Romantic Organicism and the Concept of Home

What if man’s homelessness consisted in this, that man still does not even think of the real plight of dwelling as the plight? Yet as soon as man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that calls mortals into their dwelling.

-Martin Heidegger ‘Building Housing Dwelling’

In what follows I develop a critical assessment of the organic ontological worldview that was articulated during the romantic period, roughly taken here to be between 1780–1850. Developing the modern notion of ‘home’ as a tributary of this organicism, I contend that this philosophical narrative becomes key for of a number of British romantic poets and examine two corresponding poems from arguably the most philosophical of these poets: S. T. Coleridge and P. B. Shelley. In so doing, I hope to illustrate how this idea of the sanctity of home in an age when the human subject had become, as Jay Bernstein has termed it, “de-worlded.” In my assessment, the human subject has become spiritually homeless, an idea rooted in the concomitant concept of romantic organicism, which countered the essentially mechanistic physics that had dominated philosophy and the natural sciences since the epoch of Descartes and Newton.

To begin, I shall briefly define ‘romantic organicism’ by delineating this change in ontological sensibility in its various forms, from the monism of Spinoza, through the Früherromantik, to the absolute idealism of F. W. Schelling. Moreover, I locate these organic sensibilities alongside several differing views of home that can be discerned in both the romantic tradition and the current intellectual precis. Lastly, I offer the latter poetic hermeneutics of Heidegger, as a third organic way of thinking about our relationship with the notion of home and rereading the poetics of the English romantics. I conclude by suggesting that the current ‘culture wars’ are in one respect genealogically connected to these developing themes of liberal modernity that were originally interrogated by the romantics and German idealists and later expanded upon by Heidegger.
Home is where the Organic Hearth Is?

The concept of ‘home’ pursued in this chapter is linked closely to a critical idea of modernity—the philosophical idea of organicism. The concept of the organic itself is of course as old as the concept of home. Still, they both became a combined and vitally living idea under the aegis of the philosophical romanticism that came to the intellectual fore in Europe just after the French Revolution and the demise of the ancien régime. The organic explored as an aesthetic instead of a more psychological manner, was famously initiated by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), in which he utilized the scholastic principles of *compositum* and *totum* to delineate the organic in his critical and aesthetic philosophy. The organic *Naturphilosophie* developed by Schelling and his close friend Hegel was a direct response to Kant’s third *Critique*, and was instantiated in order re-home the putative human subject of a de-worlded subjectivity, thus providing a firm bedrock for the new natural and logical sciences.

This new sense of homelessness in the world arose in part as a reaction to the privileging of the transcendental subject in modernity, a move that abstracted humanity from the more communitarian locale in which it had dwelled in the classical and pre-Enlightenment ages. This abstract conception of the individual, which also led to the original romantic longing for a bygone classical ‘golden age’ and in part the medieval world from which the early modern subject had been jettisoned. This particularly new sense of homelessness had also led to novel conceptions of human migrancy and even a new sense of boundaries and borders—both physical and psychological. On the one hand, this would lead to a new cosmopolitanism, whilst on the other, a sense of romantic primitivism and yearning for connection to the culture, traditions, language and soil of one’s homeland. This sense of primitivist organicism was famously developed in various guises by Prussian thinkers such as Hamann, Herder, and Hegel.

This post-Enlightenment de-worlded notion of home and homelessness can be seen even today, at the globally-holistic, localized-parochial and individual-subjective levels respectively. At the global and geopolitical end of the scale, Jacques Derrida has explored the contradictions of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism as articulated in Kant’s most political work, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795). Derrida teases out the notion of modern cosmopolitanism
in its necessary and ambivalent relationship to the unavoidably parochial sense of organic nationhood:

If Kant takes great care to specify that this good or common place covers ‘the surface of the earth,’ it is doubtless so as not to exclude any point of the world or of a spherical and finite globe (globalisation), from which an infinite dispersion remains impossible; but it is above all to expel from it what is erected, constructed, or what sets itself up above the soil: habitat, culture, institution, State, etc. All this, even the soil upon which it lies, is no longer soil pure and simple, and, even if founded on the earth, must not be unconditionally accessible to all comers.  

Therefore, there are already inherent contradictions in the new global political economy borne of Enlightenment reason, which are connected to a newly globalized world, and reckoned with in the political space of sovereignty and borders. This sense of organic sovereignty, of a cultural primitivism of the soil, and a localized vision of home is just one of a number of unavoidable contradictions inherent in of the DNA of modern Liberalism and the Enlightenment project of reason.

More recently, and at the more parochial end of the scale, Roger Scruton has also expounded the theory of oikophilia, the love of one’s home, as a natural aspect of the human condition. From Scruton’s conservative perspective, there are inherent dangers in the connection of oikophilia with the cosmopolitan environmental movement, which for Scruton entails a loss of local character and identity. He goes as far as to use Milan Kundera’s term uglification in respect to things such as wind turbines off the UK coast, which he contends needlessly destroy the aesthetics of the landscape—an aesthetics partly spawned from a cultural primitivism itself so celebrated by the romantics. Scruton argues that a return of power and decision making to local communities and parishes would itself produce a more organic green political response to a very mechanical problem. He writes,

French environmentalism is the child of pays réel conservatives like Gustave Thibon and Jean Giono, while the German Greens have inherited some of the romanticism of the early twentieth-century Wandervogel movement, as well as the vision of home and
settlement so beautifully expressed by the German Romantic poets and taken up in our time both by the ex-Nazi Martin Heidegger and, in a more lucid and liberal vein, by his Jewish student Hans Jonas.\(^5\)

It appears that in whatever direction one faces—whether the cosmopolitan or the more parochial—and upon whichever bent your political sympathies lie—one of the major dilemmas of modernity is our spiritual and territorial sense of our home on earth—a sense of home which has become challenged by both the industrial and the Kantian ‘Copernican revolution’ in philosophy.

Moreover, on an individual—and by extension cultural level—the sense of home has also become politically embroiled within the precarious postmodern realm of identarianism and conversely, identarianism. Bonnie Honig has written of contested subjectivities and identities that, in light of a postmodern critique, are far more complex than the post-Kantian binary position outlined by Derrida; and far less stable than the conservative essentialist position delineated by Scruton. In citing postcolonial feminist thinkers such as Bell Hooks, Honig claims that the concept of a stable home is an unattainable fantasy, yet one that various individuals are prone to strive for as:

a place free of power, conflict, and struggle, a place—an identity, a private realm, a form of life, a group vision—unmarked or unriven by difference and untouched by the power brought to bear upon it by the identities that strive to ground themselves in its place.\(^6\)

Therefore, contested subjectivities, narratives and identities such as that of an African American woman living under the ‘double voiced’ discourse of both patriarchy and domestic racial prejudice necessarily inculcate resistance, adjustment and negotiation as the basic elements of a human agent’s constructed and unstable identity. Consequently, it seems problematic, if not impossible, in light of recent postcolonial theory, to sustain, at least in many ethnographic instances, an essentialist sense of home and hearth.

Given the complexities of the simple idea of home in a modernity at once punctuated by diasporas, industrial and economic relocation, imperialism and sociological fluctuation, it is perhaps more important than ever to at least philosophically trace a fundamental sense of home in the organicism that was first given serious philosophical attention by the thinkers who were
reacting to the dawn of the modern philosophical period after the instantiation of Rene Descarte’s dualistic ontology of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.

The romantics themselves, both in Germany and Britain indeed heeded the drive towards a sense of place and home within the natural world, whether in the conservative primitivism of Robert Burns or the millenarian promise of an earthly home for the imaginative poet as expressed in Wordsworth’s delightful *Home at Grassmere* (1800). There were also more proto-cosmopolitan theories of home such as that expounded by Novalis, who with the characteristic German sense of *sehnsucht*, identified home in philosophical terms as *Gefühl*, or the sense that philosophy is “really homesickness, the drive to be at home everywhere.” The philosopher is in this sense paradoxically at home in not being at home—this is his natural dwelling. Thus, even when we hearken back 200 hundred years or so, we can still discern the sense of both *oikophilia* in Burns, Wordsworth and Coleridge and a more *cosmopolitan* sense of home in the work of a poet such as Novalis, through his aesthetic of the poetic *Monolog*, the fragment and his exploration of *Gefühl*. In the following section I shall outline the romantic period’s organicism before moving on to the particular tendencies that characterise both the romantic and more specifically, idealist developments of this narrative.

**Romantic Organicism**

After Immanuel Kant responded to the epistemic limits of the mechanistic worldview as promulgated by Newton, Descartes and Spinoza, with his regulatory organicism, as expounded in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), a succession of philosophers including Fichte, Schelling and the Frühromantik had developed models of the organic in ways to describe the world and the universe in a post-Kantian praxis, and in order to find a back door around Kant’s dualistic model of the phenomenal and the noumenal world. Critical reactions such as those of Jacobi, Reinhold, Hölderlin and eventually the absolute idealism of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, culminated in a worldview that combined Spinoza’s logical monism and Leibniz’ internal entelechy. However even though an organic worldview had been ushered in under these philosopher’s aegis, this view itself had differing variants and epistemological implications.

Kant’s regulatory organism was devised based upon his critical philosophy and his transcendental idealism, which retained a logical dualism between the subject and the object. His
main reasons for holding his organicism as regulative (as supposed to apophantic), were firstly that we cannot extrapolate from the transcendental nature of human knowledge and cannot project aspects such as purpose and will onto the natural world—something strongly disputed by Schopenhauer and the tradition that traced this philosophical path; secondly, we only have true cognition of things we can create ourselves through use of our transcendental categories—a notion that, if correct, means that with the twentieth century development of genetic engineering and modification, we therefore now can have fully privileged access to the realm of the natural world; and finally, Kant’s attack on hylozoism, which stems from his post-Newtonian notion of inertia—where a change in matter must have an external cause, which is in effect a rejection of Leibniz’ metaphysical theory of monadology and by extension his metaphysics of entelechy. This, however, is also a notion that had been not only challenged by the then-contemporary empirical science of epigenesis, advocated by thinkers such of Blumenbach, but also more recently has been challenged by current developments in epigenetics.

The major organicist response to Kant’s regulative organicism was that promulgated originally by Schelling: his theory of Naturphilosophie. Schelling’s theory involved the postulation that the differences between aspects such as the ideal and material or the subject and object were differences only in degree but not in kind. This led to his famous dictum that “Nature should be visible spirit and spirit invisible nature.” In essence, this is tantamount to a new epistemic epoch, which posits Naturphilosophie as a transcendental epistemic foundation. This culminated in Schelling’s famous “identity philosophy” which was posited as an answer to the absolute ego of J. G. Fichte, itself ultimately a choice between the positing of the absolute ego on the world or a dogmatic realism—a fortiori implying a stark form of dualism—as well as Kant’s dualistic ontology. This new system of romantic metaphysics, which was in part an answer to new questions that were being raised in the new sciences, produced an intoxicating cocktail of Fichtean idealism, Leibnizean pluralism and even Spinozist realism As Frederick Beiser claims:

It is fair to say that, by organizing Spinoza’s universe, the romantics reinterpreted it along Leibnizian lines. Their reinterpretation of Spinoza was essentially a synthesis of Spinoza and Leibniz. The romantics fused Leibniz’s víz viva with Spinoza’s single infinite substance, creating a vitalistic pantheism or pantheistic vitalism. If they accepted Spinoza’s monism, they rejected his mechanism; if they rejected Leibniz’s pluralism,
they accepted his vitalism, his organic concept of nature implicit within his dynamics. It was with this remarkable fusion of Leibniz and Spinoza—the two greatest dogmatic metaphysicians of the seventeenth century—that the romantics would attempt to solve the aporiae of the post-Kantian age.13

Paradoxically, this organic idea of differences of degree also had a strong connection to Spinoza’s mechanistic model, which viewed everything as part of a single substance, of which all of the universe was an attribute—Spinoza’s famous pantheism or Deus sive Natura. However, Spinoza’s universe was frozen and did not entail any ontological economy of degree—in effect a human subject is on the same ontological footing as a rock. While this brand of determinism was an anodyne in terms of ethics; Sartre’s “man is condemned to be free” becomes, in light of Spinoza’s Ethics (1677), replaced by another more limited sense of freedom, whereby one might also paradoxically contest that we are free to feel limited by fate; this limitation means that we are not haunted by the existential sense of angst and abandonment posited by Sartre—less choice gives us a more ethical approach to our everyday existence, resulting in fortitudo (strength of mind) and generositas (nobility). The only element of freedom in Spinoza’s is the sui generis God, who manifests his freedom through the attribute of Natura Naturans: God as the self-creating cause exhibits his freedom in nature—thus there is vitalism in nature—nature is vitalism. This active capacity of nature is also deconstructed in Spinoza to its passive counterpart: Natura Naturata. God can be conceived as nature and as nature as the concretization of God’s will. Hence Spinoza leaves the space open for both a deistic element in his philosophy as Natura Naturans and a scientific element, inviting the possibility of measurement and observation, Natura Naturata.

Significantly, Spinoza has to be understood in the context of the Cartesian, mechanistic aura in which he bathed and one sees that his pantheism opens the door to the new natural sciences, whilst preserving space for a pantheistic manifestation of God. This Spinozist monism and realism were to have a significant influence on both the later idealists and romantics. However, the notion of a frozen universe was one in which the latter thinkers were disinclined to find themselves. Both the romantics and the idealists valued the role of freedom in the world, perhaps more so after the French Revolution of 1789; they therefore took Spinoza’s monistic realism as their hammer to shatter the dualistic impasse or de-worlded subjectivity left in the wake of Kant,
and the equally de-worlded egoism of Fichte, and married it with immanent teleology—in order to produce a monistic organicism, equipped to reinstall the human subject back home in the world, whilst retaining a unique position for the human as the gnostic head of this organic universe—due to a teleology that allowed for an economy of naturalistic realism that culminated in the human mind as the configuration of this single substance. For both the romantics and the idealists this was the sphere of reason and aesthetics.

However, in examining the philology of organicism, and in light of its current use, one clearly sees that, given current environmental, farming and climate concerns, this type of organicism in some sense feels highly anthropocentric, with its positioning of the human subject at the apex of the organic family tree. Spinoza’s original mechanistic ontology was also a reaction against the then prevailing theological dogma of his time, which he also felt was too anthropocentric. Spinoza’s model of the universe became the great leveler of the time; here was a system where man was not at the centre of the picture. However, it did, importantly, allow the natural sciences programme to explore a whole logical picture that was waiting to be discovered in the Natura Naturata. Furthermore, even though the picture was self-evidently mechanistic, in light of the Cartesian physics to which it responded, a sense of the organic was preserved in the symbiotic notion of the Natura Naturans. The freedom was of a metaphysical agency and was attributable a pantheistic God and in this sense this universe also corresponds to Schelling’s notion of nature as visible spirit and spirit as visible nature—although without the anthropocentric agency or teleological implications of Schelling’s System of Transcendental Idealism (1800). The main anachronistic concern with the romantic form of idealism is the fact that it may have culminated in a relationship with the planet that has borne dire ecological consequences, whether foreseen or not.

There is, I would argue, a third form of phenomenological organicism to which I will turn shortly, and which I contend was most apparently present in the work of a number of the canonical English poets of the nineteenth century. Before I examine this, I will turn to the romantic troping of “home” and the place of romantic agency into the broader universe at large.

**Romantic and Idealist Visions of an Organic Home**
There is also an historical situational irony at work here, in that the philosophers who came after Spinoza removed our place at home in the universe, by introducing a new form of dualism between the human subject and the material world, one that for Fichte in his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) meant a stark choice between absorption into a dogmatic realism, or the post-1789 hypostasis of the absolute human ego at the ontological apex of the ontological pecking order; and which for Kant had meant the separation of the noumenal and phenomenal realms. This loss of our home in the universe had prompted the later organicism of Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel and their seminal document, *The Oldest System Programme of German Idealism* [SP] (1796).

However, the organic vision of the universe, and by extension our home within it, soon became bifurcated and one can discern a romantic version of the organic and a more strictly idealist view of the organic universe. This is arguably a vital source of the troping of home in English romantic poetry that I will discuss below; a trope that answers to the post-Kantian aporia and dislocation from the Spinozist sense of home within the great chain of being.

Whilst the path to organicism can be traced on the selfsame genealogical path displayed above, the response of the *Frühromantik* differed in very different ways from that of idealists such as Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel. The German romantics initially postulated a similar vision for an organic view of the world as was adumbrated in the *SP*, which flagged the prominence of a new religious mythology of aesthetics and reason; “People without aesthetic sense are our pedantic philosophers [Buchstahen Philosophe]. The philosophy of spirit is an aesthetic philosophy. One cannot be spiritual [geistreich] in anything, one cannot even reason spiritually over history—without aesthetic sense.”¹⁴ The idealists and romantics therefore both endorsed the view originally postulated by Schiller¹⁵ about the philosophical importance of aesthetics. They also agreed that the new ideas would be “aesthetic i.e. mythological”. Friedrich Schlegel, the high-priest of the *Frühromantik*, also prognosticated this new aesthetic-mythological discourse and wrote his own *Discourse on Mythology* (1800); however, this vision of mythology was destined to be tied to concepts such as *parabasis, transcendental buffoonery, allegory, wit* and *irony*—a new form of particularly modern mythology—rather than a mythology linked to the realm of public reason, as expounded by the idealists. Schlegel characteristically packs this idea of a new religion and mythology of art into one of his fragmentary *Ideas*, whilst also resembling the *SP* and Schelling’s putative synthesis of Fichtean idealism and realism:
All philosophy is idealism, and there exists no true realism except that of poetry. But poetry and philosophy are only extremes. If one were to say that some people are pure idealists and others very definitely realists, then that remark would be quite true. Stated differently, it means that there exists as yet no wholly cultivated human beings, that there is still no religion.\(^\text{16}\)

This fragment points to the perhaps forever unattainable synthesis of idealism with the only highest form of realism—poetry—a newly organicist form of Spinozist realism; here it seems that Schlegel is indeed concurring with Schelling’s notion that the highest human creative art form, poetry, needs to become the realist organ of idealist philosophy in order for there to become a new mythology or religion. Poetry, and the poet as tolerating “no law above himself”\(^\text{17}\) needs to supersede previous notions of realism. However, as we have seen, the romantic notion of poesy and its ascent to the infinite is necessarily partial and ironic—this is the new realism that faces the newly crowned romantic philosophers, who have poesy as their new philosophical apparatus. The new religion is always yet to come and is of necessity bound by an ultimately unattainable sense of idealism that had been posited by Hegel, Schlegel’s old sparring partner.

The new realism of poetry however, is the sense that the poet truly senses the in media res nature of human experience of the world at large; the only partial (and in this sense Spinozist), sense of the infinite; partial because we can cultivate an intellectual love of God, we can partake in the infinite mind of God, but can never stake an Olympian claim to absolute knowledge as this is only available to the infinite mind of God, which is beyond the temporality of our grammar, and hence poetry.

As Andrew Bowie has claimed:

For Schlegel, then, one is left with the alternative between the evanescent transcending of the sensuous in wit and a failure to represent a transcendent unity in allegory, rather than a way of seeing art as the sensuous manifestation of the infinite. The aptness of these ideas is already evident in the extent to which they become preoccupations of so much modernist art from this time forwards.\(^\text{18}\)
In this sense of romantic allegory or irony, the organic metaphysics at work in romantic art as in some sense less organic than Spinoza’s system. Spinoza’s sense of the human subject as in media res, means that one is within a single substance system and, although not granted the same human freedom as what is instantiated in the romantic/idealistic systems, at least has a definite place within a chain of being; in one sense this Spinozist location provides us with an awareness of a system that is higher than the subjective needs of our wants and desires, and one that, as outlined above, requires a noble adherence to higher preestablished rules that provide us with access to Aristotle’s more communitarian notions of the good life or magnificence; as long as they are adjusted to in good faith.

Moreover, the fact that anything in Spinoza’s system is of necessity no more valued on an economic scale than anything else, points to an ethical system whereby our place within the Natura Naturata means that we are ourselves determined and therefore struggle for mastery in vain—in the philosophical long run. There is no admittance of the infinite senhsucht of romanticism, as in this ethical system, one faces life with dignity and resolve in the face of predetermined necessity. Furthermore, even in the idealistic programme of Naturphilosophie, there are unanswered philosophical problems, which may themselves point to a species of dogmatism lying just under the surface, because of the hypostasis of the transcendental Ego over the natural world on the ontological economic scale. This is the fundamental reason for the romantic irony that pervades the oeuvre of German Romanticism and some areas of English Romanticism, as most clearly elaborated upon by Ann K. Mellor.19 These selfsame tensions are also give rise to the uncertainty about home and hearth, as signaled in certain areas of the romantic tradition.

However, there was one later philosophical giant of the twentieth century, who readdressed our conceptualisation of the world as our home, and developed another form of ‘philosophical romanticism,’ perhaps providing the new mythology or religion for which the earlier romantics and idealists such as Schlegel and Schelling yearned. This thinker attempted to organically rehouse the human subject in its rightful home—locating home as the place where we poetically dwell—Martin Heidegger.

Heidegger’s Organic Language of Home and ‘Dwelling’
Heidegger’s hermeneutics followed Husserl’s call for a ‘return to the things in themselves’ in the form of his hermeneutics of Being. If Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology had once again produced a transcendental subjectivity, Heidegger placed the subject right back into the prepositional _being-towards-which_ and the _Geworfenheit_ (thrownness) of his philosophical hermeneutics of Being. Although Heidegger’s broader treatment of, for example, twentieth-century technology, is of no great interest for the purposes of this chapter, his anti-metaphysical system does share some interesting organic similarities to the systems assessed above. For one, it shares a monistic ontology, whilst placing the subject firmly back _into_ world, and moreover a desire to challenge the representationalism of the Kantian system, whilst concurrently challenging the absolute Ego of Fichte’s idealism. Heidegger’s placing of the subject back into _Weltheit_ (worldhood) that enables the instantiation of a third type of organicism, which gives us an interesting vista through which to reread the poems under discussion below, whilst helping us reframe the ideas of organicism in the early nineteenth century.

In a number of seminal later essays Heidegger develops the notions first elaborated upon in _Being and Time_ (1927) to dizzying heights as he developed his notions of poetic dwelling within the world. He posits in these latter works that poetry is much more than an aesthetic, and in the romantic tradition of Schlegel, Shelley and others, places the poet at the top of the echelons of philosophy. In the self-same tradition, poetry becomes for Heidegger (as it would later for other philosophical romantics such as Richard Rorty), the supreme act of both aesthetic and philosophical creation. This is because poetic thinking arrests or stills Being, enabling one to partake in Being at its deepest level. It is both this privileging of the poetics of higher hermeneutics and the organicism entailed in this situating the human subject in the world—but also in the world of a _non-representational_ ontology—which make Heidegger such a romantic and organic thinker. In _The Origin of the Work of Art_ (1935-6) he writes:

> Projective saying is poetry: the saying of the world and earth, the saying of the arena of their conflict and thus of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealness of what is. Actual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which a people’s world historically arises for it and the earth is preserved as that which remains closed.\(^{20}\)
Heidegger thus sees language not as representing the world but as bringing the world ‘as worldhood’ into phenomenological existence for humanity. In other words—and in one respect, pace the primitivism of previous thinkers such as Herder and Hamann—poetry itself is organic and discloses our worldhood—whilst at the same time closing off the earth to us. Language presents the world for us and without this presencing there would not even be the requirement for philosophical correspondence to something “other”; there would in fact be no earth which is closed to us without it being in the first-place history arising out of language, or as he says elsewhere, “Language is the house of Being.”

Thus, in Heideggerian organicism, the organic and mechanical are borne of language, language which is ultimately a linguistic concrete universal or totum that is not abstracted mechanically out of the various parts of the preexisting world (which would be language as compositum or abstract universal), but in fact precedes them and concretises them in human consciousness—thus it is organic in both the scholastic and the latter idealist sense.

It is strangely paradoxical in that if we reread the romantics through this neoromantic framework, we ascertain that we see in them the origin of—on the one hand—the twentieth-century action of Gestell (framing) the world and thus removing ourselves from a more organic involvement with the world to a more mechanical one, whilst also poeticizing the world in such a way as to actually buan (dwell) in the world of Being. One of Heidegger’s poetic heroes is indeed the German romantic poet Hölderlin, from whom he borrows the phrase “man dwells poetically”. Dwelling in the world is an active verb-al process of doing. In contrast, framing reduces the world by disclosing it in new technological ways that take us further away from a more organic connection or “clearing” of the world. Therefore, the romantic organicism of Schlegel is a long way from dwelling in Being as Heidegger would have it, because it dislocates us from authentic Being by actually disclosing it in such a way as to promote a playful and allegorical distance from it. Whereas Heidegger would have it that authentic poetic thought or writing is organic in such a way as to open Being up to us rather than close it off—even if the earth is in some sense closed to us—because worldhood is opened to us through authentic, poetic, organic language.

Heidegger also reestablishes the epistemic concept of aletheia (disclosure) in the sense that certain artifacts open up a world for us, or disclose our world, which is however not the same as
representationalism, transcendental idealism or empirical realism as postulated by Kant; something to which the post-Kantian romantics and idealists responded to in kind; one may say even that this was a form of world-disclosure into which both latter groups remained subsumed, in terms of the _coherence_ of their thought.

Theoretically, the four-fold nature of Heidegger’s sense of clearing is revealed _through_ poetic thinking, not _to_ or _by_ poetic thinking; the poet thinker or philosopher takes part in the four-fold process, which includes our worldhood of: _earth, sky, mortals_ and _gods_, all functioning in a collective mirroring, all symbiotically _thinging_ together. In examining his concept of “thinging” in the essay, _The Thing_ (1951), he recalls the original German meaning of the word: “gathering” and contests that through the philological twists and turns of context-riven history, we have arrived at the modern etymology of “anything that exists, in any sense”, which is not only an extremely ambiguous meaning but one that has become central to everyday parlance. He sees this as endemic of our new representational disclosure of Being, or our technological sense of the world, from the Greek root of _tikto_: to bring forth or to produce.

In the four-fold of earth, sky, mortals and gods being produced symbiotically, and through language, there is a _clearing_, roughly translated as _ereignen_, whereby the fourfold are _gathered up_ in the old verbal sense of “thing” which thus conjugates to form the verb “thinging.” This symbiotic and verb-al event horizon is key to Heidegger’s answer to Husserl’s call to return to the things themselves; indeed, the _things-in-themselves_ mystification instantiated by Kant is symptomatic of the fact that the verb-al and actionable processes that genuinely open up or presence Being for us have become mystified or, in grammatical terms, _nominalized_ and turned into a series of frozen noun phrases, taking us further than ever away from the originary, actionable nature of language-as-Being—so treasured by the romantics.

Because the word _thing_ as used in Western metaphysics denotes that which is at all and is something in some way or other, the meaning of the name “thing” varies with the interpretation of that which is—of entities. Kant talks about things in the same way as Meister Eckhart and means by this term something that is. But for Kant, that which is becomes the object of a representing that runs its course in the self-consciousness of the human ego. The thing-in-itself means for Kant: the object-in-itself. To Kant, the character of the “in-itself” signifies that the object is an object in itself without reference to the
human act of representing it, that is, without the opposing “ob-“ by which it is first of all put before this representing act. “Thing-in-itself,” thought in a rigorously Kantian way, means an object that is no object for us, because it is supposed to stand, stay put, without a possible before: for the human representational act that encounters it.24

Thus, things thing-ing have become nominalized in our mental grammar and are thus waiting to be re-presented through poetic thought; in actual fact, more than ever in our modern world of techne, whereby representationalism has taken such a firm hold and has reduced things to this gallery of modern Gestell. Consequently, Heidegger’s organicism is verbal, however verbal in the sense of linguistic performativity, gathering the fourfold up for the lighting up or clearing in which we may truly dwell poetically and in which things are thing-ing and thus mutually illuminating their specular presencing. Heidegger’s sense is one of “letting be”—of clearing—in the sense that it does not direct us to a relationship with the products of nature; in authentic “worldhood” the world “worlding” signifies the relationship of a mutually acknowledged ontological mirroring, or a “ringing.” However, the ringing is not a ringing-of-some-thing, because this is in fact the world worlding. As Heidegger writes “Therefore, the round dance does not encompass the four like a hoop. The round dance is the ring that joins while it plays as mirroring.”25 The very verbal process of poetic gathering discloses a world without a sense of ontological distance for us. With this sense of organicism in mind, that I would like to briefly examine the two most philosophical of the English romantic poets, Coleridge and Shelley, and their particular organic encounters in the Vale of Chamonix.

**Organic encounters in the Vale of Chamonix**

S. T. Coleridge’s credentials as a poet were never really in question, his reputation already being a good deal towards being fully secured after his conversational poems with Wordsworth during
the Alfoxden period and the ensuing revolutionary volume of *The Lyrical Ballads* (1798). He recognised Wordsworth’s technical superiority as a poet and thus charged his friend with writing the philosophical epic, *The Recluse*. As a philosopher in his own right however, Coleridge was more successfully penetrating than is often recognized. His heady and eclectic combination of Platonic noesis, Neoplatonism, Behemenism, idealism and his formal logical system of pentads and tetrads all work in the service of a novel system of Coleridgean ‘Ideas’ that involves a multi-level structure crossed by a chiastic centre, ultimately enabling experience through inchoate contemplation that is approximate in many ways to Heidegger’s organic notion of the ‘dwelling in Being’, or in Coleridgean terminology his *ideal realism*.

Shelley’s own philosophical preoccupations were equally diverse, drawing on the deterministic French materialism of thinkers such as Baron d’Holbach, whilst emanating from an atheist centre, which only complicated his youthful thoughts on Godwinian perfectibility, which were cased in a rationalist and *free* conception of history; these fulminations are further complicated by Shelley’s interest in the British empirical tradition and the Humean scepticism in which this logically culminates. Moreover, his Platonic faith in the transcendental notion of the One, expressed poetically in the Demogorgon’s claim in *Prometheus Unbound* that ‘the deep truth is imagless’ in some respects mirrors Coleridge’s faith in inchoate contemplation and aesthetics providing a hieroglyphic cipher to the deeper logos—or for Shelley the One. These elements are what informs Shelley’s *sceptical idealism*. It can certainly be concluded that of the British romantics, these poets were the most philosophically committed, and were both seeking ascent to the logos or a transcendental signified—in one way or another—through aesthetics. Therefore, it is of interest to explicate, in a philosophical light, their relative poetic excursions in the Vale of Chamonix.

Coleridge’s poem “Chamouny; the Hour Before Sunrise. A Hymn” (1802), was in fact written about an experience he had on Scafell Peak, in the British Lake District. In his introductory preamble to the poem in the Morning Post, 11th September, 1802, he had asked “Who would be, who *could* be an atheist in this alley of wonders?” A clear challenge to the militantly atheist Shelley. However, Coleridge had not even seen Chamouny at the time this poem was written, which begs obvious questions about the purported tenor of the poem. However, New Historicist assumptions aside, there are clear philosophical undertones in Coleridge’s depiction of the landscape in moving the poet’s contemplative horizon. In characterising the peak of the
mountain, both Shelley and Coleridge remark the sense of sublime limit placed upon their reason when looking towards the apex—the analogon of the *apeiron*—of the mountain; Coleridge exclaims:

Deep is the sky, and black—transpicuous, deep,
An ebon mass. Methinks thou piercest it
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It seems thy own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habituation from eternity.
Oh dread and silent form! I gazed upon thee
Till thou, still present to my bodily eye,
Didst vanish from my thought. Entranced in pray’r,
I worshipped the invisible alone.
Yet thou, meantime, wast working on my soul,
E’en like some deep enchanting melody,
So sweet, we know not we are list’ning to it.
But I awake, and with a busier mind
And active will self-conscious, offer now,
Not, as before, involuntary pray’r
And passive adoration.

(8-23)

The lyric poet moves from an associationist connection of imagery to a more organic troping; far from the imagery of the peak assuming the traditional and mechanical *penetration* metaphor of the deep sky, the sky becomes an organic “home” for the mountain top—and this has been the case “for eternity”. Moreover, as the speaker experiences the sublime “Oh dread and silent
form!” which begins to work “on my soul’ the poet’s moves, through inchoate contemplation to a purer idea, and as with a palimpsest the original sensory sensation is written upon his soul. However, upon rising from his meditative state, in a move similar to the call for a visionary return in “Kubla Khan”, he calls through his active and “self-conscious” secondary imagination upon the scene to awaken for him, as the objective correlative to his numinous imaginative state.

By way of a series of imperatives he raises the numinous question of creation, “Awake, awake! And thou, my heart, awake!” (24). Before answering his own call “Who with lovely flow’rs/ Of living blue spread garlands at your feet?/ ‘God, God! The torrents, like a shout of nations, Utter…” (54-57). However here is the organic weakness of the poem—whilst it commences similarly to Wordsworth in poems such as Tintern Abbey, by moving from a physical landscape centripetally to the deeper recesses of the poet’s mind and soul, it signal fails to subsequently move in a centrifugal fashion back out towards the landscape, using devices such as Keats’ egotistical sublime.30 Coleridge adopts a position of active calling out towards the theodicy of the landscape, starting from his very corporeality, but fails to imaginatively infuse the world with the imaginative organic tool of poetics that will reflect the creativity of the Natura Naturans; instead Coleridge calls upon the Natura Naturata of the landscape and in reality produces a poem genuinely restricted to the generic limits of a hymn. In Heideggerian terms, he summons the fourfold of the earth, sky, mortals and gods but fails to encapsulate the verb phrase “thinging” of gathering; the imperative mood of the verb fails to successfully switch to the indicative mood of the voice of the poet gathering these elements after summoning them to the forefront of his conscious mind. The elements that often create a ringing and a mirroring in Wordsworth’s vistas, often fail to reach beyond the state of a summons in much of Coleridge’s conversation poems with Wordsworth, and perhaps Coleridge realised this when asking Wordsworth to write the philosophic and imaginative answer to the Milton’s previous epic Paradise Lost.

However, the poem’s final section slows the tone down to a canter and produces Coleridge’s reprise and arguably the best lines of the poem. He once again addresses the sublime mountainscape itself, after listing the preceding metonymic and picturesque elements of the mountain itself, such as “meadow streams” (58), “silent snow mass” (60), “dreadless flow’rs” (61), “ye wild goats” (62). He says “Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth!/ Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills.” (73-74). His tone switches to one of adoration and reverence for the
organic sublimity of the whole, over and above the \textit{compositum} of its metonymic parts. His final lines bring us once again closer to a gathering of the fourfold as he finds his poetic footing in an organic \textit{totum}. However, the elements are called together in these final four lines but there is still a sense of lack…perhaps because we sense the lyric speaker still standing in a sense apart from the \textit{thing itself}; the authentic \textit{fouring} as Heidegger would phrase it is not quite accomplished:

\begin{center}
Thou dread ambassador from earth to heav’n—
Great hierarch, tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell the rising sun,
Earth with her thousand voices calls on God!
\end{center}

(75-78)

The earthly mountain is connected to heaven by the sky and the stars and the sun are also \textit{ringing} in these lines, however perhaps the fact that the mountain is \textit{instructed} to call on God issues in a sense that this is a depiction and not a mirroring. The use of prosopopoeia in calling the mountain “dread ambassador” is perhaps why the best lines fall short of the perfection they call for? The sublimity of the landscape itself is enough to transport the lyric speaker and bring the fourfold together, the very dwelling in this poetic landscape, even for Coleridge the philosopher, in an inchoate manner, is perhaps enough to disclose an organic cipher to the eternal Reason as Logos. I turn now to Shelley’s very different depiction of the same (this time authentic) landscape, 14 years later.

Shelley’s encounter with Mont Blanc in the Vale of Chamonix concludes Mary Shelley’s travelogue \textit{History of a Six Week’s Tour} (1817). Upon the Heideggerian anti-representationalist notion of romantic organicism I offer here, Shelley’s sceptical idealism produces fertile ground in this (at least in part) response to Coleridge’s poem. The address to the power of the imagination as a tool is key to understanding the first part of the poem, as Shelley reflects upon some Coleridgean images, drawn mainly from Coleridge’s seminal poem about both the power and the ironic and fragmentary limits of the secondary poetic imagination: \textit{Kubla Khan} (1817). Shelley’s lines include “caves echoing the to the Arve’s commotion” (30), “the still cave of the witch poesy” (44), “vast caves/ Shine in the rushing torrents’ restless gleam,/ Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling” (120-122). Coleridge’s underground and unconscious rivers and
caverns, that are “measureless to man” (Kubla Khan, 4), are metonymically framed by Shelley as the mountainous tributaries of the Arve—roaring forth from an uncertain source at the top of the mountain—which for Coleridge is the region of eternity—also the symbolic home of the mountain. Concomitantly, for Shelley the cloud-shrouded peak of Mont Blanc is “Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down/ From the ice gulfs that gird his secret throne,/ Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame/ Of lightning through the tempest; thou dost lie.” 15-19). The simile of lightning hints at a possible Promethean allusion, and a possible allusion to Shakespeare’s The Tempest; both allusions potentially humanise the power of the imagination instead of attributing it to God. Shelley further seems to contradict Coleridge in humanist terms by claiming that

-when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
(34-40)

For Coleridge the trance he falls into whilst in contemplation is signified by the perceptual condition of becoming “Entranced in pray’r,/ I worshipped the invisible alone.” Whereas Shelley’s empiricist and rationalist tendencies refer him back to his mind’s dialogue with the external world, Coleridge takes refuge and makes the intuitive leap to theism and to “passive adoration”. Shelley’s mind is far from made up, given his atheism and philosophical influences, with the deeper meaning of this experience of the sublime. This is the reason that Coleridge fails in thoroughly gathering up the fourfold of worldhood; Shelley is gathering up more and more of this experience and thus not setting himself up in a passive relationship with an omnipotent deity, which would mean not allowing the fourfold to properly thing in the first place. Moreover, an unremitting interchange is precisely the verbal way to keep one in the ringing and mirroring exchange of Being, to dwell in the sublimity of the house of Being.
The trope of an organic interchange or positive dialogue with the mirroring elements is further elaborated upon in one of the most famous sections of the poem, where Shelley elaborates upon the truly ambiguous nature of encounters with the sublime:

The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with nature reconciled.
Thou hast a voice, great mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe—not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

(76-83)

However, this anthropomorphism is not of the exact nature as Coleridge’s previous personification. It frames a roughly human aspect but takes an ambiguous turn; it may have a family resemblance to use Wittgenstein, however, it is only a resemblance and as with a lion we can’t truly understand what is said. There is something of an exchange and it may indeed produce the “faith so mild” of Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey;* or it may equally be registered as “awful doubt” which is produced by the overall *unheimlich* (uncanny) effect of a natural event that dislodges us from a “homely” feeling, but in so doing produces an effect of organically rehousing the human subject. This is in either sense (or language game) an exchange, a ‘lesson’ and in whichever way we disclose the experience of the sublime, whether in the Wordsworthian game of the egotistical sublime, or the more Burkean sense of terror and the uncanny, we partake in an exchange, where our subjectivity is interrogated from both within and without and thus placed within an organic web of relations. We are dwelling in the world or *ringing* relations either way, and not in the passively theistic sense adumbrated by Coleridge in his ‘Chamouny’ experience. An experience that signal[y fails to rehouse the human subject in a deeper relationship of continual interjections that necessitate our sense of Worldhood.
The poem’s final lines, notoriously ambiguous, are also perhaps, as with Coleridge, the most organic of the poem, but produce the most explicit statement of the interchange either previously sought for…or intimated by Shelley.

…The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind’s imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

(139-144)

These lines are often read as perfect examples of Shelleyan scepticism, with a retention of the romantic idealism of the aesthetic imagination and its hermeneutic force. This reading couches the poem in the then prevailing ideas of organicism of the romantic period, incorporating the romantic irony or scepticism of the Frühromantik, or the positive Naturphilosophie of the post-Kantian German idealists—or even the transcendental idealism of Kant himself. On my more Heideggerian romantic reading, the rhetorical question indicates that there is an interchange that gives us a home in the world, allowing us to dwell both organically and poetically in the world—both phrases amount to the same thing. The ringing and mirroring of things thinging in the world, the mutual mirroring between dasein and the umwelt (the environment), this “secret law” of course inhabits a sublime mountain such as Mont Blanc. However, it is also a law that “governs all thought” and of necessity “the infinite dome of heaven”. Hence, even though Shelley is a self-avowed atheist, the ringing or mutual disclosure of worldhood necessarily entails fourfolding, thinging (gathering) and apophantic worlding to bring the world fully and comprehensively into existence for us. There could be no actual vacancy, or actually no “world” without the worlding that includes mortals as well as the gods. These elements in effect have a phenomenologically geometrical essence—that call us back to our true home in wordlhood.

Conclusion
To conclude, the philosophical romanticism that I posit here in light of the organicism, aestheticism, idealism and romanticism of the nineteenth-century provides the keys to what I purport to be a stronger and more resilient claim to a home in the world for the human subject, despite the Gestell, or advance of technology and current culture wars that have not only de-historicised our Being-in-the-World but also atomised our sense of home in the world, at not only at a geopolitical and environmental level, but also at a more parochial, personal and community level. The only panacea for this atomisation is a radical and timely re-engagement with our collective sense of worldhood; one less fragmented, alienated and divisive. This may be implemented through timely aesthetic and philosophical engagement that provides for a new aesthetic education of humanity.

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Notes


2. There are of course a number of varying approaches to the concept of home, many of which differ from the ontological/epistemological rendering I offer here in the context of Romanticism. Other signal representations of this concept at differing points in modern intellectual history have been made by Thoreau in Walden (1854), Marx (in terms of the economic labour theory of value) in concepts such as of alienation and private property, in many works but for example the Grundrisse (1973), Freud in terms of unheimlichkeit [the uncanny] (1919); and in their overall oeuvre, Kafka and Kierkegaard in terms of existentialism; significant contributions have more recently been made by George (1996), Rouner (1996), Nussbaum (1996), Ignatieff (1993), Homi K Bhabha (1990) and bell
hooks (1990). Novalis also responds to the irony of his Frühromantik peers by offering music as another type of response to the homelessness, or aporia, of modernity. His theory of the musicality of language as an echo of the infinite play of the universe, leads him to trace a more non-conceptual and aesthetic response to the philosophical drive of Gefühl, by positing music as offering an at least occasional sense of ‘home’ for the mind. This type of argument for the non-conceptual significance of music, was also articulated in a different form connected to the will, by Arthur Schopenhauer and others that followed in his tradition.

3. The idea of organicism can be traced right back to Plato’s dialogue on Timaeus and the transcendent Demiurge and also in Aristotle’s biological teleology of the formal-final cause—traced contingently to his doctrine of the unmoved mover. The idea of anima mundi in various guises in the Stoics, the Neoplatonic Emanation theory of Plotinus, Giordano Bruno, (and other renaissance thinkers); it also crucially appears in the work of the 17th century Cambridge Platonists, More, Cudworth, Whichcote, et al., in their implicit defense of amongst many other things, Origen, and their equally implicit critique of the naturalism of Spinoza (whom I hold here to be, upon a philological reading, an organic thinker) and Hobbes. Crucially, Cudworth’s The True Intellectual System of the Universe (1678) was studied in Latin at the Tübingen by Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin. Hedley, Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion, 40-2, citing Michael Franz, Schellings Tübinger Platon-Studien, ch. 3. In Hedley’s paper Coleridge’s identification with Anglican Platonism is discussed at length and this identification of the role Cudworth’s book brings into sharp relief the question of the influence of Anglican Platonism on the German Idealists before their early “The so-called oldest system programme of German Idealism” (SP) of 1796. Thus, one may discern more than just a response to Kant’s regulative organicism in the call for a new form of religion.

In addition, Goethe himself, like Aristotle, was trained as a biologist (as well as a theorist of aesthetics) and one clearly discerns this in his work both before and after his Italian Journey (1816-17), in which he develops a botanic theory of artistic creation. Back in England, in the eighteenth century, both Shaftesbury and Alexander Gerard also developed psychological and aesthetic organic theories that predated the latter German development of organicism, in both Gerard’s Essay on Genius (1774) and Shaftesbury’s
earlier *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), which includes the influential essay “Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author” (1710). Shaftesbury was immensely influential at the time and exerted an influence throughout France and the then Germanic States. His influence only waned along with the idealism of Bradley and others, after the development of twentieth century analytic philosophy.


9. In one sense it is not only Spinoza that can be deconstructed and read as both mechanistic and organic, as I outline here, but also even Newton himself, whose mechanistic view of the universe was the target of much of the critique of the organic thinkers. Newton hypothesized a ubiquitous God with free agency to “within his boundless uniform sensorium,” vitalise all living things in the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687). Kant had to respond to the aspect of Newton’s physics that posited a non-direct causality between objects at a distance, which ironically prompted his views on inertia and his entertainment of organicism as a regulatory principle. See M.H. Abrams, see *The Mirror and The Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. London: OUP, 1953. See especially chapters 7, 8 and 9.

10. Schopenhauer, in his magnum opus, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819) both assumed a unique access point into “the thing-in-itself” through the human unconscious, which he saw as an epistemological Rosetta stone. He also believed (contra Kant) that the blind force of will even existed in a blade of grass—thus he himself employed yet another species of organicism, whereby the world of representation could be transcended through our access to the universal driving force of the will. This in effect spurned another
tradition of philosophy and psychology, that culminated in psychoanalysis, and moved away from the modern dialectical tradition started by Kant.

11. Epigenesis was the theory that cells and eggs develop through stages into organs and eventually the mature body and one can see the connection made to all of life in general by Aristotle, first outlined in his *On the Generation of Animals*. The formal-final cause is also related to the theory of epigenesis, where we can clearly discern the influence of Aristotle’s training in biology. In the modern scientific paradigm, there have been more recent challenges made by the meta-theory of *epigenetics*. Therefore, we can now discern a new living idea of the organic in the form of epigenetics, which posits that cells essentially read genetic code like a script to be interpreted rather than a blueprint that produces the same result each time. This new area of biology promises interesting cross-disciplinary philosophical discussions in the near future—something that has already commenced with new discoveries in neuroscience. Anil K, Seth, for example, runs the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science at Sussex University in the UK, which collaborates with neuroscientists, cognitive scientists, psychiatrists, brain imagers, VR technicians and philosophers. There will undoubtedly be more such interdisciplinary centres in the near future that will be localised around the idea of epigenetics. For more discussion of the recent discoveries in epigenetics, see Nessa Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution: How Modern Biology is Rewriting our Understanding of Genetics, Disease and Inheritance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.


15. Schiller’s seminal text, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795) was hugely influential on the latter idealists and romantics.


19. Ann K. Mellor, English Romantic Irony. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980. Mellor discusses the work of Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Carlyle and even Lewis Carroll as examples of English Romantic irony. I argue both in my own Hegel and the English Romantic Tradition and here through Heidegger’s hermeneutics that while the English romantics don’t always move beyond the springes of romantic irony (or bad sense of infinity as Hegel would have it); they often do manage to re-house themselves in Being, or through Hegel’s concrete universal, they move dialectically beyond this particular gestalten (shape of consciousness).
23. This view also goes some way to concurring with Coleridge’s privileging of symbolic over allegorical language—as expounded in his Biographia Literaria (1817); although Coleridge’s theory was more theological than Heidegger’s and is closely connected to Goethe’s same idea on symbol and allegory, as expressed in his Maxims 1112-1113: “Allegory transforms the phenomenon into a concept, the concept into an image, but in such a way that the concept always remains bounded in the image, and is entirely to be kept and held in it, and to be expressed by it. Symbolism [however] transforms the phenomenon into idea, the idea into an image, and in such a way that the idea remains always infinitely active and unapproachable in the image, and even if expressed in all languages, still would remain inexpressible.” Goethe’s rendering however still leaves the possibility of space between the signifier and the signified, Heidegger’s organic theory of language contends that the authentic use of language enables us to “dwell in Being” and argues that being for both dasein and mitsein is both bound to and cleared through poetic language. Therefore, hermeneutical phenomenology closes the gap between signifier and signified, the structuralist linguistic theory that still retains the element of representationalism under critique in this type of phenomenology. It should also be noted that Novalis himself also saw more
26. The Lyrical Ballads were first published in 1798, however the edition with the seminal ‘Preface’ was the 1800 edition, which was subsequently updated in the third (1802) edition.
27. Peter Cheyne, Coleridge’s Contemplative Philosophy, Oxford: OUP, 2020, goes a long way to restoring Coleridge back to his rightful place in the British philosophical tradition. Moreover, one can also discern a more logical picture in which to frame the three periods of Coleridge’s thought in Cheyne’s book. Coleridge’s contemplative philosophy is the praxis in which he secures more certainty about his noetic engagement with the Logos—more certainty than is often found in his poetry. The architectonic of his poetic philosophy is arguably more stable than his philosophical poetry. However, Cheyne’s reading of the sequence of ‘Limbo’ poems convincingly argues for a rereading of Coleridge in light of a better appreciation of his philosophical system.
29. In Romanticism: An Anthology, ed. Duncan Wu. London: Blackwell, 2001, Wu cites Griggs, who quotes a letter from Coleridge to William Sotheby wherein Coleridge explains that he wrote the poem ‘when I was on Scafell. I involuntarily poured forth a hymn in the manner of the Psalms, though afterwards I thought the ideas etc. disproportionate to our humble mountains, and, accidentally lighting on a short note in some Swiss poems concerning the Vale of Chamouni and its mountains, I transferred myself thither, in the spirit, and adapted my former feelings to these grander external objects’. p. 505. This explanation regarding the formalism of the poem goes some way to explaining the somewhat vatic structure of the imperative mood of the verb and the questions in the main body of the poem. Both poems cited here are taken from the Wu anthology.
30. ‘The Egotistical Sublime’ was Keat’s theory in which he postulated that Wordsworth privileged his own human agency in his poems; and by symbolising psychic aspects such as the imagination in his experience of the sublime at the peak of Snowdon at the conclusion of The Prelude, Wordsworth was exercising the egotistical sublime. In Keat’s
theory of poetics, this is an error as the poet should demonstrate “negative capability” and as such, remove his agency from the poem.