could use 'feeling' as a way of combining a writer with their experiences, he stands apart from how Eliot looked back to Elizabethan-period Metaphysical poetry and interpreted 'feeling' as a term for how a piece of writing represents different experiences being combined. Eliot writes that 'the feeling became more crude' in poetry after the end of the Elizabethan period because poets lost the ability to be 'constantly amalgamating disparate experience' to form 'new wholes'.[115] Eliot uses 'feeling' to suggest that the range of experiences a poem depicts are linked in a way which is specific to that poet. The clear distinction between Eliot on one hand and Wordsworth and Coleridge on the other is important because it lets the different definitions of 'feeling' represent different trends in English poetry. Thomas clearly nails his colours to the Romantic-period mast. Unlike Eliot, he looks back to Wordsworth and Coleridge and treats 'feeling' as a type of connection. Therefore, when Thomas writes of only being able to 'see, not feel' he highlights the importance of Romantic-period models to his work and he suggests an experience of absence which involves an awareness of being disordered for failing to form spontaneous, sympathetic connections to nature and others.

Thomas' Poetry and Not 'Feeling'.

Thomas' poetry includes personae whose experience of absence is that they 'see, not feel'. The key parts of their depiction are that they are aware they lack 'feeling' and that their diction represents their inability to form deep, sympathetic connections as a spontaneous, uncontrolled happening. Presenting these personae, Thomas' poetry subverts Wordsworth's suggestion that the representation of spontaneity will prove 'feeling'. In 'There was a time' (23 June 1916), which echoes poems by Wordsworth and

[114] Edward Thomas, *Walter Pater: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1913), 211.
[115] T. S. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), 281-291 (287-288).

Coleridge, the persona undermines spontaneity by immediately complicating his perceptions and showing that he is unsure what he 'feels'. In 'Old Man' (December 1914), similarly, the representation of spontaneity underscores that the persona is unable to 'feel' when he experiences nature. These poems use the idea of seeing without 'feeling' which Thomas took from writing on Romantic-period poetry. Their personae make references to surrounding social and natural structures as potentially able to let them 'feel', isolating themselves as the ones who are unable to 'feel'.

In 'There was a time' the persona and his problem suggest the representation of 'feeling' in Wordsworth's 'Ode (There was a time)' and Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode'. The title echoes the phrase 'there was a time' from both the 'Ode (There was a time)' and the sixth verse-paragraph of 'Dejection: An Ode'. Like how 'Dejection: An Ode' responds to the 'Ode (There was a time), Thomas' 'There was a time' represents a troubled persona who measures himself against the success of others and is unsure how he 'feels':

> There was a time when this poor frame was whole
> And I had youth and never another care,
> Or none that should have troubled a strong soul.
> Yet, except sometimes in a frosty air
> When my heels hammered out a melody
> From pavements of a city left behind,
> I never would acknowledge my own glee
> Because it was less mighty than my mind
> Had dreamed of. Since I could not boast of strength
> Great as I wished, weakness was all my boast.
> I sought yet hated pity till at length
> I earned it. Oh, too heavy was the cost.
> But now that there is something I could use
> My youth and strength for, I deny the age,

> The care and weakness that I know – refuse
> To admit I am unworthy of the wage
> Paid to a man who gives up eyes and breath
> For what would neither ask nor heed his death.[116]

This persona experiences the 'weakness' as his alone. In comparison to Modernist works such as 'Prufrock', he is distinctive for not involving his society in this 'weakness'. Instead, he suggests that his instability may make him 'unworthy' to take part in the military. Moreover, he presents himself as separate from his country, '[which] would neither ask nor heed his death'. Rather than framing his problems as an issue stemming from his society or his age, the persona states that he is unsure of himself because he does not measure up to a 'mighty' ideal which he has created. He is distinctive for responding to the social upheaval of war by treating himself as problematic and his surrounding society as a point of stability.

The problem the persona presents is whether he has either the 'mighty' 'strength' that he 'wished' for, or the 'weakness' that 'I earned'. When 'There was a time' presents this problem, it subverts the possibility of spontaneity being proof of 'feeling'. The persona's spontaneity prevents him from saying if he is strong or weak. Each statement he makes to define himself is immediately qualified by a clause which undermines his assertions. When he says he is strong, he suggests he is weak too, and *vice versa*. For instance, he says he had 'never another care' but then qualifies the claim with a suggestion that he still had the kind of cares that weak people have: 'Or none that should have troubled a strong soul'. Similarly, when he says he could not 'acknowledge my own glee', this statement of a 'strength' is qualified by both an 'except' and by his ideal of 'glee' being based on a dream. And when he says that he will use his 'youth and strength', this claim is undermined by the qualification that he will have to first 'deny the age, | The care and weakness that I know'. Through the consistent use of qualifiers in

[116] Edward Thomas, 'There was a time', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 128 (128).

the persona's sentences, 'There was a time' subverts the use of spontaneity as evidence for 'feeling'. It focuses on turning spontaneity into evidence for the persona's problems being local to him and not to his wartime society.

'Old Man' shows how Thomas' poetry can include personae who treat a lack of 'feeling' as just their problem, which they oppose to the strengths of other people. The persona suggests that his daughter gains a 'meaning' from smelling herbs in his garden. However, when he tries to smell the plant too, he only has an awareness of absence. He says that he can only 'Sniff them [herb sprigs] and think and sniff again and try | Once more to think what it is am remembering, | Always in vain'. Instead of suggesting that his daughter has the same lack of 'feeling', he focuses on himself as the source of the problem. He says that 'I have mislaid the key'. He does not associate either childhood or adulthood with absence or presence, only himself with absence. Other children and adults are presented as potential sources of stability. If he could see 'father', 'mother,' or 'any playmate', they would remove his experience of absence. But he cannot see them. Instead, he is shown seeing and comparing himself to his daughter and, as a result of that comparison, treating his 'thought' as an absence:

As for myself,
Where first I met the bitter scent is lost.
I, too, often shrivel the grey shreds,
Sniff them and think and think and sniff again and try
Once more to think what it is that I am remembering,
Always in vain. I cannot like the scent,
Yet I would rather give up others more sweet,
With no meaning, than this bitter one.

I have mislaid the key. I sniff the spray
And think of nothing; I see and I hear nothing;
Yet seem, too, to be listening, lying in wait

> For what I should, yet never can, remember:
> No garden appears, no path, no hoar-green bush
> Of Lad's-love, or Old Man, no child beside,
> Neither father nor mother, nor any playmate;
> Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end.[117]

The comparison of 'As for myself' results in his interpretation of what her memory might be becoming his interpretation of what his 'feeling' should be. He can see what she is doing, but he cannot 'feel' that he has experienced the same. His diction shows the tie between his sight and what he 'thinks' the 'feeling' ought to be. When he describes her possible future memory of this scene, with 'hedge', 'path', 'bush', and himself there as her parent, he is also outlining what he wants to remember. In the final stanza, he presents equivalent nouns when he says what his memory 'should' be: 'garden', 'path', 'bush', 'father', 'mother', and 'playmate'. The contrast between persona and daughter, then, reveals the persona making an experience of absence within his 'thought'. By creating a contrast against his daughter, the persona both outlines what the 'feeling' ought to be and expresses his perception that he is the one person within the 'world' of the poem who lacks this 'feeling'.

'Old Man' turns the representation of spontaneity into a formal strategy for showing that the persona lacks 'feeling'. It echoes a formal strategy that Coleridge uses in 'Frost at Midnight' (1798). Both poems feature accumulations of verbs which portray the persona's conscious mental activity as an intense attempt to make a connection to nature. When the persona of 'Old Man' states that 'As for myself', he begins a sequence of twenty-one verbs which have him as the subject and show his attempts to 'remember'.[118] Yet, after the colon attached to 'remember', there is only one more verb, the negatively-phrased 'appears'. The imbalance of the verbs suggests that for all his

[117] Edward Thomas, 'Old Man', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 36-37 (36-37).
[118] The verbs: met, shrivel, sniff (x3), think (x3), try, am remembering, like, would, give up, have mislaid, see, hear, seem, listening, lying, should, remember.

effort the persona cannot generate an equal response from the herbs. This imbalance echoes 'Frost at Midnight', which also depicts a father discussing what his child will gain from experiencing nature. In 'Frost at Midnight' the persona hopes that 'thou, my babe' will know 'The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible' which God expresses in nature.[119] However, the persona of 'Frost at Midnight' cannot uncover the 'lovely shapes and sounds'.[120] The persona states that instead his 'mind 'interprets' and is 'every where | Echo or mirror seeking of itself'.[121] The first verse-paragraph of 'Frost at Midnight' shows this interpretation happening with a group of verbs: 'Methinks, 'Gives', 'Making', idling', 'interprets', 'seeking', and 'makes'.[122] In 'Old Man' this echo contributes to spontaneity inhibiting 'feeling'. Echoing 'Frost at Midnight' and Thomas' comments on 'Dejection: An Ode', the persona of 'Old Man' is depicted as stuck attempting to overcome a mental absence.

Drafts of 'Old Man' show that Thomas constructed the persona's diction with language which suggests Coleridge's poetry. Thomas inserted the Coleridgean word 'playmate' into the persona's description of how he does not 'feel': 'no figure of mothing or father or [~~chil~~] playmate, only [~~an endless~~] dark avenue without an end'.[123] The word 'playmate' echoes the description of the persona's city childhood in 'Frost at Midnight', 'Or sister more beloved | My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!'[124] This echo reflects how 'Old Man' develops from Thomas' keen interest in 'Dejection: An Ode'. The persona's description of 'absence', 'Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end', echoes Thomas' emphasis on 'Dejection: An Ode' in the note on his project about 'ecstasy'. In the note Thomas writes that he 'knew so well the "grief without a pang" described with some flattery in Coleridge's Dejection' and that 'so often had I looked at things' and had a 'see, not feel' experience.[125] Equivalent to Thomas' note on 'ecstasy',

[119] Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', 88.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 87.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Quoted in Edna Longley, 'Notes', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 141-321 (150).
[124] Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', 88.
[125] Quoted in R. George Thomas, *Portrait*, 254-255.

'Old Man' is built around presenting an inability to spontaneously 'feel' when encountering nature. As 'Old Man' and 'There was a time' show, Thomas' poetry can involve personae whose construction shows they lack the spontaneous connections to nature which Wordsworth and Coleridge call 'feeling'. Importantly, these personae demonstrate how the representation of absence in Thomas' poetry draws on his interpretation of Romantic-period poetry and is distinct from the mainstream Modernist emphasis on connections between the individual experience of absence and wider problems within a social milieu.

'Dejection' and the 'Household Poems'.

Thomas' position that 'Dejection: An Ode' is a model of seeing without 'feeling' underscores the 'Household Poems', a sequence of poems that he addressed to members of his family. The four poems are 'If I should ever by chance' (to Bronwen, 29 March 1916), 'If I were to own' (to Mervyn, 1 April 1916), 'What shall I give?' (to Myfanwy, 2 April 1916), and 'And you, Helen' (c. 9 April 1916).[126] They depict a persona who cannot 'feel' when he encounters nature or when he describes his family. Instead of describing how he is connected to nature, the persona is shown to substitute a focus on money. He describes his desire to own the countryside. 'If I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own' portray the persona fantasising about owning the land with his children. Rather than saying how his children are important to him, the persona describes how he will have financial relationships with them. However, in the third poem, 'What shall I give?', the persona contrasts the financial language of ownership and an acceptance that nature

[126] Thomas had begun to write some of the quartet in late 1915. On 18 November 1915 he sent an early version of 'If I should ever by chance' to his friend and typist Eleanor Farjeon in a letter that encloses 'the lines for Baba. All these place names are from this part of Essex – which I like more and more'. This letter is reproduced by Farjeon in her *Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 170. However, the first composition dates that Thomas supplies for the poems come in his 1916 notebook, now held by The National Library of Wales as NLW MS 22921A. Thomas dates the first three poems in the sequence but leaves 'And you, Helen' undated. Thomas then wrote and dated fair copies of these poems, dating them as, respectively, 6 April 1916, 7 April 1916, 8 April 1916, and 9 April 1916 (Bodleian Library, MS. Don. d. 28, ff. 33-36). I have taken dates for the first three poems from Thomas' manuscript notebook, and then a date for 'And you, Helen' from the Bodleian fair copy.

cannot make him content. He presents the shared experience of disconnection from nature, called 'time without contentment', as the foundation of a new relationship with his daughter.[127] In 'And you, Helen', the persona describes himself as an artist who can see well but does not know what he can feel. He raises the possibility of basing his marital relationship to Helen on having lost 'myself' and trying to 'find | Where it lay hidden and [if] it proved kind'.[128] The 'Household Poems' are an important part of Thomas' poetry because they show how his work can turn the individual's experience of family relationships into an expression of the absence which his criticism associates with seeing without 'feeling'.

It was Thomas who grouped the poems as a quartet and gave them the title of 'Household Poems'. As well as its domestic connotations, 'household' can have financial connotations. It is a monetary term for a family, and – although there is no suggestion that Thomas knew this etymology – the English word 'economy' has a Greek root in *oikonomia*, 'household'.[129] Thomas gave the poems their grouping and their title in letters of 16 and 24 April 1916 sent to Bottomley, who was choosing poems for *An Annual of New Poetry 1917*. Thomas' letters to Bottomley coordinated the eventual submission of eighteen poems, which the *Annual* attributes to Thomas' pseudonym, 'Edward Eastaway'. In the 16 April 1916 letter Thomas groups the 'Household Poems' into a 'set of 4 … I did lately, not because I think you will want to use them but because they are rather different in kind'.[130] Although Bottomley's letters back to Thomas were lost in the 'huge bonfire' that Thomas made 'of his papers and correspondence in 1916', evidently Bottomley then asked Thomas about putting the quartet into the *Annual*.[131] Thomas' reply, dated 24 April 1916, is the letter which gives the 'set' their title: 'The household poems ought perhaps to appear as a bunch'.[132] However, the poems did not

[127] Edward Thomas, 'What shall I give?', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 116.
[128] Edward Thomas, 'And you, Helen', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 117.
[129] Kurt Heinzelman, *The Economics of the Imagination* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), ix.
[130] Thomas, *Letters to Bottomley*, 265.
[131] R. George Thomas, *Portrait*, 29.
[132] Thomas, *Letters to Bottomley*, 272.

appear in the *Annual*. Perhaps Thomas was uneasy about their descriptions of family members being 'rather different in kind'. They were eventually published in *Poems* (1917).

As the title of 'Household Poems' suggests, the manuscript and published versions of the quartet show that financial frameworks dominate the persona's relationship to both nature and his family. 'If I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own' both depict the persona as fantasising about owning the countryside and then gifting the land to his children. Unlike in 'What shall I give?', he does not say anything about what his children might or do 'feel', what they do, or even what they look like. His focus is on the financial arrangements that will take place, not on how nature or his children inspire any 'feeling'. In 'If I should ever by chance' the 'thought' that he could ever 'grow rich' leads to the persona fantasising that 'I'll buy Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch, | Roses, Pyrgo, and Lapwater, | And let them all to my eldest daughter'.[133] As part of the idea of owning and letting these places, the persona's fantasy transforms their flowers into a form of currency. He says that he will ask to be 'paid' a rent of 'the first violets' and 'The first primroses and orchises'.[134] The persona thus gives different financial values to the different flowers. He will have the rare 'first' flowers, but his daughter may keep any furze flowers that she finds: 'if she finds a blossom on furze | Without rent they all for ever shall be hers'.[135] Unlike the 'first' flowers, furze (also known as gorse) is abundant in the countryside. As Henry Hoare writes in *Flowering Trees & Shrubs* (1902), 'it is hard to find any day of the year on which some flower is not to be seen upon some of it if there is any quantity of it about … "when the gorse is out of flower, kissing's out of season"'.[136] The contrast between the rarer 'first' flowers and the common furze flowers suggests that the persona wants to keep the rarer flowers for himself. It introduces a value-based scarcity component into how the persona is

[133] Edward Thomas, 'If I should ever by chance', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 115.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Henry Hoare, *Flowering Trees & Shrubs* (London: Humphreys, 1902), 102.

depicted 'thinking' about nature. When the persona describes what will happen to the flowers, his 'thinking' about being 'sufficiently rich' affects the ways that he relates to nature and his daughter.[137]

With its references to finance, 'If I should ever by chance' stands in sharp contrast to poetry by Wordsworth that Thomas had quoted from, and to the comparisons between money and nature made in Thomas' other poems. Wordsworth had written that people who view the world from a financial perspective are unable to respond to nature with 'feeling'. His sonnet 'The world is too much with us' (1802) portrays money as inhibiting the connections to nature which maintain 'our powers'. The financial activities of 'Getting and spending' stop people from seeing that nature already 'is ours':

> THE world is too much with us; late and soon
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
> The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
> The winds that will be howling at all hours,
> And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
> For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
> It moves us not. – Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.[138]

[137] Thomas, 'If I should ever by chance', 115.
[138] William Wordsworth, 'The world is too much with us', in *The Works of William Wordsworth* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994), 259 (259).

Thomas and his friends saw this sonnet as important. Thomas quotes from it in *The Country* (1913), writing of how the Romans saw nature as inhabited by anthropomorphic gods: 'The hills and waters were alive with an unknown life … whether they saw as well as heard "old Triton blow his wreathed horn" is now uncertain'.[139] His short story 'An Autumn House' (c. 1898-1901) also echoes its opening line, 'And when the world is too much with me', and suggests a link to Coleridge by quoting from 'Christabel' in the same paragraph ('Each matin bell … | Knells us back to a world of death').[140] And Thomas was not the only person in his social circle who was paying attention to this sonnet. For W. H. Davies, the itinerant poet whom Thomas began to look after in 1905, 'The world is too much with us' was a key poem. Davies 'went to school' with 'The world is too much with us' and 'echoes from that sonnet resound throughout [Davies'] work'.[141] The attention that Thomas and Davies paid to 'The world is too much with us' shows how Wordsworth could provide late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets a model for treating a focus on money as an absence of 'feeling'. In the 'Household Poems' Thomas' poetry takes this contrast between money and nature and revises it into depicting the psychological experience of an absence. Instead of describing a loss of 'our powers', Thomas, like in his critical emphasis on Coleridge, turns these Romantic-period ideas into a way for lyric poetry to show what kind of 'thought' happens when a persona sees without 'feeling'.

As well as quoting and echoing 'The world is too much with us' in his prose, Thomas' other poems have sharp contrasts to the financially-minded persona of the 'Household Poems'. In 'May 23' (15 February 1915) a rural figure rejects using money to buy flowers. The persona of 'May 23' encounters the itinerant 'Old Jack Noman', who treats buying and selling as a bar to being part of the countryside. Jack is a rural figure whose presence evokes spring and nature's rejuvenation because 'Fairer flowers were

[139] Edward Thomas, *The Country* (London: Batsford, 1913), 30.
[140] Edward Thomas, 'An Autumn House', in *Rose Acre Papers: Including Essays from* "Horae Solitariae" (London: Duckworth, 1910), 92-107 (107).
[141] Richard Stonesifer, *W. H. Davies: A Critical Biography* (London: Cape, 1963), 219.

none on the earth | Than his cowslips were with the dew of their birth'.[142] Refusing to engage in buying and selling, Jack gifts his flowers to the persona:

> 'I don't want to sell.
> Take them and these flowers, too, free.
> Perhaps you have something to give me?
> Wait till next time.[143]

Jack and the persona of 'May 23' do not add money into flowers and nature. Instead, waiting 'till next time' makes the persona a part of the countryside, which the persona responds to by saying how he 'feels': 'Of the dust in my face, too, I was glad. | Spring could do nothing to make me sad'.[144] Similarly, in 'What will they do?' (15 September 1916) the persona suggests that his relationship to other, unnamed people has been more important than money: 'But what if I in them as they in me | Nourished what has great value and no price?'[145] However, in the 'Household Poems' the persona does not suggest that either nature or people can make him 'feel'. As 'If I should ever by chance' shows, the persona of the 'Household Poems' treats money as the substance of his relationships with people and things.

In 'If I were to own', the persona returns to the framework of owning lands and letting them. However, while in 'If I should ever by chance' he will let the lands to his daughter, in 'If I were to own' the persona will give the lands to his son and then have them be let back to him. This reversal in the letting process, wherein the persona has become the tenant and not the landlord, introduces the suggestion that the persona is a poet and his poetry ('song') may be his rent. The persona therefore subjects poetry to the same commodification which affects his connections to nature and family. The

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[142] Edward Thomas, 'May 23', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 62-63 (62).
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 63.
[145] Edward Thomas, 'What will they do?', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 133.

persona fantasises that if he owned land that extended 'As far as a man in a day could ride' then he would give these lands to his son 'If he would let me any one | For a song, a blackbird's song, at dawn'.[146] The persona would shoot all of the blackbirds and 'put them into a pie', replacing them by paying 'for rent, a song | As sweet as a blackbird's'. He represents his poetry, or 'song', as replacing rather than taking part in nature. Moreover, he presents this poetry with a financial pun. 'For a song' was vernacular for 'sold cheaply' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British English. Thomas would have encountered this idiomatic use of the phrase in a novel that he analyses in *A Literary Pilgrim in England* (1917), George Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* (1885): 'Have I been bought for a song?'[147] This mercantile view of poetry suggests that the persona 'thinks' of financial perspectives as having replaced 'feeling' as the foundation of poetic responses to nature.

'If I were to own' shows that the persona's 'song' is there to replace nature and not represent his 'feeling' with nature. Lines eight to fourteen of 'If I were to own' describe the Essex countryside that the persona would give to his son. These descriptive lines echo lines thirty-one to thirty-eight of 'Dejection: An Ode', which describe what the persona can only 'see, not feel'. The two passages have a suggestive formal similarity. They both repeat a rhyme over an enjambment. Contrast 'plovers', 'lovers', and 'love' in 'Fields where plough-horses steam and plovers | Fling and whimper, hedges that lovers | Love' to 'bars', 'stars', and 'Those stars' in 'Dejection: An Ode': 'And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars, | That give away their motion to the stars; | Those stars'.[148] In 'If I were to own' this repetition contributes to showing how the persona cannot describe his connections to the scene. The phrase 'hedges that Lovers | Love' is not tautological. People who love one another are called 'lovers', and they could love the 'hedges' too. But it shows that the persona cannot find new words to say why nature is special. The repetition suggests the same concepts which Thomas picks up in his

[146] Edward Thomas, 'If I were to own', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 115-116 (115).
[147] Thomas, *Literary Pilgrim*, 50; George Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways: A Novel* (London: Constable, 1915), 388 (Chapter XXXIV).
[148] Thomas, 'If I were to own', 116; Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode', 115.

criticism of 'Dejection: An Ode': the persona may want to be part of nature, but he is unable to explain convincingly what nature is or how people can have an affinity with it.

Throughout 'If I were to own' the persona's adjectives suggest that he is missing out when he looks at the rural scene. The bland adjective that he gives to the thrush's song, 'well', appears pointedly unimaginative.[149] It is formally limp too: 'well' ends a nine-syllable line as the weak half of an incomplete foot. Moreover, the persona states that he cannot respond to the thrush's 'proverbs' by translating them into his own 'thought'. His adjective 'Untranslatable' can be a negative version of Thomas' description of John Keats' sonnet 'What the thrush said' (1818).[150] In his critical study, *Keats* (1916) Thomas describes the sonnet as 'a *translation* of a thrush's song that told [Keats] he was "right to have no idea but of the morning"' (italics supplied).[151] Thomas is paraphrasing Keats' description of the sonnet, 'I had no Idea but of the Morning and the Thrush said I was right – seeming to say – '.[152] But by contrast to Thomas' description of Keats' 'translation' of a thrush, the persona of 'If I were to own' can only say that he does not understand the thrush. The stilted description of the scene contributes to him appearing to lack the 'feeling' that responds to nature and appearing to use his financial ideas as a substitute for that 'feeling'.

In 'What shall I give?' the persona demonstrates that his perspective is based on contrasts between money and 'feeling'. The poem can be a corrective to 'If I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own' because the persona now suggests that money cannot be a substitute for 'feeling'. He treats financial goods as being less important than having your own 'self', even if that 'self' is 'without contentment'. This juxtaposition of money and 'feeling' becomes especially apparent after looking at Thomas' drafts of 'What shall I give?' They state overtly that money is an inferior foundation for a family

[149] Thomas, 'If I were to own', 116.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Edward Thomas, *Keats* (Cheltenham, Cyder Press, 1999), 51.
[152] John Keats, 'Letter to J. H. Reynolds, February 19, 1818', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 2009), 126-127 (127).

relationship. An early version of the poem, written in pencil, depicts the persona as saying that financial gifts would not make his daughter be 'better off':

> Why shd I give her anything?
> If she owned South Weald & Havering
> ~~f~~ields two
> and their ~~lands~~ & the ^ brooks running between,
> She wd be no better off than the queen
> who once on a time owned Havering Bower
> & Even if I had the power
> then her small hands I shd not cumber
> I ~~do not~~
> with so many acres & their lumber
> But leave her Steep & the rest of the world
> spectacled
> and her ^ self with hair uncurled
> Wanting a host of little things
> But better off than queens & kings[153]

Thomas then redrafted the poem in pen. This redraft strikes the old final line and inserts a new final line underneath in pencil:

> And her spectacled self with hair uncurled,
> Wanting a host of little things
> ~~But better off than queens & kings~~
> That time without satisfaction brings[154]

[153] Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, NLS MW 22921A, f. 14^{r}.
[154] Ibid., f. 15^{r}.

On the previous page in the notebook, and in the same pen, Thomas redrafted the first lines to make this rhyming couplet:

> What shd I give my D the younger
> Beyond ~~something~~ what will keep her
> ^from cold & hunger[155]

In the pencil text, the question 'why shd [should] I give her anything' underscores that the persona 'thinks' there is no point in giving financial gifts to his children. However, the question is tonally unlike the rest of the poem. 'Why shd I' sounds confrontational in the vein of 'why should I give you anything, what have you done to deserve it?' The changes that Thomas made to the line, to 'What shd I give' and then 'What shall I give', delete this confrontational edge and focus the act of giving onto how the relationship with the daughter might be dependent on something more important than the money or material goods that would only keep her 'from cold & hunger'.

When the persona describes the gifts that he might give, he suggests that giving his daughter the ability to 'feel' is more important than giving her money. He draws a contrast between the financial riches of 'queens & kings' and the possibilities of non-monetary possessions. He states that his daughter will be 'better off' by possessing her own 'self'. This 'self' is based on being without 'satisfaction' or 'contentment' but is nonetheless more valuable to the persona than material or monetary possessions. In *The Isle of Wight* Thomas had written that 'It is most sad when we "see but cannot feel" that something is fair, but the sadness itself often comes to our relief'.[156] As in *The Isle of Wight*, the persona of 'What shall I give?' envisages that a version of 'sadness itself', 'time without contentment', will form the basis of his daughter's 'feeling'. Thomas' revisions to the final line delete the focus on the material wealth of 'queens & kings' and instead emphasise the importance of what the daughter might 'feel': 'time without

[155] Ibid., f. 14[v.]
[156] Thomas, '*The Isle of Wight*', II, 369.

satisfaction'. Thomas then changed 'satisfaction' to 'contentment' for inclusion in the fair copy of 8 April 1916.[157] The revisions to the final line ensure that in the settled, print text of 'What shall I give?' the persona unpicks the language of money and instead asserts the importance of the kind of deep, sympathetic connections which Wordsworth and Coleridge call 'feeling'.

The persona reverses the financial language of 'If I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own', which present nature as a financial system of ownership and rents. In 'What shall I give?' the persona turns his language in the opposite direction. He presents financial words as descriptions of 'feeling', not of money. In 'What shall I give?' the persona ties the ownership of lands to being 'no richer than the queen | Who once on a time sat in Havering Bower | Alone, with the shadows, pleasure and power'.[158] The persona does not represent 'pleasure and power' as valuable. He calls them only 'shadows'. A shadow shows the shape of a thing but does not provide the thing itself. Therefore, the persona's use of the word 'shadows' suggests that he perceives 'pleasure and power' as lacking the substance or 'feeling' that he 'thinks' they should provide. Accordingly, he says they cannot make anyone 'richer'. His phrase 'no richer' changes 'richer', a financial word, into a description of 'feeling'. The word loses some of its financial reference and suggests the 'richness' of intense sensations and responses. The persona then depicts his daughter as cut off from gaining these 'feelings' from nature, stating that she could not have them even if she owned an exotic location such as 'Samarcand | Or the mountains of a mountain land'.[159] The persona suggests that her only way to experience richness will be to have her 'own world' where she is 'without contentment':

> Her small hands I would not cumber
> With so many acres and their lumber

[157] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Don. d. 28, f. 35.
[158] Thomas, 'What shall I give?', 116.
[159] Ibid.

> But leave her Steep and her own world
> And her spectacled self with hair uncurled,
> Wanting a thousand little things
> That time without contentment brings.[160]

Unlike 'if I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own', the persona describes this child and suggests that they have something in common. When he depicts her as being 'without contentment', his language suggests that he experiences the same absence. This suggestion comes when he predicates the whole arrangement on him dying. Instead of buying or renting, he will 'leave' her his property to inherit. As well as suggesting that the persona is mindful of his own death, it indicates that he 'thinks' of his daughter in terms of a continuation from him. He suggests her experience of absence will be descendant from his. And he, then, turns this family connection into a suggestion that maybe his daughter will have 'feeling'. He suggests that her experience will enable her to know 'her own world | And her spectacled self'. As in Thomas' description of using 'sadness itself' to escape from the 'see, not feel' experience in *The Isle of Wight*, the persona tries to turn being 'without contentment' into a way for the daughter to see the 'world' as hers. Therefore, 'What shall I give?' suggests that a shared experience of seeing nature as a 'shadow' can be the foundation of the persona and his daughter knowing that they each have a 'self' and being able to share a family relationship.

The sequence of 'Household Poems' depicts a persona who does not 'feel' when he sees nature. The relationships that he creates are then compensations for that lack of 'feeling'. 'If I should ever by chance' and 'If I were to own' depict him as using money as a substitute basis for relationships. His depiction in 'What shall I give?' suggests that he rejects using money as a basis for relationships and will instead share in the experience of being unable to 'feel'. In the fourth poem, 'And you, Helen', the persona treats the shared lack of 'feeling' as the basis for a marital relationship. He demonstrates to 'Helen'

[160] Ibid.

that he does not have a 'self'. But, as he tells her, neither does she. He is depicted revising their relationship so that it can be based on their shared experience of absence. He frames it as a shared disconnection from all these desired ideals:

> And you, Helen, what should I give to you?
> So many things I would give you
> Had I an infinite great store
> Offered me and I stood before
> To choose. I would give you youth,
> All kinds of loveliness and truth,
> A clear eye as good as mine,
> Lands, waters, flower, wine,
> As many children as your heart
> Might wish for, a far better art
> Than mine can be.[161]

The persona is unable to give 'Helen' any of these gifts. He only fantasises that he would give them were they 'Offered me'. The repetition of 'I' sounds in the list highlights the tension between the persona's presence and his inability to give these prospective gifts. The chiming repetition of 'I and 'mine' emphasises that the persona is present and that he frames these gifts as coming from him: 'what should *I* give to you?' (italics supplied). However, he cannot give these gifts to 'Helen' because the 'great store' is a fantasy. Even within a fantasy of his own making, the persona does not give himself the agency to say that he will make or distribute these gifts; they must first be 'Offered me'. The depiction of his 'thought', then, is built from a clash between the list and his agency. The persona cannot 'think' of a gift without treating himself as unable to obtain it. With this list framework, and the focus on the individual through the repetition of 'I' sounds, 'And

[161] Thomas, 'And you, Helen', 117.

you, Helen' shows how Thomas' poetry can create formal representations of how absence is an experience local to the individual.

Part of how the persona is shown to be aware that absence is his problem, and not a wider social problem, is his devaluation of his 'art'. He says he cannot reach the standard that other artists might reach. When he discusses his 'art', the persona changes from describing things that he fantasises to describing things that are, within the poem, real. He possesses both his 'art' and 'A clear eye'. Having a 'clear eye' suggests both the persona's artistic ability and the historical fact that Helen Thomas wore glasses.[162] The phrase had an artistic connotation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary criticism: Thomas Carlyle's essay 'On the "*Nibelungen Lied*"' (1831) was still being appended to copies of the *Nibelungenlied* (c. 1200) and describing how the Nibelung poet 'has a clear eye for the Beautiful and True'.[163] The dual reference of 'clear eye', then, links the persona's ability to produce art and his inability to give 'Helen' gifts. Equal to the confession in 'There was a time' that 'my own glee | … was less mighty than my mind | Had dreamed of', the 'Household Poems' persona is depicted as psychologically devaluing himself and his 'art' by measuring both against an ideal that he 'thinks' he cannot obtain.

In the 'Household Poems' the persona's 'thought' is based around compensating for a lack of 'feeling'. It involves relating relationships to disconnections and things that cannot happen. There are the financial fantasies, 'If I' and 'Offered me', there are ideas based on his death, 'leave', there is an inability to see 'pleasure and pain' as more than 'shadows', and there is his 'art', which falls short. In 'And you, Helen', however, disconnection becomes its own compensation. The shared experience of disconnection is portrayed as the possible basis of a marital relationship. The persona states that both he and 'Helen' have lost their selves:

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[162] *Edward Thomas: A Life in Pictures* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2017), 207, Richard Emeny prints two 'newly discovered photographs' of Edward and Helen together in 1916. She is wearing glasses in both photographs.

[163] Thomas Carlyle, 'On the "*Nibelungen Lied*"', in *The Lay of the Nibelungs Metrically Translated from the Old German Text*, ed. by Edward Bell, trans by Alice Morton (London: Bell, 1901), xiii-lxix (lxviii).

… If I could choose
Freely in that great treasure-house
Anything from any shelf,
I would give you back yourself,
And power to discriminate
What you want and want it not too late
Many fair days free from care
And heart to enjoy both foul and fair,
And myself, too, if I could find
Where it lay hidden and it proved kind.[164]

The persona represents himself and 'Helen' as similar. Neither of them knows what they may 'want' because she lacks 'yourself' and he lacks 'myself'. The admission that he has no access to 'myself' contrasts with the emphasis on the 'I' pronoun and sound in the first two sentences. This contrast increases the impact of the persona's climactic statement that he does not know what or where 'myself' is. With this emphasis on his lack of self and uncertainty over it being 'kind', the depiction of the persona breaks away from earlier artists and poets who had offered their selves as gifts to the beloved. The persona's rhyme of 'find' and 'kind' echoes the gifting in the second stanza of Robert Herrick's 'To Anthea, who may command him any thing' (1648). In Thomas' novel, *The Happy-Go-Lucky-Morgans* (1913), the narrator describes this poem as Herrick's best-known.[165] The stanza:

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free,
As in the whole world thou canst find,

[164] Thomas, 'And you, Helen', 116.
[165] Thomas, *Prose Writings*, I (2011), 46 (Chapter V).

That heart Ile give to thee.[166]

The representation of the persona in 'And you, Helen' deviates from poems such as 'To Anthea'. It deviates because the persona does not possess himself, nor any of the gifts. Nor does it suggest what the persona's self is. The persona is unsure whether it is 'kind'. Both the adjective (as in 'kindly') and noun (as in 'kindred') forms of the word 'kind' make the persona's self into something ambiguous. Would it be kind to him and 'Helen'? Would it be of a kind with him? The persona cannot say. Instead, the persona suggests that he and 'Helen' are connected because neither of them knows what their 'self' is or what it might 'want'.

Through the ways that his descriptions show how he relates to nature and to his family, the persona is shown to 'see, not feel'. He finds the songs of thrushes to be 'untranslatable' in 'If I were to own', and 'pleasure and power' to be only 'shadows' in 'What shall I give?' Moreover, he does not know what 'myself' is, nor what it may want. These representations of the persona suggest that his artwork is equivalent to the 'see, not feel' judgment in 'Dejection: An Ode' that Thomas repeatedly references in his prose. Indeed, the 'Household Poems' conclude with a literal rendering of this judgment. In 'And you, Helen', the persona highlights his ability to see. He has a 'clear eye'. While 'clear' can suggest the clarity of his eyesight, it also suggests that his vision does not adapt or change anything that he sees. His good vision makes him an artist who knows that he can see, but who does not know what 'feeling' he might have in his self. When taken as a sequence, then, the 'Household Poems' portray the persona as a poet who can 'see, not feel'.

[166] Robert Herrick, 'To Anthea, who may command him any thing', in *The Poems of Robert Herrick* (London: Frowde and Oxford University Press, 1909), 108-109 (108).

Thomas, 'Dejection: An Ode', and Absence: Conclusion.

By finding ties between Thomas' prose discussions of 'Dejection: An Ode' and the representations of absence in his poetry, this discussion has demonstrated how his draws on his critical approach to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's term 'feeling'. Thomas built and used a model of absence which is focused on the individual. When his poems depict personae whose 'thought' involves an experience of absence they rework Coleridge's judgment of 'see[ing], not feel[ing]' into new contexts. It shows how Thomas' poetry can treat absence as, actually, a state of comparison. The personae are caught isolating themselves by an awareness that other people do not inhabit the same state. It is only when the personae raise the possibility of nature, social structures, or personae's family members possessing the same experience of isolation – as happens in the 'Household Poems' – that absence stops being a comparison. Then, instead of being dispelled, it becomes a potential type of interpersonal connection.

Thomas' View of History in Wartime, Patriotism, and 'Fears in Solitude'.

Although Thomas' poetry draws on his critical ideas of Coleridge when it treats absence as a problem local to personae, his poetry does include ways of relating personae to their societies. He responds to the First World War (1914-1918) by depicting links between personal identity and national identity. His wartime work reflects the critical positions on history and on patriotism which he developed by writing about Coleridge's 'Fears in Solitude: Written in April, 1798, during the Alarm of an Invasion' (1798). By discussing Thomas' writing on 'Fears in Solitude', this part of the chapter will set his criticism, his work as an anthologist, and his poetry in the context of other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century views of patriotism and Coleridge's poem. It will show that Thomas' critical responses to 'Fears in Solitude' are important because he used them to develop and clarify his own ideas of how the English countryside is

historical and how being English involves being a part of that history. These ideas distinguish Thomas among First World War writers.

Thomas on the 'Humble' Coleridge.

Thomas associates 'Fears in Solitude' with a 'humble' patriotic viewpoint, a word that he echoes from the poem. This viewpoint is the basis of how Thomas' wartime essays and poetry express love for England. The qualities England has which are the reason for loving it then come from Thomas' model of history. I will discuss how Thomas generated a model for being 'humbly' patriotic in his criticism on 'Fears in Solitude' and then I will explore how he relates this type of patriotism to his view of English history.

Thomas' 'humble' patriotism is a love for England through a lens of loving the countryside. It is a belief that the countryside is the source and representative of English values. Thomas defined these values indirectly. He did so in essays of 1914 and 1915 which dissent from the 'shouting' and jingoism of 'deliberately patriotic works'.[167] Their dissent does not offer a firm picture of what the countryside or 'England' mean. Instead of attempting to create a definition of 'England' and then opposing it against other kinds of patriotism, Thomas undermined the possibility of jingoistic voices speaking for all of England because, he suggests, national identity is beyond clarification. He writes in the wartime essay 'This England' (September 1914), first published in the November 1914 number of *The Nation*, that a wood-betony 'stood sentinel' for reasons that 'I did not know, any more that what I had got to do'.[168] By leaving the meaning of 'England' suggestive, Thomas' 'humble' writing expands to include a connection between the countryside and national identity, a willingness to fight to defend England, a distrust for jingoistic press and popular opinion, and a rejection of arguments that England is necessarily superior to other countries.

[167] Edward Thomas, 'England', *The English Review*, 'Seventy-Seventh Number' (April 1915), 88-99 (97).
[168] Edward Thomas, 'This England', in *The Last Sheaf*, ed. by Thomas Seccombe (London: Dent, 1928), 215-221 (221).

It is crucial to see that Thomas' idea of being 'humble' is a quarrel with jingoism, not with the war itself. Both Thomas and Coleridge support defensive fighting and oppose wars of aggression. They reject wars of aggression, but not war itself. This distinction is important because it can reflect the legal climate of wartime England as much as Thomas' beliefs about war. When Thomas outlined being 'humble' he was writing at a time of strict government censorship. The Defence of the Realm Act (1914) had introduced censorship for the press and for private mail and telegram communications. This censorship was to ban any writing which could 'jeopardise the operations of His Majesty's forces' or 'assist the enemy'.[169] By maintaining that he would fight to defend England, Thomas could stay on the right side of this law. However, it is striking that his output of anti-jingoist essays ended on 8 May 1915 with the publication of 'Soldiers Everywhere' in *The New Statesman*.[170] By early 1916, Thomas' critiques of the press and public opinion could have resulted in his arrest. On 23 May 1916 the Defence of the Realm Act was amended with the inclusion of Section 27, which made it a criminal offence to write or say anything that could 'interfere with the success of His Majesty's forces'.[171] This was a wide-ranging amendment. Samuel Hynes describes it as making it 'an offence to utter, in any form, any opinion that might be construed as prejudicial to the conduct of the war'.[172] When Thomas dissented from jingoist writers and opinions, then, he was writing in a time when he had to carefully calibrate his discussions of Coleridge so that they did not contravene the new wartime legislation.

Thomas' writing on 'Fears in Solitude' is focused on an objection to the newspapers and, suggestive of the impact of the Defence of the Realm Act, not on an objection to war itself. In 'War Poetry', an essay in *Poetry and Drama* for December 1914, Thomas says that the anti-jingoism in 'Fears in Solitude' is 'humble' and 'one of the noblest of the patriotic poems'. He writes that:

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[169] *Defence of the Realm Manual*, ed. by Alexander Pulling (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1917), 99.
[170] Edward Thomas, 'Soldiers Everywhere', *The New Statesman* (8 May 1915), 111.
[171] *Defence of the Realm Manual*, 99.
[172] Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 145.

> … no newspaper of magazine, then or nor, would print such a poem, since a large part of it is humble. [Coleridge] admits that aboard we have offended, at home
>
> [quotes 'Fears in Solitude' lines 54-60 and 101-107.]
>
> … The poem, one of the noblest of the patriotic poems, has been omitted from most of the anthologies.[173]

Thomas' critical responses to 'Fears in Solitude' focus on how the 'humble' perspective jars against any 'newspaper or magazine, then or now' and 'most of the anthologies'. It jars, he suggests, because newspapers, magazines, and anthologies are a major source of bellicose patriotism. In *A Literary Pilgrim in England*, for instance, he frames 'Fears in Solitude' as evidence that Coleridge had broken away from being 'one of those who speak from the newspapers'.[174] It was only after Coleridge had moved away from the opinions printed in the press, Thomas states, that the poet could write in a 'humble' way based on 'his country's need of humility'.[175] When Thomas outlines the word 'humble' in relation to 'Fears in Solitude', then, he treats it as a patriotism which is defined by its rejection of how jingoistic press and public opinion treat England as necessarily more important than other countries.

Thomas probably takes the words 'humble' and 'humility' from how the persona of 'Fears in Solitude' opposes himself to newspapers and public opinion. In 'Fears in Solitude' the persona calls himself 'The humble man' (l. 14).[176] He addresses other Britons and rebukes militaristic attitudes that have been propagated by the press. He states that 'my countrymen! | We have offended most grievously, | And been most tyrannous' (ll. 41-43) and blames the 'ignorant' 'war-whoop' (ll. 91, 90) on the narratives that newspapers print:

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[173] Edward Thomas, 'War Poetry', in *Poetry and Drama*, ed. by Harold Monro (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1914), 2 vols., II, 341-345 (341-342).
[174] Thomas, *Literary Pilgrim*, 180.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Fears in Solitude: Written in April, 1798, during the Alarm of an Invasion', in *The Major Works*, 92-98 (93).

> Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
> To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
> Alas! for ages ignorant of all
> Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
> Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
> We, this whole people, have been clamorous
> For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
> The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
> Spectators and not combatants! (ll. 89-96)[177]

As these lines show, 'Fears in Solitude' makes the censure of newspapers key to the persona's assertion that it is patriotic to be a 'humble man'. The persona is depicted as having to justify himself as patriotic in a climate that judges him to be unpatriotic. He states that the press and people who love 'To swell the war-whoop' have 'deemed' him one of the 'enemies' of Britain for not choosing to 'fall before their images' of what Britain is (ll. 172-176).[178] The persona's justification of his viewpoint is, as Thomas suggests, based on his description of how he has drawn his identity from loving the British countryside.

Thomas takes the rejection of newspapers and jingoistic public opinion from 'Fears in Solitude', but he does not take the idea of what British identity is. In 'Fears in Solitude' Coleridge draws on his Christian principles for the view of Britain and Britishness. When Britain has 'offended' against 'The wretched' of the world with military aggression, this is an offense against Christianity. These 'wretched' are also 'the sons of God, | Our brethren' (ll. 45-47).[179] Accordingly, 'Fears in Solitude' does not have to define what British identity is. The poem simply relates it to an idea of God. The persona

[177] Ibid., 93, 95.
[178] Ibid., 97.
[179] Ibid., 93-94.

states that he finds 'all adoration of the God in nature' (l. 188) and so offers the British countryside as representative of the Christian principles which he presents as the foundation of Britishness.[180] Thomas, however, does not draw on religion. By taking God out of the equation, Thomas' result is that English countryside represents an undefined English identity and an opposition to the jingoism in wartime newspapers and anthologies.

In 'War Poetry' Thomas presents his critique of 'Fears in Solitude' as a disagreement with how the poem had been represented in newspapers, magazines, and anthologies. This list of different publications can be seen as a synecdoche for the wider literary trend that saw critics reject 'Fears in Solitude'. Although Thomas, and critics including Traill and Dowden, observe a connection between the political statements in 'Fears in Solitude' and its descriptions of countryside, others were working to break this connection.[181] Several critics disputed the political message of 'Fears in Solitude', either by attacking the poem's critique of jingoism or by focusing on its nature description to the exclusion of any political content or context. This critical trend was extant before the outbreak of the First World War and it continued through the fighting.

A prominent example of an attack on the political statements in 'Fears in Solitude' is 'Coleridge and the Anti-Jacobins', an essay by Coleridge's editor and biographer James Dykes Campbell in *The Athenæum*, 31 May 1890. Campbell describes an early version of Coleridge's footnote to the end of *Biographia Literaria* chapter three, 'in the first number of the *Friend*, which was not reproduced in what Coleridge called the "rifacciamento" [sic – 'rifacimento' is Italian for 'remake'] in three volumes (1818) known to this generation'.[182] Campbell writes that in the *Friend* version of the note Coleridge's attempt to use 'a long quotation, as certificate of his patriotic, anti-Jacobin sentiments, from his "Fears in Solitude"' was unable to convince him that the poet was not a political radical. To Campbell, Coleridge's argument that 'Fears in Solitude' helps to demonstrate that

[180] Ibid., 97.
[181] Dowden, *New Studies*, 326; Traill, *Coleridge*, 39.
[182] J. D. C. [James Dykes Campbell], 'Coleridge and the Anti-Jacobins', *The Athenæum*, 3266 (31 May 1890), 703-704 (704).

'none of [Coleridge's] writings show "the least bias to Irreligion, Immortality, or Jacobinism"' was 'ludicrously incorrect and incomplete'.[183] This 'long quotation' is of lines 129-197, which include the praise for 'my Mother Isle!' and its 'lakes and mountain-hills'.[184] In his works on Coleridge, Campbell only treats the description of 'my Mother Isle' as evidence of regrettable political radicalism, 'Jacobinism'.[185] There are similarly dismissive treatments of 'Fears in Solitude' in the First World War period. For instance, the poet and critic Edmund Gosse writes in *Inter Arma* (1916) that 'Fears in Solitude' shows a 'very curious' perspective.[186] Gosse suggests that 'Fears in Solitude' shows cowardice, not a love for England expressed through the countryside. Gosse writes that Coleridge 'saw Somersetshire [could be] treated like La Vendée', a 1793 massacre of soldiers and civilians.[187] Seeing Coleridge as unnecessarily afraid that an invasion might succeed, Gosse writes that 'Fears in Solitude' shows 'little confidence in the military resources of England', and that it indicates 'Coleridge was unnerved by the dread of invasion'.[188] While Campbell had dismissed 'Fears in Solitude' as politically radical, Gosse shows the possibility that critics could dismiss 'Fears in Solitude' by labelling Coleridge a coward.

When some critics sought to dismiss or ridicule the political statements in 'Fears in Solitude', others who wrote on or anthologised the poem could simply exclude these statements. These critics treat the political content of 'Fears in Solitude' as irrelevant. They do so by presenting the poem as an apolitical representation of rural life, not a depiction of a 'humble' patriotic viewpoint rooted in a response to the countryside. For instance, in 'The Village Shrines of England' (August 1911), A. B. Cooper writes that 'Coleridge's fine poem, "Fears in Solitude", is full of reminiscences of Stowey and its

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[183] Ibid.
[184] James Dykes Campbell, 'Notes', in *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by James Dykes Campbell (London: Macmillan, 1893), 561-654 (610).
[185] Ibid; 'Coleridge and the Anti-Jacobins'; James Dykes Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Narrative of the Events of His Life* (London: Macmillan, 1984).
[186] Edmund Gosse, *Inter Arma: Being Essays Written in Time of War* (London: Heinemann, 1916), 117.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

neighbourhood'.[189] Similarly, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthologists often omitted the lines which describe the problem of how 'We have offended most grievously'. In *The Golden Book of Coleridge* (1895), which was reprinted four times before the end of the First World War, the editor, Stopford A. Brooke, confirms that he has reshaped 'Fears in Solitude' to be a description of rural life with no political content. Brooke treats the description of rural Somerset as 'the whole' and labels the lines which describe political issues as injurious to that 'whole'. He omits lines 41-181 of 'Fears in Solitude' and writes that he has 'as I think lawful in *Selections*, left out, in a few poems, stanzas and lines which seemed to me to injure the impression of the whole'.[190] Similarly, *English Patriotic Poetry* (1910, reprinted 1912) edited by L. Godwin Salt only includes lines 176-196, and *English Landscape: An Anthology* (1916) edited by Maurice Baring only lines 183-232.[191] *Poets' Country* (1907) is an anthology of paintings and short essays connecting well-known British poets to the landscapes they described, contains excerpts of 'Fears in Solitude' and an essay by Coleridge's descendant, Ernest Hartley Coleridge. The latter equivocates on the political context of 'Fears in Solitude', and it is accompanied by excepts of 'Fears' that only describe 'beloved Stowey', not the political context for why the persona may love Nether Stowey.[192] The excerpts are of lines 203-210, 215-218, and 221-227, which are descriptions of rural Somerset. Together, these anthologies show that authors and editors could focus on the descriptions of nature in 'Fears in Solitude' to the exclusion of the poem's political component.

Unlike other anthologists, Thomas printed all of 'Fears in Solitude'. In his wartime anthology, *This England: An Anthology from Her Writers* (1915), he framed it as a

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[189] A. B. Cooper, 'The Village Shrines of England', *The Quiver*, 46:10 (August 1911), 895-900 (898).
[190] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Fears in Solitude. Written at Nether Stowey in April 1798, During the Alarm of an Invasion', in *The Golden Book of Coleridge*, ed. by Stopford A. Brooke (London: Dent, 1906), 80-82; Stopford A. Brooke, 'Preface', in *The Golden Book of Coleridge*, v-vii (vi).
[191] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'From Fears in Solitude. Nether Stowey. April 20th, 1798', in *English Patriotic Poetry*, ed. by L. Godwin Salt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 33; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'From "Fears in Solitude"', in *English Landscape: An Anthology*, ed. by Maurice Baring (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 9-11.
[192] Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 'S. T. Coleridge', in *Poets' Country*, ed. by Andrew Lang (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott; and Edinburgh: Jack, 1907), 66-82.

political poem.[193] Thomas' brief introductory note to the anthology states that the selection is an expression of his political beliefs about patriotism. He says that the selection is to the exclusion of 'professedly patriotic writing' and is instead 'as full of English character as an egg is full of meat'.[194] Most of the works printed in *This England* are less than an octavo page in length. 'Fears in Solitude' stands out in the anthology because of its length. It is the longest complete work, taking up seven pages. By printing the entire 'Fears in Solitude' Thomas encourages readers to see all of the poem – both the descriptions of nature and the descriptions of invasions – as making a political point. However, as in his prose writings on 'Fears in Solitude', Thomas does not say exactly what that point is. Instead, he writes that *This England* is intended to be indirect and remind readers 'of some of the echoes called up by the name of England'.[195] When Thomas represents 'Fears in Solitude' as a patriotic wartime poem, then, he uses it to supplant 'professedly patriotic' press, print, and public opinion, and he suggests that it represents an alternate patriotism which involves belonging to an indefinite national identity rooted in how the countryside seems historical.

Thomas on History.

Thomas' wartime prose and poetry present a distinct model of history. Although Thomas held an upper-second-class degree in History from Oxford University and wrote *The Life of the Duke of Marlborough* (1915), his wartime prose and poetry do not treat history as the study of social, intellectual, or technological developments, nor as the description of sequences of events.[196] They present history as the continued presence of an idea of 'the Merry England of the English people'.[197] For Thomas, the dates of battles and the lives of kings are markers which represent this core of English identity. Instead of history being

[193] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Fears in Solitude', in *This England: An Anthology from Her Writers*, ed. by Edward Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 104-110.
[194] Edward Thomas, 'Note', in *This England*, unpaginated.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Edward Thomas, *The Life of the Duke of Marlborough* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1915).
[197] Thomas, 'England', 94.

a development, one built on a base of Englishness so that later iterations of the structure are different from earlier ones, Thomas presents the dates and events of past England as fungible representations of just that base.

In Thomas' writing, English identity is a representation of a psychological experience of belonging to the countryside so that 'If England seems threatened you feel that in losing her you would lose yourself'.[198] His view of history links this idea of belonging to the time when 'the English race came once upon a time to Britain and made it England'.[199] For Thomas, that indeterminate past is when 'Merry England' was formed. It is therefore the basis of English identity, and it is represented by the continuing presence of the English countryside. He says of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653) that in reading it 'I touched the antiquity and sweetness of England'.[200] Thomas' focus on 'antiquity' in *The Compleat Angler*, with its 'English fields, English people, English poetry, all together', reveals how his own writing brings together an emphasis on rurality and an idea that the 'sweetness' of English identity is a continuity from an indefinite past.[201]

In Thomas' writing the historical basis of English identity is found in the present-day experience of the countryside. Thomas does not attempt to create characters or personae who are set in an earlier time. He stands out from how Modernist poets could present characters and personae whose experiences in earlier ages can represent national identity. These poets' works can turn away from seeing the past as comforting 'sweetness' and toward exploring the roots of English poetry in the harsh circumstances and alliterative verse of bardic and skaldic poets. Whereas Thomas presents awareness of history as an experience of belonging, Modernist poetry can frame bardic scenes as examples of danger and rootless travel. In the November 1911 number of *The New Age*, Pound published his translation of the Old English poem 'The Seafarer', in which the

[198] Ibid., 88.
[199] Ibid., 93.
[200] Ibid., 98.
[201] Ibid.

persona recounts 'how I in harsh days | Hardship endured oft'.[202] Pound describes his translation in the *A. B. C. of Reading* (1934) as showing 'more or less where English poetry starts'.[203] While First World War poets could use bardic traditions to suggest travel and warfare, such as 'The Vengeance of Fionn' (1917) by the Irish poet Austin Clarke ('Upon a stormful nightfall when the plain …'), Thomas does not.[204] Although Thomas knew about British bardic mythology, as signified by his several references to the Welsh bardic stories of *The Mabinogion* (c. 1300), his wartime writing is focused on an idea of 'Merry old England'.[205] This focus enables Thomas' criticism and poetry to both treat history as English identity preserving a sense of comfort and belonging.

For Thomas, belonging to England is a key concept. His poetry and criticism focus on the word 'home' as a metaphor for the psychological experience of belonging. This experience is not tied to the person's residence or to the locale they were born in, but to them being a part of all of England. Thomas writes that 'in war-time or coming from abroad … the whole land is suddenly home'.[206] Similarly, his poetry uses the word 'home' to describe living in and being a part of England, not being rooted in a specific English place. Thomas' poems especially focus on belonging to the land in the three poems he titled 'Home'. In 'Home (Often had I gone this way before)' (17 April 1915), the experience of belonging is made part of having a 'nationality': ''Twas home; one nationality | We had, I and the birds that sang'.[207] In 'Home (Not the end)' (23 February 1915), the experience is inverted and represented as a disconnection from the 'land': 'That land, | My home, I have never seen'.[208] In 'Home (Fair was the morning)' (7-10 March, 1916), 'home' is freedom to move in England without the 'captivity' of being in the army.[209] As the 'Home' poems show, Thomas' poetry creates a link between the

[202] Ezra Pound, 'The Seafarer', in *Ripostes of Ezra Pound: Whereto are Appended the Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme with Prefatory Note* (London: Swift, 1912), 25-30 (25).
[203] Ezra Pound, *A. B. C. of Reading* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 58.
[204] Austin Clarke, 'The Vengeance of Fionn', in *The Vengeance of Fionn* (Dublin and London: Maunsel, 1917), 1-56 (1).
[205] Edward Thomas, *Beautiful Wales* (London: Black, 1905), *passim*; Thomas, 'Roads', 107.
[206] Thomas, 'England', 97.
[207] Edward Thomas, 'Home (Often had I gone this way before)', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 81-82 (81).
[208] Edward Thomas, 'Home (Not the end)', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 64 (64).
[209] Edward Thomas, 'Home (Fair was the morning)', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 113-114 (114).

English countryside and personae experiencing a sense of belonging. The depiction of this sense is bound up in representations of how personae experience the countryside as historical. It is at this point that 'Fears in Solitude' becomes a singularly important touchstone for Thomas' poetry. In his criticism, his anthologising, and his poetry, Thomas celebrates and echoes the 'historical association' which he says Coleridge depicts being experienced in 'Fears in Solitude'.

Thomas' criticism positions the representation of Coleridge in 'Fears in Solitude' as the exemplar of how to experience history in the English countryside. In *Literary Pilgrim* Thomas states that 'Fears in Solitude' lines 177-192, which describe how 'There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul | Unborrowed from my country', demonstrate that Coleridge's persona of a 'humble' man treats the countryside and its history as the basis for national identity.[210] To Thomas, these lines are representative of how Coleridge had 'a most vivid sense of what his country was' and regarded the history of the countryside as the root of his personality and values.[211] In *Literary Pilgrim,* he notes that Coleridge 'had as little as possible of the enjoyment of historical association which a guide to Stratford or Carnarvon Castle could satisfy, but at times … the thoughts of such association "would come upon me like a storm"'.[212] By distinguishing Coleridge from the historiography of 'a guide', Thomas turns history away from dates and details, and toward the suggestion that English identity could suddenly appear to people who experience the countryside.

Literary Pilgrim reveals that Thomas was crafting a version of Coleridge whose existence could support his own model of history. It shows the selectiveness that Thomas used when writing about Coleridge. When he describes Coleridge's 'historical association', Thomas quotes the poet's 19 April 1804 letter to the abolitionist James Webbe Tobin which describes how 'at times "uncalled and sudden, subject to no bidding of my own or others", the thoughts of such association "would come upon me like a

[210] Thomas, *Literary Pilgrim*, 180-181.
[211] Ibid., 180.
[212] Ibid., 181.

storm, and fill the place with something more than Nature"'.[213] This letter is not among those printed in Ernest Hartley Coleridge's two-volume edition of *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1895).[214] Thomas had probably encountered it in *Anima Poetæ* (1895), Ernest Hartley Coleridge's edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notebooks.[215] Thomas discusses and quotes from *Anima Poetæ* in 'The Frontiers of English Prose', his essay in the 23 September 1899 number of *Literature*.[216] If Thomas is referencing *Anima Poetæ* in *Literary Pilgrim* then his quotation of the 19 April 1804 letter shows the extent of his selectiveness. Printed two pages after the 19 April 1804 letter, an 1833 remark denies that Coleridge felt 'historical associations' at all. The 1833 Coleridge opposes himself to Sir Walter Scott, for whom 'every old ruin, hill, river or tree called up in his mind a host of historical or biographical associations; whereas, for myself, I believe I should walk over the plain of Marathon without taking more interest in it than in any other plain of similar features'.[217] The potential selectiveness of Thomas' quotations underscores that his criticism on 'Fears in Solitude' is shaped in a way which can make the countryside be representative of a foundational base of English history. By connecting a 'historical association' and Coleridge's 'sense of what his country was', Thomas frames 'Fears in Solitude' as the leading example of how dissenting from jingoism enables people to see that the countryside represents the eternal, true, and rural English national identity.[218]

'Humbleness' and History in Thomas' Wartime Poetry.

Thomas' poetry depicts persona who respond to the First World War by 'thinking' that the English countryside reveals its historical significance. They can treat this historical significance as a national identity that they are part of. In 'Lob' (3, 4 April, 1915), the

[213] Ibid.
[214] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Heinemann, 1895), 2 vols.
[215] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Anima Poetæ: From the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Heinemann, 1895) 72.
[216] Cardiff, Cardiff Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/3/3/1/7, ff. 48-49.
[217] Coleridge, *Anima Poetæ*, 74.
[218] Thomas, *Literary* Pilgrim, 180-181.

persona encounters Lob, a mysterious rural figure who 'has been in England as long as dove and daw' and who is 'English as this gate, these flowers, this mire' (ll. 58, 55).[219] 'Lob' sees Thomas' poetry tie rural English identity to military history. It depicts Lob as a veteran of a sequence of famous battles which begins with the Battle of Hastings in 1066. In the final verse-paragraph the persona realises that the man speaking to him is 'Lob-lie-by-the-fire, Jack Cade, | Jack Smith, Jack Moon, poor Jack of every trade' (ll. 133-134).[220] When 'Lob' man disappears into the hedge, the persona treats his wartime deaths and his rural disappearance into the hedge as both 'prov[ing]' that the character embodies an English identity:

> One of the lords of No Man's Land, good Lob, -
> Although he was seen dying at Waterloo,
> Hastings, Agincourt, and Sedgemoor too, -
> Lives yet …
> …
> … With this he disappeared
> In hazel and thorn tangled with old-man's-beard.
> But one glimpse of his back, as there he stood,
> Choosing his way, proved him of old Jack's blood,
> Young Jack perhaps, and now a Wiltshireman
> As he has oft been since his days began. (ll. 138-141, 145-150.)[221]

These lines equate disappearing into the hedges with dying in famous battles. Other wartime poets could use the technique of having personae say that dead soldiers appear and then vanish in civilian scenes. See, for instance, 'Corporal Stare' (1917) by Robert Graves.[222] Thomas is distinctive for using the technique to connect a view of English

[219] Edward Thomas, 'Lob', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 76-79 (77).
[220] Ibid., 79.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Robert Graves, 'Corporal Stare', in *Fairies and Fusiliers* (London: Heineman, 1917), 70-71.

identity that is based on rurality with the possibility of particular important battles marking the continued existence of that identity. The list of battles where Lob has died is an expression of the character's Englishness, not an attempt to chart how English identity changed in the 749 years between the battles of Hastings and Waterloo. If considered as Lob's *curriculum vitae*, the list of battles echoes Taliesin's boasting list of his accomplishments in *The Mabinogion*. Thomas quotes a section of the boast in *Beautiful Wales*:

> I was with my Lord in the highest sphere
>
> …
>
> I have been with my Lord in the manger of the ass;
>
> I strengthened Moses through the water of Jordan;
>
> I have been in the firmament with Mary Magdalene;
>
> I have obtained the muse from the cauldron of Ceridwen;
>
> I have been bard of the harp to Lleon of Lochlin;
>
> I have been on the White Hill, in the court of Cynvelyn[223]

In *Beautiful Wales* Thomas does not treat these lines as evidence of competitiveness or as a proud boast. He writes that they all represent a single Welsh mood, a 'true sadness'.[224] In an essay on Arthurian stories (1907), he suggests that the mood of *The Mabinogion* fits with his idea that history involves belonging to, but not defining, the national identity. He writes that the poem represents 'an indescribable antiquity'.[225] Treating Taliesin's boast as the national identity of 'sadness' distinguishes Thomas from how other First World War writers could relate it to soldiering. In his First World War poem *In Parenthesis* (1937) David Jones echoes the boast with the proud monologue of

[223] Quoted in Thomas, *Beautiful Wales*, 87.
[224] Thomas, *Beautiful Wales*, 87.
[225] Edward Thomas, 'Arthur.', *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 104:2708 (21 September 1907), 364-365 (364).

the infantryman Dai Greatcoat.[226] Dai's boast emphasises his ability as a soldier, and it ends with the refrain 'Old soljers never die they | Simply fade away'.[227] When viewed in contrast to Dai's pugnaciousness, the history in 'Lob' has swapped out individual pride for an emphasis on belonging to the national identity. 'Lob' focuses its portrayal of history on treating rural England as a source of national identity and famous battles as markers of how that identity has continued to exist throughout the centuries.

In 'Lob' the First World War is another conflict which shows that English identity exists in the countryside. The focus on the countryside is apparent in the phrase 'lord of No Man's Land'. The phrase evokes 'No Man's Land', the battlefield in First World War trench warfare. However, it can also suggest the English common land, which was historically owned by the lord of a manor but left available for commoners to use. For Lob to be 'One of the lords of No Man's Land' suggests a connection between trench warfare and the national identity bound up in the English countryside's history. As Longley notes, Thomas composed 'Lob' at the same time as he was compiling *This England*.[228] And, as in *This England*, 'Lob' shows how national identity is tied to rural England. In 'Lob', Thomas' poetry responds to the First World War by entering the conflict into the list of battles which mark the ongoing existence of that national identity.

Thomas' wartime poetry can suggest that people should fight for England without being jingoistic. When it does so, it emphasises the opposition between rural national identity and the jingoistic press and public opinion. This is the opposition which Thomas' criticism associates with 'Fears in Solitude', and it is key to the persona who speaks in 'This is no case of petty right or wrong' (26 November 1916). This persona is depicted as rejecting the jingoistic patriotism built on a 'hate' for German people. He presents this type of patriotism as dependent on simplistic binary divisions, and suggests that newspapers use these divisions to compel people to fight:

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[226] David Jones, *In Parenthesis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 79-84.
[227] Ibid., 84.
[228] Longley, 'Notes', 214.

> This is no case of petty right or wrong
> That politicians or philosophers
> Can judge. I hate not Germans, nor grow hot
> With love of Englishmen, to please newspapers.[229]

This persona's focus on 'hate' and 'love' echoes how Thomas writes in 'England' that patriotism should not be a matter of hating other countries, that 'men who wish good to their own country at the expense of no matter what other country' make patriotism 'only a high-sounding name for self-interest'.[230] Accordingly, the persona treats the newspapers' divisions as false binaries. He disputes their division between English and German as unnecessary, stating that 'I have not to choose between the two, | Or between justice and injustice'.[231] The persona of 'This is no case', then, is shown to reject the 'case' that 'politicians', 'philosophers', and 'newspapers' have made for English national identity to be based on divisions.

In 'This is no case', the persona's focus on newspapers is distinctively on the reasons they give for going to war and not, unlike other war poets, on the consequences of going to fight in a war. Frequently, First World War soldier poets delegitimised print accounts of war by opposing them to first-hand accounts of violence. In Graves' 'A Dead Boche' (1917), for example, a German soldier's corpse is framed as a 'cure' for any readers who believe war is only 'blood and fame':

> To you who'd read my songs of War
> And only hear of blood and fame,
> I'll say (you've heard it said before)
> 'War's Hell!' and if you doubt the same,
> To-day I found in Mametz Wood

[229] Edward Thomas, 'This is no case of petty right or wrong', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 104-105 (104).
[230] Thomas, 'England', 91.
[231] Thomas, 'This is no case of petty right or wrong', 104.

A certain cure for lust of blood[232]

Other prominent examples are 'Smile, Smile, Smile' (1918) by Wilfred Owen and 'The Effect' (1918) by Siegfried Sassoon.[233] Although it is not an ever-present imperative (in 'Soliloquy II (1919) by Richard Aldington an English soldier's corpse is 'More subtly coloured than a perfect Goya'), wartime poets could present newspaper accounts as sanitised by making comparisons to the real violence in warfare.[234] Instead of saying that newspapers have misrepresented what happens to soldiers in battle, 'This is no case' stands out in First World War poetry for focusing on how newspapers have misrepresented the good reasons for why people should go into battle.

'This is no case' maintains that the correct reason for fighting is to defend the English identity which is kept in the countryside. Unlike the binary divisions which the persona associates with newspapers and politicians, he maintains that English identity is a matter of unity. It accepts all types of English people. The construction of the persona's speech shows that when he describes rural history he 'thinks' in terms of unity. (The persona does not comment on whether his arguments are undermined or changed by unity being a binary opposite to division.) He traces this unity back to the history of the countryside, stating that 'with the best and meanest Englishmen | I am one in crying, God save England, lest | We lose what never slaves and cattle blessed'.[235] His speech combines opposites, 'best and meanest', and says that he is 'one' with both of them. The persona of 'This is no case' treats national identity as broad and unifying. His speech-rhythms suggest that he is 'thinking' about England in terms of unity and connection. The sound patterns show his words unifying: 'best' + 'mean*est*' + '**l**est' = 'b**l**ess*ed*'. The position shifts in these lines enhance their rhymes' suggestion of a

[232] Robert Graves, 'A Dead Boche', in *Fairies and Fusiliers*, 33 (33).
[233] Wilfred Owen, 'Smile, Smile, Smile', in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. by Edmund Blunden (London: Chatto & Windus, 1933), 114 (114); Siegfried Sassoon, 'The Effect', in *Counter-Attack and Other Poems* (London: Heineman, 1918), 21 (21).
[234] Richard Aldington, 'Soliloquy II', in *Images of War: A Book of Poems* (London: Beaumont Press, 1919), 36 (36)
[235] Ibid.

perception being worked out. The oppositional dyad ('best and meanest') happening in the middle of a line then shifts to the end-rhymes of line ('lest' and 'blessed') so that the perception finishes at the conclusion of the sentence. These shifts show a pattern which accumulates into a single word that can describe his understanding of English history, 'blessed'. This historical view, which goes back to 'The ages', informs his present-day view of national identity, being all that 'we know and live by'.[236] This identity is what he will fight for, and wartime jingoism is left portrayed as a falsehood.

In 'This is no case' the representation of how people perceive history echoes Thomas' critique of 'Fears in Solitude'. In *Literary Pilgrim* Thomas presents Coleridge's poem as the example of how turning away from jingoistic newspapers and public opinion can awaken a 'sense of what [your] country is'. 'This is no case' follows the same model of history. By turning away from newspapers, the persona of 'This is no case' can describe the rural landscape in relation to an identity which goes all the way back to an indefinite past, 'The ages'. Thomas' poetry includes several personae who become suddenly aware of a historical English identity which resides in the countryside. In *This England* Thomas invites links between 'Fears in Solitude' and the awareness of English identity in his (attributed to 'Edward Eastaway') poem 'The Manor Farm' (24 December 1914). In 'The Manor Farm' the countryside suddenly changes and reveals to the persona that 'This England' lives on in 'farm and church'.[237] 'The Manor Farm' shows how Thomas' poetry pictures English identity as a historical continuity which is kept safely in the countryside.

'The Manor Farm' is the 'title poem' to *This England*.[238] No other entry in the anthology includes the words 'This England'. They echo John of Gaunt's speech in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1597) II.i.32-69, which Thomas knew. Thomas' short story 'Mothers and Sons' (1910) refers to the speech as 'the eloquence of the dying "old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster"'.[239] As Gaunt is dying he praises 'This blessed plot,

[236] Ibid., 105.
[237] Edward Thomas, 'The Manor Farm', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 45 (45).
[238] Edward Eastaway [Edward Thomas], 'The Manor Farm', in *This England*, 112-113.
[239] Edward Thomas, 'Mothers and Sons', in *Rest and Unrest* (London: Duckworth, 1910), 49-92 (49).

this earth, this realm, this England', which he contrasts against 'That England, that was wont to conquer others' and 'Hath made a shameful conquest of itself'.[240] Gaunt's rebuke for 'That England' is echoed in the tone of 'Fears in Solitude'. Thomas' introductory note to *This England* takes a similar tone to Gaunt's speech too. Like the rebuke to 'That England', Thomas' note describes the anthology as an alternative to wartime jingoism. 'The Manor Farm' can function as an essential expression of the alternative which *This England* offers against jingoism. It depicts a persona becoming aware of the consistent national identity which the English countryside has contained since the time when England was called 'merry'.

The persona gains a sudden, uncalled perception of 'This England, Old already' that has 'awakened' in a farmyard scene. The perception is presented as the countryside revealing itself to the persona. The revelatory dynamic suggests that England is not just this persona's creation, but a historical source which anyone could find and experience:

> The air raised not a straw. The steep farm roof,
> With tiles duskily glowing, entertained
> The midday sun; and up and down the roof
> White pigeons nestled. There was no sound but one.
> Three cart-horses were looking over a gate
> Drowsily through their forelocks, swishing their tails
> Against a fly, a solitary fly.
>
> The Winter's cheek flushed as if he had drained
> Spring, Summer, and Autumn at a draught
> And smiled quietly. But 'twas not Winter –
> Rather a season of bliss unchangeable
> Awakened from farm and church where it had lain

[240] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. by Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170-171.

Safe under tile and thatch for ages since
This England, Old already, was called Merry.[241]

The stanza break is the pivot. Changes in the persona's language show that he 'thinks' a historical England has suddenly 'flushed' Winter's cheek and 'Awakened' itself around him. The activity with which this historical England reveals itself is made especially prominent by its contrast to the quiet and sleepy farmyard scene, which the persona describes with 'nestled', 'Drowsily', and 'not a straw'. The contrast between present and past suggests that a deeper or greater historical England is present and active even when the present-day England is inactive. Unlike the similar division between past and present in Charles Hamilton Sorley's pre-war 'Stones' (1913) and 'Marlborough' (1914) the persona can see the past as whole. It is stable, beneficial and contributing to his identity. It is not 'bleached and buried bones | [With] neither love nor faith nor thought' ('Stones') nor does it leave the persona half-aware, as in 'The revelation that is always there, | But somehow is not always clear to me' ('Marlborough').[242] Unlike Francis Ledwidge's 'The Dead Kings' (1917), the national identity stored in the past is not affected by the battles and the soldiers dying in the present: 'We who yet are kings | Have heard these things lamenting inly'.[243] 'The Manor Farm', like Thomas' interpretations of 'Fears in Solitude', stands out in First World War poetry because it depicts a persona seeing the countryside's continuities between past and present and taking these rural continuities as the English national identity he belongs to.

In *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) Paul Fussell weighs how Jones' *In Parenthesis* 'poses for itself the problem of re-attaching traditional meanings to the unprecedented actualities of the [First World] war'.[244] Fussell's concern for 'actualities' reveals what is so striking about Thomas' critique of 'Fears in Solitude' and his depiction

[241] Thomas, 'The Manor Farm', 45.
[242] Charles Hamilton Sorley, 'Stones', in *Marlborough and other poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 16-17 (17); Sorley, 'Marlborough', in *Marlborough*, 1-4 (2).
[243] Francis Ledwidge, 'The Dead Kings', in *The Last Songs* (London: Jenkins, 1918) 48-50 (49).
[244] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York, NY, and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 146.

of wartime history: the omission of details. This omission is odd for Thomas, who knew lots about what happens in wars. In *The Life of the Duke of Marlborough* he frequently gives details about battles. Some details even evoke First World War trench warfare and suggest his awareness of what happening in France. For instance, he writes the first British attack in Battle of Blenheim (1704) 'was a very bloody action. The attack was checked by the men mistaking a natural trench for the ditch of the fortification, and down into this they flung their fascines, which were useless … Only ten of the Grenadiers' [first line] … escaped'.[245] But in his poetry and criticism Thomas is less concerned with specifics. He keeps the details of the actual fighting out of his poetry and, as when he writes on 'Fears in Solitude', he does not specify which points of history and tradition he is depicting. This omission leads to Thomas' wartime work being about fighting to defend an idea of belonging and not attempting to stand for a specific set of principles.

The personae in Thomas' wartime poetry do not question exactly what principles they are fighting for or why they might fight for English history. There is no attempt to break free from history or to question its importance, as can be found in the work of Modernist poets. There is no question like 'Why should we celebrate | These dead men more than the dying?' in 'Little Gidding' (1942), which Eliot composed during the Second World War.[246] Instead, Thomas depicts personae who treat their awareness of history as a precondition for being part of the national identity. Although history is tied to Englishness, there is no suggestion that it is what has led to the problems of war and jingoism. History is not blamed, and there is no suggestion that English history has made the civilisation which is 'botched', as in Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920).[247] In *Mauberley* the failed civilisation is represented by the media it has used to record its history, the 'two gross of broken statues' and 'a few thousand battered books'.[248]

[245] Thomas, *Marlborough*, 137.
[246] T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding', in *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 35-44 (41).
[247] Ezra Pound, 'E. P. Ode pour l'election de son sépulchre', in *A Selection of Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 50-54 (54).
[248] Ibid.

Although Thomas' depiction of history is informed by his critical responses to Romantic-period poetry, he does not portray the countryside as an idea based on how English writers and artists have recorded its history. This feature of Thomas' poetry is again about avoiding specific ideas. If Thomas' poetry suggested that people were fighting for the ideas contained in particular books and artworks, it would complicate his depiction of English history and identity. Then, his poems would treat the desire to belong as less important than the specific ideas that the personae want to belong to. In that case, Thomas' poetry would treat patriotism as a hierarchy of ideas. If England were representative of some ideas, it would be to the exclusion of other countries that represent other or no ideas. Then, Thomas' patriotism would no longer be about belonging to England but about the jingoism of saying that England is superior to other countries. However, by keeping English history indeterminate, Thomas' poetry avoids these complications. It keeps the singular focus on belonging to England, which is the 'humble' approach to patriotism that his criticism associates with 'Fears in Solitude'.

As Thomas' poems depict the personae as experiencing an indeterminate sense of belonging to England, they avoid depicting personae who believe that fighting or dying will make them become more English. Instead of trying to sacrifice themselves for England, the personae outline how they are already part of English national identity. Although Thomas is reported to have 'picked up a pinch of earth' in the English countryside in July 1915 and said that he wanted to fight 'Literally, for this', the personae in his war poems do not say that they want to die for the countryside or national identity.[249] His poems rather treat the countryside as something to defend. In this regard, they reflect his rejection of Rupert Brooke's wartime sonnets and the latter's suggestions of patriotic apotheoses when 'dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold' ('III. The Dead') or 'for ever England' ('V. The Solider').[250] In a 13 June 1915 letter to Frost, Thomas suggests that representing a desire to die is unnecessary:

[249] Farjeon, *The Last Four Years*, 154.
[250] Rupert Brooke, 'III. The Dead', in *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke: With a Memoir*, ed. by Sir Edward Marsh (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1919), 7 (7); Brooke, 'V. The Soldier', in *Collected Poems*, 9 (9).

> I had to spoil the effect of your letter by writing 1000 words about Rupert Brooke's posthumous book – not daring to say that these sonnets about him enlisting (?) are probably not very personal but a nervous attempt to connect with himself the very widespread idea that self sacrifice is the highest self indulgence.[251]

For Thomas, Brooke's motif of self-sacrifice was melodramatic. Accordingly, Thomas' war poems do not present patriotism as dependent on wanting to die for England. Instead, they are focused on the experience of being a part of England. Their depiction of belonging reveals how 'Fears in Solitude' is of paramount importance in Thomas' critical and poetic responses to the First World War. They follow from the critical positions he takes regarding the representation of patriotism, history, and the press in 'Fears in Solitude'. When seen in relation to his writing on 'Fears in Solitude', Thomas' poetry forms part of a critical project which responded to Romantic-period poetry and revised patriotism from being hierarchies and value judgments into being an indeterminate sense of belonging.

Thomas' Wartime History: Conclusion.

By writing about 'Fears in Solitude' Thomas made it his model for representing a love of England. When his poems articulate the points that he made about 'Fears in Solitude', Thomas portrays a view of history as a single, continuous national identity which could refute jingoism's divisiveness and aggression.

[251] Thomas, *Selected Letters*, 111.

Thomas and Coleridge: Conclusion.

This chapter has demonstrated how the personae of Thomas' poems respond to his literary criticism on Coleridge's poetry. Thomas' writing on Coleridge shows three different ways that he states Coleridge's poetry is distinctive, all of them ways of representing nature. Thomas argued that Coleridge's poems can represent nature as oneiric or supernatural, that can they depict an inability to 'feel' nature, and that they can show nature to have a politicised, historical connotation. Thomas' poetry then includes personae who can be regarded as expressing these different ways of 'thinking' about nature. These personae affect how Thomas' poetry relates to major developments in twentieth-century life and writing. They show how Coleridge's importance as a critical touchstone kept Thomas' poetry separate from the stylistic changes which several key Modernist poets and poems brought about. Moreover, they show how writing about Coleridge provided a model for a distinctive view of historical patriotism which undermined press jingoism. Above all, their key significance is that they show that Thomas takes his distinctive place within the development of early twentieth-century poetry because of how his poems build on what he had found in Romantic-period poetry.

Chapter Three: Thomas and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The 'Symbolical' Shelley.

In his prose writings, Edward Thomas presents Percy Bysshe Shelley as an important exemplar of how to be a poet. His autobiographical novel *The Happy-Go-Lucky-Morgans* (1913) underlines Shelley's importance to him.[1] The novel focuses on the teenage years of Arthur Froxfield, the narrator, and describes his friendship with another teenager, Philip Morgan. The two characters reflect aspects of Thomas' youth: Arthur's surname comes from the street where Thomas lived as a young man, and Philip's forename from the Thomas' own rarely-used forename (Philip Edward Thomas). The characters' relationship is driven by their different responses to Shelley. Arthur enjoys Shelley's poems, but Philip is obsessive about the poet. Philip 'loves' Shelley more than he does Arthur or other characters, and he wishes to become like the poet.[2] Philip's obsessive relationship to Shelley is presented in ways which reflect Thomas' own teenage attention to the poet, particularly when the copy of Shelley's lyric poems that Philip quotes from is decorated with the same combination of handwritten excerpts and pressed flowers as one of Thomas' own copies of *The Lyrical Poems of Shelley* (1896).[3] *The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* ends with Philip dying and Arthur being given this book. Arthur is unsure

[1] The literature on Thomas has documented, extensively, that *The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* contains autobiographical elements which reflect his interest in Shelley.
For the novel having autobiographical elements see Edward Thomas, *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*, ed. by R. George Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 135, 223-224; Edward Thomas, *Selected Letters*, ed. by R. George Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 84; Andrew Motion, *The Poetry of Edward Thomas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991), 33, 62; William Cooke, *Edward Thomas: A Critical Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 39-40; and R. George Thomas, *Edward Thomas: A Portrait* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 34-36.
For the novel representing Shelley's importance to Thomas see Guy Cuthbertson, 'Introduction', in Edward Thomas, *Prose Writings: A Selected Edition*, ed. by Guy Cuthbertson, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–), I (2011), xii-li (xxvi); Guy Cuthbertson, 'Footnotes' to Edward Thomas, '*The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans*', in Thomas, *Prose Writings*, I, 1-170 (73n146 102n188-102n189, 164n296-169n316); R. George Thomas, *A Portrait*, 201-210; and Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Edward Thomas: From Adlestrop to Arras: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 38, 218.
[2] Thomas, '*The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans*', 164.
[3] Ibid., 167-168; Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Lyrical Poems of Shelley*, ed. by Ernest Rhys (London: Dent, 1896), this copy of the book now archived as Oxford, Lincoln College, MS THO 12.

of what Philip found in Shelley's poems, but without Philip alive to read them he says that reality seems incomplete. The other characters fall away into lesser importance and become 'as people in a story whose existence I cannot prove'.[4] Shelley has a similar personal importance in Thomas' prose non-fiction. In *The South Country* (1909) and *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (1910) Thomas states that people can make Shelley into a part of their own personality.[5] In *The South Country* Shelley is 'an immortal sentiment … present wherever love and rapture are', and in *Feminine Influence* Thomas asks rhetorically 'How many times has Shelley – Shelley and the daffodils of Devon or the wild thyme of Wiltshire – been the half of a first love?'[6] When Thomas writes about the poet, he says that Shelley's poems contribute to people's lives. This chapter traces how his interest in Shelley affects the ways that Thomas' poetry presents experience. It shows that his critical ideas of Shelley contribute to how his poetry depicts personae's mental activity, their 'thought', through the ways these personae describe the scenes and objects around them.

Thomas associated Shelley with a style of poetry where the words a persona uses to describe objects would turn those objects into representations of who that persona is and what they are 'thinking'. He writes in an account of the then recently-deceased poet Rupert Brooke that Brooke never attained the 'Shelleyan altitude where words have various radiance rather than meaning'.[7] In his other critical works, Thomas goes into more detail about how this 'altitude' is Shelley's style and how it functions. In *Feminine Influence* he frames it as a style that uses symbols, writing that that Shelley was able to use words in a 'symbolical' way which made a 'perfect expression' for his 'inner world of images'.[8] Thomas does not use this focus on symbols with other English-language poets, only with Shelley. Accordingly, this chapter discusses how Thomas' critical positions on

[4] Thomas, '*The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans*', 169.
[5] Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (New York, NY: Lane, 1911), 78; Edward Thomas, *The South Country* (Toller Fratrum, Dorset: Little Toller Books, 2009), 106-107.
[6] Thomas revised both of these passages from his 29 August 1905 *Daily Chronicle* of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1905). The review is available in an excerpted version as Edward Thomas, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley', in *A Language Not to Be Betrayed: Selected Prose of Edward Thomas*, ed. by Edna Longley (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1981), 23-24.
[7] Edward Thomas, 'Rupert Brooke', *The English Review*, 'Seventy-Ninth Number' (June 1915), 325-328 (328).
[8] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 41.

Shelley's poetry are his critical positions on what symbols are and how poets ought to use them.

Instead of arguing that Thomas wanted his poetry to be specifically Shelleyan, however, the chapter's argument is that Thomas used his writing on Shelley to clarify what he saw as the correct way that all poets should use symbols. The chapter makes this argument by showing how Thomas' writing on Shelley's 'symbolical' poetry can explain his objections to the poets he calls 'symbolists'.[9] In his other works, particularly his critical study of the Belgian poet and playwright, Maurice Maeterlinck, *Maurice Maeterlinck* (1911), Thomas reproves poets who use symbols without personae. He says that doing so is a flaw in the 'symbolist' style that Maeterlinck uses. But while Thomas uses *Maeterlinck* to suggest that 'symbolical' poetry is superior to 'symbolist' poetry, he does not use the study to define 'symbolical' poems and say how they function. It is only when he writes about Shelley that Thomas give his detailed descriptions of what 'symbolical' poetry is and does. The symbols that Thomas observes in Shelley's poetry depend on personae but, otherwise, they are not radically different to what he calls 'symbolism'. As this chapter will observe, Thomas' categories of 'symbolist' and 'symbolical' poetry are not as different as he suggests.

First, the chapter will outline the historical context of Symbolism in English criticism to explain how Thomas had objected to 'symbolist' poetry. It will then demonstrate that his critical positions on Shelley respond to his objections against 'symbolism' when they outline a theory of what 'symbolical' poetry is and how poets might use it. The chapter then explores the impact of Thomas' clarification on his own lyric poetry. It shows how his poetry uses the critical positions on symbols he had developed in relation to Shelley, setting out how the lyric structures that Thomas calls Shelley's 'symbolical' style are involved in his poetry showing the 'thought' of personae who encounter objects and imagine their possibilities.

[9] Thomas writes 'symbolist' in lower case letters. When I am quoting him I write 'symbolist' with quotation marks. I otherwise write 'Symbolist', but without quotation marks.

Thomas' Distrust of 'Symbolist' Poetry.

As a critic, Thomas was cautious about what he calls 'symbolist' poetry and keen to embrace what he calls 'symbolical' poetry. This discussion will first define Thomas' use of the term 'symbolist'. It will show that he connects the term to francophone poetry from between the mid nineteenth-century period and the early twentieth century. It will then show that he was dismissive of both francophone 'symbolist' poetry and his own attempt to write in the 'symbolist' style.

Symbolism was confirmed as a poetic movement on 18 September 1886 when the poet Jean Moréas published his manifesto, 'Le Symbolisme', in *Le Figaro*. Moréas' manifesto identifies the core quality of Symbolist poetry as using analogous forms to express abstract ideas:

> Ennemie de l'enseignement, la déclamation, la fausse sensibilité, la description objective, la poésie symbolique cherche à vêtir l'idée d'une forme sensible qui néanmoins ne serait pas son but à elle-même, mais, tout en servant à exprimer l'idée, demeurerait sujette. L'idée, à son tour, ne doit point se laisser voir privée des analogies extérieures; car le caractère essentiel de l'art symbolique consiste à ne jamais aller jusqu'à la concentration de l'idée en soi.[10]
>
> (Enemy of didacticism, declamation, false feeling, objective description, symbolic poetry tries to clothe the idea in a sensorial form that, not the goal in and of itself, will serve to express the idea, which remains the subject. The idea, in its turn, cannot be allowed to be deprived of the external analogies; because the essential character of symbolic art consists in never going to the idea concentrated in itself alone.)

[10] Quoted in Anne Osmont, *Le Mouvements symboliste* (Paris: Maison du Livre, 1917), 140-141.

At the start of the twentieth century, anglophone critics began to describe Symbolism for their English-speaking readerships. These critics include Arthur Symons in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1889), Edmund Gosse in *French Profiles* (1904), and Francis Yvon Eccles in *A Century of French Poets* (1909).[11] They grouped francophone poets including Gérard de Nerval, Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Gustave Kahn, and Maeterlinck into their accounts of Symbolism. However, these anglophone critics did not produce a consensus on what the movement is, what its poems do, now how its ideas may be used in English. As the critic Laurence Jerrold noted in *The Real France* (1911), 'Nobody has yet determined exactly and completely what Symbolism was'.[12] Instead of saying that Thomas was taking part in a critical trend of writing about Symbolism, the necessary task is to determine what he took Symbolism to be and what opportunities he believed it offered poets.

Thomas focuses on Maeterlinck as a representative of Symbolism. He discusses Maeterlinck's poetry by drawing on a passage of Eccles' 'brilliant' introductory essay to *Century of French Poets*.[13] Thomas uses the passage as his working definition of 'symbolism', quoting:

> Of the many tendencies imputed to symbolism this is the most characteristic – out of an acuter perception of what all poets have always known, that words are insufficient if their power is bounded by their meaning, emerged an audacious doctrine which branded their representative function as inferior, and sought to shift the poetical interest from what they signify to what they may suggest … the emotion which symbolism pursues bears no constant relation to the objects represented or the ideas expressed; rather it aims at

[11] Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1899); Edmund Gosse, *French Profiles* (London: Heinemann, 1904); *A Century of French Poets: Being a Selection Illustrating the History of French Poetry During the Last Hundred Years*, ed. by Francis Yvon Eccles (London: Constable, 1909).
[12] Laurence Jerrold, *The Real France* (London: John Lane and The Bodley Head; New York, NY: John Lane Company, 1911), 222.
[13] Edward Thomas, *Maurice Maeterlinck* (London: Methuen, 1911) 20.

> the recovery of vanished moods by curious incantations, by the magical use of verbal atmosphere. To fashion a true likeness of the material world it holds a vain and illusory undertaking: it values sights, sounds, scents, and savours for their secret affinities with states of the soul[14]

Thomas treats Maeterlinck's collection *Serres chaudes* (1889) as representative of this definition. When Maeterlinck wrote *Serres chaudes* in the 1880s, Thomas writes, he 'became a symbolist himself'.[15] As Thomas incorporates ideas quoted from Eccles and adapts them for his critique of *Serre chaudes*, he presents his own positions on what the word 'symbolist' means and what it is that 'symbolist' poets do.

Part of Thomas' work in *Maeterlinck* is attempting to define the type of symbol that 'symbolist' poets use. His result is that these symbols are one-to-one substitutions 'of which we can say, "Let *this* be the symbol of *that*"'.[16] The substitutions can be for either important, 'familiar' abstractions or for nouns that describe peoples' moods. Thomas speculates that the poems in *Serre chaudes* may include 'a not obscure symbol of something familiar – youth' or symbols of moods including 'sadness, weariness, ennui, melancholy, pallor, feebleness, immobility'.[17] With his quotation from Eccles, Thomas indicates that a 'symbolist' poem makes these abstractions be more important than the 'representative function' of words. The 'symbolist' poem, Thomas writes, is unconcerned with representing a scene and is entirely concerned with showing a single, abstract 'significance which is quite precise' and which requires that each word 'be examined like an heraldic device'.[18] The reader must puzzle out this one meaning that the poet intended for each of the words. Once the reader has done so, she can combine all the symbols and understand the poem. Thomas describes this process as a difficult and

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[14] Ibid., 20-21. The quotation is of Francis Yvon Eccles, 'An Introductory Essay on the Development of French Poetry', in *A Century of French Poets*, 1-65 (60-61).
[15] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 18.
[16] I quote this phrase from Andrew George Lehmann's survey of different types of symbols in art: A. G. Lehmann, *The Symbolist Aesthetic in France 1885-1895* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950), 311.
[17] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 24.
[18] Ibid., 21, 23.

unusual style of reading, stating 'To give such a poem significance it would be necessary to make a key to it … But this is not literature; as well algebra might be called literature'.[19] When he describes how people might read 'symbolist' poems, Thomas argues that the reading process depends on the reader having a 'key', which the poems do not provide. He also describes these poems as 'very near to allegory'.[20] Paying attention to why he qualifies these one-to-one substitutions as only 'very near' to being allegories helps to reveal the basic principle that makes him object to 'symbolical' poetry. This principle is that Thomas needs characters and personae to act as 'keys' for the symbols.

When Thomas states that 'symbolism' is a poetry 'very near to allegory', his reluctance to call the poems allegories suggests his concern over the rules of what makes a piece of writing an allegory. His writing on allegory shows one of these rules is a requirement that they are narratives with characters. He uses the term 'allegory' without qualifiers when he discusses works that present narratives with characters. For instance, he rebukes Alfred Lord Tennyson's twelve Arthurian verse-narratives *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885) because the cycle merely 'allegorises'.[21] And, similarly, in a review of John Masefield's *Phillip the King, and other Poems* (1914) he reproves Masefield's tendency of 'turning a good story into an allegory'.[22] Thomas' division between 'allegory' and poetry 'very near to allegory' therefore suggests that he was using some of the generic rules of Elizabethan poetic allegory. These are rules which require that allegory has characters and a narrative form. As the Edmund Spenser scholar Kenneth Borris writes of *The Fairie Queene* (1590-1596), 'Spenserian allegory … involves readers in sympathetic characterizations and unfolding stories', and allegory in general 'is necessarily syntagmatic or extended and thus requires some implied or explicit narrative'.[23] These rules descended to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century

[19] Ibid., 29.
[20] Ibid., 33.
[21] Edward Thomas, 'William Morris', *The English Review*, 'Fifth Number' (April 1909), 153-156 (155).
[22] Edward Thomas, 'John Masefield and Wilfrid Gibson', *The Bookman*, 47:218 (November 1914), 51-52 (51).
[23] Kenneth Borris, 'Allegory, Emblem, and Symbol', in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 437-461 (440, 445).

writers such as Thomas via the mediating presence of Romantic-period interest in Spenser's allegories. As Greg Kucich writes in *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (1991), the narratives in *The Fairie Queene* interested Romantic-period poets so much that they 'worked through his allegories in a sustained fashion to trace the intricate pathways of their mental labyrinths'.[24] In *Maeterlinck* Thomas' use of the qualifier 'very near to allegory' indicates that he did not see 'symbolist' poems as having enough of a narrative to satisfy his view of what an allegory is, a view which was inflected by Elizabethan and Romantic-period poetry. Therefore, the phrase 'very near to allegory' suggests that Thomas wanted Symbolist poems to depict personae like allegories depict characters and scenes. Then, for Thomas, these poems would benefit from being able to show personae whose 'thought' is represented by objects or events.

Thomas' confused responses to francophone Symbolist poetry are evidence that he believed 'symbolism' should depict personae with their 'thought'. He writes of these poems being unintelligible, and the only thing that he says makes them intelligible is including a persona. For instance, the one poem in *Serre chaudes* that Thomas finds to be 'perfectly intelligible' is 'Hôpital'. Although he says 'Hôpital' is 'not successful in any class', Thomas says that he can at least understand the poem because it appears to represent a persona.[25] For Thomas, Hôpital' 'reveals its own origin' as 'a series of the fantastic images in a feverish man's brain'.[26] To Thomas, the revelation of 'its own origin' can be treated as a 'key' to the symbols, and not a symbol in itself. Other 'symbolist' poems, he suggests, suffer from making all of the words into symbols. Instead of being able to present a persona in a scene revealing 'a world of its own', the 'symbolist' poetry that Thomas discusses makes only collections of symbols.[27] Instead of having 'literary value', the 'symbolist' poem is something shapeless like a 'catalogue': 'symbolist' poems

[24] Greg Kucich, *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 96.
[25] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 35.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 28.

are 'hardly more than a catalogue of symbols that have no more literary value than words in a dictionary'.[28]

When Thomas writes about examples of 'symbolist' poetry he keeps coming back to his expectation that poems should show 'thought' in a persona. He does not adjust his critical expectations to this new style of poetry, nor does he ask how he ought to read these poems. He does not suggest that the French Symbolist poets may have found new ways for poems to be interpreted or reasons for why poems might be important. Nor does he consider that these poems may have been written to be fragmentary or that they destabilise expected ways of linking words together. He overlooks the possibility that poems might primarily communicate with their forms instead of with their words. Instead of considering what is important about the fragmentary punctuation and grammar in Maeterlinck's poetry, Thomas attempts to 'fix' these Symbolist poems by turning them into coherent wholes. To Thomas, all of the words in a 'symbolist' poem can be one-to-one substitutions for other words ('like St Melito's key to the Bible, where it is shown that in one place the word "Camelus" stands for Christ, in another for love of this world'), and so he looks for how these substitutions might have a common theme.[29] For Thomas, this common theme will be the 'symbolist' poem's meaning, and the 'symbolist' poet has written the poem solely to communicate it.

To show how a poem can be like a catalogue and have no 'literary value', Thomas translates 'The poem called "Serres Chaudes"' into English prose.[30] Thomas spoke French, and evidence demonstrates that this translation is his work.[31] The first English translation of Maeterlinck's poetry was not published until 1915.[32] And when Thomas references several translators of Maeterlinck's prose in the front-matter to *Maurice*

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[28] Ibid., 27.
[29] Ibid., 29.
[30] Ibid., 26.
[31] Thomas' letters to the poet Walter de la Mare see him repeatedly asking for French books. He used the books that de la Mare mailed to him as sources for his critical prose. While de la Mare did not have French (Thomas recommends him a translation of Maeterlinck's play *La Princess Maleine* (1889)), he did live in Anerley, Greater London, and could easily travel to the city's lending libraries and to the bookshops along Charing Cross Road, central London. Edward Thomas, *Poet to Poet: Edward Thomas's Letters to Walter de la Mare*, ed. by Judy Kendall (Bridgend: Seren, 2012), 75, 76, 84, 92, 95, 96.
[32] Maurice Maeterlinck, *Poems*, trans. by Bernard Miall (London: Methuen, 1915).

Maeterlinck, he does not name any translator of *Serres chaudes*.[33] He only references the French-language expanded edition of 1912.[34] By making a prose translation of Maeterlinck's poem, Thomas effectively writes his own prose-poem that is representative of the catalogue-like quality which he ascribes to 'symbolist' poetry. He deletes the punctuation and grammar which suggest that images are variously connected and contrasted. In place of these structuring elements, Thomas instead inserts a single sentence that he then says is an example of how 'symbolist' poems give incomplete descriptions of what their symbols represent. Here are the first two stanzas of 'Serre chaude' with Thomas' prose translations:

> O serre au milieu des forèts!
> Et vos portes à jamais closes!
> Et tout ce qu'il y a sous votre coupole!
> Et sous mon âme en vos analogies!
>
> Les pensées d'une princesse qui a faim,
> L'ennui d'un matelot dans le désert,
> Une musique de cuivre aux fenêtres des incurables.[35]

> "O hothouse in the midst of the woods, with your doors for ever closed; and all the things under your dome, with their counterparts in my soul!
>
> "The thoughts of a hungry princess; the weariness of a sailor in the desert; a brass band playing under the windows of incurables.[36]

[33] Edward Thomas, 'Note', in *Maeterlinck*, vii-ix.
[34] Maurice Maeterlinck, 'Serre chaude', in Maurice Maeterlinck, *Serres chaudes: suivies de Quinze chansons* (Brussels: Lacomblez, 1912), 9-10.
[35] Ibid., 9.
[36] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 26.

Notice how Thomas removes the verbal juxtaposition of the plants under ('sous') the dome and under the soul ('Et sous mon âme').[37] Instead of 'And under', he translates the fourth line of the first stanza as 'with their'. This change corresponds to his prose-poem deleting the different ways that the lines can relate. Maeterlinck's French text uses punctuation and word-repetition to contrast different types of connections between lines. Thomas' English version removes this feature. In French the first stanza has fragmentary, separating punctuation. Each line ends with an exclamation point, which gives the appearance of several unconnected exclamations. But this punctuation clashes against the words, which are linked by their syntax. They are linked when the stanza's subject ('serre') is given in the first sentence and then linked back to as 'your' ('vos' and 'votre') in each subsequent sentence fragment. Three of these fragments begin with 'And' ('Et'), which underscores their links and clashes against the barrier-like exclamation points. However, Thomas changes this stanza into a single sentence and removes the final 'Et'. He also omits the juxtaposition from the first to the second stanza's type of connection. In the second stanza of the French text the words are not linked into a sentence. They are fragmentary. But their punctuation, three commas, does link them together. The effect is to be the opposite of the first stanza, which has linked words but fragmenting punctuation. Due to the commas, words that might appear fragmentary are linked together. In Thomas' prose, however, the second stanza is given punctuation that links clauses together: there are two commas that each mark a dependent clause, and a semi-colon that marks an independent but related clause.

On comparing Thomas' prose rendering of 'Serre chaude' to the French original, it is apparent that he omits the grammatical and syntactical elements of the poem's internal structure. Thomas' version suggests an attempt to reconcile 'Serre chaude' with an idea that poems should have personae and narratives. Thomas used his translation to

[37] Thomas' translation of 'coupole' into 'dome', especially as it avoids the homophonous English word 'cupola', evokes the 'stately pleasure-dome' in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan: Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment' (1798). Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan: Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment', in *The Major Works including 'Biographia Literaria'*, ed. by H. J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 102-104 (103).

turn the first stanza into one first-person sentence that might be a 'key' to the poem, or, as he writes of it, 'if not a complete explanation … a timid admission of the need for one'.[38] The translation of the second stanza then substitutes the two commas for two semi-colons. These semi-colons appear to function as serial commas do, marking out a list. The changes that Thomas made in his translation suggest that he saw 'symbolist' poems as made of unrelated images all brought together as though a list of things with a common theme. They suggest he was unable to reconcile the francophone poems with a belief that poetry ought to demonstrate the personalities and perceptions of personae.

When Thomas writes on anglophone poems which allude to French Symbolism he further reveals his inability to parse Symbolist poems without relating them to personae. In *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study* (1912) his critique of Algernon Charles Swinburne's elegy for Baudelaire, 'Ave Atque Vale' (1878), sees him praise the poem even though 'I cannot pretend to explain it'.[39] Thomas bases his approval on how 'Ave Atque Vale' makes reference to a persona and shows 'death and the grave and a living man venturing among them'.[40] Thomas' critique is balanced between his awareness that the poem makes reference to the 'living man' and his inability to explain how the poem's symbols are related to this persona:

> Perhaps no single sentence in the poem is unintelligible to the mind any more than it is ungrammatical. But the combination is one which the mind cannot judge, though it may approve, seeing the effect, and say that it is beyond her expectation or understanding.[41]

While, like in *Maeterlinck*, Thomas does not try to interpret the different ways that 'Ave Atque Vale' connects its images together, he does not state that these images only show

[38] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 27.
[39] Edward Thomas, *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study* (London: Secker, 1912), 174.
[40] Ibid., 176.
[41] Ibid.

'a further significance which is quite precise'.[42] Rather, he states that the images add up to make an 'effect' which can be related to the persona's mental activity. The discussion of 'Ave Atque Vale' sees Thomas writing that although poems with 'symbolist' traits can be in part 'unintelligible' they can still succeed if they appear to represent a persona's 'thought'.

Thomas' comments in *Maeterlinck* and *Swinburne* show that he saw it as important that symbols be explained by the presence of personae. This importance is underlined by his comments on his poem 'The Dark Forest' (1-10 July 1916). As I will show, he censured the poem as 'Maeterlinckian'. 'The Dark Forest':

> Dark is the forest, and deep, and overhead
> Hang stars like seeds of light
> In vain, though not since they were sown was bred
> Anything more bright.
>
> And evermore mighty multitudes ride
> About, nor enter in;
> Of the other multitudes that dwell inside
> Never yet one was seen.
>
> The forest foxglove is purple, the marguerite
> Outside is gold and white,
> Nor can those that pluck either blossom greet
> The others, day or night.[43]

[42] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 21.
[43] Edward Thomas, 'The Dark Forest', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, ed. by Edna Longley (Tarset: Bloodaxe Books, 2013), 130 (130).

On 12 November 1916, writing to his friend and typist Eleanor Farjeon, Thomas called 'The Dark Forest' 'a bad Maeterlinckian thing'.[44] Like the 'symbolist' poems that Thomas discusses in *Maeterlinck*, 'The Dark Forest' gives descriptions of objects without stating that they are related to the persona. Instead of describing the persona, 'The Dark Forest' presents three stanzas that each describe an opposed binary. These stanzas allow 'The Dark Forest' to be an accumulation of three references to a single concept. This concept appears to be related to irreconcilable binary oppositions.[45] Yet, like Thomas says of 'Serre chaude', there is no explicit reference to a persona that would give a 'complete explanation' of why these descriptions are important.[46] Without a persona, the binaries can represent the concept itself and not a persona 'thinking' about divisions. This lack of a persona being shown as the one who is 'thinking' about these objects may be why Thomas wrote to Farjeon on 10 July 1916 and complained that 'The Dark Forest' is 'a too obvious metaphor'.[47]

When Thomas writes about Symbolism in *Maeterlinck*, *Swinburne*, and his letters, the consistent thread running through his work is dissatisfaction with any poems that do not feature personae. His approach to Symbolism then indicates his underlying late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' focus on poetry representing a persona's 'thought'. This focus is the backbone of his writing on 'symbolical' poetry. When he writes about Shelley's 'symbolical' poetry, Thomas explores how symbols illuminate personae's mental activity.

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[44] Quoted in Eleanor Farjeon, *Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 219.

[45] The concept may be death. In his 1916 drafting notebook Thomas provides what Edna Longley calls 'an explicitly elegiac' fourth stanza:

beloved & lover or child
Not even & mother ~~& child [unintelligible] other~~
One from with~~out~~ IN, one from
With out the forest could recognise each other,
Since they have changed their home.

Edna Longley, 'Notes', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 143-321 (308); Aberystwyth, The National Library of Wales, NLW MS 22921A, f. 41^{r}.

[46] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 27.

[47] Quoted in Farjeon, *Edward Thomas*, 202.

Thomas' Criticism of Shelley Clarifies His View of 'Symbolical' Poetry.

In *Maeterlinck* Thomas suggests that 'symbolist' poetry uses symbols which make objects and words into one-to-one substitutions for other concepts. These concepts can be, after his quotation of Eccles, the 'states of the soul', or the 'thought' of a persona. The problem that Thomas finds is that 'symbolist' poems do not show a persona, nor any other 'key' to the symbols. Writing about Shelley let Thomas give his solutions to this problem. He approaches Shelley by discussing how the poet represents some objects as more important than others because they represent 'thought'. By writing on how Shelley's lyric poems signal that objects affect personae, or that personae want objects to affect them, Thomas outlined his own theory of how poems can signal that some objects have qualities which are connected to the persona's 'thought'.

Before discussing Thomas' writing on Shelley, I will comment on his critical terminology. Thomas does not treat the term 'symbolical' as synonymous with the terms 'pathetic fallacy' and 'personification'. Critics must be careful because these terms can appear relevant to what Thomas says about Shelley. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) Chris Baldick defines the term 'pathetic fallacy' as when 'natural phenomena which cannot feel as humans do are described as if they could'.[48] Baldick notes that the art critic John Ruskin who coined the term used it to distinguish between 'great poets' poets who use it 'sparingly' and the 'lesser poets' who rely on it as a literary device, but that later critics 'employ the term in a neutral sense'.[49] Baldick defines the related term 'personification' as a 'figure of speech by which animals, abstract ideas, or inanimate things are referred to as if they were human'.[50] When Thomas uses these terms it is not to say 'makes a thing be person-like'. Thomas uses 'pathetic fallacy' strictly as Ruskin had in *Modern Painters* (1843-1860), which is to describe a 'weak' and 'morbid' person being so affected by an emotion that they perceive falsely 'something …

[48] Chris Baldick, 'Pathetic Fallacy', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 187 (187).
[49] Ibid.
[50] Chris Baldick, 'Personification', in *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 190 (190).

to be in nature which is not'.[51] In a review of D. H. Lawrence's *Love Poems and Others* (1913) Thomas uses 'pathetic fallacy' just as Ruskin does:

> His [Lawrence's] triumph is, by image and hint and direct statement, to bring before us some mood which overpowers all of a sick, complex man save his self-consciousness. Mr. Lawrence is fearless in treatment as in choice of subject. He will be exact in defining an intuition, a physical state, or an appearance due to the pathetic fallacy.[52]

The review sees Thomas use the term 'pathetic fallacy' to reference the sickness with which the 'sick, complex man' perceives his reality. Thomas does not use the term as a neutral description of objects becoming person-like. Similarly, Thomas does not use the term 'personification' to say that an idea or an object in the material world resembles a person. He uses it to say that a writer's representation of human qualities – whether in people or in things – is incomplete. For instance, when Thomas writes that Swinburne found 'Freedom or Liberty' to be 'a safer object of worship than Man because she could never be embodied though too easily personified' the term 'personified' suggests that Swinburne's ideas are inconsistent and unfinished.[53] Thomas uses the term to the same end in a review of *Fraternity* (1909) by John Galsworthy, where he states that Galsworthy's earlier works 'were personifications rather than character studies'.[54] And in the essay 'It's a Long, Long Way' (December 1914) Thomas describes wondering what an 'old soldier meant by "England", if it was anything more than some sort of a giant with Gloucestershire for its eyes, its beating heart, for everything that raised it above a personification'.[55] Following from how Thomas uses these terms, then, this thesis does not use 'pathetic fallacy' or 'personification' in saying how he presents Shelley's poetry

[51] John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5 vols (London: Allen, 1906), III, 176-177.
[52] Edward Thomas, 'More Georgian Poetry', *The Bookman*, 44:259 (April 1913), 47 (47).
[53] Thomas, *Swinburne*, 113.
[54] Edward Thomas, 'Fraternity', *The Bookman*, 36:212 (May 1909), 86 (86).
[55] Edward Thomas, 'It's a Long, Long Way', *The English Review*, 'Seventy-Third Number' (December 1914), 85-92 (85).

as an important demonstration of how poets can make particular objects appear to represent what personae 'think'.

In an introduction to the edited version of *Feminine Influence*, *The Tenth Muse* (c. 1911), the poet John Freeman remembers the direction that Thomas had said his critique of Shelley was taking.[56] Freeman writes that to Thomas 'Another unwritten book was even nearer to his heart – a study of Shelley, of the development of his mind in his poetry'.[57] As Freeman's recollection suggests, the focus of Thomas' writing on Shelley is how poems represent personae's mental activity. To Thomas, this focus was a necessary addition to Shelley studies. He writes in his reviews that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were not providing accurate accounts of Shelley's poetry. By writing on how Shelley's poetry is 'symbolical', Thomas could patch what he saw as a major gap in the criticism on the poet.

The first major figure of Shelley criticism to whom Thomas responds is Matthew Arnold, the 1857-1867 University of Oxford Professor of Poetry. Thomas' 29 August 1905 *Daily Chronicle* review of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1905) firmly rejects Arnold's work on the poet:

> … Shelley's poetry is by no means entirely designed to provide amusement and advancement for critics, grammarians, lexicographers, professors of poetry, reviews, collectors, spiders, etc. Keats may be a greater poet. Wordsworth and Byron may be more effectual. Matthew Arnold has said as much, and there are many who believe in the efficacy of repeating it, although it is not clear whether the critic condemned Shelley for any better reason than that he did not wear side-whiskers.[58]

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[56] *The Tenth Muse* is an extracted version of the eighth chapter of *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, 'The Tenth Muse'. Freeman's 'Edward Thomas: A Memoir' was appended to the third edition of *The Third Muse* after Thomas' death on 9 April 1917. Robert P. Eckert, *Edward Thomas: A Biography and a Bibliography* (London: Dent, 1937), 219-221.

[57] John Freeman, 'Edward Thomas: A Memoir', in Edward Thomas, *The Tenth Muse* (London: Secker, c. 1917), i-viii (v).

[58] Thomas, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley', in *A Language Not to Be Betrayed*, 23-24.

Thomas signals his dissatisfaction with how Arnold had read Shelley by subverting Arnold's terms. Thomas echoes Arnold's 'Preface' to *Poetry of Byron* (1881), where Arnold writes that William Wordsworth and Lord George Byron are 'first and pre-eminent in actual performance, a glorious pair', that John Keats possessed 'a more consummate poetic gift than either of them', but that Shelley is only a 'beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'.[59] These echoes subvert what Arnold had written because they turn Arnold's terms from being an attack on Shelley into being an outline of a limited criticism that can only 'provide amusement and advancement'. Like Arnold, Thomas pairs Wordsworth and Byron, says that Keats is 'greater', and gives a parallel to 'ineffective' by writing that Wordsworth and Byron 'may be more effectual'. Yet, Thomas implies that any late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Shelley criticism which uses these terms and repeats these judgments will lack 'efficacy'. Although Thomas does not attempt to provide a new critical framework for reading Shelley, his attack on Arnold sees him suggest that the established critical frameworks are not to his satisfaction.

Thomas began to set out how people should read Shelley in late 1909. He writes in his 9 September 1909 *Morning Post* review of *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1909) that readers should be aware Shelley's 'innate tendency was to transmute visible things into spirits and abstractions'.[60] In December 1909, Thomas starts to describe how people should critique this representation of 'visible things' when he reviewed Arthur Clutton-Brock's *Shelley: The Man and the Poet* (1910). Clutton-Brock's study is also an attempt to reclaim Shelley from Arnold's 'beautiful and ineffectual angel' label. Clutton-Brock describes *Alastor* (1815) as Shelley 'beating his wings in the void, an angel without a heaven' but argues that 'beauty justifies the wildest lamentations' and that 'At his best Shelley sings like an angel for an audience of angels'.[61] Thomas responds to

[59] Matthew Arnold, 'Preface', in [Lord George] Byron, *Poetry of Byron*, ed. by Matthew Arnold (London: Macmillan, 1881), vii-xxxi (xxx-xxxi).
[60] Edward Thomas, 'Shelley's Letters', *The Morning Post* (9 September 1909), 2 (2).
[61] Arthur Clutton-Brock, *Shelley: The Man and the Poet* (London: Methuen, 1910), 107, 192.

Clutton-Brock's book by writing that while the critic is 'usually very just', he does not do enough to explain specifically what Shelley's poetry does to appear beautiful.[62] Clutton-Brock, writes Thomas, 'could have done more towards defining if not explaining Shelley's power … He does not dwell sufficiently on the intellectual far more than sensuous quality of the lyrics'.[63] When Thomas writes on Shelley in the period surrounding and after this review, his criticism is characterised by a focus on how 'sensuous' things are combined with an 'intellectual' quality. Thereafter, until his death in 1917, when Thomas writes about Shelley, his critical focus is on how the poet used description to make objects represent what personae 'think'.

Thomas' critical study *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, which he was preparing to write when he reviewed Clutton-Brock's book, discusses Shelley's poems by emphasising that they are based around 'symbolical' objects that show personae's 'thought'. [64] Shelley, Thomas writes, would put objects of the material world 'into the alembic [a distilling vessel] of the spirit' and make them 'become symbolical'.[65] Thomas' descriptions of Shelley, then, clarify what Thomas intended with the term 'symbolical'. He used it for a word or description that reveals the persona's 'inner world of images'.[66] Thomas argues that Shelley's poetry uses this 'symbolical' style for 'perfect expression', that the poet used the conventions of the lyric to describe objects in ways which represent both the characteristics of the object and the complete mental activity of the persona.[67]

To show that Shelley is a 'symbolical' poet, Thomas uses a critical strategy of selectively and adaptively quoting from the poet's letters and essays. This strategy is at work throughout *Feminine Influence on the Poets*. It lets Thomas picture Shelley as fixated on making objects be symbols for 'thought'. The first major step that Thomas

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[62] Edward Thomas, 'Shelley', *The Bookman*, 37:219 (December 1909), 149-150 (150).
[63] Ibid.
[64] Thomas wrote to Bottomley on 14 December 1909, 'I am perhaps about to begin a book on poets & women. Originally it was to have been the influence of women on English poets. But that it too difficult: so it will be mainly the attitude of poets to individual women & the idea of women & so on'. *Letters to Bottomley*, 196.
[65] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 42.
[66] Ibid., 41.
[67] Ibid.

makes with this strategy in *Feminine Influence* is to revise the 'Preface' (1819) to *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) into an example of Shelley saying that poets should combine their 'internal powers' with the 'external influences' of the objects around them. Thomas writes, quoting Shelley, that 'Led on to discuss poetry and its nature, [Shelley] calls a poet "the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as sustain these powers"'.[68] Thomas fits this quotation into his discussion of how Shelley's poetry is 'symbolical', but Shelley did not write it to describe making symbols. In the 'Preface' the sentence is actually part of a defence of imitating earlier writers, which is why Shelley states that the 'internal powers' of writers are able to 'modify the nature [the personality] of others'. Shelley's strategy in the 'Preface' is to combine the material world and the works of earlier writers into one category, 'external influences', and to say that 'Every man's mind is in this respect modified by all the objects of nature [material reality] and art'.[69] However, Thomas omits the defence of imitating other writers. Instead of combining all 'nature and art' within 'his consciousness; [as] it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form', the version of Shelley that Thomas describes will combine his internal personality and perceptions with the external influences of objects in the world to create images 'meaning more to him than to a merely æsthetic observer; if I say that there are symbolic I shall explain nothing, but I may suggest something of the truth'.[70]

Having revised the *Prometheus Unbound* 'Preface' into a 'symbolical' methodology, Thomas ties it to a wider trend in Shelley's letters and poems. He writes that these letters and poems show Shelley worked by making combinations of internal and external. The letters, Thomas states, 'show us' Shelley preparing objects to be used as symbols in poems:

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[68] Ibid., 40.
[69] Percy Bysshe Shelley, '"*Prometheus Unbound*", Preface', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 2002), 206-209 (208).
[70] Ibid; Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 41.

> Shelley's letters show us portions of the process of dissolving the objects of the outward and visible world into the poet's inner life, so as to form if not a complete and consistent new world there, yet one of great significance which can only die with his poetry. No one can read the letters describing the scenery of the Alps without feeling that the forms are entering the poet's brain in such a way that they are certain of this new life.[71]

Shelley's descriptions of scenery in his letters are what present the 'objects of the outward and visible world … entering the poet's brain'. Thomas presents examples of how this 'entering' happens by giving excerpts from Shelley's letters. When Thomas gives these excerpts, he uses his strategy of selective and adaptive quotation. He includes misquotations which make the letters appear to show that Shelley combined the 'internal powers' and 'external influences':

> And in the next paragraph [of Shelley's 28 October 1814 letter to Mary Godwin], 'My mind, without yours, is dead and cold as the dark midnight river when the moon is down'. These are more than comparisons; they have an intenser life than life itself as it is commonly lived. When he writes that the wind is abroad and 'the leaves of the forest are shattered at every gust', I feel that the wind is already a spiritual wind such as he afterwards invoked [in 'Ode to the West Wind'] to 'drive his dead thoughts over the universe', and that already 'the imagination has breathed into the most inanimate forms some likeness of its own visions', as he says, in describing the calm lake of Geneva at evening'.[72]

In this passage Thomas presents examples of Shelley tracing connections between objects and his 'mind', and his 'dead thoughts', and 'the imagination'. Thomas states

[71] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 40.
[72] Ibid., 43.

that these examples show Shelley using his 'imagination' to make objects have 'some likeness of its own visions'. This phrase, 'some likeness of its own visions', is key to Thomas' representation of Shelley's 'symbolical' poetry in the passage. Thomas constructs the phrase by misquoting Shelley's 12 July 1816 letter to Thomas Love Peacock, which discusses 'the calm lake of Geneva at evening'. In *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, which Thomas reviewed 1909 in *The Morning Post*, the phrase is a description of children playing in the village of Nernier:

> On returning to the village, we sat on a wall beside the lake, looking at some children who were playing a game like nine-pins. The children here appeared in an extraordinary way deformed and diseased. Most of them were crooked, and with enlarged throats; but one little boy had such exquisite grace in his mien and motions … My companion gave him a piece of money, which he took without speaking, with a sweet smile of easy thankfulness, and then with an embarrassed[73] air turned to his play. All this might scarcely be; but the imagination surely could not forebear [sic] to breathe into the most inanimate forms, some likeness of its own visions, on such a serene and glowing evening, in this remote and romantic village, beside the calm lake that bore us hither.[74]

In *Feminine Influence* Thomas misquotes this letter by omitting the scene of the children and by removing the equivocation of 'surely' and what 'might scarcely be'. In the letter Shelley expresses doubt that the scene of the children playing 'might scarcely be'. This ambiguous phrase suggests that the scene will 'be' 'scarcely' alone, unmodified by 'the imagination'. Shelley then gives a show of reasoning that the 'imagination surely could

[73] The 1914 second edition of *The Letters* corrects this word to 'unembarrassed'. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Containing Material Never Before Collected*, ed. by Roger Ingpen, 2 vols (London: Bell, 1914), II, 490.
[74] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Containing Material Never Before Collected*, ed. by Roger Ingpen, 2 vols (London: Pitman, 1909), II, 490-491.

not' forbear to make connections to the 'inanimate forms' of Nernier. As it has to reason out something that Shelley is otherwise unsure of, this letter is nuanced and ambivalent about what his imagination actually did with the scene. Shelley only *hopes* that his imagination 'surely' became combined with the 'forms'. When Thomas includes the letter in *Feminine Influence*, however, he makes the process unequivocal. Thomas writes that the 'forms' have 'already' became combined with the 'imagination'. Thomas' misquotation of the letter and his use of it as a key to explaining other letters and phrases is consistent with his approach to Shelley throughout *Feminine Influence*.

As Thomas' selective and adaptive quotations show, in *Feminine Influence* he is focused on showing that Shelley wrote poetry by 'dissolving' objects into his 'inner life'. This focus becomes so dominant in Thomas' approach to the poet that he says that being 'symbolical' is the only way that Shelley could experience reality. His gives this statement in his commentary on Shelley's 19 June 1822 letter to Leigh Hunt. Shelley writes to Hunt that 'we all agree' Jane Williams to be 'the exact antitype of the lady I described in *The Sensitive Plant* [1820], though this must have been a pure *anticipated cognition*, as it was written a year before I knew her'.[75] Thomas disputes the claim that the poem was written in anticipation of meeting Williams. He does not query why Shelley, expelled from the University of Oxford for writing the pamphlet *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811), uses 'antitype', a term of Christian theological inquiry.[76] Shelley's use of the term echoes an Old Testament person or event, called a 'type', being ordained by God as a symbol which represents a New Testament character or event, which is the 'antitype'. In *The Typology of Scripture* (1845) the nineteenth-century theologian Patrick Fairbairn describes the dyad of type and antitype as 'one of the symbolical institutions and services of the Old Testament'.[77] Nor does Thomas question how the circumstances of meeting Williams may have motivated Shelley to relate her to 'The Sensitive Plant'.

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[75] Ibid., II, 981.

[76] Thomas Jefferson Hogg describes how he and Shelley were expelled in his *Shelley at Oxford*, which was serialised in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1832-1833) and later published as a book: Thomas Jefferson Hogg, *Shelley at Oxford* (London: Methuen, 1904).

[77] Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture: Viewed in Connection with the Whole Series of the Divine Dispensations*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Clark, 1876), I, 84.

Instead of looking at either what kind of special religious symbol an 'antitype' might be, or the social circumstances surrounding the letter, Thomas wholly focuses on the letter being evidence that Shelley saw material reality in terms of 'symbolical' combinations. Shelley had defined 'antitype' in the prose fragment 'On Love' (1815), which Thomas quotes from in *Feminine Influence.*[78] Shelley defines an 'antitype' as a person who might understand and complete him:

> … its antitype; the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating our own; an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret … like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations of our own.[79]

This definition follows from Christian typology by treating the 'antitype' as coming after and completing the 'type'. The term is not allowed to be a mere opposite. It is a second part that completes the puzzle. Thomas would have been alive to this religious aspect of the definition. He was a lifelong reader of Christian theology, as shown by his letters to his minister friend, Jesse Berridge. He was especially interested in William Inge's *Christian Mysticism* (1899), which he borrowed from Berridge several times.[80] Inge clarifies his discussion of 'Nature-Mysticism and Symbolism' by opposing it to typology:

> … it is otherwise when the type is used as a *proof* of the antitype. This latter method had long been in use in biblical exegesis. Pious persons found a

[78] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 68.
[79] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'On Love', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 503-504 (504).
[80] Edward Thomas, *The Letters of Edward Thomas to Jesse Berridge*, ed. by Anthony Berridge (London: The Enitharmon Press, 1983), 55, 60, 71.

> curious satisfaction in turning the most matter of fact statements into enigmatic prophecies.[81]

However, Thomas overrides all these religious aspects of Shelley's use of 'antitype'. He treats the term as marking the same kind of symbol which he associates with Shelley, writing that 'The fact was that the exact antitype existed in Shelley's brain, and there only. A real thing or a real person could be no more to him than a new entrance into the enchanted solitude of his soul'.[82] Thomas' explanation of the phrase 'pure *anticipated cognition*' sees him relate Shelley's poetry and use of 'antitype' back to the 'symbolical' poetry. He denies that the poet lived in a world where the 'exact antitype' might live outside of 'Shelley's brain'. When he states that Shelley saw material reality as combinations between 'real things' and 'the enchanted solitude of his soul' or his 'brain', Thomas underscores his view that Shelley made 'symbolical' combinations of 'real things' and the 'brain'.

When Thomas writes about Shelley, he treats the terms 'soul' and 'brain' as interchangeable. His doing so suggests that the 'soul' is no more than another word for a biological organ. This suggestion takes away from the claims – which other critics were making – that the symbols in Shelley's poetry represent something spiritual, not something psychological. While Thomas disputed the critical findings of Arnold and Clutton-Brock, he also stands apart from Shelley critics because of his focus on how the descriptions of objects represent personae's personalities and perceptions. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics who saw Shelley as making objects represent abstractions were not looking at 'thought'. These critics were writing of how Shelley had made objects into symbols for a transcendent or other-worldly power. Francis Thompson, S. J. Mary Suddard, A. C. Bradley, and George Santayana were looking at how Shelley's descriptions of objects could represent a secret power running

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[81] William Ralph Inge, *Christian Mysticism: Considered in Eight lectures Delivered Before the University of Oxford* (London: Methuen, 1899), 271.
[82] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 45.

through existence. For instance, in *Shelley* (written 1889, published 1908) Thompson discusses a spiritual power in *Prometheus Unbound* IV. 111-128:

> And beyond our eyes
> The human love lies
> Which makes all it gazes on, Paradise (IV. 126-128).[83]

Thompson frames *Prometheus Unbound* as 'the root', representative of Shelley's poetry because it shows a power in all existence.[84] His approach evokes Robert Browning's 'Essay on Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1851), which had framed Shelley's depiction of 'the concrete' throughout his career as 'a sublime fragmentary essay towards a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal'.[85] Similar to Browning, Thompson treats this power as the presence of the Christian God, and writes that Shelley saw 'the underlying analogies, the secret subterranean passages, between matter and soul; the chromatic scales, whereat we dimly guess, by which the Almighty modulates through all the keys of creation'.[86] In the lecture 'Shelley's View of Poetry' (1904) Bradley presents a similar but non-Christian account of Shelley's poetry. Bradley states that Shelley's poetry is preoccupied by an attempt to represent 'the light of a hidden but glorious power' and emphasises that the reader must 'realise how strong in [Shelley] is the sense and conviction of this unity in life: it is one of his Platonic traits'.[87] In his lectures on *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe* (1910), Santayana uses a similar focus on a single power as the basis for claiming that Shelley is different from 'symbolists', who 'play with things,

[83] Percy Bysshe Shelley, '*Prometheus Unbound*', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 209-286 (273).
[84] Francis Thompson, *Shelley* (London: Burns & Oates, 1909), 57.
[85] Robert Browning, 'An Essay on Percy Bysshe Shelley', in *Peacock's Four Ages of Poetry, Shelley's Defence of Poetry, Browning's Essay on Shelley*, ed. by H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1921), 63-83 (82).
[86] Thompson, *Shelley*, 56-57.
[87] A. C. Bradley, 'Shelley's View of Poetry', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 151-176 (152).

making them symbols for their thoughts'.[88] Taking Thompson as an authority, Santayana argues that Shelley shows 'elements of landscape, chosen, emphasized, and recombined' by 'his wild and exquisite imagination' to show 'some restlessly dreaming power … the earth spirit'.[89] Thompson, Bradley, and Santayana all treat Shelley's poetry as an attempt to show a power in all existence. Suddard takes up the same topic, 'the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the idea ever trying to realise itself in the forms of matter', but has a more nuanced view.[90] She treats some of Shelley's poems as attempts to present a single power, 'the Spirit of Beauty', and writes that others only show a persona 'thinking' about that power. Thus, 'what the *Epipsychidion* represents merely as a personal intuition the *Hymn* [to Intellectual Beauty] attributes to humanity' and frames as 'a power of universal appeal'.[91] Suddard distinguishes between poems which use symbols to treat the 'Spirit of Beauty' as a creation of the persona's psyche and poems which use symbols to treat this 'Spirit' as an independent 'power' that exists throughout the universe.

While these critics of Shelley were discussing how his poems might show an all-encompassing power, Thomas sidesteps their concerns. He only looks at how Shelley used symbols as tools to show 'thought'. In this regard, and as the background presence of Santayana's 'Lucretius' suggests, Thomas' focus on Shelley's 'thought' makes his criticism closer to the Symbolists than to his fellow Shelley-scholars. By excluding secret powers from his writing, Thomas shares an approach with the ways that francophone Symbolist poets and their anglophone critics were describing their goals. For instance, Baudelaire states in the dedicatory note to *Le Spleen de Paris* (1869) that his prose poetry is a representation of the psychological, that it is '*musicale sans rhythme et sans rime, assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la rêverie, aux soubresauts de la conscience*' (musical without

[88] George Santayana, 'Lucretius', in *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1910), 19-70 (58).
[89] Ibid., 58-59.
[90] S. J. [Sarah Julie] Mary Suddard, 'Shelley's Idealism', in *Keats Shelley and Shakespeare: Studies & Essays in English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 109-112 (112).
[91] Ibid., 88-89.

rhythm or rhyme, supple and striking enough to show the lyrical movements of the soul, the undulations of reverie, and the jolts of consciousness).[92] In *A Century of French Poets* Eccles presents objectives such as Baudelaire's as the established principles of Symbolist poetry. Eccles writes that 'the Symbolists are concerned above all with self-revelation' and that their symbols are 'fancies which betray an intimate obsession and reflect a singular habit of association'.[93] In a convergence which shows how Thomas' discussions of 'symbolism' and 'symbolical' poetry can be clarifications of the same topic, and not two separate theories, Thomas' emphasis on 'the enchanted solitude' of Shelley's 'soul' has a similar psychological focus to work by the Symbolist poets and their critics. This focus enables Thomas to describe the different ways that Shelley's poetry depicts objects as the representation of a persona's 'thought', and to not have to adapt the 'symbolical' style to accommodate the presence of a transcendental power.

Thomas highlights two principal ways that Shelley's poems display objects as symbols for personae's 'thought'. When Thomas describes these two features of how Shelley's poetry uses symbols, his criticism is establishing a framework for how his own lyric poetry will use symbols as a way of depicting personae. These two features of Shelley's poetry are the persona describing the object in a way that shows how the object makes the persona perceive something about themselves, and the persona making a direct address, or 'crying to', the object.[94]

The first feature of Shelley's poetry which Thomas ties to presenting symbols is for the poem to include a description of the objects when they make an impression on the persona. In *Feminine Influence* Thomas draws attention to this feature in the poem 'Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni' (1817). He uses Shelley's description of composing 'Mont Blanc' as an example of the poet describing objects affecting personae:

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[92] Charles Baudelaire, 'A Arsène Houssaye', in *Le Spleen de Paris ou les cinquante petits poèms en prose* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1917), iv-vi (v).
[93] Eccles, 'Introduction', 61.
[94] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 43, 66.

> Shelley sometimes, perhaps often, wrote under 'the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects' which he attempts to describe. These are the words he uses about his 'Mont Blanc'. 'As an undisciplined overflowing of the soul', he continues, 'it rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which these feelings sprang'.[95]

In this passage, Thomas treats showing an object's 'symbolic' quality as a poetic technique. The technique involves depicting the object's presence as making personae experience new perceptions. It frames objects as the cause of the 'powerful feelings' that then 'sprang' up. In his prose fiction Thomas involves Shelley's poetry in comparable scenes of characters becoming aware that that an object is causing them to have 'powerful feelings'. The short story 'July' (1911) includes the narrator quoting from Shelley's poem 'Time' (1821) to portray the sea as a symbol of a character perceiving death:

> If it was a sea, it was that 'unfathomable sea whose waves are years' of which the poet speaks. Could those two not tell the difference between the undying moan of those waves and the sound of ocean? He at least knew that if a man listened curiously he could disentangle out that seeming senseless murmur the lamentation of his own death bell. M-m-m-m-m—sh—ah![96]

As 'July' and *Feminine Influence* show, Thomas looked to how objects in Shelley's poetry affect 'thought'. Thomas indicates that Shelley's poetic objects stand out and have a symbolic function when they are described as affecting a persona's or character's personality and perceptions.

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[95] Ibid., 43.
[96] Edward Thomas, 'July', in *Light and Twilight* (London: Duckworth, 1911), 96-116 (108-109).

Thomas also states that Shelley's poetry features personae who make requests of objects to affect them. He focuses on how making such an address frames the persona as the cause of its 'thought' being in a combination with the object. In *Feminine Influence* he treats the 'Ode to the West Wind' (1819) as an example of an address to an object, in this case the west wind. He states that the persona's address to the wind is an example of a trend that can be in all poetry. The 'Ode' represents a need, 'Chief among these impulses', 'to extend the personality in such a way that it can be said, Not all of me shall die when the breath goes finally out of my body'.[97] This 'impulse', Thomas states, led Shelley to 'feel his own weakness and yet cry to the wind: "Make me thy lyre even as the forest is", and "Drive my dead thoughts over the universe like withered leaves to quicken a new birth"'.[98] Thomas treats the address to the wind as description that turns an object into a symbol which represents the persona's ideal of existence without limitations:

> And so lovely is the calm immortal and unchanging world of imagination and of art that, in apparent disloyalty to life, it is desired even amidst life in its supremacy, because it is a world inaccessible to age, winter, hatred, tyranny, disease, stupidity, or death.[99]

The address to an object then involves two components. It will describe an object in the terms of 'a world inaccessible to age, winter, hatred, tyranny, disease, stupidity, or death', and it will show how this 'inaccessible' ideal is reconciled with 'life'. Accordingly, Thomas frames addresses to objects as a combination of what a persona wants to believe and what that persona can actually believe. He states that this combination is akin to 'the weakling's morbid sympathy with strength'.[100] When Thomas critiques Shelley's poetry, then, he outlines how objects can be symbols when they are shown to

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[97] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 65-66.
[98] Ibid., 66.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work* (London: Hutchinson, c. 1909), 210.

cause a change in the persona's 'thought' and when the persona is shown to want them to cause a change. This critique provides Thomas with a framework of how symbols work. As I will demonstrate, his own lyric poetry uses this framework to include symbols which represent the personae's mental activity.

The Symbolical Edward Thomas.

In his writing on Shelley, Thomas shows that personae who relate symbols to their 'thought' provide the 'explanation' that he said was missing from Maurice Maeterlinck's poems.[101] These personae are not shown to attempt to 'make sense of a near-unknowable object', as the Shelley scholar Michael O'Neil has described 'Mont Blanc'.[102] Rather, and as Thomas explains 'Mont Blanc' in *Feminine Influence*, personae describe how the presence of objects leads to them having particular 'thoughts'.[103] The object is then a symbol for those 'thoughts'. This section of the chapter will now explore the various ways that Thomas' poetry uses the style of description which he outlined in writing on the 'symbolical' Shelley.

As a starting point, it is important to note that we, as readers, never see these objects. The reader only sees the lyric's persona. Instead of unmediated access to the object, what we get is access to the persona's description of the object. The importance of this point can be clarified by a comparison to T. S. Eliot's theory of the 'objective correlative'. Eliot defined this theory in the essay 'Hamlet and His Problems' (1919) and appears to use it in the essay 'The Possibility of a Poetic Drama' (1920). In 'Hamlet and His Problems' Eliot argues that in *Hamlet* the characters' emotions are represented by 'external facts', which may be 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall

[101] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 27.
[102] Michael O'Neill, '"Fond of What He's Crapping On": Movement Poetry and Romanticism', in *The Movement Reconsidered: Essays on Larkin, Amis, Gunn, Davie, and Their Contemporaries*, ed. by Zachary Leader (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 270-291 (288).
[103] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 43.

be the formula of that *particular* emotion'.[104] Similarly, in 'The Possibility of a Poetic Drama', the most successful fiction is said to involve 'a presentation of feeling by a statement of events in human action or objects in the external world'.[105] In these two essays Eliot focuses on objects that are 'external' to the characters whose emotions they represent. He discusses plays and novels, media that can show objects existing independently of the characters. Everyone in the theatre can see Yorick's skull when Hamlet holds it up. In a novel, cross-referencing the multiple characters and narrators can confirm that an object exists external to them.[106] But, unlike plays and novels, a lyric poem does not show that an object exists independently of the persona. Therefore, and unlike the 'objective correlative', the first major step for Thomas' theory of 'symbolical' poetry is that it must accommodate the impossibility of showing an object to be an 'external fact' separate from the persona.

In Thomas' poetry, the 'symbolical' style has to perform the work of showing how an object, which only exists to the reader because the persona describes it, is distinct from the persona. To do so, Thomas' poetry echoes a key part of his interpretation of Shelley's 'symbolical' poetry. It has the personae show that they are different from the object that they describe by having them say that the object is present and exciting their 'deep and powerful feelings'.[107] When this section of the chapter explores the 'symbolical' style in Thomas' poetry, it looks at how his poetry combines three ways of emphasising that a particular object's presence affects the persona. These three strategies are: stating that the object causes the persona to have a 'thought'; indicating that a change in the description of an object equals a change in the persona's 'thought'; and, signalling that parts of scenes have been excluded, which is suggestive of the persona focusing on a small number of special objects.

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[104] T. S. [Thomas Stearns] Eliot, 'Hamlet and His Problems', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920), 87-94 (92).
[105] T. S. Eliot, 'The Possibility of a Poetic Drama', in *The Sacred Wood*, 54-63 (58).
[106] For broader discussions of how novels present characters, narrators, and objects, see the essay 'A Future for the Novel' (1956) by Alain Robbe-Grillet, in *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction*, trans. by Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 15-24, and the lecture 'Consciousness and the Novel' (2001) by David Lodge, in *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays* (London: Vintage, 2018), 1-91.
[107] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 43.

One of Thomas' main techniques for presenting an object as important is to have the persona say outright that its presence or its actions are influencing their 'thought'. This technique is apparent in 'The New House' (19 March 1915) when the persona says that hearing the wind makes him aware of his future and 'griefs | Not yet begun':

> Now first, as I shut the door,
> I was alone
> In the new house; and the wind
> Began to moan.
>
> Old at once was the house,
> And I was old;
> My ears were teased with the dread
> Of what was foretold,
>
> Nights of storm, days of mist, without end;
> Sad days when the sun
> Shone in vain: old griefs, and griefs
> Not yet begun.
>
> All was foretold me; naught
> Could I foresee;
> But I learnt how the wind would sound
> After these things should be.[108]

When the first stanza shows the persona isolating himself within his house, the description intensifies the suggestion that the persona treats the wind as the dominant

[108] Edward Thomas, 'The New House', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 68 (68).

presence. Although he physically 'shut the door' and 'was alone' the wind still comes in. The clash between the wind's activity and the persona's isolation is apparent when the wind 'Began to moan', entering the scene against his wishes. When the hears the wind's noise he suddenly perceives that 'Old at once was the house, | And I was old'. Because he states that the wind has the same sound in the present as it will in the future 'After these things should be', the persona intimates that listening to the wind in the present is a way for him to listen to the sound of his future. He states that his experience of listening is, rather, an experiencing of the wind 'foret[elling]' him his future and how it will chain together his 'old griefs' and 'griefs | Not yet begin'. When it depicts the persona making these statements, 'The New House' is focused on revealing how this persona treats the wind's presence as beyond his control and associates it with himself becoming aware of 'the dread | Of what was foretold'.

As 'The New House' reveals, in Thomas' poetry the descriptions of how personae physically inhabit scenes can indicate that particular objects represent their 'thought'. Several of Thomas' poems use physical and spatial language to depict forests affecting personae. In 'The Green Roads' (28 June 1916) the persona's physical relationship to the object is made key to the psychological relationship. He says that he is located in a place where he can see a forest. However, he says that going away will make a change in his 'thought'. He suggests that losing sight of the forest will make him undergo an experience of forgetting that he equates with death. Therefore, his descriptions of his physical position make the forest a symbol for his 'thought'. Describing his sight of the forest 'now', the persona relates what he sees to his 'thought' about death:

> It is old, but the trees are young in the forest,
> All but one like a castle keep, in the middle deep.
>
> That oak saw the ages pass in the forest:
> They were a host, but their memories are lost,

> For the tree is dead: all things forget the forest
> Excepting perhaps me, when now I see
>
> The old man, the child, the goose feathers at the edge of the forest,
> And hear all day long the thrush repeat his song.[109]

Every couplet repeats the word 'forest' at the end of its first line. This repetition shows that this persona has no 'thoughts' which he does not relate back to the word. Thomas had earlier written against poems which use repetition to make words stand out as symbols. In *Maeterlinck* he rejects 'a verse by Adam de St. Victor, where the word "dragon" is used three times in three different senses within two lines', and in his 'Introduction' (1908) to an edition of George Herbert's *The Temple & A Priest to the Temple* (1633, 1652) he writes that the repetition of the phrase 'My Master' in 'The Odour' (1633) 'seems too consciously to rejoice that poetry gives him so many new ways of praising God'.[110] 'The Green Roads' sees Thomas recuperate repetition as a poetic device by relating it to the persona's 'thought'. The use of repetition shows that the forest is always part of the persona's mental activity. The persona then connects its ubiquity with his perception of another psychological ever-present, his awareness of death. He indicates that he is aware of death when he says that while the oak tree in the 'middle' of the forest had seen 'the ages' go past, it has lost those memories because it has since died. He 'thinks' that 'all things' must 'forget', and that their one method of forgetting is dying. The rhyme has made the 'forest' seem ever present in his 'thought', and the suggestion that 'all things' die gives death an equivalent ubiquity. With this

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[109] Edward Thomas, 'The Green Roads', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 128-129 (120).
[110] Thomas, *Maeterlinck*, 29; Edward Thomas, 'Introduction', in George Herbert, *The Temple & A Priest to the Temple*, ed. by Edward Thomas (London: Dent; New York, NY: Dutton, 1908), vii-xii (xii). Thomas' argument that the repetition in 'The Odour' is 'too consciously' poetic reflects Izaak Walton's criticism of the poem in *The Life of Mr George Herbert* (1670). Thomas, who was a keen reader of Walton, may have drawn on Walton's claim that the phrase 'My Master' is an addition to the poem rather than the core of it. Walton writes that Herbert 'seems to rejoice in the thoughts of that word, Jesus, and say, that the adding these words, my Master, to it, and the often repetition of them, seemed to perfume his mind'. Izaak Walton, *Izaak Walton's Lives* (London: Nelson, 1900), 258.

equivalence, ‘The Green Roads’ has linked the word ‘forest’ to the persona being preoccupied with death.

The persona leaves it unsaid that he will become one of ‘all things’. He states that the only thing that will not ‘forget’ the forest is him. This state of resistance to forgetting is conditional on him being physically near to the forest and able to see it. He will not ‘forget’ the forest right ‘now’. The representation of the persona’s physical proximity to the forest becomes key to how ‘The Green Roads’ makes the forest a symbol for his mental activity. Rather than allow that his existence is only temporary, and conditional on the physicality of ‘now’, the persona maintains strategies that keep him alive. If death is the equal of forgetting the forest, then the only way to remain alive is to constantly keep looking at the forest. Accordingly, to stave off death the persona must keep relating all of his ‘thought’ to the forest. His repetition of the word ‘forest’ can then be simultaneously staving off death and being aware of death. He is stuck between, on one hand, the consistent repetition of ‘forest’ and the certainty of ‘all things’, and on the other, the conditionality that he only exists near the forest ‘now’. Consequently, the physical references which outline the persona’s relationship to the forest (the object) take on a psychological edge. Repetition and physicality combine to so that the persona’s description of the forest portrays his intense awareness of death.

While the ‘thought’ of the persona in ‘The Green Roads’ is related to standing near to the forest, in ‘Lights Out’ (c. 6 November 1916) the persona describes his ‘thought’, his perception of falling asleep, as though walking into a forest. ‘Lights Out’ sees Thomas’ poetry combine multiple types of progression. Together, they suggest that the changes in how the persona relates to the forest reflect changes in his ‘thought’. He goes from obeying military orders to obeying orders from the forest itself.

As the title suggests, ‘Lights Out’ has a military background. It was written when Thomas was a British Army officer-in-training and living at the Royal Artillery Barracks, Trowbridge. The barracks-life title of the poem, ‘Lights Out’, echoes the military command to turn out lights and go to sleep, ‘lights out’. When the persona describes

entering a forest his progress into ‘the unknown’ can represent his ‘thought’ as he falls asleep:

I have come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track
That, since the dawn’s first crack,
Up to the forest brink
Deceived the travellers
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends,
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter and leave alone,

I know not how.

The tall forest towers;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf;
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.[111]

The persona states that going in to the forest is the equivalent of him falling asleep. He uses the spatial phrase 'the borders of sleep' in a suggestion that if he crosses the forest threshold then he will fall asleep. The psychological action of 'Lights Out' is that the forest appears to call the persona to come in, and that it exerts an effect over him.

Although Edna Longley writes that '"Lights Out" represents the journey, on all its symbolic levels, as chosen', analysing the poem in the terms of Thomas' critique of Shelley's symbols suggests that this is not the case.[112] The persona is shown as passive and to not make any choices. He says that people 'cannot choose'. And he describes the forest as commanding him to enter 'the unknown'. When Thomas' poems contain symbols, they show how parts of personae's thought are controlling yet hidden and inexplicable. The wind in 'The New House' irrupts so the persona thinks of 'griefs | Not yet begun'. The forest of 'The Green Roads' cannot be returned from and its appearance is equal to the persona's thought of death. The forest of 'Lights Out' commands the persona to enter 'the unknown' and it will 'deceive' travellers. In these poems, the use of symbols involves an obscure, potentially-harmful part of mental activity being displaced onto an object that then acts upon the persona. This dynamic is a stylistic trait which

[111] Edward Thomas, 'Lights Out', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, (135-136) 135-136.
[112] Edna Longley, 'Edward Thomas and Ivor Gurney', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War*, ed. by Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 129-143 (139).

Thomas' criticism associates with Shelley and stands out against other ways late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets used nature to represent 'thought'.

In 'The New House', 'The Green Roads', and 'Lights Out', the use of symbols accords with what Thomas had written about Shelley, but it also sits between two opposed types of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry. One type involves anthropomorphic representations of nature, which can underpin Platonic (the persona is innately connected to a universal power) or Lockean (the persona is not innately connected to anything, but gains knowledge from experience) views of nature as a benevolent, universal power. The other type involves representations of what Robert Langbaum calls 'the exciting new concept' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry, 'that of the mindlessness of nature, its nonhuman otherness – a concept *attempting* at least to transcend [i.e. bypass] optimism and pessimism'.[113] The gap can be illustrated by comparing representations of the sea in poems by Swinburne and the Modernist poet Marianne Moore. In the Platonic ode 'The Triumph of Time' (1866) the persona calls the sea 'the great mother' and says its 'waves' are 'thy thousand graves'.[114] Swinburne, as Thomas writes, 'allows himself the pleasure of thinking what a "sublime sweet sepulchre" the sea would be'.[115] In Moore's 'A Grave' (1921-1932), however, anthropomorphism is rejected:

> it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing,
> but you cannot stand in the middle of this;
> the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.[116]

When Swinburne gives an anthropomorphic description of a 'great mother' deathly sea, Moore presents a sea which is completely unlike 'human nature'. It has neither "volition

[113] Robert Langbaum, 'The New Nature Poetry', in *The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), 101-126 (102).
[114] Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'The Triumph of Time', in *Poems and Ballads* (London: Hotten, 1866), 40-55 (50).
[115] Thomas, *Swinburne*, 208.
[116] Marianne Moore, 'A Grave', in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 56-57 (56).

nor consciousness", and all it will offer is an absence of humanity, a "grave". It is a sharply defined version of A. E. Housman's depiction of nature in 'Tell me not here, it needs not saying' (1922):

> … heartless, witless nature,
> [Which] Will neither care nor know
> What stranger's feet may find the meadow[117]

As Moore and Housman show, an emerging style of poetry could wholly reject anthropomorphism. However, featuring symbols which represent personae 'thinking' about such absences allows Thomas' poetry to show a compound position. Objects could be anthropomorphic representations of the parts of their 'thought' which they are unaware of. This combination of Swinburne's and Moore's approaches might be called a 'human otherness'.

Instead of trying to harm people or to exclude the personae from nature, which Chapter Two showed can happen when Thomas' poetry suggests that nature contains a non-benevolent presence, the objects in Thomas' 'symbolical' poems make people aware that things will happen to them which they cannot know about. This focus on the unknown can be explored by examining how the phrase 'unfathomable deep' in 'Lights Out' echoes the adjective 'unfathomable' in Shelley's poetry. When Thomas writes about 'unfathomable', he shows that Shelley's poems use it to make symbols of personae forced to 'think' about things that they cannot know about. In 'Mont Blanc' the 'unfathomable deeps' of the Chamonix mountain range teach the persona 'awful doubt' and reveal 'The secret strength of things | Which governs thought' (ll. 64, 77, 139-140).[118] And in 'Time' the persona addresses an 'Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are

[117] A. E. [Alfred Edward] Housman, 'Tell me not here, it needs not saying', in *Last Poems* (London: Richards, 1922), 75-76 (76).
[118] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 97-101 (98, 99, 100-101).

years' that 'Claspest the limits of mortality'.[119] Thomas frames these poems as personae being forced to 'think'. He writes in *Feminine Influence* that 'Mont Blanc' shows that objects cause 'deep and powerful feelings' in the persona. And in the short story 'July', 'Time' is quoted when the 'watcher' represents the ocean's sounds as his 'own death bell'.[120] 'Unfathomable' provides a focus on objects controlling people's mental activity which underscored Thomas' lifelong interest in Shelley's poetry. He demonstrated the character of this interest when he copied 'Time' into his copy of *The Lyrical Poems of Shelley* and into his 1901 common-place book.[121] 'Time' evidently stirred Thomas, who added exclamation points to the first and last lines of the c. 1895 transcription into *The Lyrical Poems*. Other transcriptions in the book are abridged or excerpted – and Thomas inserts a note into 'Ode to Liberty' (1820) – but only 'Time' receives extra exclamation points.[122] In 'Lights Out' the design of the forest symbol can also look back to yet earlier representations of nature being without benevolence and affecting what people 'think'. When the 'unfathomable deep | Forest' harmfully 'deceives' the 'travellers' and makes them 'sink', it can be seen as an echo of the dangerous travel in James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1730). In 'Winter' the falling snow deceives a swain as he is walking home. The snow projects 'busy shapes into his mind' so that the swain drowns under a drift, 'unfathomably deep' (ll. 297-298).[123] Yet, in 'Lights Out' these echoes occur within the larger trend of Thomas' poetry presenting symbols as he said Shelley's poetry had. They present the forest as neither benevolent nor inhuman, but as a representation of aspects of the persona's 'thought' that the persona cannot know about completely. The echoing 'unfathomable' in 'Lights Out' highlights that Thomas' poems can depict symbolic objects

[119] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Time', in *The Complete Poetical Works of Shelley*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 637 (637).
[120] Thomas, *Light and Twilight*, 108-109.
[121] Oxford, Lincoln College, MS THO 12; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Don. e. 10, f. 15.
[122] Oxford, Lincoln College, MS THO 12. The note into 'Ode to Liberty' is between the lines 'The Galilean serpent forth did creep' and 'And make thy world an undistinguishable heap'. Thomas inserts '(C[ink blot]ion of Galilee and of the wolf!)'. Thomas may have connected the 'Ode' to Matthew 10:16. In this verse Jesus uses serpent and wolf similes to instruct His followers to use clandestine means to spread His message.
[123] James Thomson, 'Winter', in *The Seasons and The Castle of Indolence*, ed. by James Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 129-157 (136).

as spurring personae into being aware that there are things they cannot know about themselves.

In 'Lights Out', as in 'The Green Roads' and 'The New House', the persona is not portrayed as having any choice of whether or not the object triggers an impulse in his 'thought'. The forest affects him, and he has no choice. 'Lights Out' precludes him having any power over his own 'thought'. Thomas' poetry builds this type of symbol into a parallel between the object and the 'thought'. The personae say that they are being spurred to become aware of a part of their mental activity that they cannot control. They either cannot control the 'thought' because it is too obscure for them to know what it is ('The Green Roads') or because it cannot be prevented from happening ('Lights Out' and 'The New House'). Therefore, when Thomas poetry presents symbols, it can create parallels between the way the object is depicted as triggering a response in the persona and the type of 'thought' that the persona becomes aware of. These parallels underscore that Thomas' poetry can use the 'symbolical' style he wrote about in relation to Shelley as a way of showing that personae have limited control over their 'thought'.

However, Thomas' poetry includes another type of symbolic relationship. This relationship is based on personae actively choosing to review who they are and what their 'thought' is. Instead of showing that nature spurs impulses in these personae, Thomas' poetry presents nature as happening independently of them. The personae then reveal that they are interpreting what they have seen as representative of their 'thought'. This dynamic involves Thomas' poetry presenting the personae as observers. It suggests that instead of an object making them become aware of how their 'thought' operates, they use the objects of nature as an interpretative lens to discover and to talk about their identities.

These interpreter-observer personae are present when Thomas' poetry presents scenes which change from day to night. They respond to seeing this diurnal change by saying that the onset of darkness is related to their 'thought'. As Christopher R. Miller demonstrates in *The Invention of Evening: Perception and Time in Romantic Poetry* (2006), several Romantic-period poets had developed the 'moment of pastoral closure',

exemplified by Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1751), into 'the adverbial still point of "now" … [when] 'the speaker recalls his recent past'.[124] Miller identifies a category of 'evening poems', which are poems that represent the change from daytime to darkness as a threshold associated with new types of perceptions that are to do with this recall: 'an occasion of perpetual adjustment, in which the faculty of vision yields [in darkness] to aural acuity and imaginative fancy or introspection'.[125] In Thomas' poetry the change to night is also depicted as a threshold. However, Thomas' night poetry has two differences to Miller's description of 'evening poems'. Instead of removing sight, Thomas' night poems focus the personae's vision on particular objects. Frequently, a few well-lit objects draw the personae's vision before they are then described as representative of the personae's 'thought'. The other difference is that Thomas' night poetry does not involve the connections to supernatural beings or the dreamlike creations that could be involved in 'imaginative fancy or introspection'. Instead, Thomas' night poems are concerned with postures of self-examination. In Thomas' 'symbolical' poems, night comes with solitude. Instead of having to be subject to the impulses of other people or objects, these personae represent their nocturnal solitude as a time for being able to focus on and review their own 'thought'. These differences from Miller's category of 'evening poems' outline how Thomas' night-time poems feature personae who say the night is a change which they interpret as representing their mental activity.

The key to how Thomas' poetry presents 'symbolical' night scenes, then, is that the personae are portrayed as observers who reflect on what the scene might mean for them. This type of portrayal is key to 'Out in the Dark' (24 December 1916). In 'Out in the Dark' the persona observes as the lamps are extinguished and 'Stealthily the dark haunts round'.[126] His vision becomes focused on the few objects that remain lit, and he relates the onset of night to his 'fear':

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[124] Christopher R. Miller, *The Invention of Evening: Perception and Time in Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 35, 43.
[125] Ibid., 9.
[126] Edward Thomas, 'Out in the Dark', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 138-139 (138).

How weak and little is the light,
All the universe of sight,
Love and delight,
Before the might,
If you love it not, of night.[127]

The persona's emphasis on no longer having the 'sight' that he has in daytime indicates that his response is to how the darkness reshapes the scene. He relates this change to the possibility that he experiences 'might' as the opposite of being able to 'love' what he sees. He is depicted as observing the change that comes with night, and then relating his awareness of his 'thought' to what he has seen by saying that he may 'love it not'.

Thomas' poetic strategy of yoking night and change develops from the arguments that he made about Shelley's night poem, 'Stanzas. – April 1814' (April 1814). The poem is especially important to Thomas because he says that it is the earliest poem which uses the 'symbolical' style that he associates with Shelley. It is 'the first poem in which [Shelley] is himself, something like all himself, and nothing but himself'.[128] While Thomas says 'Stanzas' is important, however, he does not say that it is entirely successful. He disputes the presence of autobiographical details that he says do not represent the persona's thought'. Writing on 'Stanzas', then, Thomas argues that poems could be exclusively comprised of objects that represent the persona's 'thought'. I will quote the first and last stanzas of 'Stanzas' to then discuss how Thomas treats the poem's success and failure as examples of how night scenes can represent personae's 'thought':

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
  Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
  And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

[127] Ibid., 138-139.
[128] Edward Thomas, *A Literary Pilgrim in England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 66.

…

Thou in the grave shalt rest – yet till the phantoms flee
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free
From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.[129]

'Stanzas' was first published in *Alastor; Or, The Spirit of Solitude: And Other Poems* (1816). Its composition dates to Shelley's separation from his first wife, Harriet Shelley née Westbrook. In 1813 Shelley had begun visiting the house of Harriet Boinville and 'her lovely married daughter, Cornelia Turner' at Bracknell, Berkshire.[130] While living 'sporadically' with Harriet Shelley in another Bracknell house, Shelley also lived 'in his room at Mrs. Boinville's, where Cornelia helped him learn Italian'.[131] However, soon, his 'infatuation with Cornelia and his erotic lyrics about her resulted in his banishment'.[132] Shelley and Harriet Shelley then conceived a second child in March 1814. In May 1814 Shelley met Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, with whom he would elope to Italy in July 1814. Separated from Shelley, Harriet Shelley then drowned herself in The Serpentine on 10 December 1816. Her two children with Shelley were placed into foster care. Shelley's reluctance to be with Harriet Shelley at Bracknell informs 'Stanzas', as his biographer Edward Dowden writes in *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1886): 'The beautiful "Stanzas". Dated "April 1814", read like a fantasia of sorrow, the motives of which are supplied by Shelley's anticipated farewell to Bracknell, and his return, at the call of duty, to a home which seemed to him loveless'.[133] However, when Thomas states that 'Stanzas' should not have included autobiographical detail he is less concerned with

[129] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Stanzas. – 1814', in *The Complete Poetical Works*, 521 (521).
[130] Donald H. Reiman and James Bieri, 'Shelley and the British Isles', in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O'Neill, Anthony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15-30 (26).
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Edward Dowden, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 223.

the morality of Shelley's behaviour toward Harriet Shelley than with how these details cannot function as symbols.

Thomas treats discussion of Harriet Shelley's death as pointless. He writes that the death 'has become a sort of test case of the "privileges of genius". There is no privilege in these matters except the lack of conscience, and Shelley had not that'.[134] Although Thomas knew all the details that Dowden had supplied – a reference in *Feminine Influence* confirms that he had read the *Life*[135] – his commentary on 'Stanzas' is only concerned with how the description of the dark moor can represent what the persona 'thinks'. He says that the scene's representation of the persona 'himself' is interrupted by the autobiographical detail. Referring to 'Stanzas' as 'Away! the moor is dark', he writes:

> 'The dewy looks', 'Away! the moor is dark' and 'Thy look of love has the power to calm' were written at this time. The first may refer to Cornelia Turner or any other woman; it is a poem of little value except as autobiography, and for that it is not explicit. 'Away! the moor' is made imperfect by the same need and lack of explanation: it makes its own spiritual and physical world, but 'the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile' present apparently insurmountable difficulties.[136]

In *Literary Pilgrim* he clarifies this comment on the 'insurmountable difficulties'. He writes that although the representation of Shelley is 'all himself' in 'Stanzas', and that although the scene of moor and moon is a representation of a persona whose experience is dependent on the change to evening, 'one moment of space and time in the beginning

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[134] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 225-226. The phrase that Thomas puts in quotation marks evokes John Gibson Lockhart's *Blackwood's Magazine* review (January 1819) of *The Revolt of Islam*: '[Shelley] is also of the "COCKNEY SCHOOL" so far as his opinions are concerned; but the base opinions of the sect have not as yet been able entirely to obscure in him the character, or take away from the *privileges of genius* born within him' (italics supplied). Unsigned review, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (September 1820), excerpted as John Gibson Lockhart, 'Unsigned review', in *Shelley: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by James E. Barcus (London, and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 115-122 (116).
[135] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 202.
[136] Ibid., 205.

of Shelley's estrangement from Harriet', the final verse is flawed because it is something 'only an intimate could understand'.[137] Therefore, the 'difficulties' happen because the persona does not supply any way of knowing who the smile and the voices belong to or what sort of 'deep musings' they inspire. Without being a personal 'intimate' of Shelley the reader cannot know who these people are or what they might represent. Thomas' differentiation of the successful and unsuccessful elements of 'Stanzas' holds that when 'Stanzas' showed a change to night and made 'its own spiritual and physical world', the scene should have only included objects which represent what the persona 'thinks'. When he composes night scenes, they express this critical position. Thomas' night scenes depict personae who emphasise that darkness is a change which helps them to make objects reveal their own 'thought'.

Darkness as change is key to 'The Mill-Water' (12 July 1915). The persona sees a change to night at an abandoned mill, and he highlights that 'Night makes the difference'. After the change to night he relates what he calls his 'thought' to the sounds of the water. In 'The Mill-Water' the persona uses the word 'thought' in a way which suggests that he exclusively refers to his conscious perceptions of the scene and himself. I will use the term 'conscious thought' to refer to the word that the persona uses, and I will use 'thought' as I have throughout this thesis to refer to the persona's complete mental activity. The persona's states that in the daytime his 'conscious thought' is obscured by the sounds of 'talk and noise of labour and play'. However, after the change to darkness, he is able to know about his 'conscious thought' with more clarity:

> Pretty to see, by day
> Its sound is naught
> Compared with thought
> And talk and noise of labour and of play.

[137] Thomas, *Literary Pilgrim*, 66-67.

Night makes the difference.
In calm moonlight,
Gloom infinite,
The sound comes surging in upon the sense:

Solitude, company, –
When it is night, –
…

Often the silentness
Has but this one
Companion;
Wherever one creeps in the other is:

Sometimes a thought is drowned
By it, sometimes
Out of it climbs;
All thoughts begin or end upon this sound[138]

The persona emphasises that when the night has quieted the scene, he can focus on the single audible sound. He calls the noise of the water his 'companion' and says that 'The sound comes surging in upon the sense' of his 'conscious thought'. He then describes how he relates 'the sense' to the noise of the water. His description of the water, which 'creeps', which he relates to 'Gloom infinite', and which lets his 'conscious thought' be 'drowned', all suggests that his 'thought' includes an awareness of death.

In 'The Mill-Water' the persona describes his 'thought' as a physical presence when he relates it to the darkened water. He says that it can end when it is 'drowned'

[138] Edward Thomas, 'The Mill-Water', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 98 (98).

and can begin when 'Out of it climbs'. Although Romantic-period writers including Shelley and Wordsworth could suggest that 'the natural landscape is *like* a mind', Thomas' poetry uses a different connection between biology, psychology, and geography.[139] His poems can depict 'thought' as becoming physical when it is symbolically represented by the natural landscape. Often, the verb 'drowned' is a marker of this symbol technique. Thomas' poetry takes advantage of how 'drowned' bridges between the material and the immaterial. The verb can refer to sound and water together. Thomas' poems can suggest that 'thought' being drowned out by noise is equivalent to the 'thought' physically drowning in the water. Several personae use the verb in ways which render their immaterial 'thought' as physical and suggest their underlying preoccupation with death. In 'The Bridge' (12 March 1915) a change to 'Night's first lights | And shades hide what has never been', and this description of a change to night includes the persona describing how the water has become able to drown his memories:

> The stream
> Runs softly yet drowns the Past,
> The dark-lit stream has drowned the Future and the Past.[140]

Similarly, in 'Aspens' (11 July 1915) at night 'The whisper of the aspens is not drowned' by the noise of men singing in an inn because the persona says that it can call forth 'ghosts from their abode'.[141] Likewise, in 'The Cuckoo' (15 January 1915) the persona describes his memory as a water and associated with death. He states that 'even if I could lose my deafness | The cuckoo's note would be drowned by the voice of my dead'.[142] Thomas' poetry can use the verb 'drowned', then, to suggest that personae are using their preoccupation with death to connect the objects they see to their own

[139] William Keach, *Shelley's Style* (London, and New York, NY: Methuen, 1984), 54.
[140] Edward Thomas, 'The Bridge', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 66 (66).
[141] Edward Thomas, 'Aspens', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 97 (97).
[142] Edward Thomas, 'The Cuckoo', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 54 (54).

'thought'. In 'The Mill-Water', the persona uses the physicality of 'drowned' to say that his 'thought' includes an awareness of death and that it is tied to his experience of the water. Yet, this physicality is tied to the sound of the water being able to drown out all the other sounds. As such, the persona can only treat his 'thought' as a physical entity when he is aware that the scene has become dark and quiet at night. His representation of his 'thought' is based on emphasising the change to night, which has made 'the difference'.

Thomas suggests the importance of the change into night as a way for showing personae when he reworks his earlier prose into night poetry. As I will show, 'Liberty' (26 November 1915) revises 'Cherry Blossom', chapter thirty of Thomas' travel narrative *The Heart of England* (1906) into a night poem. In 'Liberty' the persona observes the change to night and then responds to it by evaluating his 'conscious thought', which he describes as 'All I have thought'.[143] Compared to 'Cherry Blossom', the persona has become more passive and the poem has more emphasis on the coming dark hiding objects. The persona only describes his house, the moon, and the darkness. He says that they have made the scene into a 'grave' that represents 'All I have thought'. The poem involves the persona critiquing his sympathetic relationship with the moon and then deciding, instead, that the moon is putting him into this 'grave' too. 'Liberty':

> The last light has gone out of the world, except
> This moonlight lying on the grass like frost
> Beyond the brink of the tall elm's shadow.
> It is as if everything else had slept
> Many an age, unforgotten and lost
> The men that were, the things done, long ago,
> All I have thought; and but the moon and I
> Live yet and here stand idle over the grave

[143] Edward Thomas, 'Liberty', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 103-104 (103).

> Where all is buried. Both have liberty
> To dream what we could do if we were free
> To do some thing we had desired long,
> The moon and I. There's none less free than who
> Does nothing and has nothing else to do,
> Being free only for what is not to his mind,
> And nothing is to his mind. If every hour
> Like this one passing that I have spent among
> The wiser others when I have forgot
> To wonder whether I was free or not,
> Were piled before me, and not lost behind,
> And I could take and carry them away
> I should be rich; or if I had the power
> To wipe out every one and not again
> Regret, I should be rich to be so poor.
> And yet I still am half in love with pain,
> With what is imperfect, with both tears and mirth,
> With things that have an end, with life and earth,
> And this moon that leaves me dark within the door.[144]

Unlike 'Liberty', the scene in 'Cherry Blossom' underlines agency. It alludes to Shelley to describe how 'you rule' the night:

> The past day is long past, the day of fighting, digging, buying, selling, writing; and if there are still men on the earth they are all equal in the trances of passion or sleep; the day to come is not to be thought of. The moon reigns; you rule. The centuries are gathered up in your hand. You and

[144] Ibid., 103-104.

> the moonlight and the nightingale and the cherry blossom have you own way with them all night long. It is true then that Virgil, Catullus, Crashaw, Burton, Shelley … live still, and Horace, Racine, Bishop Beveridge … never lived. You exult because you are alive and your spirit possesses this broad, domed earth. (Ellipses in text.)[145]

The narrator of 'Cherry Blossoms' presents 'you' at night without any other 'men'. The night represents 'you' and the moon as a partnership in control of the scene. As part of his power, the figure named 'you' holds all ages of human history, 'The centuries are gathered up in your hand'. The figure inhabits a scene with several objects and actively 'possesses' all of them, 'the nightingale', 'the cherry blossom', and 'this broad, domed earth'. 'Liberty' reproduces the partnership between the persona and the moon, and the reference to all human history, but makes two major changes. It strips objects out of the scene, and it suggests that the persona's 'thought' includes a passive tendency.

Boiled down from 'Cherry Blossom', 'Liberty' presents the persona's vision as focused on the few objects he can see. He says that each of the objects is representative of his awareness that he is a passive person. Because there is no other activity for the moon to illuminate, the persona is able to describe the darkness as a deathly emptiness. He says that he and the moon are alone 'idle over the grave'. He describes the darkness as a 'grave' which contains 'All I have thought' and 'Many an age, unforgotten and lost'. The darkness suggests all of his 'thought', and his similarity to the moon suggests his passivity. Like the moon, which appears to hang in orbit unable to move under its own volition, the persona is not 'free | To do some thing'.

The persona intensifies the emphasis on his passivity. He changes from describing the moon as representative of his passivity to then describing the moon as inflicting his passivity. Thus, 'Liberty' is built on stating that one object has the same 'thought' as the persona, and then suggesting that the persona's 'thought' is so intense

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[145] Edward Thomas, *The Heart of England* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 147,

that even the object which represented it is no longer his equal. The persona shows this change by saying that he would make changes were he not passive. He would be 'rich to be so poor' if he could divest himself of his 'Regret'. However, he cannot make the change and lose his 'Regret'. He says that he must stay, in an echo of Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819), 'half in love with pain'.[146] When he acknowledges that he is 'half in love with pain' and must be passive even when it causes 'pain', he then changes his description of the moon. He no longer calls it his equal in passivity. He treats it as an agent that makes him passive. In this climactic final line, he describes the moon with an active verb. It 'leaves' him 'dark within the door'. He and his house are consigned into the same darkness as the 'grave' that contains his 'thought'. Therefore, 'Liberty' shows the persona responding to night falling by describing how the objects in the newly-darkened scene can represent his passivity.

As this discussion has demonstrated, Thomas' poetry includes personae whose 'thought' is represented by their descriptions of objects. In his criticism Thomas associates this type of poetry with Shelley. He argues that Shelley wrote poetry with 'symbolical' descriptions of objects causing 'deep and powerful feelings' to occur in the personae. As in his criticism of Shelley, Thomas' poems feature multiple ways that personae say that objects affect them. The personae can say that the objects are causing them to be aware of a part of their 'thought'. This type of 'symbolical' poetry is the basis of "The New House', and 'The Green Roads', and 'Lights Out'. The personae can also say that seeing the interactions between objects can represent part of their 'thought'. This type of 'symbolical' poetry is the basis of 'Liberty' and 'The Mill-Water'. In these observational poems the personae observe and interpret as nature continues on its diurnal cycle. They relate the onset of darkness to their own 'thought'. When it presents these types of personae, Thomas' poetry follows the critical ideas he developed by writing on Shelley and shows personae who make objects represent their 'thought'.

[146] John Burrow, 'Keats and Edward Thomas', *Essays in Criticism*, VII:4 (October 1957), 404-415 (410).

Symbols and the Imagination.

As M. H. Abrams writes, Romantic-period poets frequently depict the wind as representative of abstract concepts. They 'exploited attributes of the wind which rendered it peculiarly apt for the philosophical, political, and aesthetic preoccupations of the day'.[147] Among the many Romantic-period representations of the wind, Thomas especially focuses on Shelley's depiction of 'a spiritual wind' in the 'Ode to the West Wind'.[148] However, Thomas does not frame the 'Ode' as representative of Romantic-period concerns, but of 'impulses' that all poets have. He writes that in the 'Ode' the persona's description of the wind exemplifies one of the major 'impulses' in all poetry:

> Chief among these impulses must be some form of the desire to impress the plastic world of men … And Shelley heard it in that universal west wind that made him feel his own weakness and yet cry to the wind: 'Make me thy lyre even as the forest is', and 'Drive my dead thoughts over the universe to quicken a new birth'. And so lovely is the calm immortal and unchanging world of imagination and of art that, in apparent disloyalty to life, it is desired even amidst life in its supremacy, because it is a world inaccessible to age, winter, hatred, tyranny, disease, stupidity, or death.[149]

To Thomas, the 'Ode' shows that poets can try to break free from the restrictions of 'life in its supremacy' – a phrase which he uses to describe age, death, and suffering – by making objects into symbols for an unrestricted kind of imagination, 'the calm immortal and unchanging world of imagination and art'. When he focuses on how the 'Ode' is split between actual restriction and desired freedom, Thomas outlines his theory of how there are two types of imagination. The first type is desired imagination. It is ideal, 'immortal',

[147] M. H. Abrams, 'The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor', in *The Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 1984), 25-43 (42).
[148] Thomas, *Feminine Influence*, 43.
[149] Ibid., 65-66.

and unrestricted. The second type is the faculty of imagination that people possess. The persona is depicted using this faculty to make the wind be a symbol for that ideal. These two parts divide between the ideal that the persona 'thinks' of and the way that he 'thinks' of it. As a critic, Thomas treats the 'Ode' as the main example of this division. As a poet, he uses wind symbols to represent the same dynamic, particularly in his poems that are about poetry. They portray personae who associate the wind with a total lack of restriction, and who then say that 'thinking' of it helps them to cope with a specific problem that they face. As I will show by describing Thomas' definitions of the imagination in *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work* (c. 1909) this partial freedom is equivalent to poets using a faculty of imagination which 'stops our ears' against limits without being able to actually remove those limits. The wind in Thomas' poetry, then, reveals how he used his theory of 'symbolical' writing to express the ideas of imagination which he developed by writing about the 'Ode to the West Wind'.

The first major point is that Thomas presents the 'immortal and unchanging world' as unobtainable. His criticism shows that he had moved on from how several Romantic-period poets had theorised that the imagination actually works by having connections to a transcendent or divine power. Wordsworth and Coleridge are prominent examples. For instance, in the 1850 *Prelude* the persona's description of imagination, the 'awful Power' that 'rose up from the mind's abyss', suggests that the faculty is connected to a hidden numinous force which unifies material reality (VI, 595).[150] Imagination makes 'a flash that has revealed | The invisible world' and which shows that 'Our destiny, our being's heart and home, | Is with infinitude, and only there' (VI, 601-605).[151] To Coleridge the primary imagination, or 'esemplastic power', is a conduit that runs a religious power through all material reality. He writes in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) that this power is active in all objects of material reality as 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal action of creation in the infinite I AM' and that it works 'to

[150] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 241.
[151] Ibid.

idealize and unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead'.[152] This theory reflects how Coleridge's earlier poetry had suggested that the imagination connects up all of reality. For instance, the speaker of 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) states that the wind could unify 'all of animated nature' as 'o'er them sweeps | Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze | At once the Soul of each, and God of All'.[153] Thomas was well aware of these visionary theories of the imagination. He writes in an 8 June 1908 *Daily Chronicle* review of *Biographia Literaria* that Coleridge's discussions of imagination 'deserve to have a temple of Imagination and Romance built in order that they might adorn its entrances'.[154] However, Thomas does not go beyond his interpretation of the 'Ode to the West Wind' and depict Romantic-period ideas of the 'immortal and unchanging' imagination as anything other than an unobtainable ideal.

By turning Romantic-period theories of the imagination into an ideal, Thomas stands out from other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics who sought to use these theories to describe how the faculty of imagination actually works. Several prominent critics worked to adapt Romantic-period theories of imagination by removing 'the divinisation of human intellect that denies limit' and instead emphasising that the faculty of imagination assembles objects into patterns that resemble biological life.[155] In 'Romanticism and Classicism' (c. 1912) T. E. Hulme suggests other ways that Coleridge's model of the imagination might show the essences of things or their underlying connections.[156] Hulme positions Coleridge's term 'vital' as a non-religious term for the obscure ways that the parts of an imagined image connect together. For Hulme, Coleridge had used 'vital' with a meaning comparable to 'mechanical complexity', 'that in which the parts cannot be said to be elements as each one is modified by the other's presence, and each one to a certain extent is the whole'.[157] Similarly, in his lecture

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[152] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, '*Biographia Literaria; Or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*', in *Major Works*, 155-482 (313).
[153] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Eolian Harp', in *Major Works*, 27-29 (28-29).
[154] Cardiff, Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives, GB 1239 424/3/3/1/4, ff. 68-69 (69).
[155] Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image* (London, and New York, NY: Routledge: 2002), 150.
[156] For discussion of Hulme's 'Romanticism and Classicism' see Murray Krieger's essay 'The Ambiguous Anti-Romanticism of T. E. Hulme', *ELH*, 20:4 (December 1953), 300-314, and Kermode, *Romantic Image*, 141-63.
[157] T. E. Hulme, 'Romanticism and Classicism', in *Speculations: Essays on the Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. by Herbert Read (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 111-140 (138-139).

'Imagination' (c. 1911), J. W. Mackail revises Coleridge's terms 'organic' and 'vital' into synonyms for how the imagination arranges things in patterns which resemble biological 'life'.[158] While 'observation', 'sensibility', and 'reflection' gather 'impressions through intelligence', Mackail states, imagination is what lets the poet make 'out of them an organic pattern, a vital structure', which Mackail describes as an 'imitation in the form of language'.[159] Although Hulme and Mackail were important figures in early twentieth-century writing, Thomas does not join in with their work. He leaves the transcendental Romantic-period imagination as a model for desired imagination, but not the actual imagination.

To Thomas, the faculty of imagination is non-religious and psychological. It does not make patterns which either create or resemble biological life. It cannot create perceptions out of nothing, nor can it infuse objects in reality with any other-worldly power. Instead, it lets people perceive and describe how objects are important to them. Thomas writes that the imagination cannot make perceptions out of nothing when he takes up the topic in his August 1915 *Bookman* review of *William Blake: Poet and Mystic* (1915) by Pierre Berger:

> Take away Ossian and Milton and the lyrical Blake from the Prophetic Books, and you have a sorry little left. Nor was that little made 'out of nothing', though M. Berger seems to believe that imagination creates out of nothing 'ideas that are entirely new'. He says more truly that …[160]

Instead of framing the imagination as a power which creates or unifies, Thomas treats it as a mental process which excludes problems. He describes this exclusionary aspect in *Richard Jefferies*. He focuses on how it a person uses their 'clear concentrated sight' to

[158] J. W. [John William] Mackail, 'Imagination', in *Lectures on Poetry* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), 259-80.
[159] Ibid., 277-80.
[160] Edward Thomas, 'William Blake', *The Bookman*, 48:287 (August 1915), 140-142 (141).

say why the object is important to them and to briefly exclude any problems they face in their life. He describes the faculty as:

> no more than the making of graven images, whether of things on the earth or in the mind. To make them, clear concentrated sight and patient mind are the most necessary things after love.[161]

And writes that Jefferies:

> built images of certain things in his brain with such clearness and of such close relationship to his own life and thoughts that they make a new world, where, without imagination, we should have missed a thousand things that Nature has … imagination stops our ears against the song of the cold sirens on the rocks, and helps up to go on living as if for ever, to do and to be the greatest and most god-like things, making nothing of time or death. Thus, the contrast is not between imagination and reality, but between imagination and death … it is 'an expression of hope'.[162]

Thomas states that when Jefferies used the imagination, he only 'built images of certain things in his brain'. The same as his interpretation of the 'Ode to the West Wind', Thomas describes an imagination that does not make a new reality or change material reality. Instead, it demonstrates that the poet wants reality to be changed so that restrictions such as death no longer exist. However, Thomas underscores that this change will not happen. Rather than showing the presence of a new world, or the certitude of a religious belief, the idealised imagination is only 'as if for ever'. The 'sirens' are not removed from the rocks, just the listener's ears are stopped up. The ideal is left as a mere 'hope' for freedom, desired but not attained.

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[161] Thomas, *Jefferies*, 57.
[162] Ibid., 307.

The ’Ode to the West Wind’ is Thomas’ key example of how poets present their impossible desire for the imagination to liberate them. By framing the ‘Ode’ as a representation of a balance between the persona’s desired and actual imagination, Thomas stakes out an idiosyncratic critical position. The ‘Ode’ and its late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics emphasise that poetry can unify the persona with other people. This is not a religious or other-worldly unity, but a political involvement with a public. In verses four and five of the ‘Ode’, the persona contrasts his personal captivity against the wind’s freedom and then requests that the wind will spread his ‘prophecy’ to all mankind:

> If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
> If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
> A wave to pant beneath thy power and share
>
> The impulse of thy strength, only less free
> Than thou, O Uncontroulable!
> …
>
> Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
> What if my leaves are falling like its own!
> The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
>
> Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
> Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
>
> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened Earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?[163]

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics who wrote on the 'Ode' drew attention to how it presents poetry as a public, political activity when the wind is called on to 'Scatter … | … my words among mankind!' For instance, John Clarke Stobart writes in *The Wordsworth Epoch* (1907) that 'the Spring [is] of a moral, intellectual, and political awakening', and C. H. Herford in *The Age of Wordsworth* (1897) that the 'Ode' combines 'personal despondency and prophetic passion' when the persona 'utters, not his own sorrows, but the woes of man'.[164] However, comparing Thomas to these critics reveals that he was focused on treating the 'Ode's' depiction of the wind as a private kind of imagination which could liberate just the persona.

Thomas' focus on how the 'Ode' represents the imagination as a private liberating force, not a political or a sweeping force, was lifelong. It can be seen in the handwritten version of these stanzas which he made as a teenager. This version, which he made circa 1895, is in the front fly-leaves of his copy *The Lyrical Poems of Shelley*. He uses an ellipsis to elide the six-and-a-half lines between 'impetuous one!' and 'O Wind'.[165] This omission suggests that the request for poetry to be involved in 'the universe', 'mankind', and 'unawakened Earth' with 'prophecy' was not what caught Thomas' attention. His transcription rather focuses on the lines in which the persona describes his personal weakness, being 'chained and bowed', and requests that the wind will give him freedom.

[163] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ode to the West Wind', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, 298-301 (300-301).
[164] John Clarke Stobart, *The Wordsworth Epoch* (London: Arnold, 1907), 148; C. H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth* (London: Bell, 1908), 250.
[165] Oxford, Lincoln College, MS THO 12.

This is the same focus as in his criticism. Thomas writes in *Feminine Influence* that the desire to receive freedom makes the persona 'feel his own weakness' and yet cry to the wind: "Make me thy lyre even as the forest is"', and in *The Icknield Way* (published 1916, but written in 1911) he refers to the 'Ode' as one person's request, 'the prayer from Shelley … Make me thy lyre even as the forest is'.[166] In his transcription, *The Icknield Way*, and *Feminine Influence*, then, Thomas stands out because he omits the political context and only treats the 'Ode' as a representation of the persona's 'thought' on what the imagination is and could do.

When Thomas writes about the imagination in *Feminine Influence* and *Richard Jefferies*, he does not suggest that people believe that it is a faculty which grants them actual freedom from restrictions, but that they want to believe that it is. He writes that people use the faculty of imagination to shape 'graven images' which represent this ideal, free imagination. The combination of the imagination as a process and the ideal imagination as its product underscores Thomas' poetry. It can be found in several instances when his poems depict the wind. Although Thomas' poetry includes poems such as 'The Mountain Chapel' (December 1914) (which I discuss in Chapter Two) and 'Wind and Mist' (1 April 1915) which depict the wind as stymying peoples' intentions, his poems also include representations of the wind as a symbol for the imagination.[167] Frequently, these representations are in his poems about poetry. They involve personae who associate the wind with total freedom and who then achieve a lesser, particular freedom of their own. Comparing these personae to Thomas' criticism shows how he had revised Romantic-period theories of the imagination as an unrestricted power from being accounts of how the imagination actually works into being an unobtainable desire which motivates poets to make symbols for freedom.

The personae in Thomas' poetry rarely attain complete freedom, and they never keep it. In 'It was upon' (21 June 1916) the persona is depicted as reminiscing of a time

[166] Edward Thomas, *The Icknield Way* (London: Constable, 1916), 243.
[167] Edward Thomas, 'The Mountain Chapel', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 43-44; Edward Thomas, 'Wind and Mist', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 73-75.

when 'The earth outspread, | Like meadows of the future, I possessed'.[168] Although he conceived of freedom as possessing 'the future', when he looks back from the future he no longer possesses that freedom. It has faded and become 'an unaccomplished prophecy'.[169] Similarly, in 'Ambition' (23 January 1915) the persona soon lost the sense that 'Omnipotent I was' which came from seeing a train in a valley.[170] Although this persona 'did nothing' with his power he nonetheless lost it when 'the end fell like a bell'.[171] Personae can also desire complete freedom without attaining it. In 'Liberty' the persona remains stuck in his situation, 'free only for what it not to his mind, | And nothing is to his mind'.[172] And in 'The Lofty Sky' (10 January 1915), as Edna Longley suggests, 'perhaps the whole conceit consciously dramatises the human and artistic need to press beyond limits'.[173] The persona states that he has 'The desire of the eye | For sky, nothing but sky' but fails to attain this freedom: 'I might be a tench for aught | That I can do today'.[174] As 'The Lofty Sky' shows, Thomas' poetry includes personae who see complete freedom in nature. Rather than becoming completely free, though, these personae are only depicted as using imagination to associate the natural world – particularly the wind – with that freedom which they desire.

In the sonnet 'The Wind's Song' (22-30 April 1916) the persona associates the wind with freedom. However, he cannot experience this freedom without combining it with a landscape that he describes as restrictive:

> Dull-thoughted, walking among the nunneries
> Of many a myriad anemones
> In the close copses, I grew weary of Spring
> Till I emerged and in my wandering

[168] Edward Thomas, 'It was upon', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 126-127 (126).
[169] Ibid.
[170] Edward Thomas, 'Ambition', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 59 (59).
[171] Ibid.
[172] Edward Thomas, 'Liberty', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 103-104 (104).
[173] Edna Longley, 'Notes', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 141-321 (180).
[174] Edward Thomas, 'The Lofty Sky', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 53 (53).

I climbed the down up to a lone pine clump
Of six, the tallest dead, one a mere stump.
On one long stem, branchless and flayed and prone,
I sat in the sun listening to the wind alone,
Thinking there could be no old song so sad
As the wind's song; but later none so glad
Could I remember as that same wind's song
All the time blowing the pine boughs among.
My heart that had been as still as the dead tree
Awakened by the West wind was made free.[175]

The persona's descriptions of objects consistently combine opposites. He describes ascending a hill as climbing 'the down up'; the wind is both 'sad' and 'glad'; the phrase 'branchless and flayed and prone' can refer to either the persona or to the 'one long stem'; the word 'alone' is both adjective ('I am alone') and adverb ('I only listen to the wind'); and the 'anemones' have a Greek etymology of 'wind-flower' which suggests both enclosure and openness because, as Henry N. Ellacombe observes, 'the name is explained in Pliny: "The flower hath the propertie to open but when the wind doth blow, wherefore it took the name Anemone in Greeke"'.[176] All of these descriptions suggest the persona perceives the objects as showing combinations. The combinations suggest that the persona cannot experience freedom on its own. He must always mediate it with another experience. This dynamic evokes the character of the "impulse' that Thomas associates with the 'Ode to the West Wind' in *Feminine Influence*, which is the desire for complete freedom in the 'unchanging world of imagination and art' is checked by the necessary presence of its opposite, the restrictions involved in 'life in its supremacy'.

Thomas composed 'The Wind's Song' in his 1916 drafting notebook now held at the National Library of Wales. The manuscript shows that he revised the sonnet's ending

[175] Edward Thomas, 'The Wind's Song', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 117-118 (117-118).
[176] Reverend Henry N. Ellacombe, *The Plant-Lore & Garden-Craft of Shakespeare* (London: Satchell, 1884), 16.

line in a way which suggests an association with Shelley's 'Ode'. In the initial sketch and the first full draft Thomas had written 'that W. wind'. The later 30 April 1916 fair copy of 'The Wind's Song' changes 'that' to 'the': 'Awakened by the West wind was made free'.[177] The fair copy text using 'the' stops the wind from being situational. Instead of the persona's 'West wind' being local to *that* one instance, it is *the* West wind. The change suggests the presence of Thomas' critique of the 'Ode to the West Wind'. Other changes that Thomas made also suggest the ideas that he raised in that critique. In the initial sketch he drafted the ending line as 'answering that W wind & was *open &* [made] free' (italics denote subscript, underlined square brackets superscript).[178] His full draft of 'The Wind's Song' then removes the active verb 'answering' for the passive 'awakened by'.[179] This change means that the persona does not make his own freedom as an answer to the wind. Instead, he has to be gifted freedom when the wind awakens him. When he is only 'awakened', the persona relates to the wind with a combination of the freedom that it gives to him and the limitation that he cannot make his own freedom. Thomas' revisions in his 1916 drafting notebook, then, see him bringing 'The Wind's Song' closer to his descriptions of the imagination as a faculty and the idealised imagination as its product.

In his criticism, Thomas associates the wind with the kind of complete freedom that drives poets to try and overcome death. In his own poetry, the wind is often associated with the limitless freedom that personae say that they need to succeed as poets. They describe restrictions which hinder the work as poets, then present the wind as able to help them defeat these restrictions. This use of the wind as a symbol is apparent in 'Aspens', which Thomas wrote about his career as a poet. He outlined this intention behind the poem when he wrote to Farjeon in a 21 July 1915 letter that '*I* was the aspen. "We" meant the trees and I with my dejected shyness'.[180] Representing Thomas, the persona says that he is a poet whose 'rhymes' are like the noise of wind

[177] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Don. d. 28, f. 38.
[178] Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, NLW MS 22921A, f. 17^{r}.
[179] Ibid., f. 16^{v}.
[180] Quoted in Farjeon, *Edward Thomas*, 152-3.

blowing in aspen trees. The persona says that his similarity to the noise in the trees means that criticism by 'men' does not apply to his poetry:

> Over all sorts of weather, men, and times,
> Aspens must shake their leaves and men may hear
> But need not listen, more than to my rhymes.
>
> Whatever wind blows, while they and I have leaves
> We cannot other than an aspen be
> That ceaselessly, unreasonably grieves,
> Or so men think who like a different tree.[181]

'Aspens' depicts problems in how people interpret one another. The persona suggests that the 'men' are wrong to 'think' that either he or an aspen tree 'ceaselessly, unreasonably grieves'. Likewise, he shows that he cannot interpret the sounds that other people make. A counterpart to 'men' misinterpreting 'my rhymes', the persona finds people's singing in an 'inn' to be only 'random'. He says that he hears 'The clink, the hum, the road, the random singing'.[182] The speaker does not attempt to interpret this singing. Nor does he attempt to alter his 'rhymes' to the expectations of people who 'like a different tree'. Neither does he attempt or desire to make the 'men' learn to see his poetry as something other than 'unreasonable'. The persona does not gain a positive ability to solve these problems of interpretation. He will not be able to remove the restrictive expectations that 'men' have for his 'rhymes'. Instead, the wind lets him describe a smaller freedom. He can suggest that 'men' are wrong and ignore their expectations for his poetry. Like Thomas' critical position that poets use the imagination in an attempt to ignore the restrictions of 'life in its supremacy', the persona presents his

[181] Thomas, 'Aspens', 97.
[182] Ibid.

connection to the wind as enabling him to ignore the restrictions that 'men' impose on him.

When 'Aspens' suggests that the persona cannot alter the world with his poetry, the *ars poetica* 'Words' (26-8 June 1915) emphasises that the persona cannot write poetry at all unless the words 'Let me'. The persona presents the 'English words' as able to take any form and having the ability to 'Choose me'.[183] He states that they may blow through him as winds 'use | A crack in a wall | Or a drain' to whistle 'Their joy or their pain'.[184] If the words blow through him like a wind, the speaker suggests, he will be able to write poetry. This depiction of poetry suggests that the persona does not believe he will attain a complete freedom. His poetry will be simultaneously 'fixed and free':

> Let me sometimes dance
> With you,
> Or climb
> Or stand perchance
> In ecstasy,
> Fixed and free
> In a rhyme,
> As poets do.[185]

The representation of what 'poets do' as 'Fixed and free' suggests the combination of limitation and freedom that Thomas' criticism associates with the imagination. The persona requests some of the freedom that words have, and if they 'let' him then he will transmute the words into the physical movements that 'poets do'. The verbs 'dancing', 'climbing', and 'standing' are all conditional on the speaker being allowed to use them, 'perchance', but they are also free from anything other than words preventing or

[183] Edward Thomas, 'Words', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 91-93 (92).
[184] Ibid., 91-92.
[185] Ibid., 93.

restricting them. In 'Words', as in Thomas' descriptions of the imagination, poetry is not presented as complete freedom. The work that 'poets do' involves the persona having a lesser version of the total freedom that he imagines the words themselves possess.

The personae of Thomas' poems about poetry can describe the wind as an overwhelming, absolute power that could have an effect on their situation. But they do not possess the power they 'think' that the wind has. Instead of becoming free under their own volition, they are 'made free'. When these personae 'think' of the wind as an absolute freedom and then exercise an inferior version of that freedom, they show the same processes that Thomas associates with poets using the imagination. In *Feminine Influence* and *Richard Jefferies*, he says that the imagination works to turn objects of material reality into 'graven images'. He writes that although the 'Ode to the West Wind' shows that poets desire to use the imagination to transcend restrictive 'life in its supremacy', they cannot do so. All they can do is describe objects in ways which express this desire for freedom from restrictions. Analogously, Thomas' poems do not show personae who become as free as the wind. Rather, they show personae who are left wanting the complete freedom for which they have made the wind a symbol.

Thomas and Shelley: Conclusion.

Thomas' critical writing on symbols is tied to his expectation that poems show 'thought'. This expectation is the foundation of his distrust for Symbolist poems. He writes of these poems as inexplicable, and his writing suggests that he found this problem because he was unable to relate these symbols back to personae. By contrast, Thomas emphasises that Shelley's poetry is the important model for how poets should use symbols. Shelley's 'symbolical' poems succeed, Thomas writes, because they use descriptions which show that objects represent personae's 'thought'. Writing on Shelley allows him to clarify how it is that personae make use these descriptions to make objects into symbols. He says they can either describe objects as actively making them experience 'deep and powerful

feelings' or that they can address an object to say what effect they want it to have on their 'thought'.

Thomas' poetry presents objects as symbols by using the method that he clarified by writing on Shelley. Personae reveal their 'thought' through the ways the describe particular objects. Some of these personae follow Thomas' critique of 'Mont Blanc' and say that objects affect their 'thought'. Other personae can follow Thomas' critique of 'Stanzas. – April 1814' and show themselves to be observing nature and interpreting it in relation to their 'thought'. A further set of personae are shown to have expectations for what an object will do to their 'thought'. Thomas frames the 'Ode to the West Wind' as an example of poets separating what they believe the imagination can actually do and what they want the imagination to do ideally. The personae of his poems who describe the wind can then represent the same dynamic of belief and desire. They relate the wind's agency to the role of the imagination in an ideal poetry. This ideal poetry, like Thomas' critique of Shelley's symbols, is entirely focused on the individual persona and their 'thought'.

Chapter Four: Thomas and John Keats.

'Receptiveness'.

In his study *Keats* (published 1916, but written in 1914), Thomas develops a theory of how John Keats' poetry is dependent on 'passivity' and 'receptiveness'.[1] He writes that Keats' life and poetry were shaped by 'the brooding intensity of his receptiveness'.[2] This chapter demonstrates that Thomas' focus on these terms is distinctive among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism of John Keats and explores how it creates distance between Thomas' poetry and Modernist poetry when it contributes to the presentation of personae in Thomas' own poetry.

Defining Terms.

Thomas takes the terms 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' from Keats' 19 February 1818 letter to John Hamilton Reynolds. He quotes from Keats: '"Let us", [Keats] said to Reynolds, "be passive and receptive like a flower"'.[3] When Thomas uses 'passivity' in *Keats* he refers to how Keats depicts himself as an observer. Thomas treats 'passivity' as chosen, not imposed. He suggests a 'passive' observer refuses to interpret the scene, does not suggest that the scene represents them, and does not physically interrupt the scene. 'Passivity' is a precondition for being 'receptive'. Thomas treats 'receptiveness' as a deep empathy for potentially anything. He writes that Keats would see a person or thing and then experience existence as they do. For Thomas, this type of empathy could completely suppress Keats' identity.[4] To describe the nature of this suppression, Thomas uses the terms 'richness' and 'intense'. 'Richness' is the total focus on an object being

[1] For Thomas completing *Keats* in 1914, see R. George Thomas, *Edward Thomas: A Portrait* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 223.
[2] Edward Thomas, *Keats* (Cheltenham: The Cyder Press, 1999), 11.
[3] Ibid., 74.
[4] Ibid., 75.

'contrasted' to how the persona's worries become absent from the poem.[5] 'Intensity' is a total focus on just that one thing such that Keats' own personality could be completely 'submerged' as a result.[6] Thomas describes the result of identities being 'submerged' with the term 'morbidity'. He derives this term from Keats' phrase 'Morbidity of Temperament' in a 10, 11 May 1817 letter to B. R. Haydon. Although Keats uses the phrase to explain how 'I cannot write', Thomas, as the chapter will show, uses 'morbidity' to say that Keats' tendency was to be 'receptive' in a way which is equivalent to death erasing identity.[7] The final term to define is 'masculine' and its cognates. Thomas uses 'masculinity' to designate either a personal quality or a type of poetry. The term has different meanings in these different contexts. For describing personalities, Thomas treats 'masculine' as the 'active qualities' of 'energy, courage, and independence'.[8] He suggests these qualities when he writes that Keats had a 'manly grasp of life'.[9] Regarding poetry, Thomas uses 'masculine' to refer to clarity in form and content. He writes that 'masculine' poetry has a 'clear, well-balanced, and essential' form and an 'intellectual and assured tone'.[10] The key parts of Thomas' term 'masculine', then, are that it has a different meaning in personal and poetic contexts and that it is not related to sexuality or to biological gender so much as to specific qualities that people or poems can exhibit.

Defining the Scope of the Argument.

The chapter's underlying historical argument is that *Keats* shows that a category of Thomas' criticism and subsequent poetry can be opposed to how early twentieth-century Modernism could present personae's loss of identity or impetus as part of a broader

[5] Ibid., 59.
[6] Ibid., 56.
[7] John Keats, 'Letter to B. R. Haydon, May 10, 11 1817', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox (New York, NY, and London: Norton, 2009), 83-86 (84).
[8] Thomas, *Keats*, 11.
[9] Ibid., 86.
[10] Ibid., 58.

social disorder or loss of national identity. This is a dynamic of individual and society which was clearly expressed by the major Modernist poet and critic T. S. Eliot in 'Religion Without Humanism' (1930) when he wrote that 'at the present time the problem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual, are in the end one and the same'.[11] As I will show, several critics have associated Thomas' poetry with this type of connection between individual and social problems. These critics draw on how some of Thomas' poems present passivity as a restrictive imposition. In 'Liberty' (26 November 1915), 'Lights Out' (November) 1916, 'The Glory' (May 1915), and 'Home (Not the end)' (23 February 1915) for example, the personae are depicted as unable to act as they would prefer. However, this restrictiveness is not the only way that Thomas' poetry depicts passivity. As this chapter will show, Thomas develops another type of beneficial 'passivity' by writing about Keats.

I will argue that critiquing Keats let Thomas describe 'passivity' and the loss of identity as a strategy for describing objects as though the persona is not present. In his criticism on the poet he develops a theoretical framework for how 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' are hallmarks of Keats' poetry and are not problems – even when they cause pain – but that they are ways of representing a heightened focus on a particular person, idea, or thing. He writes of how Keats' poetry suppresses the persona's presence as though the objects that they describe become more important than their identity. For Thomas, the 'passivity' in Keats' 'Ode on Melancholy' (1819) is not problematic but pleasurable: 'Instead of corrupting [readers] it will deepen their taste of life, and perhaps also their understanding'.[12] When Thomas brings this version of Romantic-period style from his *Keats* into his poetry, it stops 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' from being problems and turns them into ways of emphasising the detail in scenes.

Therefore, *Keats* is especially important to this thesis because it helps to reveal more of how Thomas' 'Romantic' literary theory and turn to Romantic-period poetry

[11] T. S. Eliot, 'Religion Without Humanism', in *Humanism and America: Essays on the Outlook of Modern Civilisation*, ed. by Norman Foerster (New York, NY: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930), 105-112 (112).
[12] Thomas, *Keats*, 55.

generate his nuanced relationship to early Modernism. In Chapter Two, I discussed how Thomas' poetic representations of nature and the experience of absence are distinct from ideas emerging among some Modernist writers, their number including Eliot and Virginia Woolf, that an individual's experience of absence could represent a broader, societal absence, and in Chapter Three I explored how Thomas' view of Symbolism sees his theory and poetry turn back toward Romantic-period poetry and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism'. This fourth chapter completements the previous two by showing that Thomas' criticism and poetry about the loss of identity are distinct from the idea, emerging in several Modernist representations of identities being lost, fragmented, or dismissed, that this loss reveals a wider social problem. Together, these chapters reveal how Thomas' 'Romantic' theory avoids the ways that poets including Eliot and Pound could fragment personae and making their psychologies representative of wider social problems; as this thesis shows, Thomas' place in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English poetry is generated by his poetry doing what he said Romantic-period poets had done and what 'Romantic' poets ought to do.

However, some critics have argued that Thomas ought to be included among Modernist poets for how he represents losses of identity. This chapter looks to *Keats* to refine and refocus those critics' arguments. Several of Thomas' critics have suggested that his representations of 'passivity' and disrupted identity reveal connections to problems in modernity or to Modernism. F. R. Leavis writes that because 'Thomas records the modern disintegration' then 'he succeeded in expressing in poetry a representative modern sensibility'.[13] Moreover, Jem Poster writes:

> Thomas' poetry can be seen to exemplify the near-paradox which lies at the heart of modernism itself: the vacillations and liminalities which might logically be associated with a failure of impetus are actually a source of extraordinary artistic energy. This is because, whatever else they may reflect,

[13] F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 57.

> modernism's ambiguities are bound up with a heightened awareness of plurality – of the richness of a multi-faceted world and the variety of ways in which that world can be interpreted.[14]

Poster relates Thomas' poetry to Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1910-1911). He writes that 'Thomas must be similarly, if perhaps less knowingly, representative' of the same 'age of uncertainty … marked by an unusually astute sense of disturbance' that is present in 'Prufrock'.[15] Similarly, William Cooke suggests that the 'anguish' in Thomas' poetry is connected to 'Prufrock' and the revision of identity in the couplet 'I should have been a pair of ragged claws | Scuttling across the floors of silent seas'.[16] Cooke writes about Thomas' poem 'The long small room' (November 1916) that 'Thomas typifies his own way of life by choosing what was to become in the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Allen Tate a powerful and peculiarly "modern" symbol of anguish – that of the crab'.[17] However, unlike 'Prufrock', or Imagist poems with similar scope and style such as 'Childhood' (1915) or 'Whitechapel' (1916) by Richard Aldington, the sequence 'London Excursion' (1915) by John Gould Fletcher, or 'Otherworld' (1920) by F. S. Flint, Thomas' poetry does not relate 'passivity' or 'receptiveness' to either individual or social disturbance.[18] By contrast to the idea that social pressures can fracture and fragment identity, which was made prominent when 'Prufrock' portrayed what Marjorie Perloff calls 'the spiritual anemia [sic] and emotional paralysis of a self-conscious and yearning modern man', and which appeared in the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies of 1915, 1916, and 1917, Thomas' poetry could keep identity whole and explore its suppression

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[14] Jem Poster, 'I Cannot Tell: Edward Thomas's Uncertainties', in *Branch-Lines: Edward Thomas and Contemporary Poetry*, ed. by Guy Cuthbertson and Lucy Newlyn (London: Enitharmon, 2014), 43-50 (44-45).
[15] Ibid., 44.
[16] T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', in '*The Waste Land' and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 9-14 (12).
[17] William Cooke, *Edward Thomas: A Critical Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 129.
[18] Richard Aldington, 'Childhood', in *Some Imagist Poets: An Anthology*, ed. by the contributors (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1915), 3-9; Richard Aldington, 'Whitechapel', in *Some Imagist Poets 1916: An Annual Anthology*, ed. by the contributors (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1916), 8-9; John Gould Fletcher, 'London Excursion', in *Some Imagist Poets: An Anthology*, 39-49; F. S. [Frank Stewart] Flint, 'Otherworld' in *Otherworld: Cadences* (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1920), 1-16.

or replacement.[19] This chapter relates his *Keats* to his poetry to show how he generated the concepts which underpin that representation of identity. It explores how he used *Keats* to create a 'passive' and 'receptive' strand within his own poetry. This strand stands Thomas' lyric apart from poetries that frame the loss of identity or impetus as problematic.

***Keats* in the Historical Context of Criticism on the Poet.**

In *Keats* Thomas defines 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' and says how they combined in Keats' life and came to the fore in his poetry. Thomas presents 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' as linked together, stating that 'the sensitive passive qualities without which [Keats] poetry would have been nothing' are part of 'his receptiveness'.[20] He describes Keats' career by sketching how these 'sensitive passive qualities' came to the fore in the latter's poetry. Thomas outlines how Keats moved beyond the 'Cockney' influence of the poet and essayist Leigh Hunt after *Poems* (1817), began to use a passive and receptive style uncritically in *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* (1818) ('Independent he would be, in "Endymion" without judgment'), and then developed the receptive style so that it could be an identification with death itself in *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (1820).[21] As I will show, this focus on 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' distinguishes Thomas from other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics of Keats. He went against the prevailing critical trends to emphasise that 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' are worth praise and were central to Keats' success as a poet.

When Thomas came to write *Keats*, critics often associated Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' with mental and physical weakness. This association was longstanding. In Keats' lifetime, politically-motivated reviews of *Poems* and *Endymion* had attacked Keats

[19] Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1981), 73.
[20] Thomas, *Keats*, 11.
[21] Ibid., 85.

for his association with the radical Hunt.[22] These reviewers suggested that Keats' poetry was obscure because of its similarity to Hunt's poetry. They also went beyond looking at Keats' poetry and attacked his personality too, claiming that he was psychologically unhealthy. The most prominent of these political reviews were John Gibson Lockhart's, in a pseudonymous review of *Endymion* in the August 1818 number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and John Wilson Croker's, in an unsigned review of *Endymion* in the September 1818 *Quarterly Review*. Writing as 'Z', Lockhart described *Poems* as a 'phrenzy' and *Endymion* as 'imperturbable drivelling idiocy', dismissed Keats as 'only a boy of pretty abilities, which he has done everything in his power to spoil', and took aim at the 'Cockney' association with Hunt, whom Lockhart called 'the meanest, the filthiest, and the most vulgar of the Cockney poetasters'.[23] Croker, similarly, labelled Keats 'a copyist of Mr Hunt, but he is more unintelligible … bitten by Mr Leigh Hunt's insane criticism, [Keats] more than rivals the insanity of his poetry'.[24] These reviews had a political focus which was motivated by Keats' personal association with Hunt. They combined Keats' politics, personality, and poetry, and attacked them all. It was an approach which affected the criticism of Keats throughout the nineteenth century.

After Keats died of tubercular illness in 1821, the suggestion that he and his poetry could represent physical and mental weakness was compounded by how the sickness had struck him down. In the aftermath of his death, a legend built up that the reviews were right, Keats was weak, so weak, in fact, that reading the reviews had brought on the sickness which killed him. However, this legend was not only made by people attacking Keats. It gained momentum when poet's tributes to Keats blamed the reviewers for killing him. In the 'Preface' to *Adonais* (1821), his elegy for Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley laid the blame for his death firmly on the hostile reviews of *Endymion*.

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[22] For Keats' involvement in Hunt's radical political activity, see Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), and Martin Aske, 'Keats, the critics, and the politics of envy', in *Keats and History*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64.

[23] 'Z', 'Cockney School of Poetry No. IV', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August 1818) excerpted as John Gibson Lockhart, 'Lockhart's attack in *Blackwood's*', in *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by G. M. Matthews (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 97-110 (98, 104, 99).

[24] 'Unsigned Review', *Quarterly Review* (September 1818) excerpted as John Wilson Croker, 'Croker's attack in the *Quarterly*', in *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, 110-114 (111).

He wrote the reviews 'produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs'.[25] However, in attacking the reviews, Shelley inadvertently confirmed what they were saying. Shelley described Keats as 'delicate', 'fragile', 'susceptible', and a 'young flower'.[26] In attempting to defend Keats, he had told the world that the poet really was physically 'delicate' and mentally 'susceptible'. This legend of the mentally and physically weak Keats was then circulated by Lord George Byron in *Don Juan* (1823), which describes 'John Keats, who was killed off by one critique' and whose 'mind … | … let itself be snuffed out by an Article' (XI, 60).[27] Although Byron moderated these lines in a manuscript note that Keats' death was 'a loss to our literature', he also kept some animosity to the poet; Countess Blessington wrote in her *Conversations of Lord Byron* of a day in April 1823 when 'he and I nearly quarrelled to-day because I defended poor Keats'.[28] The complexities of Byron's private opinions notwithstanding, the hostile reviews and the poetic remembrances had merged Keats' personality and poetry together. Keats had become associated with the obscurity and weakness which led later critics to suggest that his poetry's 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' were condemnable for being evidence of personal defects.

Before those later attacks came, however, some mid nineteenth-century criticism began to unpick the idea that Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' were unpardonable faults. Critics suggested that 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' reveal that his personality could have developed and made him a poet to be celebrated. This change in critics' approach to Keats was then largely undone by a resurgence of the hostile criticism focused on his personality. This resurgence was a response to the publication of Keats' love letters to Fanny Brawne in *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, edited by Harry

[25] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Preface', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed, by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (Ney York, NY, and London: Norton, 2002), 409-411 (410).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Lord [George] Byron, *Don Juan*, 2. vols (London: Humphreys, 1906), II, 118.
[28] George Byron, *Life of Lord Byron: with his Letters and Journals*, ed. by Thomas Moore, 6 vols (London: Murray, 1854), V, 22; Countess [Marguerite] Blessington, *Conversations of Lord Byron* (London: Colburn, 1834), 75.

Buxton-Forman. I will discuss how critics changed from attacking Keats' personality to discussing its potential for maturing and producing a different poetry. Then, I will show how the critical focus changed back to making attacks after the publication of *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*.

In the middle of the nineteenth century critics used Keats to question whether and how a poet's focus on 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' might be moral. In his 1848 review of *The Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats* (1848) the poet Coventry Patmore had argued that while Keats presents 'the pleasures and temptations of sense' in vivid language, such 'eye-watering splendour' is diminished by the lack of a moral and religious foundation: 'A man without a belief is like a man without a backbone. Keats made the very common mistake of preferring the true to the good'.[29] To the critic David Masson, however, Keats' 'sensuousness' reveals such personal refinement that critics might believe that Keats would have become a 'truly epic poet'. Masson writes in 'The Life and Poetry of Keats', first published in the November 1860 number of *Macmillan's Magazine*, that Keats possessed a 'native capacity for keen and abundant sensation' which was 'developed, educated, and harmonised, by the influences of reading, intellectual conversation, and more or less laborious thought' into a 'richer and more cultivated sensuousness'.[30] This 'capacity' would have become:

> … that more matured state of mind in which, though the sensuous may remain and the cool fancy may weave its tissues as before, human interest and sympathy with the human heart and grand human action shall predominate in all. Now, in the case of Keats, there is evidence of the fact of this gradation. There is evidence of a progress both intellectually and morally; of a disposition, already consciously known to himself, to move

[29] 'Unsigned Review', *North British Review* (November 1848) excerpted as Coventry Patmore, 'The sensual school of poetry', in *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, 329-340 (331-333).
[30] David Masson, 'The Life and Poetry of Keats', in *Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1874), 143-191 (177).

> forward out of the sensuous or merely sensuous-ideal mood, into the mood of the truly epic poet, the poet of life, sublimity and action.[31]

Thus, to Masson, Keats' poetry had already generated a solution to the problems that Patmore found. Although 'sensuousness' may be immoral it also represents its own potential to become a moral poetry of 'the human heart and grand human action'. While Masson's and Patmore's essays are not in agreement, they both show that mid nineteenth-century criticism could discuss Keats' poetry without making *ad hominem* attacks on the poet.

The publication of the *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne* in the late nineteenth century returned criticism to personal attacks on Keats. The tenor of this criticism was that these letters were immoral to write and immoral to publish. Its critics expanded the personal attacks from saying Keats was personally physically and mentally weak to also saying that he was undignified or effeminate. Matthew Arnold writes in 'John Keats' (1880) that the 'relaxed self-abandonment' of the *Letters* made him 'tempted to speak even as *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* were in the old days wont to speak'.[32] Algernon Charles Swinburne's essay on Keats for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1886) explicitly labelled the *Letters* as unmanly. As Thomas later noted, Swinburne reflected 'the standards of any other Englishman of his class' when he 'pronounced that "a manful kind of man or even a manly sort of boy, in his love-making or in his suffering, will not howl and snivel after such a lamentable fashion" as Keats in his letters to Fanny Brawne'.[33] These letters were a lightning rod for *ad hominem* critical arguments based on disapproval for Keats descriptions of his 'passivity' and 'receptiveness'.

Similarly, when biographers of Keats discussed the letters to Fanny Brawne they voiced their distaste for both Keats and the letters. William Michael Rossetti writes in *The Life of John Keats* (1887) that 'I cannot say that the character of Keats gains to my eyes

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[31] Ibid., 189.
[32] Matthew Arnold, 'John Keats', in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1888), 100-121 (103).
[33] Edward Thomas, *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study* (London: Secker, 1912), 104.

from the perusal of this correspondence' and that the *Letters* reveal Keats to have been 'unbalanced, wayward, and profuse'.[34] Sir Sidney Colvin refused to treat the letters as material fit for literary criticism. Colvin excluded the letters from his edition of *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends* (1881) by dismissing them as 'petty private matters with which he [the reader] has no concern'; he later wrote in his 'English Men of Letters' critical biography *Keats* (1887) that 'their publication must be regretted by all who hold that human respect and delicacy are due to the dead' because 'they are constrained and distressing, showing him a prey, despite his efforts to master himself and be reasonable, to an almost abject intensity and fretfulness of passion'.[35] The late nineteenth-century disquiet about *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne* reveals that critics' concern over Keats' 'receptiveness' had not gone away. When critics responded to the Brawne letters they showed that they were still able to discuss Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' as personal qualities which had to be either censored or censured.

When Thomas emphasises the importance of Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness', then, his criticism is recuperating these qualities from how critics had said they are evidence of weakness and immorality. In *Keats* Thomas does not explicitly frame his arguments as opposed to the nineteenth-century attacks. However, the criticism that he wrote prior to *Keats* shows that his arguments are based on just this opposition. In this earlier work Thomas can be seen arguing that critics who attacked Keats are wrong because the 'passive' poet should also be seen as 'masculine' and 'decided'. In his 19 August 1907 *Morning Post* review of *Poems of Keats* (1907), a selection by the critic and poet Arthur Symons, Thomas attempts to rebut the argument that Keats was 'unhealthy' and 'feminine'. However, Thomas' defence of Keats is based on his misreading of Symons' introductory essay. The misreading suggests that Thomas is not discussing what Symons had written so much as he is revealing his own

[34] William Michael Rossetti, *Life of John Keats.* (London: Scott, 1887), 45
[35] Sidney Colvin, 'Preface', in John Keats, *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1881), xi-xix (xvii); Sidney Colvin, *Keats* (London, and New York, NY: Macmillan, 1887), vi, 142.

understanding of how critics had attacked Keats. Thomas writes that he has observed a contradiction in Symons' essay, stating that Symons claims Keats to be:

> …so impersonal that 'we cannot distinguish him from that which he reflects', just after saying that he had that quality 'made up out of unhealthy nerves and something feminine and twisted in the mind, which is almost precisely what it is now the fashion to call decadent'.[36]

Thomas writes that Symons contradicts himself by saying Keats is simultaneously both impossible to 'distinguish' and visibly 'decadent'. However, Symons actually states that Keats' poetry made things be as 'twisted' and 'decadent' as the poet: 'the thing itself and the emotion were indistinguishable … with him, nothing can be a casual statement, nothing can be prosaic, or conceived of coldly'.[37] It is an account of Keats that echoes the definition of the Decadent poetry which Symons had given in his essay 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' in the November 1893 number of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, which is to be a 'disembodied voice': 'To fix the last fine shade, the quintessence of things; to fix it fleetingly; to be a disembodied voice, and yet the voice of a human soul; that is the ideal of decadence'.[38] Yet, Thomas' misreading does not question whether Symons is using words as critical terms. Thomas does not respond to the suggestion that Keats may be part of the Decadent movement, nor that this 'decadence' may make the term 'feminine' into a label for a type of poetry and not a biological term or an insult. Instead, Thomas appears to respond to his understanding of the history of how critics had attacked Keats. He argues back that Keats' 'passive' poetry is 'masculine' because it is 'decided': 'it would be possible to take an almost opposite point of view by insisting on the decided, if passive, personality that shows itself in

[36] Edward Thomas, 'Poems by Wordsworth and Keats', *The Morning Post* (19 August 1907), 2 (2).
[37] Arthur Symons, 'Introduction', in John Keats, *Poems of Keats*, ed. by Arthur Symons (Edinburgh: Jack, 1907), xiii-xxxix (xxxviii).
[38] Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXVII: DXXII (November 1893), 858-867 (867).

poems so different as, let us say, the sonnet on the Elgin Marbles and the Ode to Indolence'.[39] When seen as a precursor of Thomas' work in *Keats*, this review suggests that Thomas' focus on how poems show the 'brooding intensity of [Keats'] receptiveness' is at least in part an attempt to correct the critics who had used their reviews to make personal attacks on Keats.[40]

Thomas was not alone in rejecting the attacks on Keats. Other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were presenting Keats' 'receptiveness' in a favourable light. However, Thomas is distinctive for going far beyond the other critics. His focus on Keats' 'receptiveness' is not just a potential corrective to the critics who had attacked Keats, but also to the critics who had praised Keats without giving sufficient attention to 'receptiveness'. His critical arguments about how 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' contribute to poetry are independent from both the critics who attacked Keats and the critics whom he quotes as authorities on Keats. These authorities include S. J. Mary Suddard and A. C. Bradley. In *Keats* Thomas refers to Suddard's *Keats, Shelley and Shakespeare: Studies & Essays in English Literature* (1912) as the work of 'one of [Keats'] best critics'.[41] Suddard sees 'receptiveness' as just one part of Keats' poetry. She treats it as a developmental stepping-stone, not an end for poetry: 'Nature will only lend its beauty at a high rate of interest in human emotion. Therefore, passive receptivity must develop into an active proffer of love'.[42] Thomas also refers to Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909) in *Keats*.[43] In the lecture '*'*The Letters of Keats' (1905) Bradley states that Keats had two different personal impulses. One was 'the poetic temper of his time, the ever-present sense of an infinite', but another, which 'was strengthening at the expense of the first, and would in time have dominated it', was 'the impulse to interest himself in everything he saw or heard of, to be curious about a thing,

[39] Thomas, 'Poems by Wordsworth and Keats', 2.
[40] Thomas, *Keats*, 11.
[41] Ibid., 54.
[42] S. J. Mary Suddard, 'Keats's "*Prelude*": A Study of the Poems of Keats up to "*Endymion*"', in *Keats, Shelley and Shakespeare: Studies & Essays in English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 10-56 (20).
[43] Thomas, *Keats*, 31, 73.

accept it, identify himself with it'.[44] Suddard treats receptiveness as an incomplete part of Keats' development, Bradley a competing half of Keats' poetry. Thomas goes beyond both because he treats 'receptiveness' as the core reason for Keats being a successful and important poet.

Thomas' argument in *Keats* is that Keats was primarily a 'passive' and 'receptive' person and that these qualities led to his poems showing a preoccupation with his own death. He writes that this preoccupation is apparent in almost every poem that Keats wrote in the three years of his life after 'Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil' (1818). For Thomas, after 'Isabella', 'Keats seldom' wrote poems that do not show 'that sense of the miseries of the world which came upon him when he reflected that he was to die'.[45] When Thomas describes Keats' presentation of these 'miseries' he uses 'masculine' as a term which explains how well-established but idiosyncratic forms can make poems succeed when they represent 'passive', morbid topics.

Thomas' criticism does not cede the topic of masculinity to Symons and Swinburne, who had suggested that there was a link between being 'passive' and 'receptive' and being unmanly. They had suggested that Keats is not 'masculine' because his poetry and letters depict imposed passivity with a focus on bodily sensations. Swinburne says that having to 'howl and snivel' is incompatible with 'manhood' and Symons, that to 'luxuriate' or to show 'all that swooning and trembling' is 'unmanly'.[46] Thomas displaces these arguments by relating 'masculinity' to poetic form. His tactic is to expand 'masculinity' into a literary idea which lets poets of any personality type be 'masculine' when they depict 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' with formal clarity.

Thomas' term 'masculinity' has two components, a personal masculinity and a poetic masculinity. The personal masculinity involves people having the 'active qualities' of 'energy, courage, and independence'. It can expressed by his description of the paradigmatically masculine character Javier Petulnegro in *George Borrow: The Man and*

[44] A. C. Bradley, 'The Letters of Keats', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 209-246 (237).
[45] Thomas, *Keats*, 50.
[46] Symons, 'Introduction', xxiii-xxiv.

His Books (1912): 'a figure of most masculine beauty, a king, a trickster, and thief, but simple, good with his fists, loving life, manly sport, and fair play'.[47] Unlike Ezra Pound, whose poem 'The Condolence' (1913) suggests that masculinity does not have to be 'virile' because 'We were in especial bored with male stupidity', Thomas does not join early twentieth-century attempts to undo the opposition between 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.[48] As Sandra Stanley Horton writes in *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (1986), the early twentieth-century saw activists suggest that gender roles could be changed because it was no longer necessary to accept 'totally segregated spheres of action consequent on [biological sex] differentiation'.[49] Instead of taking part in these social changes, Thomas looks for ways to say that Keats was personally masculine. He argues that Keats had the personal qualities which other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics said the poet lacked, writing that Keats had the agency to act with vigour instead of having to 'howl', swoon, or 'luxuriate'. However, the outcome of this tactic was that Thomas still had to find a way to say that morbid poems are 'masculine' too.

To reconcile his defence of Keats' personal masculinity with praise for showing morbidity in poems, Thomas expands 'masculinity' into a principle of literary form. This strand of 'masculinity' is focused on describing how literary works are organised. It describes works with clear and organised forms. For instance, Thomas writes that 'Lamia' is a 'masculine' poem because it is 'clear, well-balanced, and essential', showing the 'masculine side of Keats', whose 'attitude is firm as well as masculine throughout'.[50] Because of his focus on poetic forms, Thomas does not attempt to use 'masculinity' to say that active and passive are the same thing. In that regard, he writes that Keats never attained 'full harmony' between his 'intellect, his manly grasp of life, and his "morbidity" or sensitiveness of temperament'.[51] But while Keats' personal masculinity

[47] Edward Thomas, *George Borrow: The Man and His Books* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1912), 236.
[48] Ezra Pound, 'The Condolence', in *A Selection of Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 28 (28).
[49] Sandra Stanley Horton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13.
[50] Thomas, *Keats*, 58.
[51] Ibid., 86.

may not co-exist with his morbidity, Thomas suggests that 'receptive' poetry can combine 'masculine' form with morbid content. This model of receptiveness lets Thomas write – in a statement that I will come back to – that 'in the odes the poet made for himself a form in which the essence of all his thought, feeling, and observation would be stored without overflowing or disorder'.[52] By using 'masculinity' as a critical term, then, Thomas subverts earlier critics and empowers himself to praise morbid poems by saying how they are set in particular, well-organised poetic forms.

For Thomas, being 'passive' and 'receptive' was tied to being aware of death. He argues that Keats' 'receptiveness' relied on both 'Negative Capability' and 'Morbidity of Temperament'. His argument is based on his distinctive adaptations of Keats' letters. In *Keats* Thomas works by excerpting short passages from letters without acknowledging what he is doing. He removes the context of what else Keats writes in each letter and presents the excerpts as evidence of a morbid 'receptiveness'. This method opposes Thomas to earlier biographers of Keats. Rossetti had elected to print a few of the letters complete to rebuke them. Colvin had begun his first biography, *Keats*, by directing readers to what was then the most complete collection of Keats' letters, Richard Monkton Milnes' *Life and Letters of John Keats* (1848).[53] When he quotes from letters, including to his stated 'regret' the *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, Colvin prints either complete sentences or whole paragraphs.[54] In method, Rossetti and Colvin are strikingly different to Thomas, then, who only includes one block quotation (from the 17 September 1819 letter to George and Georgiana Keats) and otherwise adapts Keats' letters by inserting their phrases and sentences into his narrative as supporting evidence.[55]

Thomas uses this method to connect 'Negative Capability' and 'Morbidity of Temperament'. He excerpts from Keats' 21-27 December 1818 letter to his brothers George and Tom, in which the poet gives his sole description of 'Negative Capability':

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[52] Ibid., 57.
[53] Colvin, *Keats*, v.
[54] Ibid., vi.
[55] Thomas, *Keats*, 85.

> I mean *Negative Capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason – Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge. This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.[56]

When Thomas discusses 'Negative Capability' he treats it as a theory of how poetry can show how a poet being 'passive'. He relates it to his distinctive interpretation of Keats' 'Morbidity of Temperament'. To Thomas, 'Morbidity of Temperament' is an intensified version of 'Negative Capability'. He uniquely positions it as a kind of 'receptiveness' in which Keats would lose his own identity as if he had died. To Thomas this loss of self was the 'overbalancing' of the 'intense sympathy' that otherwise enabled Keats to be 'passive' and 'receptive':

> The morbidity was the occasional overbalancing of his intense sympathy, his greatest passive power. He thought that men of genius in general had no individuality; they were 'everything and nothing', they were theatres where other's tragedies and comedies were enacted; they were distinguished by what he called Negative Capability – 'that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'. 'Let us', he said to [John Hamilton] Reynolds, 'be passive and receptive, like a flower, budding patiently under the eye of Apollo, and taking

[56] Keats, 'Letter to George and Tom Keats, December 21, 27? 1817', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 107-109 (109).

> hints from every noble mind [Thomas misquotes 'insect'] that pays us a visit.[57]

Of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics only Thomas sees 'Morbidity of Temperament' as an intensified 'Negative Capability'. Other critics treat it as a harmful personal quality. Rossetti relates it to Keats' 'suspicion' and 'misanthropy', Colvin writes of it that 'there dwelt in Keats's bosom' a 'busy and inventive spirit of self-torment', and Suddard calls it a bar to Keats' 'artistic production'.[58] Thomas stands apart from them. To Thomas, 'Negative Capability' and 'Morbidity of Temperament', combined, are the reason that Keats' poetry depicts personae who do not make sights and scenes represent them, and who can experience their personalities being replaced by those sights and scenes.

The reason that only Thomas presents 'Morbidity of Temperament' as an intensified 'Negative Capability' is that his argument is based on his idiosyncratic interpretation of Keats' 10-11 May 1817 letter to Haydon. This letter describes 'Morbidity of Temperament' as a response to an ongoing, intractable financial problem which prevents Keats from composing poetry. Keats writes of 'Money Troubles' and says that they are 'not like Envy and detraction stimulants to further exertion as being immediately relative and reflected on at the same time with the prime object – but rather like a nettle leaf or two in your bed'.[59] Keats then presents 'Morbidity' as the opposite of a 'stimulant': 'truth is I have a horrid Morbidity of Temperament which has shown itself at intervals – it is no doubt the greatest Enemy and stumbling block I have to fear'.[60] Unlike both Keats himself and other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics, however, Thomas presents 'Morbidity of Temperament' as 'passivity' amplified into an absolute 'receptiveness'.

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Rossetti, *Life of Keats*, 141; Colvin, *Keats*, 70; Suddard, 'Keats's "*Prelude*"', 12.
[59] Keats, *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 84.
[60] Ibid.

Thomas' focus on positioning 'Morbidity of Temperament' as a type of 'receptiveness' is also apparent in the selective way that he interprets Keats' 25 August 1819 letter to Reynolds. Thomas adapts this letter into a description of how an experience of 'Negative Capability' could become an experience of 'Morbidity of Temperament'. Quoting from the letter, Thomas writes that 'If these things were too persistent they became "day nightmares"'.[61] Thomas presents the phrase 'day nightmares' as a statement that Keats' 'receptiveness' would become a death-like loss of identity if it were left unchecked. Thomas is adapting Keats' letters to present a view of Keats' life and work being founded on 'passivity' and 'receptiveness'. But unlike Thomas' claims, Keats does not describe 'receptiveness' in the letter. In fact, the letter describes 'day-nightmares' to reject the idea that poets must be 'passive' and be 'receptive' of others. Keats is focused on the importance of 'My own being':

> I have indeed scarcely anything else to say, leading so monotonous a life, except I was to give you a history of sensations and day-nightmares. You would not find me at all unhappy in it, as all my thoughts and feelings what are of the selfish nature, home speculations, every day continued to make me more iron … My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the shape of men and women that inhabit a kingdom. The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home. Those whom I know already, and who have grown as it were a part of myself, I could not do without: but for the rest of mankind, they are as much a dream to me as Milton's Hierarchies.[62]

Thomas omits the discussion of 'the selfish nature', being 'iron', having 'My own being', and experiencing 'The soul [as] a world of itself'. He instead focuses on 'day nightmares' and presents it as evidence that Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' would necessarily

[61] Thomas, *Keats*, 75.
[62] Keats, *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends*, 282-283.

become a loss of identity just like death it left unchecked and 'persistent'. By adapting Keats' letters, then, Thomas works Keats' 'intense sympathy, his greatest passive power' into a critical idea that poetry can show 'passivity' leading to a loss of identity which is equal to dying. Distinctively among critics of Keats, Thomas does not consider this idea to be a moral problem or a sign that Keats' development as a poet was incomplete. To Thomas, the suppression of identity is central to Keats' success as a poet.

How Thomas Reads 'Receptiveness' in Keats' Poetry.

In *Keats* Thomas uses his account of Keats' character as the framework for writing about Keats' poems. 'Passivity', 'receptiveness', 'masculinity', and an equivalence between loss of identity and death are the tools he uses to interpret Keats' poems. Unlike Modernist critics and poets who had suggested that an individual's loss of impetus or identity could represent or indict their age or society, Thomas focuses on explaining how Keats' poems are among 'the unquestionable mortal achievements' because they emphasise the 'intense' experiences that people can have when they are 'passive' and 'receptive'. This part of the chapter will outline what Thomas says poems must do to present 'passive' and 'receptive' personae; the next part of the chapter will then use that outline to say how Thomas' distinctive critical work on Keats contributes to his own poetry.

To Thomas, *Poems* is significant because it shows Keats preparing to write 'passive' and 'receptive' poetry. It is a developmental stage of 'fine though sometimes broken' poetry.[63] These poems reveal to Thomas that Keats could use 'the observation or feeling of the hour' but could not express them as anything other than 'a disconnected rhyming of his pleasures and hopes'.[64] Their emphasis on the importance of observation makes them promissory to Thomas, who treats them as Keats 'looking towards the time when he must "bear the burden and the mystery of all this unintelligible world"' to use

[63] Thomas, *Keats*, 37.
[64] Ibid., 37, 39.

'receptiveness' to be 'singularly like his fellow-men'.[65] In Thomas' interpretation of Keats' development, the poems of *Lamia … and Other Poems* succeed because Keats had moved on from *Poems* and become able to present these mysteries. Thomas writes that they are 'among the unquestionable mortal achievements' because they depict 'passive' and 'receptive' personae who experience 'Love for vanished, inaccessible, inhuman things, almost for death itself – regret – and the consolations offered by the intensity which makes pleasure and pain so much alike'.[66] His comments on the *Lamia* poems show that he saw them as 'achievements' because they use 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' to depict 'the consolations offered by the intensity' in experience.

For Thomas, the core of the *Lamia* poems' success is how their representations of experience are like death. Thomas relates 'passivity', 'receptiveness' and death in *Keats*. He writes that after the composition of 'Isabella' in March-April 1818, 'all Keats's vivacity and judgment, and clear, determined thinking about man and nature, seem to have weighed less than that sense of the miseries of the world which came upon him when he reflected that he was to die'.[67] However, Thomas does not see the preoccupation with death as problematic. When Thomas describes how Keats' poems show this awareness of 'the miseries of the world' he focuses on the five major odes in *Lamia … and Other Poems* – 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819), 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1819), 'Ode to Psyche' (1819), 'Ode on Melancholy', and 'To Autumn' (1819). He frames them as an example of 'masculine' poetic form.[68] As I have noted, Thomas calls 'Lamia' 'masculine' because it is 'clear, well-balanced, and essential'.[69] He also uses these criteria to say why the 'great odes' are succeed in showing 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' with death: 'in the odes the poet made for himself a form in which the essence of all his thought, feeling, and observation, could be stored without overflowing or disorder'.[70] Therefore, Thomas points his ideas of 'passivity', 'receptiveness', and 'masculinity' at the 'great odes' to say

[65] Ibid., 36, 39.
[66] Ibid., 57, 51.
[67] Ibid., 50.
[68] Ibid., 51.
[69] Ibid., 58.
[70] Ibid., 57.

that their success was in giving English poetry a new form which enables the clear representation of morbid and 'receptive' personae.

Thomas does not explicitly say what the form is that 'the poet made for himself', but his descriptions of the five odes suggest that it is a tripartite structure of topic, persona, and scene. The first part of this structure emphasises the central quality of the 'Odes': they are addresses 'to' or reflections 'on' just one topic. Thomas states that these topics are frequently emphasised by personae saying how they appear to the senses, that is, with 'richness' and 'flattery' for how they can be 'precious', 'delicious', 'gorgeous', or of 'divinity'.[71] The second part of the structure depicts the personae as 'passive' and 'withdrawn'. Thomas writes that the 'Ode on Melancholy' shows 'the connoisseurship of the quiet, withdrawn spectator', and in the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the persona's 'personality is submerged, and the more intense for that'.[72] Thomas adds a third element by stating that in the background of this contrast between prominence and taciturnity, the scenes of the 'Odes' are depictions of 'stillness'. The scene of 'To Autumn' has 'mellowness and slowness', the 'outdoor setting' of the 'Ode to a Nightingale' is 'slow', the 'Ode on Melancholy' depicts 'certain still pleasures', and in the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the scene is 'the calmest as well as the stillest, of all'.[73] When Thomas describes how the 'Odes' are an important representation of Keats' awareness 'that he was to die', then, his criticism suggests that this importance is due to the clarity of the tripartite structure of the topic's 'richness', the persona's quietness, and the scene's stillness. This structure lets Thomas equate being more 'passive' and withdrawn with having a more intense awareness of death. The more the persona emphasises the object or idea they describe, the less they show or maintain their identity. In this tripartite structure, 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' can involve the same death-like loss of identity that Thomas interprets as Keats' 'Morbidity of Temperament'.

[71] Ibid., 53-55
[72] Ibid., 53, 56.
[73] Ibid., 53, 54, 56.

Thomas' arguments suggest that the structure which Keats used to write 'passive' and 'receptive' poetry brought order to experiences which otherwise overwhelmed the poet. Although he calls 'Morbidity of Temperament' an 'overbalancing' in Keats' mind, he says this tripartite model let Keats depict the awareness of death 'without overflowing or disorder'. This suggestion that poetic structure brought order to otherwise difficult experiences is key to how Thomas mistakenly discusses 'Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art' (1819) as Keats' last poem. Thomas states that this sonnet is 'receptive' for death itself, that it focuses on – an allusion to *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne* – 'death the "luxury"'.[74] This use of the *Letters … to Fanny Brawne* in the criticism of Keats' poetry makes Thomas distinctive among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics. He stands apart from the critics who had either rebuked the letters, said they were too private to publish, or, as Suddard and Bradley had done, entirely omitted them. When Thomas praises the ways that Keats' poems emphasise sensation and death, his almost amoral position is distinct from both the critics of Keats and from the trend represented by 'Prufrock'. Unlike earlier critics, Thomas does not look to censor or fault the letters as evidence that Keats was undignified or immoral. Nor does he treat a desire to lose identity as a problem that indicts the age. Instead, and as his reading of 'Bright Star' shows, Thomas is singularly focused on how 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' suppress identity to amplify the 'richness' of description.

Thomas mistakenly dates 'Bright Star' to September 1820, shortly before Keats' death from tuberculosis. He treats the sonnet as one last piece of 'receptive' clarity which let Keats express a desire for death to free him from tubercular illness. Thomas labels this desire 'Death the "luxury", which was "Life's high meed"'.[75] This description of death treats the *Letters ... to Fanny Brawne* and Keats' poems as equivalent, combining the 25 July 1819 (but postmarked Tuesday 27 July 1819) letter to Brawne, 'I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness and the hour of my death', and the last line of the sonnet 'Why did I laugh tonight?' (1819): 'But death intenser – death is

[74] Ibid., 71.
[75] Ibid.

life's high meed'.[76] As Thomas' quotation of the letter to Brawne and 'Why did I laugh tonight' indicates, his criticism treats 'Bright Star' as the 'fitting' 'end'.[77] To Thomas, then, 'Bright Star' depicts a 'receptiveness' which brings together all the aspects of Keats' life and poetry that he discusses in *Keats*. Its 'passive' observation of the star's 'splendour', desire to become 'stedfast as thou art', and 'reception' of that steadfastness as an equivalent to death ('And so live for ever – or else swoon to death')' enable Thomas to suggest that 'Bright Star' is entirely characteristic of Keats' poetry.[78]

It was not until the publication of Colvin's second, revised biography of Keats, *John Keats* (1917), that critics became aware of the earlier text of 'Bright Star' transcribed 'by Charles Brown [Keats' friend], under date 1819'.[79] Thomas, not knowing otherwise, dates the sonnet to September 1820 and Keats' voyage to Italy. Keats undertook this voyage in the hope that the Mediterranean air might assuage his tuberculosis. Thomas writes of the voyage and the poem:

> On the ship in September Fanny Brawne's phrases rang in his ears, and eternally he saw her figure eternally vanishing. Yet off Dorset, after a day on the rocky shore, he wrote the sonnet, 'Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art', opposite 'A Lover's Complaint' in his copy of Shakespeare's poems.[80]

The account that Thomas gives, then, is more properly a description of how Keats had written out a version of the sonnet that had been composed a year earlier. Thomas died before Colvin published the correct dating of 'Bright Star'. Due to the misdating, Thomas describes the poem as 'the end of his poetry'. While the historical fact is that both the

[76] John Keats, *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, ed. by Harry Buxton Forman (London: Reeves & Turner, 1878), 14; Keats, *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 333.
[77] Thomas, *Keats*, 72.
[78] John Keats, 'Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art', quoted in Thomas, *Keats*, 71.
[79] Sidney Colvin, *John Keats: His Life and Poetry His Friends Critics and After-Fame* (London: Macmillan, 1917), 494.
[80] Thomas, *Keats*, 89.

'great odes' and 'Bright Star' were written in 1819, Thomas treats 'Bright Star' as a return to the form that Keats had made for himself in the 'great odes'. When Thomas frames 'Bright Star' in this way he associates the style used in the 'odes' with a 'receptive' identification with death itself. Thomas calls the sonnet the final instance of Keats' long-held desire to suppress his identity with the 'calm' of death:

> The end of his poetry was fitting. Perfect language, endowed with a more sweeping rhythmic energy than was usual in his work, builds up a vision of sky and earth, immense in its grandeur and its calm; and in the midst of it a man troubled by the principal unrest of life cries out for that same calm, for the oblivion of 'melting out his essence fine in to the winds', for 'soothest sleep that saves from curious conscience', for the happiness of the seemingly immortal nightingale, of the 'marble men and maidens' carved on the urn, the dead poets 'on Elysian lawns' who know not satiety, for the intensity of great art. Oppressed by disease and misfortune, the poet seems to choose death rather than life.[81]

The quotations that Thomas gives span Keats' career. They trace a desire to identify with deathly beings, things, and 'oblivion' throughout his poetry. In order, the quotations and allusions are of and to Book I of *Endymion*, where 'A melancholy spirit well might win | Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine | Into the winds' (98-100); 'To Sleep.' (1819), with the request 'Save me from curious conscience … | Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards, | And seal the casket of my soul'; 'Ode to a Nightingale'; 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', and then the 'Ode (Bards of Passion and Mirth)' (1818): 'in soft ease | Seated on Elysian lawns'.[82] To Thomas the representation of death in 'Bright Star' is a 'fitting' and 'perfect' final expression of this 'receptiveness' that runs through Keats' poetry. Going against late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century criticism on Keats, Thomas emphasises that

[81] Ibid., 72-73.
[82] Keats, *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 151, 346, 468.

by showing stillness and 'calm', a withdrawn persona can frame death as a rich 'luxury' and attempt to receive it by obliviating his personality.

Thomas' Poetry and the 'Passivity' of 'Negative Capability'.

In *Keats* Thomas presents Keats' life and poetry as fundamentally based on 'the brooding intensity of his receptiveness'.[83] This chapter has clarified Thomas' view of what receptiveness is by showing how he interprets 'Morbidity of Temperament' as an intensified 'Negative Capability'. Thomas treats 'Negative Capability' as 'passivity', saying that Keats would observe mysterious sights without trying to interfere with or interpret them. He says that 'Morbidity of Temperament' is this 'passivity' increased into a total 'receptiveness'. For Thomas, Keats would lose his identity and instead assume the identity of what he saw.

This chapter will now demonstrate how Thomas' poetry includes the same dynamic of 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' that he says Keats used to make poems which are focused on sensation and detail. It will show the strategies which Thomas' poems use to depict personae whose 'thought', or the total mental activity that they are portrayed as having, is equivalent to his interpretation of 'Negative Capability'. It will then show how his poems include personae whose 'thought' involves the loss of identity that is central to his interpretation of 'Morbidity of Temperament'.

As Thomas had written about in *Keats*, his own poetry uses 'passivity' as a contrast which reveals the 'richness' and detail of objects. When personae are 'passive' their cares and self-questioning can be shown to dissipate so that only the object remains in view. Thomas' poetry can label this type of 'passivity' with the aesthetic term 'beauty', as in 'Beauty' (21 January 1915). In 'Beauty' the depiction of the persona initially links together interpretation and anger. The first line begins with him questioning 'What does it mean?' and then describing his dissatisfaction: 'Tired, angry, and ill at

[83] Thomas, *Keats*, 11.

ease, | No man, woman, or child alive could please | Me now'.[84] However, when the persona is 'passive' he 'happily | Floats' into 'the misting, dim-lit, quiet vale' to 'find my rest'.[85] He then states that 'Beauty is there'.[86] This depiction of 'beauty' echoes Thomas' critical position that the purpose of Keats' 'passive' and 'receptive' poetry was to 'make beauty'.[87] To Thomas, this 'beauty' would be what he calls 'intensity', the poet's totalising focus on the object made by 'the intensity of imagination which makes "all disagreeables evaporate"'.[88] As 'Beauty' indicates, Thomas' poems feature the same dynamic when 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' suppress the personae and enable the complete, 'intense' focus on description.

This emphasis on 'passivity' makes Thomas stand out among twentieth-century poets. As the anthologist and poet Jerome Rothenberg highlights in *Revolution of the Word: A New Gathering of American Avant-Garde Poetry 1914-1945* (1974), many early twentieth-century poets used a focus on seeing one particular thing at a time. For Rothenberg, seeing is central to the poetics of many Modernist poets:

> … the concern with 'seeing' is at the heart of the enterprise: e.g., Pound's 'image' as the 'primary pigment of poetry'; [Gertrude] Stein's change of the thing seen as the key to composition; [Hart] Crane's 'poetic prophecy' qua 'perception'; [George] Oppen's faith that 'the virtue of the mind is that emotion which causes to see'; even [Marcel] Duchamp's 'shop window proof of the existence of the exterior world', etc.[89]

As Rothenberg notes, 'the concern with "seeing"' became a dominant element of twentieth-century poetry. However, Thomas stands out from these poets when his

[84] Edward Thomas, 'Beauty', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, ed. by Edna Longley (Tarset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2013), 58 (58).
[85] Ibid. Longley suggests that 'vale' is an echo of Keats' marginalia on *Paradise Lost* (1667): Edna Longley, 'Notes', in Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 141-321 (187).
[86] Thomas, 'Beauty', 58.
[87] Thomas, *Keats*, 73.
[88] Ibid., 77.
[89] Jerome Rothenberg, 'Pre-face', in *Revolution of the Word: A New Gathering of American Avant-Garde Poetry 1914-1945*, ed. by Jerome Rothenberg (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1974), xi-xxvii (xvii).

poetry emphasises that personae must be 'passive' to find the sight to be important or enjoyable. This emphasis on 'passivity' evokes the passage he quotes as representative of Keats' theory of 'Negative Capability': 'when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'.[90] When Thomas' personae are 'passive' they do not attempt to solve what they see. Instead of suggesting that 'passivity' is or reveals a hindrance, these personae indicate how it contributes to the pleasure they experience as observers.

In Thomas' poetry, personae who have this specific way of seeing are presented in situations equivalent to 'uncertainties, mysteries, doubts'. These situations involve personae saying that scenes in nature have internal connections and that particular animals have knowledge or intentions which the personae are aware of but which are also beyond their comprehension. Thomas' poetry includes three main strategies for showing that personae are 'passively' encountering mysteries. These three are showing a change in the way that the persona looks at the scene; having the persona say that they are only reacting to, and not creating, the mysteriousness; and, suggesting that the mystery is irreconcilable with the kinds of knowledge that people can have. This discussion of 'passivity' in Thomas' poetry will explore each of these strategies in order with examples from his poems.

Similar to his argument in *Keats*, Thomas' poetry indicates that only 'passive' personae experience mysteries. In the war poem 'The Trumpet' (c. 26 September 1916) a burst of activity after the revile trumpet not only dispels mysteries but compels the persona to tell his addressees that activity is 'lovelier' than experiencing 'any mysteries':

> While you are listening
> To the clear horn,
> Forget, men, everything
> On this earth newborn,

[90] Thomas, *Keats*, 74.

Except that it is lovelier

Than any mysteries.[91]

'The Trumpet' can be read inverted: the persona states that being 'passive' makes mysteries lovely to experience. Andrew Motion builds on this inverted reading and suggests 'The Trumpet' presents activity as harmful because it dispels mysteries and 'puncture[s] [men's] innocent ideals'.[92] However, I disagree with what Motion builds. 'The Trumpet' does not include any explicit value judgment. Rather, what 'The Trumpet' does is demonstrate that when Thomas' poetry portrays 'passive' personae who experience mysteries these portrayals include ways of showing that the personae 'think' the experience is lovely. In the readings of Thomas' poems which follow, I will set out the three strategies for how personae are shown to be 'passively' encountering mysteries and how the construction of their speech indicates that it is pleasurable to be a 'passive' observer.

Changes in how the narrator looks at the scene are central to 'A Winter Morning', chapter twenty-nine of Thomas' nature-book, *The Heart of England* (1906).[93] As I will show, Thomas reworked the chapter's representation of vision into his poem, 'The Barn and the Down' (22-23 March 1915). In 'A Winter Morning' the narrator makes allusions to Keats and quotes 'Lamia' I. 216-219 and 294-397. He associates Keats' poetry with his being able to see an enigmatic scene without having to relate it to his own 'thought'. The narrator describes how 'I clung to Keats' in a dark farmyard scene of 'the trees and barns and shed' which was 'strange' and 'a chaos out of which perhaps something was to be born'.[94] However, this narrator undergoes a change in the way he sees the scene. When the sight became clearer and less 'strange' then 'Keats left my mind. From my memory, I added melodies of voice and harp'.[95] This narrator connects the experience of

[91] Edward Thomas, 'The Trumpet', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 133-134 (133).
[92] Andrew Motion, *The Poetry of Edward Thomas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1991), 122.
[93] Edward Thomas, *The Heart of England* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 140-143.
[94] Ibid., 140-141.
[95] Ibid., 142.

a 'strange', shadowy rural scene to Keats' poetry, and then dismisses associations with Keats when he starts to perceive the scene as not mysterious but an extension of his own 'memory'. When the morning light arrives and takes all mysteriousness, the narrator raises a connection between pleasure and 'passivity'. He states that it is comparatively harder to enjoy clarity than mystery: 'Then all was over. The clear face of things which it is so hard to enjoy was back again'.[96] The allusion to Keats and the suggestion that imposing 'my memory' on the scene dispels both enjoyment and mysteriousness both evoke the 'Negative Capability' that Thomas would outline in *Keats*.

In 'The Barn and the Down' the suggestion of 'Negative Capability' echoes 'A Winter Morning'. Like 'A Winter Morning' the persona sees a dark farmyard scene as mysterious because its component objects are indistinguishable from one another. Initially, the barn appeared 'So huge and dark that it seemed | It was the hill'.[97] However, when the persona imposes his 'critical eyes' he finds that the scene loses its 'mightiness' and 'the barn fell to a barn | Or even less'.[98] Like the change in perspective which 'A Winter Morning' connects to Keats' poetry, this persona undergoes a change in the way he sees. He switches to looking in a 'critical' way which leads to him interpreting the scene and no longer treating it at mysterious.

'The Barn and the Down' is important because, unlike 'The Trumpet', it involves the persona directly commenting on the pleasure of 'passivity'. When the persona says that his 'critical eyes' have been tricked by his own 'cautiousness' and 'beguiled' he states that he 'smiled'.[99] The rhyme of 'beguiled' and 'smiled' suggests that they are connected and that the persona treats being tricked or spellbound as pleasurable. Similarly, he comments on his 'critical' vision with vocabulary that has a moral tenor. This vocabulary suggests that the persona 'thinks' it right to look in a 'passive' and uncritical way. It is present when he states that he began 'To disdain what seemed the

[96] Ibid., 143.
[97] Edward Thomas, 'The Barn and the Down', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 68-69 (68).
[98] Ibid., 69.
[99] Ibid.

barn' until he realised that he was looking at 'the down; | So the barn was avenged'.[100] He states his 'disdain' was 'avenged' as though he had committed a wrong by being disdainful. As a reworking of the allusions to Keats in 'A Winter Morning', 'The Barn and the Down' goes further because it depicts a persona who not only suggests that his 'passivity' is pleasurable but that looking with active, 'critical' vision is inappropriate.

In Thomas' poetry the depiction of changes in vision is not limited to personae asking questions and using 'critical eyes'. They can also interpret what they see in relation to their already-existing memories and fantasies. Similar to 'A Winter Morning', they are portrayed stopping and starting this interpretation. In 'Sedge Warblers' (23 May 1915) the persona is shown to stop relating the scene to a dream of his. He then expresses his preference for being a 'passive' observer. He says that the scene becomes 'dearer then to me' when he is 'passive' and does not try to say what it means.[101] Connections between the contrast presented in 'Sedge-Warblers' and Thomas' criticism on Keats' 'receptiveness' are borne out by the persona's dream being in a chivalric romance style that echoes Thomas' description of Keats' first book, *Poems*. Therefore, 'Sedge-Warblers' can represent Thomas' argument that *Poems* anticipated Keats' turn to 'Negative Capability'.

As defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990), chivalric romance is a style of poetry that was prominent in medieval Europe from the twelfth century onwards and which is distinctive for its thematic focus on 'the adventures of legendary knights, and celebrating an idealized code of civilized behaviour that combines loyalty, honour, and courtly love'.[102] In *Keats* Thomas describes *Poems* in relation to chivalric romance. Thomas glosses *Poems* by quoting lines from the later 'The Eve of St. Agnes.' (1819): 'The brain new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay | Of old romance'.[103] One way that *Poems* presents this 'old romance', Thomas writes, is by imposing literary

[100] Ibid.
[101] Edward Thomas, 'Sedge-Warblers', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 90-91 (91).
[102] Chris Baldick, 'Chivalric Romance', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38 (38).
[103] Thomas, *Keats*, 35.

tropes onto depictions of nature. He states that, unlike Keats' later work, 'things seen in books and Nature are also revealed [in *Poems*], often together, as when he pictures the nymphs'.[104] Thomas says that this 'romance' style anticipated 'the time when [Keats] must bear the "burden and the mystery of all this unintelligible world"'.[105] When the persona of 'Sedge-Warblers' looks at the sedge and has a 'dream' about a 'nymph' in 'a time | Long past' his depiction echoes the scene of Keats' chivalric romance-style poem 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' (1819)'.[106] In 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' the persona encounters a knight-at-arms by the waterside sedge. The knight laments that he was put 'in thrall' by La Belle Dame sans Merci and was only saved by a 'horrid warning'.[107] The knight states that this experience is responsible for him now walking where 'no birds sing':

> O what can ail thee, knight-at arms.
> Alone and palely loitering?
> The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
> And no birds sing.
> …
> And this is I why I sojourn here,
> Alone and palely loitering,
> Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
> And no birds sing.[108]

In 'Sedge-Warblers' the persona's dream suggests the chivalric romance tropes that Thomas associates with *Poems*. The persona says that his dream of a 'nymph' is 'poison'

[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 36.
[106] For how the chivalric romance styling of 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' echoes Keats' interest in Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queene* (1590), see Greg Kucich, *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 185-189, 215n17.
[107] John Keats, 'La Belle Dame sans Merci. (1848/Brown Version)', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 341-343 (343).
[108] Ibid., 341-343.

compared to being able to looking 'into the water, | Clearer'. His reference to 'poison' contrasts between different ways of looking. He suggests that he gains more satisfaction when he looks without actively interpreting the scene to make it resemble his 'desire':

> This beauty made me dream there was a time
> Long past and irrecoverable, a clime
> Where any brooks radiant racing clear
> Through buttercup and kingcup bright as brass
> But gentle, nourishing the meadow grass
> That leans and scurries in the wind, would bear
> Another beauty, divine and feminine,
> Child to the sun, a nymph whose soul unstained
> Could love all day, and never hate or tire,
> A lover of mortal or immortal kin.
>
> And yet, rid of this dream, ere I had drained
> Its poison, quieted was my desire
> So that I only looked into the water,
> Clearer than any goddess or man's daughter.[109]

These lines focus on how the persona chooses a change to 'passivity'. As in 'The Barn and the Down' and 'A Winter Morning', the persona of 'Sedge-Warblers' connects being passive to being able to enjoy the scene he sees. An echo of the sedge in 'Le Belle Dame sans Merci', it is only when the persona is not poisoned by a supernatural female presence that he can then hear the birds singing. By contrast to his first description of the scene, which 'made me dream there was a time', the persona says that he listens to the birds without interpreting them and that they are 'dearer' to him for it. This

[109] Thomas, 'Sedge-Warblers', 90.

separation of enjoyment from interpretation reflects the changes that Thomas made when he revised 'Sedge Warblers' from the first, cancelled version of the poem (which he dates 23 May 1915). In the cancelled version the persona describes himself as having 'deep content' because of how he interprets the scene. The 'deep content' in the cancelled lines:

> And yet, rid of this dream, ere I had drained
> Its poison great [?], the sun's first light & fire
> Bred me a deep content with what the water,
> Clearer than any goddess or man's daughter,
> Had for its voice.[110]

In this extract from the cancelled version, the persona interprets the birds' song as the water's 'voice'. The revised version deletes this suggestion that the persona interrogates the scene and says that the birdsong has a specific meaning. He is instead depicted as starting to enjoy how the scene is separate from him. He says that he values the birds' song because it is different from what people have 'learnt yet, in or out of school' and because it is almost without 'words', 'melody' or 'sweetness':

> Clearer than any goddess or man's daughter,
> And hearkened while it combed the dark green hair
> And shook the millions of the blossoms white
> Of water-crowfoot, and curdled to one sheet
> The flowers fallen from the chestnuts in the park
> Far off. And sedge-warblers, clinging so light
> To willow twigs, sang longer than the lark,
> Quick, shrill, or grating, a song to match the heat

[110] London, The British Library, MS ADD 44990, ff. 75^{r}-76^{r} (f. 75^{r}).

> Of the strong sun, nor less the water's cool,
> Gushing through narrows, swirling in the pool.
> Their song that lacks all words, all melody,
> All sweetness almost, was dearer then to me
> Than sweetest voice that sings in tune sweet words.
> This was the best of May – the small brown birds
> Wisely reiterating endlessly
> What no man learnt yet, in or out of school.[111]

This description of the birdsong is equivalent to the mysteriousness which Thomas highlights writing on 'Negative Capability'. It is equivalent because the persona's speech suggests that he is aware the song has special properties which he does not know about. These properties are suggested by the endlessly reiterated wisdom which people have been unable to learn, and by the birds' ability to express contradictory states at the same time: their song matches 'the heat | Of the strong sun, nor less the water's cool'. When the persona describes the warblers, then, he says that they have connections and intentions which he cannot understand. He does not try to explain this mystery, nor to relate it to another dream of his. Rather, he merely states his satisfaction with being able to observe the warblers. His ability to enjoy what he observes is aligned to him becoming 'passive', a figure who 'only looked'. In an echo of Thomas' description of how Keats developed as a poet between *Poems* and *Lamia … and Other Poems*, 'Sedge-Warblers' emphasises the persona's passivity by depicting how he has transitioned from combining nature with dreams of a nymphs to describing the scene in detail and saying that it is 'dearer' to him for being beyond his wisdom.

As 'Sedge-Warblers' reveals, the personae in Thomas' poetry can say that existence is mysterious and then be depicted as drawing pleasure from how the scene is beyond their understanding. These personae can be opposed to Eliot's depiction of

[111] Thomas, 'Sedge-Warblers', 90-91.

Prufrock turning the deference of 'Do I dare | Disturb the universe?' into the confusion of 'It is impossible to say just what I mean!'[112] Eliot's depiction of confusion does have analogues in Thomas' poetry. But these analogues involve 'passivity' being shown as imposed on the personae. In 'The Glory', for instance, the failure of impetus leads to the persona lamenting 'How dreary-swift, with naught to travel to, | Is Time? I cannot bite the day to the core'.[113] However, 'The Glory' is unlike the style of 'passivity' which Thomas' poetry receives from the critical ideas that he developed in *Keats*. In this style, as 'Sedge Warblers' shows, personae present their inability to understand the world as pleasurable. Thomas' 'passive' personae do not suggest that the mysteriousness they observe is symptomatic of their own 'thought' or how it has potentially been affected by the modern age. Their portrayal emphasises the pleasure of observation. Crucially, they are not depicted as being confused or as imposing an idea of mysteriousness. Rather, these personae encounter mysteries and express pleasure in their inability to understand further.

Thomas' poems use several different strategies to show that the personae are not imposing their own confusion or a need for mysteriousness onto the scenes they inhabit. One is to have the personae say outright that they are not responsible for creating the mystery. 'I never saw that land before' (5 May 1916) is an example. The persona's diction underlines that the enigmatic scene is not a projection of his personality or perceptions. When the persona describes experiencing 'the breeze | that hinted all and nothing spoke', he states that he 'neither expected anything | Nor yet remembered'.[114] The verbs that he uses to describe his own 'thought' stress the completeness of his disconnection from the 'breeze'. He cannot use his 'thought' to predict what it will do in the future, nor to say what it has done in the past. Instead of attempting to connect his mental activity to this enigmatic breeze, he underscores that it is entirely separate from his 'soul':

[112] Eliot, 'Prufrock', 11, 13.
[113] Edward Thomas, 'The Glory', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 87 (87).
[114] Edward Thomas, 'I never saw that land before', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 120 (120).

… and if I could sing
What would not even whisper my soul
As I went on my journey,

I should use, as the trees and birds did,
A language not to be betrayed;
And what was hid should still be hid
Excepting from those like me made
Who answer when such whispers bid.[115]

The song and its source will not show any of his own soul, not even in a whispering undertone. This persona's speech shows him as entirely separate from the mysterious 'language not to be betrayed'. It reinforces that Thomas' poetry cannot be fully reconciled with the motivations that led to Modernist poetry presenting 'passivity' and an inability to explain as symptomatic of psychological and social disorder.

Perhaps the most intricate way in which Thomas' poetry shows the dynamic of reacting-not-creating, and the way most indebted to Thomas' criticism on Keats, is depicting the inexplicable part of the scene as fundamentally incompatible with how the personae 'think'. As 'Sedge-Warblers' reveals, Thomas' poetry associates this strategy with birds. Thomas' poems contrast between what personae can know and what birds can know. This contrast is equivalent to Thomas' discussion of the presentation of the thrush in Keats' sonnet, 'O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind' (1818). Thomas frames 'O thou' as a poem in a 'passive', 'Negative Capability' style. He says that it is 'a translation of a thrush's song that told Keats he was "right to have no idea of the morning"'.[116] The octave of the sonnet is addressed to a thrush, who then responds in the sestet. The thrush replies by counselling 'O fret not after knowledge – I have none, |

[115] Ibid.
[116] Thomas, *Keats*, 51.

And yet my song comes native with the warmth'.[117] The sestet then suggests that the character of bird-knowledge is that it holds two contrary states at once. The thrush says of knowledge that 'I have none, | And yet the Evening listens', that 'He who saddens | At thought of idleness cannot be idle', and that 'he's awake who thinks himself asleep'.[118] These lines depict bird-knowledge as the simultaneous presence of opposites, showing simultaneous absence and presence of knowledge, simultaneous activity and idleness, and simultaneous sleep and wakefulness. Thomas' poetry echoes this contradictory bird-knowledge with the simultaneous 'heat' and 'cool' of the warblers' song in 'Sedge-Warblers', where it is framed as incompatible with human knowledge from either 'in or out of school'. In Thomas' other poems, personae may be depicted as aware that birds have special knowledge, and they can be granted access to it, but it is always presented as being in contrast to the kinds of knowledge that people make, have, and use.

The depictions of thrushes in Thomas' poetry articulate the point that he makes in his reading of what the thrush says in 'O thou'. These thrushes are depicted by personae saying that while they are aware of birds having knowledge, it is a special knowledge for birds only. In 'The Word' (5 July 1915) the persona uses several similes to compare the scene to how 'I am thinking', but he does not try to translate the 'pure thrush word':

> Some thrushes learn to say it as they sing,
> There is always one at midday saying it clear
> And tart – the name, only the name I hear.
> While perhaps I am thinking of the elder scent
> That is like food, or while I am content
> With the wild rose scent that is like memory,
> This name suddenly is cried out to me
> From somewhere in the bushes by a bird

[117] John Keats, 'O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 128 (128).
[118] Ibid.

Over and over again, a pure thrush word.[119]

In 'The Word' the persona cannot relate the 'thrush word' back to his own personality and perceptions. Although Thomas' poetry can show personae who try to bridge the gap between their knowledge and bird-knowledge, these personae are only ever successful when they are passive and receptive. In 'March' (5 December 1914), the persona asks 'What did the thrushes know?' and suggests that he gets an answer when he 'passively' listens to them. When 'they sang | And after' he receives the ability to possess their contradictory knowledge:

Something they knew – I also, while they sang
And after. Not till night had half its stars
And never a cloud, was I aware of silence
Stained with all that hour's songs, a silence
Saying that Spring returns, perhaps tomorrow.[120]

This persona becomes able to experience the contradiction of a noisy silence. He hears 'silence | Stained with all that hour's songs'. However, the personae who try to actively solve the birdsong do not succeed. In 'The Thrush' (November 1915), the persona asks questions of the bird, 'Is it more that you know | Than that … || Winter is gone that must go?'[121] His question goes unanswered. In place of the thrush giving an answer, the persona suggests that he and the thrush are fundamentally different. He contrasts his reasons for loving some months against the possible reasons for the thrush loving all of the months. He 'love[s]' April and November because he links them both to the spring, 'What they are and what they are not'.[122] By contrast, the persona suggests that the

[119] Edward Thomas, 'The Word', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 93 (93).
[120] Edward Thomas, 'March', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 35 (35).
[121] Edward Thomas, 'The Thrush', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 102-103 (102).
[122] Ibid., 103.

thrush can 'sing in | And love and forget in | All that's ahead and behind'.[123] Instead of learning what 'you know', the persona has to substitute a suggestion that he and the thrush have different ways of relating to the months and seasons. Similarly, in 'If I were to own' (1 April 1916), one of Thomas' quartet of 'Household Poems', the persona echoes Thomas' discussion of 'O thou' when he describes 'single trees where the thrush sings well | His proverbs untranslatable'.[124] The diction in 'If I were to own' suggests that this persona is unaware that the thrush could not offer him knowledge even if he were able to translate its song. The word that the persona uses to describe its knowledge, 'proverbs', suggests that he 'thinks' of the thrush as having little, disparate pieces of knowledge. The diction suggests that this persona does not 'think' the thrush has special bird-knowledge. 'If I were to own' stands out among the depictions of birds in Thomas' poetry, particularly so the thrushes, because the persona appears almost pointedly unaware that the thrush has a type of knowledge which is beyond him.

Thomas' poetry depicts personae who see nature as enigmatic without needing to solve it. By relating the construction of these personae back to Thomas' treatment of 'Negative Capability' in *Keats*, this discussion has shown the strategies which his poetry uses to present these personae. His poems represent passivity by emphasising changes in the ways that personae see the scene, by including statements that the personae react to, not create, the mysterious qualities of scenes, and by featuring contrasts between what personae can know and the different ways that birds can have knowledge. When Thomas' poems use these strategies, they evoke his focus on 'passivity' and 'Negative Capability' in *Keats* and, at the same time, reflect that his poetry cannot be completely reconciled with the ideas of lost identity and impetus which informed a trend in early twentieth-century Modernist poetry.

[123] Ibid.
[124] Edward Thomas, 'If I were to own', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 115-116 (115).

Thomas' Poetry and 'Receptiveness': 'Morbidity of Temperament'.

In *Keats* Thomas stands out among late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century critics when he treats the poet's 'Morbidity of Temperament' as a kind of 'receptiveness' which involved his identity being 'annihilated' and replaced.[125] When Thomas writes about Keats' 'great odes' and about 'Bright Star', which he calls the 'last sonnet', he suggests that all of Keats' 'receptiveness' is based on the 'Morbid' idea that the loss of identity is equivalent to dying. This final part of the chapter will demonstrate how the personae in Thomas' poetry can represent these ideas that he developed in relation to Keats.

This discussion will set the connections between Thomas poetry and his ideas of 'Morbidity of Temperament' within the wider scope of how the 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' in his poetry distinguish him from the trends represented by 'Prufrock' and similar poems. Unlike these works, Thomas' poetry draws on his interpretation of 'Morbidity of Temperament' to make 'receptiveness' and the loss of identity into what he calls 'richness'.[126] 'Richness' is an amplification of the objects in a scene which happens when the persona's own presence is suppressed. This discussion will show how Thomas' poems present this dynamic when they suggest the objects take over the personae's 'thought' and affect the language the personae use to describe them. The object seeps into the persona's speech as an awareness that can affect any part of its host.

However, Thomas' criticism and poetry are distinctive for not suggesting that this loss of identity is pathological or problematic. In *Keats* he works to frame Keats' ability and desire to lose identity as not being a psychological problem. Instead of saying that Keats simply wanted to die, Thomas explains that Keats wanted death to experience its calm: 'troubled by the principal unrest of life [Keats] crie[d] out for that same calm, for the oblivion'.[127] When he relates it to death, Thomas is describing 'receptiveness' as suppressing identity by making the focus on an object become everything that Keats

[125] Thomas, *Keats*, 75.
[126] Ibid., 51.
[127] Ibid., 72.

experiences in that instant. Thomas uses the same dynamic in his poems. Sensation can suppress concerns when it becomes the persona's sole focus. In 'That girl's clear eyes' (10 September 1916), for instance, the persona states:

> That all I cared for was the pleasure and the pain
> I tasted in the stony square sunlit,
> Or the dark cloisters, or shade of airy plane,
> While music blazed and children, line after line,
> Marched past, hiding the 'Seventeen Thirty-Nine'.[128]

This persona's speech contrasts a focus on sensation, 'the pleasure and the pain | I tasted', against a suggestion that the lines of marching children resemble First World War soldiers. This sensation is represented by nouns that are all paired with adjectives. They contrast against how the music, the children, the lines they make marching, and the 'Seventeen Thirty-Nine' all lack adjectives. But instead of commenting on the War, the persona focuses on his sensation, which was 'all I cared for'. His portrayal shows how Thomas' poetry can frame a persona's 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' as not just unrelated to twentieth-century social issues, but as a way of escaping the concerns and questions that these issues might otherwise impose.

Due to its repetition of the positions he takes in *Keats*, Thomas' poetry can be opposed to how poets presented the loss, interruption, or transformation of identity as part of a social problem. Although these links between individual loss and social issues pre-date the movements which critics have come to call Modernism, they increase with the rise of Modernist writing in the early twentieth century. For instance, in 'XLIII (As I Walked Through London)' (1894) by Laurence Binyon, the persona is depicted as responding to the sadness of the 'fresh wound burning in my breast' by becoming aware of a similar sadness throughout the people of London and making the '*smart* | *Deep* –

[128] Edward Thomas, 'That girl's clear eyes', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 132 (132).

hidden, perchance, but felt in the core of the heart!' of each of them into his identity: 'I, to my aching breast | Gathered the griefs of those thousands, and made them my own'.[129] Binyon's late nineteenth-century work anticipates the wider trend that came in the early twentieth century. A multitude of Modernist works portrayed social 'griefs' and changes by depicting personae becoming less sure that they are a whole person, the same person, or even a person at all.

As well as the touchstone poem 'Prufrock', further poems in *Prufrock and other Observations* (1917) connect disrupted identity with social disturbance. They include 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' (1911), when the persona is in the city street and 'The memory throws up high and dry | A crowd of twisted things', and 'Portrait of a Lady' (1915), when 'I must borrow every changing shape | To find expression'.[130] Eliot's is poetry representative of an early twentieth-century trend of poets tying together individual and social problems. This trend includes the comparison of being a child in a dull town to being a moth in Aldington's 'Childhood', the first poem in the prominent anthology *Some Imagist Poets* (1915):

> That's how I was.
> Somebody found my chrysalis
> And shut it in a match-box.[131]

The male persona who doubts his existence and attempts to merge his perspective with his dead addressee in 'In Nunhead Cemetery' (1915) by Charlotte Mew:

> This is not a real place; perhaps by-and-by
> I shall wake – I am getting drenched with all this rain:

[129] Laurence Binyon, 'XLIII (As I Walked Through London)', in *Lyric Poems* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1894), 82-83 (82-83).
[130] T. S. Eliot, 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', in *The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue, 2 vols (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), I, 18-20 (18); T. S. Eliot, 'Portrait of a Lady', in *Poems*, I, 10-14 (13).
[131] Aldington, 'Childhood', 4.

> Tomorrow I will tell you about the eyes of the Crystal Palace train
>
> Looking down on us, and you will laugh and I shall see what you see again.[132]

And the frustration with office-work in 'Otherworld', by Flint:

> And the killing of life hour by hour
>
> …
>
> The darkness and drabness around me suiting my mood
>
> And crushing me further still into myself;
>
> And I become a black ferment of half-born thoughts
>
> And still-born desire and unborn emotions[133]

Each of these examples suggests that interrupted individual identity represents a broader social disorder. This is the dynamic which Eliot would suggest in 'Religion Without Humanism' and with his note on the role of Tiresias in *The Waste Land* (1922), that the character's ambiguous, fractured identity makes him 'the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest'.[134] In these examples, individual identity is singular but representative of a plurality.[135] They frame it as the case that when identity loses its singularity by expansion, alteration, or diminution then that identity is representative of problems with that social plurality.

When Thomas' poetry presents 'receptiveness' and death affecting personae's identities, it includes strategies for showing how the personae are altered and for the personae representing this change as welcomed. In the order that this discussion will

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[132] Charlotte Mew, 'In Nunhead Cemetery', in *The Farmer's Bride (A new Edition with eleven new Poems)* (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1921), 21-23 (21).
[133] Flint, 'Otherworld', 8.
[134] T. S. Eliot, 'Notes on "*The Waste Land*"', in *'The Waste Land' and Other Poems*, 44-51 (46).
[135] For a discussion of how 'identity' can be a critical term with a variety of meanings see the chapter 'Modernism and the Self: Inside-Out', in Finn Fordham's *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 34-60.

attend to them, these strategies are: the use of the tripartite structure that Thomas calls Keats' bespoke 'form' in *Keats*; the conflation that happens when the personae describe their bodies and senses with metaphors that are derived from the objects; the use of speech rhythms that represent changes in how the personae 'think'; and, the personae's praise for the objects that have displaced or are displacing their identity.

Using these strategies as interpretative lenses lets this chapter explain what is happening when Thomas' poetry has verbal echoes of the references to death in Keats' poetry. As Edna Longley and John Burrow respectively note, 'Ambition' and 'Liberty' echo the 'Ode to a Nightingale'.[136] 'Ambition' (23 January 1915) with the phrase 'the end fell like a bell' ('Forlorn! the very word is like a bell') and 'Liberty' (26 November 1915) with the phrase 'I am still half in love with pain' ('for many a time | I have been half in love with easeful Death').[137] In *Keats* Thomas describes the 'Ode to a Nightingale' as showing 'an impatience of any end to the banquet except death'.[138] Thomas' poetry includes further echoes of Keats on death too. In 'The long small room' (November 1916) the image of 'this my right hand || Crawling crab-like over the clean white page' echoes *The Fall of Hyperion – A Dream* (1819) ('When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave') and the fragment, 'This living hand, now warm and capable' (c. 1819).[139] Thomas describes these images as, respectively, marked by 'the beginning of [Keats'] fatal illness' and showing 'when [Keats] foretasted death, if he did not truly see beyond it'.[140] Moreover, the way that Thomas selectively uses quotations keeps a consistent connection between hand images and death in *Keats*. When he quotes from 'Isabella' stanza XIV to evidence Keats' 'concern for Freedom' Thomas only includes 'In torched mines and noisy factories' and leaves out a political image of a hand: the 'many a weary

[136] Longley, 'Notes', 191; John Burrow, 'Keats and Edward Thomas', *Essays in Criticism*, VII: 4 (October 1957), 404-415.
[137] Edward Thomas, 'Ambition', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 59 (59); Edward Thomas, 'Liberty', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 103-104 (104); John Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale.', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 457-460 (460, 459).
[138] Thomas, *Keats*, 54.
[139] Edward Thomas, 'The long small room', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 136-137 (137); John Keats, '*The Fall of Hyperion – A Dream*', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 498-510 (498); John Keats, 'This living hand, now warm and capable', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 378 (378).
[140] Thomas, *Keats*, 69, 88.

hand [that] did swelt' to which the word 'In' refers' (ll. 107-108).[141] By turning these poems back to the nature of Thomas' arguments in *Keats*, this discussion can show that Thomas' poetry is not just expressing a desire to die but constructing personae who treat death as the suppression of identity. Examining Thomas' critical idea of 'receptiveness' reveals that death can be an exaggerated motif of a diminution of the personae's presence and a corresponding 'intense' focus on the objects they describe.

Suppressing the persona is key to the tripartite structure which Thomas associates with Keats' 'Odes'. The three parts are the persona's 'passivity', the 'richness' and luxury of the sole thing that they focus on, and the stillness of the background scene. Thomas' poems use this structure to present 'receptiveness'. It is prominent in the 'receptiveness' and death of 'The Brook' (10 July 1915). The persona finds that sitting and watching the brook involves the same loss of identity that happens in death. When he watches he says that 'All I could lose | I lost'; when he stops watching he says that his experience had been like death, that 'the child's voice raised the dead'.[142] 'The Brook' is a prominent example of the structure because, instead of the persona explaining what and why 'I lost', it uses the contrast between 'passivity' and detail to suggest why sitting by a brook should be like dying. The persona is withdrawn, 'Seated' and 'beguiled', and the brook is still.[143] He suggests stillness by showing the absence of moving people. His gaze turns from 'watching a child | Chiefly that paddled', he says that there is no 'cart' to [pass again | That way', and that the 'horseman and the horse lying beneath' are long dead.[144] He only refers to people in relation to their motion. They paddle or travel. But he separates all this motion away from his description of the brook, keeping the scene still. His description of the scene emphasises its detail with heat, sight, sound, and motion. The contrast to stillness and passivity gives emphasis to the birdsong, the 'scent like honeycomb', the 'butterfly' that 'perched contented so', the

[141] Thomas, *Keats*, 79; John Keats, 'Isabella; Or, the Pot of Basil. A Story from Boccaccio.', in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, 430-445 (433).
[142] Edward Thomas, 'The Brook', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 96-97 (97).
[143] Ibid., 96.
[144] Ibid.

'earth | And sun together', 'and the gleam, | The motion, and the voices, of the stream, | The waters running frizzled over gravel'.[145] These descriptions focus on his senses. They suggest that his 'thought' is displaced by what he hears, smells, sees and (physically) feels. This depiction shows Thomas' poetry using ideas that he developed in *Keats*, combining 'passivity', stillness, and 'richness' to portray a persona losing their identity.

By saying that Keats invented a form for showing 'receptiveness', Thomas constructs a way for what Kelvin Everest calls 'a direct sensory engagement with the real' to suppress the presence of the persona who is sensing it.[146] Sense and suppression are the basis of 'Rain' (7 January 1916). In 'Rain' the persona's relationship to the sound of the rain is governed by his metaphors for what the rain does to him. He depicts himself in his 'passivity' and shows how the sound affects him by using verbs that are related to water. These verbs are metaphors for his mental activity and suggest that his focus on the rain has changed him, suppressing his identity in a way which recalls Thomas' description of the 'Ode to a Nightingale': 'the variety in the richness of the poem is made by that very pain, desire, and impatience' for death.[147]

The scene of 'Rain' echoes both the description of the rain in 'Streatley to East Hendred', the eleventh chapter of Thomas' travel book *The Icknield Way* (which he had written in 1911), and in Keats' 27 April 1818 letter to Reynolds, which Thomas quotes from in *Keats* as an example of how the poet's 'intense sympathy' would quash his identity and lead to '"day nightmares". So [Keats] could lay awake listening to the night rain "with a sense of being drowned and rotted like a grain of wheat"'.[148] Yet, unlike these texts, when the persona of 'Rain' lays awake in 'this bleak hut, and solitude', he desires death.[149] He says that listening to the rain has made him desire death:

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[145] Ibid.
[146] Kelvin Everest, 'Isabella in the market-place: Keats and feminism', in *Keats and History*, 107-126 (117).
[147] Thomas, *Keats*, 54.
[148] Edward Thomas, *The Icknield Way* (London: Constable, 1916), 278-283; Thomas, *Keats*, 74, 75-76.
[149] Edward Thomas, 'Rain', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 105 (105).

… the love of death,
If love it be towards what is perfect and
Cannot, the tempest tells me, disappoint.[150]

In *Keats* Thomas describes Keats' desire for 'the happiness of the seemingly immortal nightingale' as a release from the 'unrest of life'.[151] 'Rain' gives a similar representation of 'perfect' death that 'Cannot … disappoint'.[152] The poem treats death as 'richness' for erasing the troubles of life and 'washing me cleaner than I have been | Since I was born into this solitude'.[153]

In 'Rain', however, Thomas' poetry is distinct from Keats' because the metaphors that it uses for 'receptive' change emphasise how the rain makes changes and the persona stays 'passive'. Unlike the nightingale, the rain actively 'tells me' about death. Therefore, when the rain is the only entity given verbs that cause changes in other entities, 'Rain' is a reminder that Thomas' poetry echoes his ideas of earlier poets, and not those poets directly. The persona gives the rain the verbs 'rains', 'washing', 'tells', 'cannot … disappoint', and 'dissolved'.[154] These verbs cause physical changes in the scene and intellectual changes in the persona. They are in contrast to the passive verbs that the persona uses to describe people: 'remembering', 'shall die', 'neither hear', 'nor give', 'pray', 'loved', 'dying', 'lying', and 'listening'. The verbs that people have either present them as 'passive' or show how the rain appears powerful. When the persona says 'pray', for instance, it is only after he has made the rain into a religious power. He distorts the blessing of Revelations 14:13 – 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth' – so that 'Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon'.[155] These 'passive' verbs are unlike the sound of the rain, which actively affects the persona by

[150] Ibid.
[151] Thomas, *Keats*, 72.
[152] In his homage 'All day it has rained' (1940), which alludes to Thomas, Alun Lewis emphasises the 'receptiveness' of Thomas' poem, writing that 'now it is the rain | Possesses us entirely'. Alun Lewis, 'All day it has rained', in *Raiders' Dawn: and other poems* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1942), 15-17 (16).
[153] Thomas, 'Rain', 105.
[154] Ibid.
[155] *Holy Bible: King James Version* (London: Collins, 2011), 1139.

'washing' and 'dissolv[ing]' him. These active verbs are metaphors for how he listens. They suggest that his desire for death involves a desire to be acted upon, to be 'receptive' so that his 'thought' is not just changed by physically displaced and lost in the rain.

In *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (2005) Peter Howarth notes that the sound and stress patterns in 'Rain' can mimic 'the monotonous drumming of the rain itself'.[156] These lines are made staccato by their commas and repetition of 'rain': 'Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain | On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me'. In the first line stresses fall on each repetition of the word 'rain'. Similarly, the four commas chop up the rhythm like a drum rudiment. The rhythm of the persona's speech suggests that the rain's noise has affected him and become a part of how he 'thinks'. This use of rhythm – reproducing a quality of the object that the persona is experiencing – echoes Thomas' comment in *Keats* that 'Isabella' that 'sweet things' are 'expressed in words with sounds and associations equalling them'.[157] This remark is more precise than Thomas' arguments in *Walter Pater* (1913) that 'Rhythm' represents the writer's perceptions and personality because it 'is of the essence of a sincere expressive style'.[158] It nearly agrees with William Butler Yeats' argument in 'The Symbolism of Poetry' (1900) that poets should 'seek out those wavering, meditative, organic rhythms' which embody how 'the imagination … only wishes to gaze upon some reality, some beauty'.[159] However, when Yeats traced the importance of these 'organic rhythms' to a twentieth-century rejection of mid nineteenth-century 'energetic rhythms … which are the invention of the will with its eyes always on something to be done or undone', Thomas' criticism and poetry connect them back to the Romantic period. Especially in Thomas' 'receptive' poetry, rhythms which reflect the object can then evoke Thomas' critique of Keats' life and poetry.[160]

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[156] Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 72.
[157] Thomas, *Keats*, 52.
[158] Edward Thomas, *Walter Pater: A Critical Study* (London: Secker, 1913), 218.
[159] William Butler Yeats, 'The Symbolism of Poetry', in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: Bullen, 1903), 237-256 (255).
[160] Ibid., 254-55.

This use of rhythm is central to 'receptiveness' and death in the rural and autumnal 'Haymaking' (6-8 July 1915). Thomas invited comparison to Keats by placing 'Haymaking' and Keats' 'To Autumn' in the same section of his wartime anthology, *This England* (1915).[161] The persona of 'Haymaking' emphasises the scene's stillness and the absence of people. The verbs he uses in describing its slowness and stillness are metaphors which suggest how it has replaced people. For instance: 'The smooth white empty road was lightly strewn | With leaves – the holly's Autumn falls in June - | And fir cones standing stiff up in the heat'.[162] When the road is 'empty' of people, the cones stand instead. When they replace people, they also show the persona's sensation. 'Haymaking' repeats this descriptive technique when the mill waters are 'tossing crystals', evoking the absence of a haymaking team's 'tosser' and revealing that the persona sees the waters as luxurious 'crystals'; when the fragrance travels the road instead of the mowing team: 'Only the scene of woodbine and hay new-mown | Travelled the road'; and when a corpse's endless sleep gives way to endless birdsong in 'the little thickets where a sleeper | For ever might lie lost, the nettle-creeper | And garden warbler sang unceasingly'.[163] Among this stillness, the persona's speech echoes Thomas' explanation of the slow assonance in 'To Autumn':

> … on account of the customary sadness of Autumn, the use of 'soft-dying', 'wailful', 'mourn', and 'dies', in the last verse, and in the last line,
>
> 'And gathering swallows twitter in the skies' –
>
> something light, thin, cold, and vanishing, especially by comparison with the mellowness and slowness of the other verses, with all their long 'oo' and 'ou' and 'aw' and 'z' sounds, as in the line,
>
> 'Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours'.[164]

[161] Edward Eastaway [Edward Thomas], 'Haymaking', in *This England: An Anthology from Her Writers*, ed. by Edward Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 111-112; John Keats, 'To Autumn', in *This England*, 99.
[162] Edward Thomas, 'Haymaking', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 94-95 (95).
[163] Ibid., 95.
[164] Thomas, *Keats*, 53.

When the 'Haymaking' persona describes the mowers quietly resting, he uses long 'o' and 's' sounds and makes them part of the still scene. Among the 'woodbine', 'hay new-mown', the 'road', the 'field sloping down', 'where its willows showed the brook', the men rest with the same sounds: the 'tosser lay forsook', 'the long wagon stood', 'it seemed it never would | Move from the shadow of that single yew'.[165] The assonance reflects the stillness of the scene that the persona describes. Echoing his description of Keats' 'mellowness and slowness', Thomas' poetry makes the sound pattern into its overall 'Romantic' project of showing personae's 'thought'. When it builds on Thomas' ideas of Keats' rhythms, 'Haymaking' shows the persona's mental activity merging people into the scene rather than differentiating them from the countryside.

'Haymaking' praises the still countryside as representing 'a great age untold'. Instead of telling or defining the 'age', the persona takes part in its greatness by dying. He gives up his life and identity to become, like the mowing team, another part of the scene. He sees himself with 'The men, the beasts, the trees, the implements' when 'All of us [are] gone out of the reach of change – | Immortal in a picture of an old grange'. This depiction of 'receptiveness' expresses a view of what the stillness as exceeding any identity. Like Thomas' comment on the 'calmest and stillest' picture of 'the figures on the urn' in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', this immortality leaves the persona's identity 'submerged' and the figures 'dead and fixed'.[166] Being 'untold', the 'picture of an old grange' exceeds the ability of individual artists to be identified with it. This picture of 'All of us' reveals an 'age' that is 'Older' than the work of two writers, '[John] Clare [1793-1864] and William Cobbett [1763-1835]', and two painters, '[George] Morland [1763-1804] and [John] Crome [1768-1821]'. This list of names has 'Haymaking' turning its focus away from the twentieth century. So do earlier iterations of the list. Versions of 'Haymaking' written and published before Thomas' *Poems* (1917) have the poet William Cowper (1731-1800) rather than the essayist Cobbett. The typescript of 'Haymaking' that Eleanor Farjeon

[165] Thomas, 'Haymaking', 95.
[166] Thomas, *Keats*, 56.

made ahead of *Poems* shows the revision. The typescript shows that Thomas has crossed out 'Cowper', added 'Cobbett' in superscript, and written 'Cobbett' again in the margin.[167] While the reasons for this revision are not known – maybe Thomas saw Cobbett as more associated with rurality or reacted to Cowper's fame as a religious melancholic – it shows that Thomas kept the list as a balance of two writers and two painters from the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century period.[168] Therefore, 'Haymaking' treats the persona's loss of identity as a continuity from an 'age untold' which is 'Older' than the period represented by the listed artists. The poem's praise for this 'age' is a version of 'receptiveness' which can be opposed to the Modernist suggestion that loss of identity indicates specifically twentieth-century problems.

In 'Haymaking' the persona's praise for the 'great age' turns the loss of identity into a benefit. Instead of being harmful to him, it reveals how the country scene is slow and still. In 'The Unknown Bird' (7 January 1915) Thomas' poetry moves further away from treating the loss of identity as problematic. The persona praises the bird by saying that 'receptiveness' for the bird's indefiniteness heals him from 'suffering | A heavy body and a heavy heart' and that he 'become[s] | Light as that bird wandering beyond my shore'.[169] Not only is this 'reception' dissimilar from the Modernist trend of representing loss of identity as problematic, it can be a wedge between Thomas' interpretation of Keats and his interpretation of other Romantic-period poets. The suggestion that the bird 'Neared me' while simultaneously seeming 'far-off' echoes William Wordsworth's 'To the Cuckoo' (1802): '… it seems to pass | At once far off and near'.[170] However, and unlike 'The Unknown Bird', the persona of 'To the Cuckoo' states that he is actively interpreting the 'babbling' into 'a tale | Of visionary hours'.[171] Thomas responded to Romantic-period poems of mysterious birds by saying whether the personae are 'passive' or if they are

[167] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. Poet. d. 214, f. 48.
[168] For Cowper's nineteenth-century fame as a religious melancholic see the chapter 'Religious Melancholy: Hayley's "*Life of Cowper*"', in Jane Darcy, *Melancholy and Literary Biography, 1640-1816* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 172-204.
[169] Edward Thomas, 'The Unknown Bird', in *The Annotated Collected Poems*, 55 (55).
[170] William Wordsworth, 'To the Cuckoo', in *The Major Works including 'The Prelude'*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 245 (245).
[171] Ibid.

interpreting the song. He discusses Shelley's 'To a Sky-Lark' (1820) by saying the bird is interpreted and made to resemble the figure of the poet. Writing on 'The Lark Ascending' (1881) by George Meredith, Thomas presents 'To a Sky-Lark' as Shelley making nature resemble his 'moral qualities' and getting 'far away from the bird' itself:

> Like Shelley, [Meredith] felt the moral qualities of Nature. It has been said of Shelley's lark, 'Bird thou never wert'; and of Meredith's, that it is a real lark. But this is a mistake. Meredith … gets at least as far away from the bird as Shelley does, if he starts closer.[172]

By contrast to this critical position on 'To a Sky-Lark', and to the acts of interpretation in 'To the Cuckoo', Thomas describes the 'Ode to a Nightingale' as showing a persona whose 'receptiveness' is an 'escape' from pain.[173] Thomas writes that this persona 'cries out' for death to take his identity and give him 'the happiness of the seemingly immortal nightingale'.[174] In 'The Unknown Bird' the depiction of how becoming like the mysterious bird alleviates the persona's suffering echoes Thomas' distinctive critical position that Keats' poetry turns death and loss of identity into the healing of 'calm', and 'happiness'.[175] Unlike the early twentieth-century Modernist push to represent individuals' loss of impetus and identity as indicative of social disorder, and as 'The Unknown Bird' reveals, Thomas' poetry draws on the ideas that he developed in writing *Keats* and uses 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' to suppress identity and depict 'intense' experience.

[172] Edward Thomas, *A Literary Pilgrim in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 53.
[173] Thomas, *Keats*, 54.
[174] Ibid., 72.
[175] Ibid.

Thomas and Keats: Conclusion.

This chapter has discussed Thomas' criticism of Keats in the contexts of his own poetry and the surrounding presence of Modernism. It has demonstrated that Thomas is distinctive among the critics of Keats because he bases his interpretation on 'the intensity of [Keats'] receptiveness'. This interpretation involves Thomas recuperating Keats' 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' from barbed earlier critiques. It also involves Thomas complicating his relationship to the important Modernist idea that a loss of impetus or identity is problematic and reflects a wider social problem. In *Keats*, as this chapter has shown, Thomas builds connections between the Keats' letters and poems and constructs a theory of how poetry can depict 'passivity' and a loss of identity.

Thomas' poetry includes 'passive' and 'receptive' personae who reflect the theory he made in *Keats*. His poems involve equivalents to his discussion of 'Negative Capability' when personae 'passively' observe mysterious scenes. They can involve equivalents to 'receptiveness' and his distinctive interpretation of 'Morbidity of Temperament' too when their identities recede and their descriptions of objects become more prominent. Unlike 'Prufrock' and the works in its wake, these poems do not treat 'passivity' or 'receptiveness' as problematic. Nor do they tie 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' to twentieth-century social issues. Instead, they can treat 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' as pleasurable. These poems show how Thomas made 'passivity' and 'receptiveness' into ways of showing the 'beauty' in a total focus on an object suppressing the various personae's cares and concerns.

Edward Thomas' 'Romanticism': Conclusion.

This thesis' contribution to literary studies is its exploration of how Edward Thomas' poetry includes equivalents of his interpretations of Romantic-period poets which are adapted to his late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' view of the generic rules of lyric poetry. By writing about 'Romanticism' Thomas described his expectations of how poets ought to use the lyric genre to portray the 'thought', the complete mental activity, of personae who inhabit their own 'worlds'. When he wrote about Romantic-period poetry Thomas then developed accounts of the different ways that poets have presented personae and 'thought'. By writing on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry, Thomas developed models for personae who perceive nature as dreamlike or supernatural, as part of an experience of absence, or as revealing a national history that they may belong to; by writing about Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry, he developed a model for personae who treat specific objects in scenes as 'symbolical' representations of their mental activity; and by writing about John Keats' poetry he developed models for personae who are 'passive' and can suppress their identities. This thesis has shown how Thomas' poetry takes these models from what he had written about Romantic-period poets, importing his critical ideas into his own version of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism', and consequently shaping his poetry's complicated detachment from the literary developments which critics would come to call Modernism.

This thesis foregrounds the ways in which Thomas' poetry is informed by his criticism. To underscore the importance of this research, I will briefly describe two new avenues of research which my work has made possible. This thesis has demonstrated that contours of Thomas' criticism can be explored in ways which illumine how his poetry is put together. As well as his arguments about Romantic-period poetry, Thomas' criticism includes other distinctive positions. A future study may build on this thesis' methodology by considering whether Thomas' poetry draws on his critical praise for

Charles M. Doughty (1843-1926). Thomas praises Doughty as 'in the front rank' of poets in a review of *The Dawn in Britain* (1906), as a writer of poems 'beautiful and thoroughly alive' in an essay on Arthurian stories (1907), and as 'the *vates*, the prophet-priest, among English poets' in a review of *The Titans* (1916).[1] Thomas' criticism is unusual for treating Doughty as a major poet. As Edna Longley writes in *Under the Same Moon: Edward Thomas and the English Lyric* (2017), 'Of all Thomas's enthusiasms for new poetry, Doughty is one place where posterity has usually not followed him'.[2] Further work could build on this thesis by considering whether Thomas' praise for Doughty connects him to the few Modernist poets who also treated Doughty as a major poet. These Modernist poets include Laura (Riding) Jackson and Schuyler B. Jackson, who state in *Rational Meaning* (1997, written 1948-1952) that 'With no other worker at things of language besides Charles M. Doughty do we feel any major kinship of attitude … he foresaw linguistic disaster with the eyes of a morally passionate poet, so that the poetic legacy he left has a value beyond its literary value, which is of the highest in itself'.[3] This thesis' demonstration of its method would facilitate further work questioning how Thomas' praise for Doughty informs personae in his poetry – for instance, asking whether it is possible to read in Thomas' poetry an equivalent to that 'prophet-priest' – and then connects Thomas' writing to trends in later Modernist criticism and poetry.

Furthermore, this thesis has shown how Thomas' 'Romanticism' and his critical attention to Romantic-period poetry distinguish his criticism and poetry from the core developments in early twentieth-century Modernism. By putting aspects of Modernism and 'Romanticism' into relief, this thesis has shown the need for further studies of how Modernism is related to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romanticism'. Presently, several studies trace connections between Modernism and Romantic-period

[1] Edward Thomas, 'The Dawn in Britain', *The Bookman*, 30:180 (September 1906), 222-223 (222); Edward Thomas, 'Arthur.', *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art,* 104:2708 (21 September 1907), 364-365 (365); Edward Thomas, 'The Titans', *The Bookman*, 50:297 (June 1916), 79-80 (79).
[2] Edna Longley, *Under the Same Moon: Edward Thomas and the English Lyric* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2017), 132.
[3] Laura (Riding) Jackson and Schuyler B. Jackson, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words and Supplementary Essays*, ed. by William Harmon (Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 1997), 61.

poetry. Prominent examples include *Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens* (1976) by George Bornstein, *T. S. Eliot and the Romantic Critical Tradition* (1981) by Edward Lobb, *Post-Romantic Consciousness: Dickens to Plath* (2003) by John Beer, and *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900* (2007) by Michael O'Neill.[4] These critics have paid attention to what they call 'Romanticisms', different styles and priorities within Romantic-period writing. However, critics have been less disposed to ask how Modernism specifically interacts with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period's 'Romanticism'. The critics who do ask, moreover, frequently complicate the issue by adding in French Symbolism. They treat French Symbolism as a body of ideas which functions as an adapter that is necessary for poets to be both 'Romantic' and Modern. Examples of this critical approach include Frank Kermode in *Romantic Image* (1957), C. K. Stead when he agrees with Kermode in *The New Poetic* (1964), and Hugh Kenner and Louis Simpson when they discuss T. S. Eliot's poetry in, respectively, *The Invisible Poet* (1959) and *Three on the Tower* (1975).[5] As this thesis has demonstrated, however, Thomas' work on Shelley shows that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets could separate 'Romantic' and French Symbolist ideas. By setting out how Thomas' theory of lyric poetry is based on that temporally-specific 'Romanticism', and then showing how this theory separates his poetry from aspects of French Symbolism and Modernism, this thesis has given both the necessity for and the foundations of more critical attention being paid to the connections and divisions between Modernism and late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century 'Romanticism'.

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[4] George Bornstein, *Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens* (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Edward Lobb, *T. S. Eliot and the Romantic Critical Tradition* (London, Henley, and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981); John Beer, *Post-Romantic Consciousness: Dickens to Plath* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Michael O'Neill, *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[5] Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image* (London, and New York, NY: Routledge, 2002); C. K. [Christian Karlson] Stead, *The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot* (London, and New York, NY: Continuum: 2005), 20-21; Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (New York, NY: Obolensky, 1959), 52-55; Louis Simpson, *Three on the Tower: The Lives and Works of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams* (New York, NY: Morrow, 1975), 99-100.

In summary, this thesis repositions Thomas' criticism and poetry in the flux of Modernism, 'Romanticism', and Romantic-period poetry by revealing the indebtedness of his poetry to his criticism. It demonstrates that Thomas' lyric poetry is dually shaped by his critical accounts of what Romantic-period poets had done and by his late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Romantic' theories of what poetry is and how poets should write it.

Appendix One.

Thomas' Anonymous Reviews.

In this thesis I have cited three of Edward Thomas' book reviews from *The Morning Post* and two from *The Saturday Review*. These publications did not print the reviewers' names. However, Thomas habitually cut out his reviews from newspapers and magazines and pasted them into his personal scrapbooks. These scrapbooks are now kept at Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives. The reviews that I have cited are verified as Thomas' work because they are in the scrapbooks. Below is a table showing the citations and their corresponding Cardiff University shelfmarks.

Citations.	**Shelfmarks.**
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