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Examination of the links between science and literary history is providing valuable new insight for scholars across a range of disciplines. In *Wordsworth and the Geologists* John Wyatt explores the hitherto unexamined relationship between a major Romantic poet and a group of scientists in the formative years of a new discipline, geology. Wordsworth's later poems display extensive knowledge of contemporary geology and a preoccupation with many of the philosophical issues concerned with the developing science of geology. Letters and diaries of a group of leading geologists reveal that they knew, and discussed their subject with, Wordsworth. Wyatt shows how the implications of such discussions challenge the simplistic version of 'two cultures', the Romantic–literary against the scientific–materialistic, and reminds us of the variety of interrelating discourses current between 1807 (the year of the foundation of the Geological Society of London) and 1850 (the year of Wordsworth's death).

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This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again and again by what Wordsworth called those 'great national events' that were 'almost daily taking place': the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanization, industrialization, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion and literature were reworked in texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Biographia Literaria*; gender relations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Don Juan*; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of response or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of 'literature' and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.

The categories produced by Romanticism have also been challenged by recent historicist arguments. The task of the series is to engage both with a challenging corpus of Romantic writings and with the changing field of criticism they have helped to shape. As with other literary series published by Cambridge, this one will represent the work of both younger and more established scholars, on either side of the Atlantic and elsewhere.

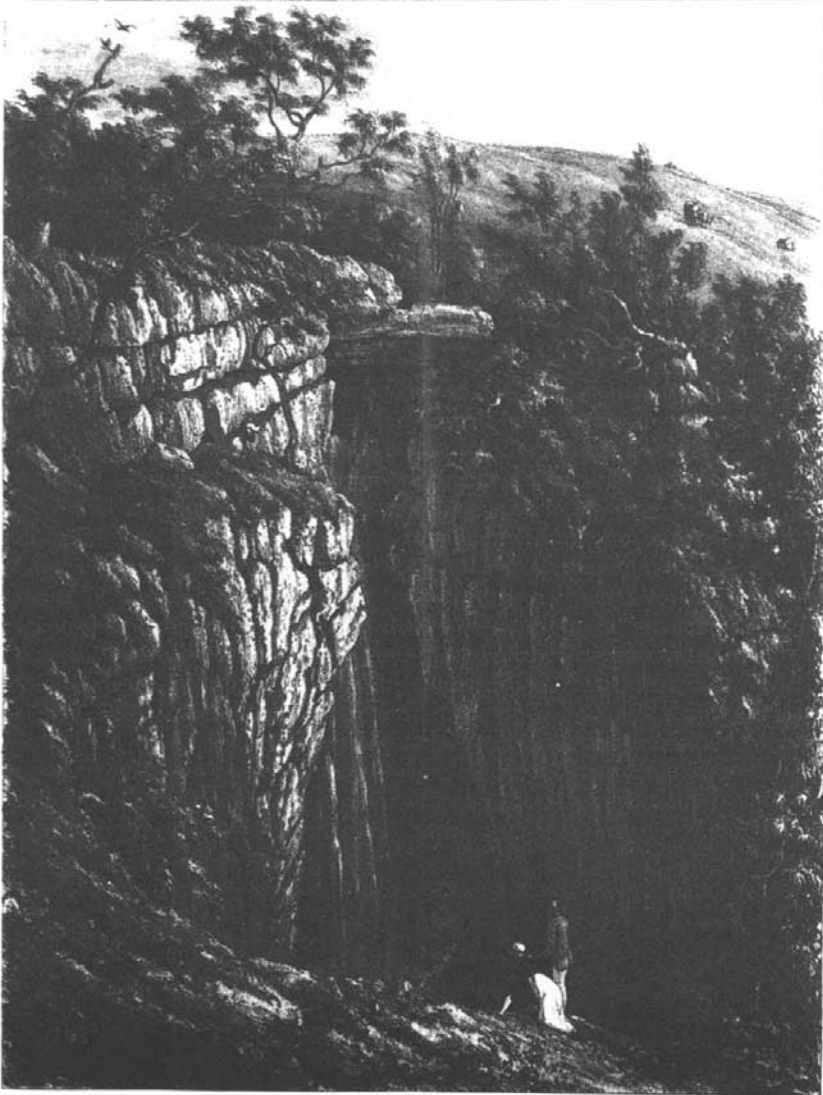
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William Westall's etchings of the limestone features of the neighbourhood of Ingleton, Yorkshire, drawn in 1818, include closely observed geological features, such as this cavern with its faulting, its typically eroded limestone rocks and the cascade of water, no doubt feeding an underground stream. The couple gingerly peering into the depths were not unusual in their interest in these phenomena. Wordsworth knew Westall, who lived near Keswick, and wrote three sonnets on limestone caves and cliffs after looking at the collection of etchings, one of which is the picture above. William Westall married the youngest sister of the geologist, Adam Sedgwick, who became a close friend of William Wordsworth.

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To Susan and Sally who collected minerals and fossils with joy

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Acknowledgements

A search for the origins of this book would be like a geological exploration. Below the surface are strata of experience which have only become significant as I dug deeper and deeper into an enquiry that aimed to explain a literary and scientific landscape of over one hundred and fifty years ago. As an undergraduate, supervised by that remarkable teacher and devoted Wordsworthian, Hugh Sykes Davies, I stored in my memory for much later consideration his exclamation of surprise on re-reading *The Excursion*: ‘Do you know, it’s a poem with considerable qualities!’ The poems of the older Wordsworth remained a quarry to investigate for many years. It was the stimulus of two members of the English section at the Chichester (West Sussex) Institute of Higher Education, the Head of section, Dr Paul Foster and the Reader of English, Dr Margaret Grainger, which gave me the confidence to engage with a theme of literature and natural history. This inter-disciplinary study was one to which they both contributed distinguished scholarship (and Paul still contributes, for, sadly, Margaret died in 1992).

My colleagues awakened a lightly slumbering interest in geology and landscape, which also began as an undergraduate at Cambridge, but in pursuit of a different Tripos. I was fortunate when I began to enquire into the relationship between literature and geology to find a doctorate supervisor in Professor James Sambrook of the University of Southampton whose own mind ranged with keen enquiry into the people who made literature and science. In addition he was a first-rate teacher, so that I found my way firmly but happily to areas of work and standards of presentation which were unknown to a reasonably busy ‘education manager’, to use a current piece of jargon. My daily struggle with language was eased by the generous time given by Paul Foster and Dr John Vickers, who suggested improvements. Their efforts brought rewards to the text, the errors in it remain my own.

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Any enquiry in an inter-disciplinary area depends upon dialogue and discussions, none more so than a study in Romanticism. Perhaps in the endless quest for that most slippery definition of what Romanticism is, we should be satisfied with: 'it is about people talking'. I am very grateful to so many people sharing their ideas with me and engaging with my endless questions about how scientists and writers behave. There are too many to mention here, but if I group them as my colleagues in the Institute, fellow Trustees of the Higher Education Foundation, fellow Council members of the Society for Research in Higher Education, and anonymous referees and identifiable editors of the Cambridge University Press, I shall have covered most of the ground.

Finally, I thank with considerable warmth the practical production of the manuscript by Mrs Debbie Bates of the Institute and the management of my time by my personal assistant, Mrs Isabel Cherrett, both of whom took a keen interest in my work.

Abbreviations

WORDSWORTH MAIN TEXTS

- WP* (followed by volume number): *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* eds. de Selincourt, E. and Darbishire, H. Five volumes I: 1963, II: 1944, III: 1954, IV: 1970, V: 1972. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prose*: *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* 1974, eds. Owen, W. J. B. and Smyser, J. W. Three volumes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- WL* (followed by volume number): *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Hill, A. G. Eight volumes: 1967, 1969, 1970, 1978, 1979 (volume IV 1821–1828 originally numbered erroneously as III). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prelude*: William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850* 1979 eds. Wordsworth, J., Abrams, M. H., Gill, S. New York and London: Norton, W. W.
- Cornell texts: referred to by editor's name: all Ithaca, Cornell University Press:
 Darlington, B. ed. 1977 *Home at Grasmere*.
 Butler, J. ed. 1979 *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*.
 Curtis, J. ed. 1983 *Poems in Two Volumes, 1800–1807*.
 Ketcham, C. J. ed. 1989 *Shorter Poems 1807–1820*.
- DWJ*: *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* 1941 ed. de Selincourt, E. London, Macmillan.

GEOLOGISTS' TEXTS

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GBG, CUL, or UCL: | Cambridge University Library or University College London. Collections of G. B. Greenough's papers (followed by box number or notebook number). The Cambridge University Library collection of Greenough papers has been moved recently to University College London. |
| GBGGS: | Geological Society, London, G. B. Greenough collection. |
| DCLAS or CULAS: | Dove Cottage Library, Adam Sedgwick correspondence; Cambridge University Library, Sedgwick collection (Hughes, T. M. bequest) (followed by box or letter number). |
| DCLW: TCAS or TCW: | Dove Cottage Library, Whewell correspondence. Trinity College Wren Library Cambridge, Sedgwick or Whewell collection. |
| Douglas: | Whewell's biographer: Douglas, S. 1881 <i>The Life and Selections from the Correspondence of William Whewell</i> . |
| Todhunter: | Whewell's scientific biographer: Todhunter, I, 1876 <i>William Whewell. An Account of his Writings</i> . |