'Uncertain notice': Unearthing Wales in William Wordsworth's 'Simon Lee' and 'Tintern Abbey'

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'UNCERTAIN NOTICE': UNEARTHING WALES IN WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S 'SIMON LEE' AND 'TINTERN ABBEY'

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Abstract

One of the defining attributes of Wordsworth and Coleridge's 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* was the poets' focus on subjects of 'low and rustic life', and especially on the potentials for enhanced human understanding accessed through the language of people of such social stations. This essay examines Wordsworth's 'Simon Lee' and 'Tintern Abbey', two entries set in Wales that in contrast to the collection's manifesto do not feature the voices of the local inhabitants. Recent scholarship has effectively compounded the Welsh locals' status: in addition to the comparatively little consideration given to the Welsh social history that would cover these topics, scholars have also at times re-set the poems in England, and even suggested that the Welsh inhabitants actually symbolise or otherwise represent English people. Minimising, disregarding, and altering the poems' Welsh settings limits, and even misshapes, any meaningful poetic analysis. I argue that in each poem a deep understanding of the local cultural histories of the respective Welsh setting – Cardiganshire in 'Simon Lee' and Monmouthshire in 'Tintern Abbey' – produces a more comprehensive appreciation of the poems themselves. Furthermore, rather than acting as signs of a people unchanged since antiquity (another consensus among many literary scholars), these poems' muted Welsh residents record the results of far-reaching social change, specifically the loss of traditions, community life, and economic stability. Such an approach enhances our understanding of wider contexts, including: Wordsworth's authorship; Romantic Wales; the Welsh in the English imagination; and eighteenth-century Wales. I demonstrate these points by incorporating primary materials to complement my accounts of each poem, including contemporary histories

of Cardiganshire in my examination of 'Simon Lee', and English poems of the period on Tintern Abbey and Monmouthshire in my examination of 'Tintern Abbey'.

Keywords: British Romanticism, *Lyrical Ballads*, poetry, William Wordsworth, Cardiganshire, Monmouthshire, poverty, industry, eighteenth-century Wales

I Introduction

William Wordsworth's 'Simon Lee' and 'Tintern Abbey' share a number of qualities beyond inclusion in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. Both are set in different corners of eighteenth-century Wales, are among the more discussed and anthologised entries in the collection, and rely upon local populations across their narrative arcs. Their most significant mutual trait, however, is that both cast impoverished figures who are denied a voice. The eponymous Simon Lee does not describe his fall into misfortune, nor do the 'vagrant dwellers' of 'Tintern Abbey' recount the travails that gave them this status. This could perhaps be cause for inquiry on its own, but more importantly it conflicts with Wordsworth's own manifesto regarding the *Lyrical Ballads*. In the Preface to the 1800 edition he explains that he originally intended the poems to portray 'a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation',[1] and goes on to exalt voice as his paramount concern:

> Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are under less restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language … The language too of these men is adopted … because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions.[2]

The low social rank and narrow social intercourse of Simon Lee and the 'vagrant dwellers' would appear to certify their direct links to human passion. Yet, despite their humble stations, their speaking is done for

them. Their silences have carried over into recent scholarship on the poems, which over time has inhibited discussions of what these figures represent: the lived experience of eighteenth-century Welsh people subjected to immense social and cultural change.

In this essay I seek to recover these poems' neglected voices and expound their poetic roles more thoroughly than has yet been done. This task leads to my greater purpose, which is to elucidate the unique Welsh cultural and social moments of which they were part. In doing so, I will shed light on certain contours of late eighteenth-century Wales and correct scholarly trends that have minimised the country's presence in the poems or, worse, disregarded it altogether. The latter point has traditionally taken the form of resituating the Welsh locales so that they are English. A common refrain in discussions of 'Simon Lee' is that its Cardiganshire setting was merely a foil for the poem's true Somerset inspiration (I return to this below). Scholarship on 'Tintern Abbey' has long set the poem in England. One prominent example is the 'Tintern Abbey' 'debate' between Marjorie Levinson and Charles Rzepka. Levinson claims to 'show that what Wordsworth offers under the sign of the picturesque is a portion of rural England … in 1798';[3] Rzepka retorts that 'There is no denying that Tintern was not a prosperous locale compared to other industrial sites in England, such as Abraham Darby's enormous ironworks at Coalbrookdale'.[4] Notwithstanding that such decisions to forego 'Welsh' borders in favour of 'English', and that more all-inclusive 'British' ones are grossly problematic on their own terms (especially when discussing eighteenth-century Britain), doing so has the effect of silencing regional histories in a similar manner to the way that the 'low and rustic' figures are silenced in these two poems. Ignoring these discrete Welsh histories also serves to reinforce problematic conventions of 'romantic Wales' (and certainly to occlude any unique 'Welsh romanticism').[5] In the English imagination, Wales at this time was seen as a haven of ancient 'liberty' unsullied by the march of civilisation.[6] Consequently its inhabitants were considered immutable relics of antiquity (ranging from ignorant to barbarous), unchanged since the era of the ancient bards.

In the case of canonical figures such as Wordsworth there is another more subtle risk, which consists of histories and cultures being absorbed into the writer's biography. For instance, Alan Liu follows a thorough overview of eighteenth-century Wales with the conclusion that 'our discovery should be that in modeling Wales we have really been mod-

eling the poet', and that in Wordsworth's vision of 'the Supremacy and Uniformity of the *British* nation' Wales was 'one with the Lakes and … the Lakes one with the (ideal) nation'.[7] Any illuminations of Wordsworth's life gained by this practice notwithstanding, reducing Wales to a poetic device silences the multifarious voices within it. In two scholarly trends Wales, its history, and its people are either subsumed into England or into the English poet invoking them. In both cases Wales and its people remain static. My intention is to challenge fundamental notions of a monolithic 'romantic Wales' by considering how poverty and impoverished people function in 'Simon Lee' and 'Tintern Abbey'. I reveal that not only was Welsh society undergoing great social change at this time (which produced the poverty diagrammed in the poems), but that numerous distinct social and cultural transitions were also taking place. The history embedded in 'Simon Lee', set in Cardiganshire, deep in west Wales and at this period virtually monoglot Welsh speaking, agrarian, isolated, and impoverished, is very different from that in 'Tintern Abbey', set in the south-easternmost county of Monmouthshire, at this time a judicial and social liminal space between Wales and England where language was mixed and industry and urbanisation were on the rise. The two poems do, however, each depict the dissolutions of social structures and customs and what results from them. My interrogation begins with 'Simon Lee' and eighteenth-century Cardiganshire before moving to 'Tintern Abbey' and Monmouthshire, and my analyses include contemporary published and unpublished literature, and also Welsh historical and literary scholarship. Although I examine the poems separately, their silent figures ultimately coalesce in a three-tiered conclusion: that through tracing these muted figures into their historical context we ultimately discover that an intimate knowledge of a transitional Wales augments our comprehension of the poems; that the resources for gaining this knowledge have been accessible since the first publication of *Lyrical Ballads*; and that Wordsworth's work fits smoothly into the larger English literary imagination's constructions of Wales of the time.

II Cardiganshire and the 'poorest of the poor' c.1798

In 1798 Wales was in the throes of socio-economic and cultural transformations that directly affected communities, traditions, and

class relations on local and national levels. Pointing to shifts among influential landed forces as a primary conduit of change across Wales, Geraint H. Jenkins explains that 'the [new] landed behemoths displayed little enthusiasm for the culture of the "mountain Welsh great or small" and consciously distanced themselves from the history, language, and literature of Wales'.[8] This took place across Wales over much of the eighteenth century, and it constitutes the backdrop against which we are to approach Simon Lee's life and story in 1798 Cardiganshire. Lee, either seventy or eighty years old by the poem's account, aged into decrepitude as his local customs faded out of practice (and nearly out of social memory). The poem's speaker shares this cognizance of change and its social impacts, as evidenced by the poem's opening four lines (which provide also the setting and subject):

> In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
> Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
> And old man dwells, a little man,
> I've heard he once was tall.   (ll. 1–4)

Similar interplays – between the speaker's view of Lee and his environment as they are and accounts of how they used to be – pervade the poem, culminating in the closing scene of the speaker assisting an old and enfeebled Lee with a tree root. However, the speaker – who enters Cardiganshire from the outside, assumes authority over Lee and his life (without Lee's input), and hails Lee in English – embodies the transitions to which Jenkins refers.

These points alone urge a reconsideration of Lee's story and its transmission, which begins with recent scholarly discussions of the poem. Despite the keynote of its opening four lines announcing a Cardiganshire setting, the most definitive statements regarding Cardiganshire in 'Simon Lee' centre on speculations that it is not the original setting of the incidents that inspired the poem. David Simpson describes how we should understand the true setting to be Alfoxden in Somerset and the true subject to be one Christopher Tricky, concluding that these points 'more or less [exhaust] the claims to documentary exactitude that can be made about the poem'.[9] His explanation for the altered setting is, less remarkably, that Cardiganshire was 'perhaps closely associated with the old traditions',[10] these referring to the tropes

of Wales as the land of liberty. Richard Gravil's more recent comment that the poem 'unexpectedly contrasts the atavism of the hunter with the views of a tender shepherd who appears to promise the evolution of a milder humanity' complements Cardiganshire's unquestioned role as a byword for antique ways of life.[11] We are given an image of Cardiganshire as a relic of an old world, peopled with 'atavistic' figures who likely do not realise that they are living in the past tense. From afar these points satisfy Mike Benbough-Jackson's observation that Cardiganshire at this time 'came to stand for rusticity and poverty' in the eyes of its observers,[12] who in this instance include Wordsworth and through him his readers.

However, within the poem Lee and his Cardiganshire setting do not function very well as symbols of stasis. The story we are given is of unrelenting and ongoing changes to social conventions, and how despite dutifully living in accordance with what was the social order Lee and his wife have been reduced to indigence. Lee's life, as resident of Cardiganshire, outlines many of the cultural practices that were at this period being threatened, and in order to understand them we must emphasise its setting. We must also establish distance between the observer and those being observed. For the local resident, Cardiganshire was undergoing immense changes that affected virtually all elements of daily life. For the outsider, Cardiganshire had not experienced any changes since time immemorial. The contemporary context for this is that, like the rest of Wales in this period, Cardiganshire saw a sharp increase in non-Welsh tourists,[13] who were less concerned with social change than with tracing the sublime. As David Barnes remarks, 'Romantic tourism has always been ambivalent about the locals: are they a blot on the landscape detracting from its pristine purity or might they [be] allowed, in measured doses, to contribute some rustic charm?'[14] To place 'the locals' in a rapidly changing modern world is to remove any markers of 'pristine purity' and 'rustic charm' from them, and also to compromise the tourist experience. That the poem's speaker, as we shall see, ultimately hails Lee in English suggests that he would not in all likelihood have been one of the locals.

The poem shifts back and forth between Lee's past comforts and enjoyments and his current misfortunes and hardships. The 'change' has affected every facet of Lee's personal and social life:

> But, oh the heavy change! – bereft
> Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!
> Old Simon to the world is left
> In liveried poverty.   (ll. 25–8)

Although Lee is in financial straits, his 'poverty' here is due to having lost all facets of his once-thriving social livelihood. The poem's reflections on Lee's earlier life outline the importance of these social forces to his wellbeing. The speaker apprises us of Lee's back story throughout the poem, with a pattern quickly emerging that it is never Lee himself who is the source of any information. For instance, the first stanza closes thus:

> Of years he has upon his back,
> No doubt, a burthen weighty;
> He says he is three score and ten,
> But others say he's eighty.   (ll. 5–8)

We do not know to whom he 'says he is three score and ten' (and this is everything he is reported to have said in the poem), but his recollection is subordinated to public opinion, which deems him an octogenarian. Lee has lost 'health, strength, friends, and kindred' (each being indispensable to being a renowned huntsman and foot-racer), and has also lost agency over his own record of their decline.

Soon after being told of his contested age we are given thorough insights into how he spent his first eighty years, and his past deeds shed light directly and indirectly on how social life functioned in eighteenth-century Cardiganshire. These memories being filtered through the poem's speaker grant us a view of how they were observed from the outside. For instance:

> No man like him the horn could sound,
> And no man was so full of glee;
> To say the least, four counties round
> Had heard of Simon Lee;
> His master's dead, and no one now
> Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
> Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
> He is the sole survivor.

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see:
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.   (ll. 17–32)

These lines document what has led to Lee's despondence and suggest how his talents were understood at this time. But they have been targets of harsh criticism: Simpson contends that these lines are 'platitudinous to say the least' and, beyond being 'intrinsically vapid', are 'at best an uncomfortable participation in the language of naïve ballad conventions, at worst a total failure of poetic intelligence'.[15] Misgivings regarding Wordsworth's style here aside, dismissing *in toto* these lines that replicate social practice eschews analysis of what they contain. This presents a hazard of scholarly readers dismissing cultural analysis on the basis of aesthetic taste. Ultimately, this results in reconfirming the false notion that the poem depicts social atavism. Closely reading these lines, and the rest of the poem, reveals that Lee's and Cardiganshire's histories revolve around reputation and communal memory.

According to these lines, not only was Simon Lee the most eminent horn-sounder of his day, but also his reputation extended across four counties. Depending on which four neighbouring counties one chooses, this means that Lee was renowned throughout all of mid-Wales (no small feat for one living in Cardiganshire at this time). Beyond being a famous huntsman he was also a fast runner; we learn a few stanzas later that 'he all the country could outrun' (l. 41), his reputation on this front leaving neighbouring counties in his wake and extending across the whole country. Contemporary scholarly accounts of Cardiganshire shed some light on the significance of such cultural practices as hunting and foot-racing and what it meant for them to be lost. Samuel Rush Meyrick's 1808 *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan* – symbolically subtitled 'Collected from the few remaining documents which have escaped the destructive ravages of time' – describes the high regard in which runners and hunters were held within their communities and how these activities could bring working-class individuals together in

areas where they might rarely see their landlord.[16] Meyrick introduces running and hunting alongside other pastimes such as horse-riding, throwing dice, and playing cards. His account of foot-racing is reminiscent of the far-fetched legacy surrounding Lee: 'The foot race is still in estimation in Wales, and many are so famed for pedestrian expedition, that in a journey of 300 miles, they have surpassed in speed the swiftest horses'.[17] Still, he elevates hunting as the pinnacle of social spectacle and recreation, noting that 'Hunting has been a favourite amusement with all nations. It afforded employment, entertainment, and sustinence [*sic*], for man in the earliest stages of society, and still holds its sway above all other pastimes'.[18]

He goes on to elevate the Welsh hunting hounds above their English counterparts:

> Hunting and coursing are still favourite amusements in Wales. The greyhounds are of a stronger nature than those in England, and their hair more wiry. On a level plain an English dog would exceed them in speed; but running on the sides of very steep mountains, or up them or down them, the English dog would soon be knocked up, while the Welsh greyhound would with ease go through his day's sport.[19]

These accounts suggest that one's running and hunting prowess was highly regarded within the community. Further, they magnify the import of lines 23–4: 'Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead; | He is the sole survivor'. The lines have an apocalyptic tone that only really becomes audible when considered in their cultural context. We learn two stanzas later Simon Lee is indeed not the only surviving person in the vicinity ('His wife … | lives with him', ll. 39–40), and line 23 cannot be signifying solely that he is the only survivor who 'Dwells in the Hall of Ivor' since both he and his wife live 'upon the village common'. Rather, he is the only remaining vestige of a way of life that has, for one reason or another, passed away.

Lee and his wife's current living situation 'upon the village common' sheds further light on cultural shifts taking place at this time. We learn:

> Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
> Not twenty paces from the door,
> A scrap of land they have, but they

Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what avails the land to them,
Which they can till no longer?   (ll. 57–64)

In Meyrick's account, by 1763 most of the lower districts of Cardiganshire were 'enclosed, or enclosing', and the commons had shrunk by a considerable degree.[20] In the lower districts the rent had nearly tripled in the forty years before 1808, and in the northern districts the earnings of the poor ten years previous to his publication – i.e., in 1798 – 'were certainly inadequate to their expenses'.[21] This provides a picture of life in this area at the time. Lee having made his house from clay excludes it from being a *tŷ unnos*, literally 'one-night house', which cottagers made for themselves on commons before the great waves of enclosures began (though this practice, as Davies explains, continued into the era of 'encroachment').[22] The customary belief was that if a cottage could be erected overnight then the house and land within a radius of six acres could legally be occupied by the builder. Even if Lee's specific house was not a *tŷ unnos*, these lines reflect what actions 'the poorest of the poor' needed to take in order to have homes at all.[23]

Such were the conditions throughout Cardiganshire, for whose residents times were becoming harder even though life had never been luxurious. As Eurwyn Wiliam puts it, male agricultural workers in Cardiganshire were skilled in all aspects of farming but 'through the accident of birth … had little or no chance of progressing up the farming ladder'.[24] There was little interconnectivity and communication among various areas and certainly with the world beyond the county, circumstances that preserved a virtual cultural and societal isolation.[25] The effects of this isolation would have gone in both directions: if residents did not know how the world was operating elsewhere, the rest of the world could not have known very well what was affecting Cardiganshire. Into the nineteenth century it remained largely an agricultural economy, with the bulk of the workers being small tenant farmers who withstood inconsistent wages and diets. The poor lived on barley bread and potatoes, and famines in the mid-1790s coupled with insufficient wages meant that, to quote David W. Howell, even if fewer people were dying than in the previous century, 'more and more

people were surviving only to be doomed to lives of great poverty and deprivation'.[26]

We must bear these conditions in mind when reading the poem's oft remarked-upon closing lines, where the speaker intervenes with Lee struggling to cut the root of a tree (the three closing stanzas follow):

> One summer-day I chanced to see
> This old man doing all he could
> About the root of an old tree,
> A stump of rotten wood.
> The mattock totter'd in his hand;
> So vain was his endeavour
> That at the root of the old tree
> He might have worked forever.
>
> 'You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
> Give me your tool' to him I said;
> And at the word right gladly he
> Received my proffer'd aid.
> I struck, and with a single blow
> The tangled root I sever'd,
> At which the poor old man so long
> And vainly had endeavour'd.
>
> The tears into his eyes were brought,
> And thanks and praises seemed to run
> So fast out of his heart, I thought
> They never would have done.
> – I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning.
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Has oftner left me mourning. (ll. 81–104)

It is the question of just what Lee might be thankful for that returns us to the poem's earlier moments. The speaker claims that Lee's gratitude 'seemed to run | So fast out of his heart' that it felt like it could last in perpetuity. Thus, the only moment in the poem that depicts permanence in any form is a result of the speaker's act of social intervention.

By the speaker's account, this intervention produces a great improvement in Lee's life, which up to that point had been marred by cascades of negative change. Yet even here Lee's own voice continues to be withheld from his life's narrative, and the voice of aid and stability is quite likely in a foreign language. The foreign voice does not promise a return to earlier glories, or the return of the cultural activities that produced them. Rather, it can make the state effected by their loss easier to bear. Lee exchanges difficult native cultural transitions for a welcomed cultural stasis dependent on a foreign, benevolent force.

If we allow Simon Lee's struggle with the 'rotten wood' of the 'old tree' to represent even a limited attempt on his part to cling to earlier years, then the poem's first nine stanzas acquire a new clarity. We know from earlier in the poem that Lee, who remains the 'old huntsman' – not, for instance, the 'one-time huntsman' – still feels a fond attachment to his earlier life, when the speaker relates Lee's fondness for hearing the hunting hounds (the one thing that we are told still gives him joy):

> And still there's something in the world
> At which his heart rejoices;
> For when the chiming hounds are out,
> He dearly loves their voices!   (ll. 15–18)

Simon Lee finds no joy in the present, and the occasional joy he does feel occurs when a symbolic sound returns him to his youth. Beyond indicating that nothing he sees, says, or does brings him happiness, this has two other purposes: it removes his agency over even passing moments of levity (he is not the one hunting with the dogs, they are not his dogs, and he cannot determine exactly when they will be hunting); and, being 'voices' that he hears, the dogs serve as an echo that reminds him that the source of his joy is far away and untraceable. With the tales of the opening 68 lines in mind, a fitting question might be: if Simon Lee is already cognizant that his early life's comforts have departed, and he has little left to live for, just what form can any possible liberation take? And, since his liberator, the speaker, comes from the outside world and is reporting back to it (the poem was written for an English-language audience), what form will this liberation take on a larger scale if it comes to affect larger parts of the population? A background knowledge of life in Cardiganshire and how it had transformed over

the eighteenth century – corresponding to Lee's eighty years – helps us begin to answer some of these questions. Again, despite learning of Lee's old exploits, his English-speaking benefactor does not suggest that through his help any of the old days, with their customs and comforts, will return. If anything, he assists Lee in stabilising himself in the new world as it is.[27]

III Culture and Identity in Monmouthshire and 'Tintern Abbey'

If the Cardiganshire of 'Simon Lee' at this time was unmistakably Welsh, then the Monmouthshire of 'Tintern Abbey' had a somewhat more vexed situation. Indeed, as we have already seen, scholars such as Levinson and Rzepka do not hesitate to associate Tintern Abbey with England. But, interestingly, the less scholarship focuses on Wordsworth specifically, the less inclined it is to refer to Tintern Abbey as being in England (this applies also to surrounding locales and to the Wye Valley). For James Prothero, we should not look eastward from Wordsworth's 'poem on the Wye' but rather north-westward; he writes that Wordsworth's earlier poetry spans 'a river valley on the border of Wales and England, in lowlands almost at sea level, [to] the highest mountain-top in Wales'.[28] Liz Pitman writes that British travellers of Wordsworth's period 'went to North Wales for its lakes, mountains and wild landscape whilst South Wales was valued for the Wye tour'.[29] Another alternative is to embrace the Wye Valley for its very ambiguity as a hazy, transitional area between the two nations. Wales's general title for legal purposes at this time was 'Wales and Monmouthshire', and this appellation signified a number of cultural nuances in that area. Damian Walford Davies and Tim Fulford write that 'Romantic authors found [the Wye Valley] to be a space not only of "tranquil restoration" and middle-class, pictur-esque recreation, but also of dislocation and radical otherness, whose topography and historical vestiges unsettled their cultural and politi-cal identities'.[30] If we apply similar terminology to a Welsh perspective the Wye Valley and Monmouthshire region retain such significance. If Cardiganshire was unequivocally Welsh due to being virtually com-pletely Welsh speaking, hanging on to Welsh customs (albeit with a loosening grip), and being isolated and agrarian, then by contrast Monmouthshire certainly becomes a zone of transition. Linguistically,

for instance, much of it, including Tintern (despite its Welsh name),[31] was English speaking by the end of the eighteenth century. Yet this did not stop the county from remaining an essentially Welsh shire whose people practised non-English customs and traditions.[32] In this way Prothero, Pitman, Davies and Fulford echo contemporary writers. In 1796 David Williams wrote that in Monmouthshire 'the feudal ideas and habits of an oppressed and degraded peasantry, are not wholly abolished: and the use of the Cambro-British language is a perpetual impediment to instruction', and that in what was the ancient kingdom of Glwysig – in the western end of the county – 'the inhabitants have preserved, with scarcely a perceptible alteration, their native language, their simple customs, and pure morals, for more than fifteen centuries'.[33] Iolo Morganwg believed that Monmouthshire was as Welsh as any other place in Wales.[34]

This is all to say that Tintern and the county that housed it must be considered not solely as an ambiguous location in the abstract but also as an ambiguous Welsh location. Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', then, must be examined as a text set in – or at least discussing – a foreign setting. Including in the poem's subtitle that it was written 'during a tour' further places it in context with the then-booming wave of English travel literature on Wales, in virtually all of which Wales's foreignness was emphasised (keeping in mind also Barnes's claims regarding tourists in Cardiganshire). The most preeminent of these tours, William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye*, influenced Wordsworth in no small way (he kept a copy of it on his person during his own tour),[35] and Prys Morgan writes that in such literature 'the picturesque was more important than the true'.[36] The foreign, silent 'vagrant dwellers' in this poem carry the burdens of social and cultural transitions, and much is revealed about life, custom, and change in eighteenth-century Monmouthshire by gathering what they might have said if they were to have said anything. Elevating the reference to 'vagrant dwellers' as the fulcrum upon which the rest of the poem pivots reveals that in terms of Tintern Abbey's cultural symbolism, and through it Monmouthshire's, Wordsworth's poem was more of a contribution to a literary wave than it was any sort of unique meditation. Accepting this allows us to reorient the conventional focus away from Wordsworth's psyche and toward the eighteenth-century location that inspired him and many others (while still reading the text as a poem in its own right). The opening lines and the later ruminations on memory and the 'sylvan Wye!' (l. 58) lead into

a Wye Valley in which social movements were at odds with travellers' depictions of its inspirational stasis.

In the famous opening 23 lines of 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth enters us into a mental space that is a hybrid of memory and present. What concerns us begins on line 15:

> Once again I see
> Those hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
> Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
> Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke
> Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
> With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
> Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
> Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
> The hermit sits alone.[37]   (ll. 15–23)

Contemporary usages of key terms remind us that the construction 'vagrant dwellers' did not only refer to associations of 'vagrancy'; despite any fleeting 'dwelling', to be 'vagrant' was to be in a constant state of change. 'Dweller' at this time could suggest 'inhabitant', and contemporary uses of 'vagrant' as an adjective, excluding definitions that redundantly suggest vagrancy, include 'wandering about without proper means of livelihood' and 'wandering, straying, roving; inconstant, unsettled, wayward, etc'.[38] Here, then, we should consider Wordsworth invoking the notion of transitory, impermanent inhabitants (in 'the houseless woods', no less). The 'wreathes' of smoke are present and visible, but their source is uncertain. Any 'vagrant dwellers' need not even be making a fire: by merely occupying the 'houseless woods', the 'dwellers' are set within the same 'uncertain notice' as the smoke wreaths which rise silently. Thus, in these lines Wordsworth does not 'once again' see wreaths of smoke arising from vagrants' hovels amongst the trees; he sees wreaths of smoke that arise in a silence that is akin to vagrant dwellers' very existence.

The poem's 'vagrant dwellers' are not a ruined structure or a geographical formation, but are rather actual living people; this complicates typical readings of these opening lines. For instance, Gravil writes that the opening 23 lines 'build a bridge between landscape and psyche, while the landscape itself becomes the perfect image of a tranquil mind', and goes on:

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> That 'mind'… appears to possess what the observer lacks and is in quest of, and finds no trace of in the human world; namely, Liberty. In all this landscape, the observer finds nothing in its own fixed nature, or in isolation, or warped permanently into economic orbits.[39]

Gravil here adheres to certain conditions of the contemporary 'picturesque' as outlined by Gilpin, specifically those in which ancient architecture subsumes indigenous people living in its surroundings (that is, people who cannot discern the picturesque themselves; I return to this below). This is, presumably, the only way that poverty can function in 'the perfect image of a tranquil mind', and certainly the only way it somehow is not 'warped permanently into economic orbits' (to say nothing of its 'Liberty' that is beyond 'the human world'). And yet, later, Gravil concedes that the woods 'probably were' 'full of vagrant dwellers', but then immediately follows this by citing Nicolas Roe's conjecture that the 'dwellers' might refer not to multiple people at all but instead to the radical political reformer John Thelwall.[40] Thus, even though there 'probably were' vagrant dwellers in the woods, their invocation comes to symbolise a political refugee then taking shelter in Wales.[41] Claiming that there 'probably were' vagrant dwellers only to subordinate them to possible allusions perpetuates the constant scholarly move outward from the Welsh setting at the expense of the conditions that made it, for English travellers, symbolic. David Fairer emphasises the Wye's familiarity to readers as well as to Wordsworth at this point, noting Wordsworth's emphatic word choices of 'again', and the deictic 'here', 'this' and 'these'.[42] Actual and multiple 'vagrant dwellers' constitute part of the Wye Valley's 'here' and 'again' in 1793 and 1798, and their presence resonates throughout the reflective nature of the rest of the poem.

Soon after line 23 we learn that the smoke, a representation of human misfortunes, is one of numerous 'forms of beauty' (l. 24) that have continuously influenced Wordsworth since he first saw them. These 'forms of beauty' have contributed to what has become his entire sense of self:

> But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
> Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
> And passing even into my purer mind
> With tranquil restoration: – feelings too
> Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
> As may have had no trivial influence
> On that best portion of a good man's life;
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.   (ll. 26–36)

Remembering and re-remembering the first 23 lines provides the contrast against which Wordsworth lists crucial details of his life since first experiencing them. They contrast the outward (for he remembers them despite an urban 'din'), and the inward (for he remembers them despite 'hours of weariness'). The influence of these memories becomes even more superlative:

> To them I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lighten'd…   (ll. 37–42)

For Wordsworth, then, the possible dwellers' smoke is part of a phenomenon that gives clarity to the enormous issues of an 'unintelligible world'. Wordsworth's eventual invocation of the Wye helps bring all of these declarations together. After exclaiming 'How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee | O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the wood | How often has my spirit turned to thee!' (ll. 57–9), he gestures to the opening scene:

> And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,
> With many recognitions dim and faint,
> And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
> The picture of the mind revives again:
> While here I stand, not only with the sense
> Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
> That in this moment there is life and food
> For future years…   (ll. 60–7)

Collectively, the memories now have entered a state wherein they can be called upon to inflect experiences to come. The thoughts that compose 'this moment' are the 'life and food | For future years'.

The delicacy of these lines notwithstanding, we must ourselves remember that the landscape Wordsworth remembers was not entirely geographical. Even if the Abbey might or might not be 'there', the 'vagrant dwellers' are, and their experiences disrupt an otherwise static landscape and memory of it. Within the poem and beyond their role in the opening 23 lines, they ultimately fade out altogether. The dwellers of Wordsworth's Wye facilitate his own personal changes across time and space, and then disintegrate. He writes:

> Therefore I am still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
> And what perceive…   (ll. 103–8)

One is left supposing that poetically-subjunctive yet historically-real dwellers or hermits here are included under 'the mighty world', denying clarification whether they, or their smoke, were actually 'perceived' or merely 'half-created'. Folding the smoke into the rest of the 'mighty world' invites interpretations such as those that Gravil cites, which link these key moments to contemporary political or literary figures. But such readings re-silence the dwellers to whom Wordsworth calls our attention, and whose presence even Gravil acknowledges. In a similar tone, Rzepka writes that 'whatever the location, number, status, or condition of the unfortunates living at the Abbey in 1770, 1775, and 1784, they all but vanish from Tintern's travel narratives between 1788 and 1797, and begging disappears entirely'.[43] In addition to trivialising the plight of contemporary 'unfortunates', Rzepka here elevates travel writings as factual historical sources, demonstrating how, to recite Morgan, the 'picturesque' continues to take precedence over the 'true'. Such accounts make even greater efforts to hide the 'truth' of contemporary poverty than Wordsworth does in 'Tintern Abbey', and collectively suggest that if this 'truth' must be reluctantly accepted, it need not have any discernible effect on our appreciation of the poem in which it is contained.

Focusing on and expanding upon this 'truth', here by consulting historical scholarship and other contemporary English responses to the area, reveals that Wordsworth's pictures of Tintern Abbey and the Wye harmonise with those of other travellers. These other resources confirm that not only was there widespread poverty among indigenous and transplanted people, but that it was also not nearly as antique as the river or even the Abbey. The spike in tourism that took travellers to Cardiganshire brought them also to Monmouthshire, and local inhabitants played an identical role to that which Barnes describes above. The Duke of Beaufort began his monumental 'cleansing' of Tintern Abbey in 1756, which included erecting a fence and employing guides to receive and inform visitors, and generally making the Abbey inviting to people from the outside. The renovations came to facilitate what Julian Mitchell describes as the traveller's desires when visiting such sites:

> People [i.e., tourists] wanted to be able to ponder the brevity of human life, the humbling of the mighty, and the lowering moral effects of Catholic monasticism, without tripping over bits of old choirscreen. Another century and the ivy, which had added so much to Tintern's charm for the first visitors, was removed on the grounds that it was destroying the ruin. Natural decay cannot be permitted at tourist sites; ruins that become too ruinous cease to be picturesque.[44]

As virtually the entire Welsh tour canon evidences, the indigent play an essential role in the tourists' 'ponderings'. Yet their status is difficult to place; they do not represent the 'natural decay' that the ivy does, and it is not their existential brevity that travellers had in mind when waxing on the 'brevity of human life'. Within Mitchell's formulation they would probably be grouped with the 'old choirscreen' over which visitors hoped not to trip. However, as we see in the writings of William Gilpin, their presence is indispensable because through them the travelling observer assumes that s/he possesses a power of appreciating the picturesque that the locals do not.

Gilpin delineates how human works and habitations are subsumed into the natural for foreign observers. He writes that 'The *ornaments* of the Wye may be ranged under four heads – *ground* – *wood* – *rocks* – and *buildings*',[45] fusing manmade architecture with the earth. He goes

on to combine the present with the historical in his list of appropriate buildings and their ornamental roles:

> The various *buildings*, which arise every where on the banks of the Wye, form the last of its *ornaments*; abbeys, castles, villages, spires, forges, mills, and bridges. One or other of these venerable vestiges of the past, or chearful habitations of the present times, character-ize almost every scene.[46]

The traveller thus assumes authority over nature, historical buildings, and 'present' 'habitations' altogether, which places him in a strong position to critique those who occupy them. Gilpin exemplifies this later, when recounting his time at Tintern Abbey. Gilpin calls atten-tion to vagrant dwellers and their insufficient veneration of 'vestiges of the past'. To him the dwellers have permanently jeopardised the site's spiritual integrity (remarkably, more than Henry VIII's dissolution of the abbeys); he writes:

> Among other things in this scene of desolation, the poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants were remarkable. They occupy little huts, raised among the ruins of the monastery; and seem to have no employment, but begging: as if a place, once devoted to indolence, could never again become the seat of industry.[47]

He then goes on to give an account of a woman who, 'shuffling along her palsied limbs, and meagre, contracted body, by the help of two sticks', deceitfully led him to 'her own miserable habitation' in order to relate her story, in a maudlin fashion, after promising to show him to the monk's library.[48] The 'poverty and wretchedness' do not themselves aug-ment the scene, but their association with non-industrious 'indolence' confirms that the observer detects significance that the local inhabit-ants do not. Further, and more importantly for our purposes, Gilpin exemplifies how living human subjects become antiquated along with their physical geography. Their lives have made the place itself 'devoted to indolence', and querying whether it could ever become industrious makes its indolence at once timeless and permanent.

Such a situation also opened a door for 'industrious' travellers to measure both what had been lost and their own powers of framing the sublime. Other people's tours exemplify how this took place and how

Wordsworth's poem fits into contemporary trends. In his 1796 journal of his Welsh tour Richard Colt Hoare writes that 'Tintern strikes us with a religious awe and veneration for the sacred cause for which [it] was erected, and creates the most solemn reflections when we ruminate upon the dust which the earth beneath the broken tombs inclosed'.[49] Around the year 1799, James Wathen copied into his notebook what appears to be a copy of Edward Gardner's 1798 poem 'Written in Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire', and in it he reflects:

> Stranger! who'er thou art, whose ling'ring feet,
> Inchain'd by wonder press this verdant green,
> Where thy inraptur'd sight, the dark woods meet,
> Ah! Pause awhile, and contemplate the scene![50]

The poem then describes the current state of the Abbey by reminding of its old activity, remarking upon 'This hallow'd floor, by holy footsteps trod, | The mould'ring choir, by spreading throwns imbrown'd' (which also corroborates Mitchell's arguments), before closing with a couplet that reflects on the individual's senescence: 'Like [pilgrims], how soon may be thy tott'ring state! | Man's but a temple, of a shorter date!'[51] Such reflections confirm that even where locals are not present (impoverished or not), the scene's admirable qualities are visible only for the visitor and those with whom the visitor shares his experiences.

In contrast to how contemporaries perceived them and how they are addressed by modern scholars, those who lived in and around Tintern at this time were participants in – indeed, oftentimes victims of – what we today understand as industry and were cognizant of the transitions to which they were being subjected. Principal transitions took the form of growths of both industry and population and the hazards that always accompany them. In short, Wordsworth's possible dwellers or hermits might have acquired their lot through a number of circumstances. In 1801 Monmouthshire's population was 47,037 (or 8% of Wales altogether).[52] By the end of the early modern period Tintern housed two forges, a charcoal furnace, and wire making industry (indeed in this early period there was a three-way language problem due to workers being commissioned from Germany), and virtually all of Monmouthshire housed some form of industry.[53] Into the nineteenth century many of the working conditions were quite grim (even if they reflected contemporary conditions throughout Wales and England).

One in five labourers was a child, and there was an increasing need for women to work in the mills and mines as well.[54] All of these workers were at the whim of the market, which caused irregular work and dips in wages.[55] Effects of a deep economic depression in the mid-eighteenth century in Monmouthshire continued in local memory well into the end of the century.[56] This continued local memory manifested itself in crime, riot, and distrust of local gentry leaders who were thought by the poor to have broken away from traditional power relations (echoing the breakdown of the system that so affected Simon Lee on the other side of the country).[57] Such developments were taking place throughout the period of increased tourist activity in the region, and are but a few examples of the 'economic orbits' from which Gravil believes the landscape was spared.

IV Conclusion

Mary-Ann Constantine highlights an issue that affects studies of Wales more broadly (and under which we can file studies of Wordsworth and Wales):

> 'Almost nothing', noted one historian in 2000, 'is known of Welsh loyalism during the 1790s and 1800s'. Not known by whom, one wonders? There are, after all, Welsh ballads to the Duke of York and Nelson, and Welsh eisteddfodic odes praising George III … These have not gone unnoticed by Welsh historians … Here be dragons indeed; from a critical perspective, Welsh culture is still, all too often, off the map.[58]

Just as Wales's eighteenth-century loyalist literature must not be complacently 'unknown', we cannot allow Wordsworth's popularity, then and now, inadvertently to detach him from the literary culture he was writing within, or the local cultures he was writing about. In English-language literature, this culture included literal and figurative forays into various parts of Wales that depended upon contemporary Welsh life and stereotypes. When we approach Wordsworth's poems on Wales as entry points toward a more thorough understanding of the settings, what associations they triggered for readers, and also what histories they hid, we begin to unearth material that informs not only

how we read Wordsworth but also how Wales has operated in 'English' literary scholarship. My accounts of turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Cardiganshire and Monmouthshire are not comprehensive, and much of the scholarship I consult has been accessible for quite a while. Much of the information would have even been accessible to vigilant contemporary intellectuals, such as Wordsworth. But even such introductory overviews, and considerations of how they inform Wordsworth's choices to cast Welsh subjects in Welsh locations, have been not only unconsidered but also in many cases avoided (by, for instance, the curious tendency of relocating Welsh settings to England). Ultimately what has occurred is a repeated generational re-silencing of Wordsworth's silent Welsh figures. Just as Wordsworth did not imbue Simon Lee or Tintern Abbey's dwellers with voices of their own, scholars have shied away from explicating the non-voice of the Welsh 'rustic'. Markedly non-silent is the presence of scholarship that examines Cardiganshire, Monmouthshire, and Wales at this time. Bringing it into the equation begins the process of correcting the images of indigenous Welsh people in these areas as being homogenous relics of ancient history and conventional 'ancient Welsh liberty', and of bringing to light the social and cultural transitions then taking place.

V Acknowledgements

Notes

[1]   William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. by Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2008), p. 171. This edition contains the 1798 and 1800 versions of *Lyrical Ballads* in full. All citations for the Preface and for 'Simon Lee' (pp. 228–30) and 'Tintern Abbey' (pp. 282–6) refer to this edition. The poems' full titles are 'Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman' and 'Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798'.

[2]   William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, p. 174.

[3]   Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 16.

4   Charles R. Rzepka, 'Pictures of the Mind: Iron and Charcoal, "Ouzy" Tides and "Vagrant Dwellers" at Tintern, 1798', *Studies in Romanticism*, 42/2 (2003), 155–85 (p. 166).

5   For an introduction see Gwyn A. Williams, 'Romanticism in Wales', in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds), *Romanticism in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 9–36; and Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Wales and the West', in David Duff (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 121–35.

6   See, for instance, Cathryn Charnell-White, *Bardic Circles: National, Regional and Personal Identity in the Bardic Vision of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 42–81; and Prys Morgan, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybïe: Christopher Davies, 1981).

7   Alan Liu, 'Wordsworth and Subversion, 1793–1804: Trying Cultural Criticism', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 2/2 (1989), 55–101 (pp. 81, 86). Original italics retained.

8   Geraint H. Jenkins, 'The Eighteenth Century', in Philip Henry Jones and Eiluned Rees (eds), *A Nation and its Books: A History of the Book in Wales* (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 1998), pp. 109–22 (p. 110). For the expression 'mountain Welsh, great or small', Jenkins includes the following reference: A. H. Dodd, *A History of Wrexham* (Wrexham: Hughes, 1957), p. 237. The quotation appears to originate in a description by the eighteenth-century Welsh sport writer Charles James Apperley ('Nimrod') of the eighteenth-century antiquarian Philip Yorke ('Erddig'). See *https://biography.wales/articles/s-APPE-JAM-1779*; *https://biography.wales/article/s-YORK-PHI-1743*.

9   David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 150.

10   Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, p. 151. See also pp. 151–4.

11   Richard Gravil, *Wordsworth's Bardic Vocation, 1787–1842* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 163.

12   Mike Benbough-Jackson, *Cardiganshire and the Cardi, c.1760–2000: Locating a Place and its People* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p. 37.

13   For an overview and introductions to the Welsh Tour see *Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour (1760–1820)* website: *www.curioustravellers.ac.uk/en/tours-page*. See also Hywel M. Davies, 'Wales in English Travel Writing, 1791–8: The Welsh Critique of Theophilus Jones', in *Welsh History Review*, 23/3 (2007), 65–93.

14   David Barnes, 'Romantic Travellers and the Blessed Ford', *Ceredigion*, 17/3 (2015), 61–72 (p. 65).

15   Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, pp. 157–8.

16   Samuel Rush Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan* (London: T. Bensley, 1808). Of this text Benbough-Jackson writes: 'Meyrick, lawyer, antiquary and author of Cardiganshire's first history... connected a belief in the supernatural with the less wealthy portion of the county… The majority of the county's population, therefore, was regarded as not being imbued with reason'. See *Cardiganshire and the Cardi*, p. 44.

17   Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan*, p. clxv.

18   Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan*, p. clxxviii.

19   Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan*, p. clxxxi.

20   Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan*, p. cclii–ccliii.

21   Meyrick, *The History and Antiquities of Cardigan*, pp. ccliii, cclxx.

22   See Alun Eirug Davies, 'Enclosures in Cardiganshire, 1750–1850', *Ceredigion*, 8 (1976), 100–40.

23   For more on life in Cardiganshire in this period see Alun Eirug Davies, 'Some Aspects of the Old Poor Law in Cardiganshire, 1750–1834', *Ceredigion*, 6/1 (1968), 1–44; and 'Wages, Prices, and Social Improvements in Cardiganshire, 1750–1850', *Ceredigion*, 10/1 (1984), 31–56.

24 Eurwyn Wiliam, '"Home-made Homes": Dwellings of the Rural Poor in Cardiganshire', *Ceredigion*, 12/3 (1995), 23–40 (p. 24).

25 See David W. Howell, 'The Agricultural Community of Cardiganshire in the Eighteenth Century', *Ceredigion*, 12/1 (1993), 64–86 (p. 64).

26 Howell, 'The Agricultural Community of Cardiganshire', p. 79.

27 Some scholarship on 'Simon Lee' offering alternative perspectives includes: Brian McGrath, 'Wordsworth, "Simon Lee", and the Craving for Incidents', *Studies in Romanticism*, 48/4 (2009), 565-82; Andrew L. Griffin, 'Wordsworth and the Problem of Imaginative Story: The Case of "Simon Lee"', *PMLA*, 92/3 (1977), 392–409; Arnd Bohm, 'Nimrod and Wordsworth's "Simon Lee": Habits of Tyranny', *Romanticism*, 8/2 (2002), 131–60.

28 James Prothero, *Wordsworth and Welsh Romanticism* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 11. The latter reference is to where Wordsworth ascends Snowdon in *The Prelude*.

29 Liz Pitman, 'Monmouthshire Journeys: The Visits to Monmouthshire of Sarah Eardley-Wilmot (nee Haslam) in 1795 and 1802', in *The Monmouthshire Antiquary: Proceedings of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association*, 21 (2005), 65–75 (p. 65). She clarifies that the Wye tour 'admittedly begins in England but ends in Wales', with this ending of course being signalled in part by Tintern Abbey.

30 Damian Walford Davies and Tim Fulford, 'Introduction: Romanticism's Wye', *Romanticism*, 19/2 (2013), 115–25 (p. 115). Their quotation refers to l. 39.

31 J. Gwynfor Jones, 'The Gentry of Gwent and the Welsh Language after the Acts of Union', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 18 (2002), 65–83 (p. 65).

32 See Jones, 'The Gentry of Gwent' p. 68.

33 David Williams, *The History of Monmouthshire* (London: 1796), pp. 348, 327–8.

34 Prys Morgan, '"A Kind of Sacred Land": Iolo Morganwg and Monmouthshire', *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 27 (2011), 127–33 (p. 129).

35 Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, p. 30.

36 Morgan, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance*, p. 100.

37 For a different historical reading of the hermit in these lines, see Damian Walford Davies, *Presences that Disturb: Models of Romantic Identity in the Literature and Culture of the 1790s* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), pp. 8–54. Within this Davies includes an informative chronicle of other interpretations of the hermit.

38 'dweller, n.' and 'vagrant, n. and adj.' OED Online. Oxford University Press *http://www.oed.com* (accessed 7 October 2020). Note that Wordsworth's 'vagrant Bee' from *Vernal Ode* is the contemporary example for the latter definition of 'vagrant' (adj., sub-definition 3.b).

39 Gravil, *Wordsworth's Bardic Vocation* p. 180.

40 Gravil, *Wordsworth's Bardic Vocation*, pp. 182–3. See Nicolas Roe, *The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 130–4.

41 For more on Thelwall in this period see Davies, *Presences that Disturb*, pp. 193–240.

42 See David Fairer, 'Revisiting "Tintern Abbey": The Challenge of the Familiar', *Romanticism*, 19/2 (2013), 179–87.

43 Rzepka, 'Pictures of the Mind', p. 166.

44 Julian Mitchell, 'Piercefield and the Wye Valley Tour, 1740–1800', in Ralph A. Griffiths, Prys Morgan and Madeleine Gray (eds), *Gwent County History: Volume 3, The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536–1780* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, 2009), pp. 381–91 (p. 384).

45 William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye* (London: R. Blamire, 1782; repr. Richmond, Surrey: Richmond Publishing Co., 1973), p. 10. Original italics retained.

46 Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 14.

47 Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 36.

[48] Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 36.

[49] National Library of Wales MS 16988-9C, pp. 322–4. A separate unpublished tour journal does not even imbue the ruins with these qualities: 'The Ruin when you come to is no compensation full well the trouble you are at in getting there for there cannot be a worse road'. NLW MS 11492B, p. 40.

[50] NLW MS 135C, ll. 1–4. For Gardner, see Paula R. Feldman and Daniel Robinson, eds., *A Century of Sonnets: The Romantic-Era Revival 1750–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 97–8; Crystal B. Lake, 'The Life of Things at Tintern Abbey', *The Review of English Studies*, 63/260 (2012), 444–65.

[51] NLW MS 135C, ll. 6-7, 13–14.

[52] W. T. R. Pryce, 'Population and Population Movements', in Chris Williams and Sian Rhiannon Williams (eds), *The Gwent County History: Volume 4, Industrial Monmouthshire, 1780–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press on behalf of the Gwent County History Association, 2011) pp. 1–33, (p. 2).

[53] John Evans, 'Early Industrial Development' in *Gwent County Vol. 3*, pp. 352–64. See also Arthur Clark, *The Story of Monmouthshire, Vol. 2: From the Civil War to the Present Times* (Monmouth: Monnow Press, 1979), pp. 25–36.

[54] Davies, 'Enclosures in Cardiganshire' pp. 108–11; Bill Jones, 'The Coal Industry' in *Gwent County Vol. 4*, pp. 87–111 (p. 92).

[55] Jones, 'The Coal Industry', p. 93.

[56] Philip Jenkins, *The Making of a Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry 1640–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 50. See also Rzepka.

[57] See Geraint Jenkins, *Literature, Religion and Society in Wales 1660–1730* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978), pp. 96–100. This area would within a few decades' time be the primary location of the Scotch Cattle popular movement. See, for instance, David J. V. Jones, *Before Rebecca: Popular Protests in Wales 1793–1835* (London: Allen Lane, 1973).

[58] Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Introduction: Writing the Revolution in Wales', in Mary-Ann Constantine and Dafydd Johnston (eds), *'Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt': Essays on Wales and the French Revolution* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), pp. 1–10 (p. 3). Constantine does not identify the historian in question; the quotation originates from: Jennifer Mori, *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution* ([2000] Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 84.