

## 'fancys or feelings': John Clare's Hypochondriac Poetics

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### Abstract:

Clare's mental and physical health has long been a source of interest and contention in his critical reception. Approaches to his 'madness' have ranged from retroactive diagnoses of bipolar disorder, to interrogations of insanity as a discourse of clinical power. If the result of these debates is that critics are more willing to read pathology as performance, or even to suggest that Clare's disorder might not have been straightforwardly 'real', then this essay asks what can be gained from returning to some fleeting claims about the poet's mental and physical health that express a struggle between reality and imagination, but have not yet received sufficient attention. I refer here to suggestions, both from his contemporary moment and from his subsequent critical reception, that Clare was a hypochondriac. Clare has been overlooked in critical conversations that discuss the significance of hypochondria as a facet of the Romantic medical imagination and cultivation of 'fashionable disease' but, as I hope to show, hypochondria should be taken seriously as a conceptual lens through which to read his poetic imagination in relation to illness and disorder. Hypochondria occupies a distinct interpretative space of uncertainty and of literary associations that, this essay argues, is better able to approach Clare on his own terms. I consider hypochondria in two interrelated ways: as a social and literary culture that Clare wanted to participate in and that also framed some of his writing, and as a form of poetic imagination and attention that emerged from Clare's anxious scrutiny of his own body and mind. I also explore, through a final reading of a sonnet Clare published in the *London Magazine* in 1821, how hypochondria can become an important lens through which to consider his lyric subjectivity, uncovering as it does the

ambiguously pathological experiences or registers that might disrupt his observation of the natural world.

Essay:

In his essay 'Beghosted Bodyhood', Steven Connor suggests that 'only if you are ill will you have a definite idea of how you are – and, for the hypochondriac, perhaps, of who you are'.<sup>1</sup> Whilst this statement speaks to the complex interplay of representation and self-fashioning in relation to imaginary illness that this essay will explore, it is at the same time not easily applied to John Clare. Roy Porter staged a key intervention in the reception of Clare's madness in particular (the most critically discussed aspect of his illness) when he argued that the poet's asylum writings, and behaviours Clare purportedly displayed in High Beach and Northampton General asylum, could not be read straightforwardly as diagnostic evidence. By asking 'Was Clare actually mad? If so, from which psychiatric disorder was he suffering?' but then dismissing 'the parlour game of retrospective diagnosis', Porter opened up a new critical conversation in relation to Clare's madness that could accommodate the possibilities of subversion and performance in the face of clinical power.<sup>2</sup> No longer is it the case that the competing suggestions of schizophrenia or bi-polar disorder made by Geoffrey Grigson and John and Anne Tibble respectively govern how Clare's 'madness', and its manifestations in his verse, can be read.<sup>3</sup> Frederick Burwick and Roger Sales, for example, have argued variously for Clare's self-conscious engagement with a Romantic tradition of poetic 'madness' that colours his identification with Byron and De Quincey in his asylum verse, and for the inherently 'theatrical' elements of asylum culture.<sup>4</sup> Clare emerges from these non-diagnostic readings not simply as the poor suffering peasant eventually estranged from his

faculties that early biographers favoured,<sup>5</sup> but as an accomplished, self-aware poet for whom madness is just one mask he might put on.

If the result of scholarly developments surrounding Clare's madness is that critics are more willing to read pathology as performance, or even to suggest that Clare's disorder might not have been straightforwardly 'real', then this essay asks what can be gained from returning to some fleeting claims about Clare's mental and physical health that express a struggle between reality and imagination, but have not yet received sufficient attention. I refer here to suggestions, both from his contemporary moment and from his subsequent critical reception, that Clare was a hypochondriac. Romantic poets such as Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron continue to attract attention for their intensive scrutiny of their own physical and mental health and its manifestation in their writing.<sup>6</sup> George C. Grinnell's study of hypochondria in this period also asserts that writers such as Mary Shelley, Thomas Beddoes, Thomas De Quincey, and Mary Prince were key figures who evidenced hypochondria's shaping influence on Romantic culture.<sup>7</sup> Clare has so far been overlooked in these critical conversations, even though his propensity for hypochondria was suggested at the beginning of his poetic career by Edward Drury (the bookseller who first introduced Clare's poetry to John Taylor): Drury, supposedly concerned about the consequences of Clare's 'talent' being 'forced' after his initial success, worried about the poet's coping methods: 'he has no other mode of easing the fever that oppresses him after a tremendous fit of rhyming except by getting tipsy [...] Then he is melancholy and completely hypochondriac'.<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Bate argues that Drury's assessment of Clare's writing habits and their effect on his mental and physical health is 'as good as, if not better than, those of the doctors who entered the story in later years',<sup>9</sup> but there is yet to be a sustained discussion of how hypochondria might have shaped Clare's relationship to his own poetry and pathologies, as well as to a wider Romantic culture of imaginary illness.

Contemporary critical studies of Clare have engaged with hypochondria in a suggestive but fleeting fashion. Porter claimed that the poet, in worrying about frequent ‘psychosomatic’ symptoms such as headaches, stomach-aches, and digestive problems, ‘turned into a hypochondriac’ and in doing so ‘reflected ruefully on the power of the imagination’.<sup>10</sup> Simon Kövesi, too, in his discussion of Clare’s fixation on what he often felt was his imminent death, remarks that the poet’s frequent worries over having contracted venereal disease were the ‘exaggerated product of a guilt-ridden hypochondriac’.<sup>11</sup> These comments read either as an offhand way of saying that Clare was worrying over nothing, or else leave much more to be said. Hypochondria, I suggest, should be taken seriously as a conceptual lens through which to read Clare’s wider poetic imagination in relation to illness and disorder. Instead of choosing between the critical apparatuses of diagnosis on the one hand, or the dismissal of pathology as clinical power on the other, hypochondria occupies a distinct interpretative space of uncertainty and of literary associations that, this essay argues, are better able to approach Clare on his own terms. My concern in this essay is not to debate whether Clare was a hypochondriac or not. Instead, I approach hypochondria in two interrelated ways: as a social and literary culture that Clare wanted to participate in and that also framed some of his writing, and as a form of poetic imagination and attention that emerged from Clare’s anxious scrutiny of his own body and mind. I also explore, through a final reading of a sonnet Clare published in the *London Magazine* in 1821, how hypochondria can become an important lens through which to consider Clare’s lyric subjectivity, uncovering as it does the ambiguously pathological experiences or registers that might disrupt his observation of the natural world.

Clare’s mental distress and eventual institutionalisation are much discussed by critics, but the poet also complained of various physical symptoms throughout his life. His letters mention headaches and stomach-aches frequently; many of the former seem to have been the

result of alcohol ('Ive more to say but my head aches after Burghley ale'),<sup>12</sup> but some are described as extremely debilitating: 'my head is so stupid & my hand so feeble & trembling'.<sup>13</sup> There were also other strange and persistent sensations. Clare wrote of how his 'insides feels sinking & dead', as well as of a 'sensation as if cold water was creeping all about my head'.<sup>14</sup> He complained of 'prickly pains in my head arms & shoulders', and a more alarming 'sort of numbing through my private parts which I cannot describe'.<sup>15</sup> There were also episodes of what Clare called 'Fever with Faintings', recorded especially in his earlier letters at the start of his poetic career. He wrote about these with embarrassment, urging one confidant 'besure don't say nothing to none of my friends respe[c]ting my alarm of the fit or rather swooning'.<sup>16</sup>

There is an ineffable quality to many of these symptoms, as Clare struggles to describe wandering sensations that seem to alienate him from his own body. Clare referred to his susceptibility to both physical and mental affliction more generally as his 'indisposition', a suitably vague term that skirts around any concrete diagnosis. An early passage from his 'Sketches in the Life of John Clare', for example, shows him trying to pinpoint the origins of his 'weak' constitution:

my indisposition, (for I cannot call it illness) originated in fainting fits, the cause of which I always imagined came from seeing when I was younger a man named Thomas Drake after he had fell off a load of hay and broke his neck the gastly palness of death struck such a terror on me that I could not forget it for years and my dreams was constantly wanderings in church yards, digging graves, seeing spirits in charnel houses etc etc<sup>17</sup>

The early trauma described here is pitched as a key turning point in Clare's life, marking an uneasy transition from well to unwell, even as he skirts hesitantly around a recognition of true 'illness'. Yet what is offered as a sure sense of the cause of his 'indisposition' is in fact

besieged with uncertainty; this is an origin story rooted in what was ‘always imagined’ rather than confidently known. As such, it is possible to uncover a language of hypochondria in Clare’s attempts to describe and locate his suffering. Clare writes of an ‘indisposition’ that manifests in ‘dreams’ and ‘spirits’ in this passage; whether he was conscious of their connotations or not, such experiences of haunting and a fixation on death can also be read in terms of the anxieties of hypochondria as a form of disorderly or over-active imagination. As Grinnell and others have traced, hypochondria transitioned from being understood as a physical illness with a specific location in the body (the liver or spleen), to a ‘disorder of imagined infirmity’ in the eighteenth century and the Romantic period.<sup>18</sup> With this transition came, according to Grinnell, an unsettling of the hypochondriac’s knowledge of their own body, as the imagination was deemed capable of producing symptoms and sensations that may not really be there at all.<sup>19</sup>

Although Clare complained of various physical and mental symptoms throughout his life, there were key periods during which his suffering peaked. One period in particular was during the years that Clare was trying to compose and publish his 1827 volume *The Shepherd’s Calendar* (ca. 1822–1827). This was a fraught time during which both Clare and his publisher, Taylor, endured severe illness. Another crisis occurred in the years following 1832, when Clare moved a short distance from his home in Helpston to Northborough, a ‘flitting’ that is often interpreted as a tipping point in the poet’s mental and physical health.<sup>20</sup> Alienated from his new surroundings and with his mind and body in seeming decline, Clare wrote frequently to friends and his publishers after the move to utter his distress and seek advice. A succession of letters drafted and sent by Clare from May to July 1834 expressed a persistent wish to see Dr George Darling especially, his London-based physician who had also attended John Keats:

I feel so little better in fact I feel so ill that I feel an inclination to come to London to see Dr Darling he has prescribed for me & then things he sent has done me no good but I think if I could get up he would do me good & that directly<sup>21</sup>

I am scarcely able to write to tell you that I am anxious to hear from you & to have your advice I want to get up to London if I can for I feel if I could see Dr Darling I should get better<sup>22</sup>

I am in such a state that I cannot help feeling some alarm that I may be as I have been. You must excuse my writing; but I feel if I do not write now I shall not be able. What I wish is to get under Dr. Darlings advice, or to have his advice to go somewhere; for I have not been from home this twelvemonth, and cannot get anywhere. Yet I know if I could reach London I should be better, or else get to salt water. Whatever Dr. Darling advices I will do if I can.<sup>23</sup>

Clare's anguish in these letters is unmistakable, and his consistent appeals to medical authority shape a pervasive sense of contingency. Everything feels conditional: if Clare 'could get up' to or 'could reach' London, if he 'could see' Dr Darling, then he might recover, making his present condition one of suspension. He 'may be' as ill as he claims to have been in the past, but until he can have this suspicion confirmed by his physician, Clare's sense of his own state hangs in the balance.

Clare shows a dependency on Dr Darling's advice to stir him into action in these letters, which he elsewhere described as 'such a stubborn opinion of his skill'.<sup>24</sup> Looking to Darling's replies in this period of exchange, however, introduces a new dynamic to their relationship. Prior to the appeals sent about seeing Darling in May-July, the doctor had written to Clare with his own take on the situation:

I am very sorry to hear that you are so much out of health and the more so as you appear to be aggravating the ordinary ills of life of which you must expect your share as well as common mortals by imaginary – purely imaginary – apprehensions.<sup>25</sup>

Instead of the promise of a prescription or practical advice about how to alleviate his symptoms (which Darling had offered frequently in the past), here is a suggestion that Clare's worries about his health are 'purely imaginary'. Darling's response articulates some of the key dynamics of hypochondria as understood from contemporary medical and cultural perspectives. Catherine Belling's suggestion that hypochondria 'can exist only in the presence of doctors' is alive to how medical discourse (in the vein of Foucauldian power relations) might create the problem of hypochondria in the first place, but also to the clinical encounter as a space capable of fostering doubts and uncertainties as much as clear diagnoses.<sup>26</sup> As a 'problem of knowing, telling, and anxious imagining', hypochondria describes a failed meeting point between the patient's subjective experience and the physician's knowledge, where individual feeling brings this knowledge into question and tests its limits, or the difference between 'feeling' and 'knowing' becomes difficult to discern.<sup>27</sup> Clare's response to Darling's letter is not to find assurance in the suggestion that his illness is imaginary, but to ask increasingly for more clinical attention, showing a simultaneous distrust of and need for medical authority when faced with a body and mind that he cannot make sense of.

Alongside a tracing of the kind of doctor-patient dynamic (and the unsettling of knowledge within it) that hypochondria engenders, however, is also Darling's sense of the 'ordinary ills of life' that Clare must reconcile himself to. Here emerges the potential for illness to be considered as a cultivated marker of difference—what John Mullan refers to as both the 'burden' and the 'privilege' of a rhetoric of sensitivity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture.<sup>28</sup> Darling implies that, through his imaginary 'apprehensions', Clare is not



only *not* ill (or at least not ill enough to warrant his attention), but also trying to escape the realms of the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘common’ by adopting illness as a state that separates him from mere ‘mortals’; this letter is an attempt to bring him back down to earth. What does it mean, then, to say that Clare was a hypochondriac? Where can he be placed in the slippage between anxious uncertainty and artful awareness that colours so much of the discussion and reception of hypochondria in the eighteenth and nineteenth century? If Clare was a hypochondriac, he was certainly in good company amongst the numerous Romantic poets and writers who fretted over their health and channelled these worries into their writing. With the turn to nervous sensibility as a marker of creative excellence being so oft-discussed in studies of eighteenth-century and Romantic medical and literary culture, it is now almost taken for granted that, as George Rousseau suggests, ‘illness was a necessary hallmark of all Romantic writers’.<sup>29</sup> Yet Rousseau is also careful to qualify how, within this pervasive literary culture of illness, hypochondria was ‘ultimately, an exclusionary strategy’.<sup>30</sup> That Clare has been left out of sustained discussions of hypochondria in the period is telling of the lines along which these exclusions were drawn. Definitions and discussions of hypochondria from the period insist almost invariably on a scholastic, sedentary lifestyle as one of its main causes. John Hill (whose botanical writings Clare greatly admired) wrote in 1766 of how ‘the finer spirits are wasted by the labour of the brain: the Philosopher rises from his study more exhausted than the Peasant leaves his drudgery’<sup>31</sup>; John Reid suggested in 1816 that ‘the labour of the poor man relieves him at last from the burden of fashionable ennui, and the constant pressure of physical inconveniences, from the more elegant, but surely not less tolerable distresses of a refined and romantic sensibility’.<sup>32</sup> As a disorder of the ‘fashionable’ and ‘refined’, and the burden of the scholar and the over-thinker, hypochondria is framed along class and occupational boundaries.<sup>33</sup>

To call Clare a hypochondriac is to return initially to his unsettled status as a labouring-class poet, and to think about hypochondria as a social and literary culture that Clare sought actively to participate in even as its definitions excluded a large part of his identity. In the language of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century treatises on hypochondria and nervous disease, Clare the *labourer* should not have been susceptible to hypochondria, with neither the time nor apparently the sensitive, imaginative capacity to cultivate the ‘fashionable ennui’ as Reid saw it. The association of labour with physical robustness and vitality is vexed for Clare. It is an idea that, whilst it appears frequently in his poetry, is not usually celebrated straightforwardly. In a poem like ‘The Woodman’ (1819),<sup>34</sup> for example, there lies a critique of idle privilege that is couched in terms of health and illness: the speaker comments on the excess that ‘does paul the idly great / As rich & sumptuous foods does surfeitings create’ (lines 98–9) as a way to elevate the sparer existence of the woodman who, with access to ‘hardy labour & the freshing air / Should ’crease his strength & keep entire his health’ (lines 101–2). Clare knows, though, that this health is also hard won; the joys of the woodman and his family are still but a ‘glimpse’ (line 95), and he does not shy away from critiquing the shortcomings of parish relief and its ‘scouts benevolence’ (line 107) in the poem. In another poem, ‘The Wish’ (1808–19),<sup>35</sup> Clare discounts the narrative of the healthy labourer (what Raymond Williams would later call a ‘slanted association’<sup>36</sup>) altogether, declaring that ‘Be as it will I hold in spite of strife / The health ne’er rises from a labouring life’ (lines 201–2). Instead, he announces a wish to spend his days in studious occupation, and covets the kind of lifestyle where hypochondria could potentially flourish: ‘The other hours I’d spend in letterd ease / To read or study just as that might please’ (lines 212–13). Granted, this is a scene of studious ‘ease’ rather than of the feverish application that could supposedly provoke hypochondria (Bernard Mandeville warned against ‘Men that continually fatigue their Heads with intense Thought and Study’ [1711; 1730]<sup>37</sup>), but nevertheless it

shows Clare yearning for the freedom to indulge fully in intellectual activity instead of physical labour.

Poems like 'The Wish' reveal a tension in Clare's identity as a labouring-class poet. Richard Cronin has written of how Clare's poetic ambitions placed him in an awkward relationship to his labouring-class community, where he was not at ease with a labouring life nor free to break away from it.<sup>38</sup> The poet was acutely aware of feeling at odds with his local community—of being wired differently somehow, or at least of representing himself as such. He recalls in his autobiographical reflections how 'I thought sometimes that I surely had a taste peculiarly by myself and that nobody else thought or saw things as I did', and having to pursue in 'secresey' his early forays into poetry because his parents 'began to dislike my love of books and writing, thinking it of no longer use since I had determined to stick at hard labour'.<sup>39</sup> Aware of the accusations of idleness or even pathology surrounding his poetic sensibilities, a poem like 'Labours Leisure' (1819–32)<sup>40</sup> shows Clare trying to negotiate his identity as a labourer and a poet, especially along the lines of striking a healthy balance between physical and mental exertion. A series of three sonnets, the first opens with a fond call to the kinds of feeling that ostensibly only labour can offer: 'O for the feelings & the carless health / That found me toiling in the fields—the joy / I felt at eve with not a wish for wealth' (lines 1–2). The 'carless' kind of health that comes from toil here resonates with the freedoms begot by bodily exhaustion described in treatises on hypochondria; to be employed in physical 'drudgery' (to use Hill's term) is to be free, supposedly, from mental 'care'. What is important in this poem, however, is what this 'carless' feeling of bodily health prepares Clare's speaker for. He goes on to describe how the 'joy' of labour not only emerges in the repose *after* physical activity (it is significant that it is 'eve' in the moment of this poem and the working day is at an end), but also that it precedes the time when he 'homeward used to hie / With thoughts of books I often read by stealth' (lines 5–6). The feeling of secrecy

confessed in the word ‘stealth’ is suggestive of Clare’s sensitivity to how the pleasures of reading are not considered as salubrious as those of physical work; that ‘stealth’ is rhymed with ‘health’ in the poem only compounds this sense of his having chosen to pursue a potentially unhealthy indulgence (which is perhaps part of the enjoyment). However, the scene of reading that unfolds in the rest of the sonnet is depicted in terms reminiscent of the healthy labour Clare has left joyfully behind. Describing himself as a voracious reader, he recalls how ‘bending oer my knees I used to read / With earnest heed all books that had the power / To give me joy in most delicious ways’ (lines 11–13). Here, reading is presented as a vigorous physical activity, with Clare ‘bending oer’ his books in a manner reminiscent of his earlier toil. Hill’s treatise on hypochondriasis advised that the ‘stooping posture of the body, which most men use, though none should use it, in writing and in reading’ was a contributing cause to the disorder.<sup>41</sup> Clare, however, takes an opportunity to forge parallels between the posture of reading and the posture of labour. By lending a physicality to the ‘earnest’ mental exercise of reading, he is able both to enjoy his furtive intellectual pursuits and to reclaim them as a healthy pastime.

If reading in ‘Labour’s Leisure’ could be pitched as a route to the kinds of ‘delicious’ joy that the exhaustion of a hard day’s physical work could provide, then Clare shows elsewhere that he was also sensitive to its more morbid pleasures. A later poem, ‘The Winters Come’ (1842–64),<sup>42</sup> for example, is focussed around another scene of reading, again tucked away indoors, but this time as a deliberate choice to retreat from the elements. After two stanzas that observe the signs of the changing season, where the landscape and its wildlife have become ‘Naked, and bare’ (line 14) and ‘Sluggish, and dull’ (line 16), the speaker suddenly declares:

’Tis winter! and I love to read in-doors,

When the moon hangs her crescent upon high:

While on the window shutters the wind roars,  
And storms like furies pass remorseless by,  
How pleasant on a feather bed to lie,  
Or sitting by the fire, in fancy soar,  
With Milton, or with Dante to regions high,  
Or read fresh volumes we've not seen before,  
Or o'er old Bartons 'melancholy pore.'

(lines 19–27)

In this cosy scene of escapism, reading is transportive, and the state of 'fancy' it induces a means of retreating from a less desirable reality. Although Clare greets his volumes of Milton and Dante as old, reliable companions in these lines, Jeffrey C. Robinson has noted how fancy could also be perceived as a faculty that was 'destructively, dangerously, uncontrollable' in the eighteenth century and the Romantic period.<sup>43</sup> Whilst Robinson is careful to distinguish between fancy and the imagination (in line with Coleridge) in order to reclaim the particular work and values of this faculty within Romanticism, it was also often synonymous with imagination and, importantly, both were suspect faculties in writings about hypochondria. Reid, for example, wrote of how 'a diseased fancy will not unfrequently produce nearly all the symptoms, or at least all the sensations of bodily disease'.<sup>44</sup> If fancy offers transcendent recuperation from the 'storms' outside in this poem, there is also the hint of less restorative flights of fancy taking place in its closing lines.

The turn to 'old Bartons 'melancholy' at the end of the poem is a miss-spelled reference to Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), and evokes a habitual pleasure not entirely in-keeping with the book's subject matter. Invoking Burton's encyclopaedic study of melancholy—of both its causes and cures—suggests the reader in this

scene has had need to return frequently to its pages and ‘pore’ over them in search of either diagnosis or remedy, but has also found forms of delight in doing so. In many respects, Clare’s choice of reading material here is a means of harmonising the internal and external weather of the poem’s subject. Jonas Cope argues that Clare’s ‘autumn verse’ is consistently ‘informed by his own physical and psychological responses to the season’;<sup>45</sup> Clare himself wrote in his correspondence how ‘every Spring & Fall’ saw the return of a ‘confounded lethargy of low spirits’ upon him.<sup>46</sup> Clare may be both playing on the literary trope of autumn and the waning of the year as a time of melancholy moods (the poem begins with a reference to the now ‘paled sky’ that ‘in the Autumn seem’d to burn’ [line 3]), and reflecting on his own psychophysiological state in ‘The Winters Come’. Yet the leisurely pleasure taken in self-anatomisation also turns into a more anxious ‘poring’ over Burton’s *Anatomy* (with this word carrying connotations of intense scrutiny and focus<sup>47</sup>) that surely uncovers a hypochondriacal tendency in the poem, too.

Burton’s *Anatomy* persisted as an influence on eighteenth-and nineteenth-century understandings of hypochondria, even as conceptions of the disorder began to shift towards considering it a ‘nervous’ affliction instead of a somatic complaint. For Burton, ‘hypochondriasis’ was a species of melancholy itself, known otherwise as ‘windy melancholy’.<sup>48</sup> Influenced by Hippocrates and Galen, Burton classed this form of melancholy primarily as a bodily disorder, locating it in the bowels, liver, and spleen that produced ‘wind and rumbling in the guts’ alongside other digestive complaints, as well as concurrent emotional states of ‘fear and sorrow’.<sup>49</sup> Stephanie Shirilan, however, traces how Burton’s insistence on the fear and delusions that attend the hypochondriacal melancholic has also ‘come to bear a closer resemblance [...] to modern representations of hypochondria as an imaginary illness’.<sup>50</sup> Samuel Johnson’s definition of ‘hypochondriack’ in his dictionary as ‘Melancholy; disordered in the imagination’ certainly shows the persistence of a slippage

between hypochondria and melancholy, even as it grounded its definition in the disorder's more 'modern' iteration in the imagination.<sup>51</sup> 'The Winters Come' is, however, not solely significant as an index of Clare's familiarity with a key text in the medical history of hypochondria. In its alertness to reading as an activity that gives permission to 'fancy', it is also sensitive to the enjoyment that can be taken in imagined infirmity. Shirilan reminds readers of an early warning in Burton's text that 'reading the descriptions of melancholy detailed in his book could worsen the symptoms of a reader'; Burton anticipated readers of a certain temperament 'applying that which hee reads to himselfe'.<sup>52</sup> By poring over 'Bartons 'melancholy', then, the poem's subject opens themselves up willingly to more morbid forms of fancy than this scene of cosy, domestic retreat seems initially to suggest.

Adam White's examination of Clare's particular strain of 'Romanticism' argues for him as a poet who reclaims and reinvigorates 'fancy' as 'central to a serious apprehension of the world', in contrast to other Romantic poets who instead valorise the imagination.<sup>53</sup> White sees Clare's investment in fancy in particular as an opportunity to 'reveal one of the fundamental tensions of his verse: that between a descriptive, attentive impulse and a more fanciful, more abstracting tendency'.<sup>54</sup> This reading speaks to a growing critical approach that seeks to debunk the conception of Clare as simply a poet of immediacy and direct observation of the natural world.<sup>55</sup> Whilst White looks to the wealth of Clare's poetic explorations of the natural world to uncover the many moments of fancy and reverie that govern them, Clare's letters in which he frets over the state of his body and mind are also, I would add, an important index of his poetic disposition. The letter from George Darling to Clare discussed above is significant not only for its direct suggestion that the poet's illness may have been imaginary, but also for how belated this advice was in the face of the poet's own self-awareness. Clare shared his publishers with another sickly Romantic poet: John Keats. The two never met but exchanged comments about each other's work via letters to

Taylor.<sup>56</sup> Keats's departure for Italy in 1821 affected Clare greatly, giving him yet another opportunity to dwell on what he felt must be his own hastening end. He wrote to Taylor:

Give my respects to *Keats* & tell him I am a half mad melancholly dog in this moozy misty country he has latly cast behind him but I feel somthing better at least I fancy which I believe to tell truth is the whole of my complaint which I am so fussy over bytimes.<sup>57</sup>

There is a striking self-consciousness about the dynamic of his own 'complaint' here. It is at once a confession of hypochondria and an acknowledgement of the unstable relationship to knowledge that it fosters. The slippage between feeling, 'fancy', belief, and 'truth' creates a position willing to entertain multiple interpretations and to dwell in both the real and the unreal, the physical and the imagined. It is fitting that Clare strikes upon this language of indeterminacy in a letter where Keats, the poet of 'negative capability' who valued a temperament that was 'capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts', is his main subject of address.<sup>58</sup> Hypochondria is sympathetic with a poetic disposition here, becoming rooted in Clare's propensity for 'fancy' as much as in an anxious fussing over the body and its errant, and potentially fanciful, symptoms.

The slippage between 'fancy' and 'feeling' became something that Clare returned to again and again to describe the mode he was in when worrying about his health:

all I regret is that I cannot describe my feelings sufficiently to benefit from our friend Dr Darlings kind advice in whom I always had the greatest confidence—my fancys & feelings vary very often but I now feel a great numbness in my right shoulder<sup>59</sup>



I am sorry that I am but little better though to all appearance as well as ever I was in my life & though I have had a goodnights rest I feel little better I am still troubled & fancy<sup>60</sup>

I fear I shall get worse & worse ere you write to me for I have been out for a walk & can scarcely bear up against my fancys or feelings<sup>61</sup>

These moments from his correspondence speak to an anxiety of interpretation that Clare found frightening and burdensome; he holds here a constant suspicion of illness that must lurk beneath an ‘appearance’ of wellness. Even if his ‘feelings’ were the product of ‘fancy’, that is not to say they were not also experienced vividly; here, they exert a physical presence that the poet feels he has to ‘bear up’ against. Yet Clare was also able to translate this distressing indeterminacy into poems that appear to revel in the space between fancy and feeling. There are two early works in particular that indulge the kind of morbid fancy hinted at in ‘The Winters Come’, but push it to a gothic extreme. ‘Supersitions Dream’ (1821–7)<sup>62</sup> (also referred to as ‘The Dream’) and ‘The Night Mare’ (1821–7)<sup>63</sup> were both composed during the time Clare was working on the manuscript for *The Shepherd’s Calendar* (1827), and ‘Supersitions Dream’ went on to be included in that volume. Mark Storey suggests that both poems ‘have their relevance to his emotional predicament in these years’.<sup>64</sup> They are certainly works full of turmoil and despair: ‘Superstitions Dream’ recounts ‘A dream of staggering horrors & of dread’ (line 9), full of ‘shadows’ (line 10), ‘demons’ (line 46), and ‘spirits’ (line 39) that transform a once beautiful natural world into a scene of desolation, where ‘The pleasant hues of fields & woods was past / & natures beauty had enjoyd their last / The colord flower the green of field & tree / What they had been forever ceasd to be’ (lines 61–4). ‘The Night Mare’ similarly tells a chilling tale of a dream that ‘began in bliss & lifted

high / My sleeping feelings into fancys joy' (lines 1–2), only to descend into wild confusion where anything once familiar becomes 'strange' (line 40) and a beautiful female figure (referred to once as 'Mary' [line 141]) transforms into 'The ugliest pictures fear could ever make' (line 147). What unites these poems beyond their ghoulish subject matter, however, is their representation of a subject who cannot tell if the dream (or nightmare) is real or not. 'Superstitions Dream' announces in the first few lines that this is a recollection of a dream 'Whose shadows lingerd when the dream had fled / Clinging to memory with their gloomy view / Till doubt & fancy half believd it true' (lines 10–12). 'The Night Mare' similarly figures an experience of reasonable awareness amongst unbelievable horror: 'I could not move or speak yet reasons power / Seemd wide awake in that spell prisoning hour' (lines 117–18).

It is possible, then, to hear the register of Clare's bewildered attention to his own ailing body in these gothic reveries and episodes of frightened half belief. Indeed, he would often turn to a language of dreams and nightmares when recounting the phantom-like quality of symptoms that he could not pin down. Writing to Hessey in 1824, he claimed that 'to be in this waking dream is almost unbearable I am certain its something more then nervous'.<sup>65</sup> To Darling in 1834–5 he wrote that 'I am very unwell & though I cannot describe my feelings well I will tell you as well as I can [...] I feel chills <&cold> come over me & a sort of nightmare awake'.<sup>66</sup> In 'The Night Mare' in particular, the speaker recoils as 'awful syptoms rousing gatherd near' (line 86). The poem dramatizes a form of hypochondriac fancy as these 'syptoms' are both acknowledged to be imagined or dreamt, and experienced as palpably real. Clare was aware that these two poems were out of the ordinary in comparison to the close studies of the natural world and rural customs that made up his compositions for *The Shepherd's Calendar*, but also that they articulated a vital aspect of his poetic imagination as sourced from his own confusing bouts of suffering: when he wrote to

Taylor to tell him of his latest work, he stated ‘I have begun one of my terrible experiments agen “The NightMare or Superstitions Dream” youl only laugh at its bombast when I send it but my vanity must have its way – the Night Mare is a thing Ive been very much subject too’.<sup>67</sup> As a confession of ‘vanity’, Clare wraps his poems in a form of self-obsession or self-interest here that further belies the hypochondriac beginnings of his craft.

If ‘The Night Mare’ and ‘Supersitions Dream’ offered Clare a means of forging a poetic imagination out of his own psychosomatic distress, then such poems also attest to the forms of literary influence and community that he found, and cultivated deliberately, in the register of hypochondria. Editors Eric Robinson, David Powell and P. M. S Dawson provide a note about the manuscript of ‘The Night Mare’ that details a footnote Clare included alongside the poem:

I wish to acknowledge that what ever merit this & “Superstitions Dream” may be thought to posses they owe it in part to the “English Opium Eater” as they were written after (tho actual dreams) the perusal of that singular & interesting production’.<sup>68</sup>

Clare was a keen admirer of Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821). He read it in serialised form when first published in the *London Magazine* and, later, requested a copy of its printed version from Taylor, stating ‘he is a great favourite of mine’.<sup>69</sup> In seeking to imitate the nightmarish spectres that pour forth from De Quincey’s examination of opium addiction and both its pleasures and pains, Clare declares an affinity with a mode of literature that willingly treads the darker regions of fancy at the same time that he is able to embed his own hypochondriac distress in his verse. He can speak to the truth (or perhaps the frightening and confusing un-truth) of imagined illness whilst also keeping hypochondria at

bay as a ‘terrible’ literary ‘experiment’ and examination of disordered imagination in the vein of another author.

Although Clare acknowledged outright the influence of De Quincey’s *Confessions* on ‘The Night Mare’ and ‘Superstitions Dream’, this text also frames and illuminates the hypochondriac imagination present in another, more unlikely, poem by way of proximity. The October 1821 issue of *The London Magazine* published two pieces that were concerned with the uncertain and unruly nature of the imagination: Charles Lamb’s ‘Witches, and Other Night-Fears’, and the second instalment of De Quincey’s ‘Confessions’.<sup>70</sup> Lamb’s is an essay fascinated by the moveable boundary between imagination and reality. Its opening discussion of witchcraft sets the question of how we are to ‘distinguish the likely from the palpable absurd’, leading to an acknowledgement that the imaginative realm demands to be taken on its own terms: ‘I see no reason for disbelieving one attested story of this nature more than the other on the score of absurdity. There is no law to judge of the lawless, or canon by which a dream may be criticised’.<sup>71</sup> De Quincey’s ‘Confessions’ also traces the seemingly ‘lawless’ visions that arise from the subject’s opium-induced dreams, as part of the ‘pains of opium’ is an increasing inability to govern the imaginative faculty and keep reality and unreality separate: ‘as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself into my dreams’.<sup>72</sup> David Higgins discusses the importance of attending to the original publication context of Lamb’s ‘Witches’ and De Quincey’s ‘Confessions’, in order to appreciate fully how mutually-informing their imaginative projects are in relation to their conception of the ‘exotic’ in particular.<sup>73</sup> Amongst the fruitful opportunities for thinking about how these two texts speak to each other, however, there has been no acknowledgement yet of how their

imaginative register of spectres and phantoms might also speak to and inform another text published in the same issue: a sonnet by Clare.

Clare's sonnet 'A Reflection on Summer' appears a few items after De Quincey's 'Confessions' and Lamb's 'Witches' in the October 1821 issue of the *London Magazine*. Originally titled 'A Reflection in Summer', it is collected with the manuscripts for Clare's second volume *The Village Minstrel* (1821),<sup>74</sup> although the poem was not included in that volume. The sonnet reflects ostensibly on the arrival of summer, but in so doing is immediately drawn back to the wintry scenes that contrast with the present season:

We well may wonder o'er the change of scene,  
Now Summer's contrast through the land is spread,  
And turn us back, where Winter's tempest fled,  
And left nought living but the ivy's green.  
The then bare woods, that trembled over head  
Like Spectres, 'mid the storm, of what had been,  
And wrecks of beauty ne'er to bloom again,—  
Are now all glory. Nature smiles as free,  
As the last Summer had commenced its reign,  
And she were blooming in Eternity.  
So in this life, when future thoughts beguile,  
And from past cares our spirits get relieved,  
Hope cheers us onward with as sweet a smile  
As if, before, she never had deceived.<sup>75</sup>

Here, the abundant 'glory' that summer brings is all the more emphatic for the 'wrecks' of winter that came before it. Yet with this sense of 'contrast' as being fundamental to the

enjoyment of summer comes also a mistrust of its pleasures. The speaker cannot revel in the present season, but is pulled back instead to ‘what had been’, as the wondrous scene before them is haunted by the ‘Spectres’ of winter. The sonnet’s final quatrain orchestrates an unshakeable unease through Clare’s choice of rhymes: ‘beguile’ rhymed with ‘smile’ and ‘relieved’ with ‘deceived’ marries a surface contentment, or moment of amelioration, with the disconcerting knowledge that this cannot last, or might have been a deception all along. For a poem that ends with a turn to hope, its outlook is decidedly pessimistic, unable to look away from the winter that is always lurking round the corner.

As a poem that has trouble with accepting surface appearances, ‘A Reflection on Summer’ has more in common with Lamb and De Quincey’s works than might be assumed. With the threat of decay that lingers behind apparent vitality figured as a ‘spectre’, Clare’s sonnet strikes a register of haunting that chimes with the phantoms lurking in ‘Witches’ and ‘Confessions’. Both ‘Witches’ and ‘Confessions’ figure a subject highly attuned to their own nervous sensibility or constitution, either past or present. Lamb writes of a younger self who was ‘dreadfully alive to nervous terrors’, whilst De Quincey concerns himself with tracing the ‘subtle links of suffering’ that connect episodes in the Opium-Eater’s life.<sup>76</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that both Lamb and De Quincey have also been discussed for their exploration of the hypochondriac figure. For Grinnell, De Quincey’s *Confessions* is a text ‘unable to look away from hypochondria’<sup>77</sup> in its anxious exploration of the body and mind of its subject, while for Simon P. Hull, Lamb ‘deflates’ the ‘unhealthily self-absorbed tendency’ of the hypochondriac in another essay, ‘The Convalescent’, so that it becomes a ‘mode of behaviour to be affectionately humoured’.<sup>78</sup> The concern with spectres, phantoms, and the reliability of the senses and credibility of seeming realities in both ‘Witches’ and ‘Confessions’ certainly speaks to the concerns of hypochondria. The *London Magazine* also published Bryan Waller Procter’s two-part series ‘The Memoir of a Hypochondriac’ in 1822,

in which the subject bewails how their ‘imagination is sick and haunted’, and states that to have hypochondria is to have ‘the phantom of fear [...] always about you’.<sup>79</sup> With its inability to shake off the ‘spectre’ of winter even in the face of summer, it is possible to hear in ‘A Reflection on Summer’ the fearful suspicion of the hypochondriac that becomes amplified by the other writings surrounding its original publication context. What seems on the surface to be a sonnet reflecting on a change in season—a frequent occurrence in Clare’s body of work—becomes drawn in to, as Hull has it, the ‘metropolitan’ discourse of hypochondria, as a fretful analysis of the body and mind translates into a mode of looking at the natural world.<sup>80</sup>

Indeed, when Clare sent his copy of ‘A Reflection on Summer’ to John Taylor ahead of its publication in the *London Magazine*, he included a remark that hints even further at the hypochondriacal register lurking within the poem:

I merely send this letter to hitch of[f] the sonnet as I began to scribble agen  
vehemently [...] I am agen recruiting from my complaints & shall wait till the book is  
publishd ere I start so when it is you may let me know & send me what copies you  
think fit – you will then hear no more of me for a time<sup>81</sup>

In his admission that he is ‘agen recruiting from my complaints’, Clare offers illness (or at least his conviction that he is ill) as both the occasion and the source material for his poetic compositions. By declaring that when he is finally free to properly indulge this period of ‘recruitment’ (i.e. after his forthcoming volume is at last in print) Taylor will ‘hear no more’ of him for some time, Clare also implies the all-consuming nature of this self-attention. There is an invitation here to read ‘A Reflection on Summer’ as having been written up to send to Taylor during Clare’s returning creative focus on his illness. This reading is not meant to overtly pathologize the poem but rather to attend, again, to how Clare’s poetic attention is

inflected, even latently, with the forms of hypochondriac ‘fussing’ bestowed on his body and mind. Hypochondria is not only, therefore, a crucial framework that uncovers the literary, medical, and cultural influences behind Clare’s attitude to his own ‘indisposition’. It can also shape a way of reading Clare’s poetry that refuses to lose sight of the pervasive influence his mental and physical suffering had on his verse, becoming alive instead to the spectres of illness that haunt and shape his writing.

Bio:

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Connor, 'Beghosted Bodyhood: Hypochondria and the Arts of Illness' (2009). <http://stevenconnor.com/hypo.html>.

<sup>2</sup> 'all madness for writing: John Clare and the asylum', in *John Clare in Context*, 264.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Grigson, *Poems of John Clare's Madness* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949); J. W. and Anne Tibble, *John Clare: A Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Michael Joseph, 1972). Other diagnostic approaches to Clare's madness include Evan Blackmore, 'John Clare's Psychiatric Disorder and Its Influence on His Poetry', *Victorian Poetry* 24.3 (1986): 209–28; Arthur Foss and Kerith Trick, *St Andrew's Hospital Northampton The First 150 Years (1838–1988)* (Cambridge: Granta, 1989); Sean Haldane, 'John Clare's Madness', *PN Review* 30.6 (2004): 42–6.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Burwick, *Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 258–69; Roger Sales, *John Clare: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 104.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Frederick Martin's description of Clare as being 'led away from his wife and children, by two stern-looking men' when discussing his admission to High Beach Asylum in 1864, in *The Life of John Clare* (London and Cambridge: Macmillan, 1865), 269.

<sup>6</sup> See in particular George C. Grinnell, 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Dead Man: Coleridge's Hypochondria', in *The English Malady: Enabling and Disabling Fictions*, ed. by Glen Colburn (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 177–99; George Sebastian Rousseau and David Boyd Haycock, 'Framing Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Gut: Genius, Digestion, Hypochondria', in *Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History*, ed. by George Sebastian Rousseau, Miranda Gill, David Haycock and Malte Herwig (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 231–65; Jonathon Shears, 'Byron's Hypochondria', in *Byron's Temperament: Essays in Body and Mind*, ed. by Bernard Beatty and Jonathon Shears (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 100–17; Nora Crook and Derek Guiton, *Shelley's Venomed Melody* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> *The Age of Hypochondria: Interpreting Romantic Health and Illness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See Bate, *Biography*, 146.

<sup>9</sup> Bate, *Biography*, 147.

<sup>10</sup> 'all madness for writing', 260.

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- <sup>11</sup> ‘John Clare’s Deaths: Poverty, Education, and Poetry’, in *New Essays on John Clare: Poetry, Culture and Community*, ed. Simon Kövesi and Scott McEathron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 148.
- <sup>12</sup> *Letters*, 203.
- <sup>13</sup> *Letters*, 304.
- <sup>14</sup> *Letters*, 294.
- <sup>15</sup> *Letters*, 615.
- <sup>16</sup> *Letters*, 45.
- <sup>17</sup> *By Himself*, 18.
- <sup>18</sup> *Age of Hypochondria*, 4. See also German E. Berrios, ‘Hypochondriasis: History of the Concept’, in *Hypochondriasis: Modern Perspectives on an Ancient Malady*, eds. Vladan Starcevic and Don R. Lipsitt (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–20.
- <sup>19</sup> *Age of Hypochondria*, 12.
- <sup>20</sup> See Barrell, 174; Tim Chilcott, ‘a real world and a doubting mind’: *A Critical Study of the Poetry of John Clare* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1985), 108; Roger Sales, *John Clare*, 65; *Middle Period*, 3: xxii; Eric Robinson, David Powell and P.M.S Dawson, ‘Introduction’, *John Clare: Northborough Sonnets*, ed. Eric Robinson, David Powell and P.M.S Dawson (Manchester: Carcanet, 1995), x.
- <sup>21</sup> *Letters*, 613.
- <sup>22</sup> *Letters*, 616.
- <sup>23</sup> *Letters*, 616.
- <sup>24</sup> *Letters*, 350.
- <sup>25</sup> Darling to Clare, February 1834, British Library MSS, Egerton 2249, fol. 180
- <sup>26</sup> *A Condition of Doubt: The Meanings of Hypochondria* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.
- <sup>27</sup> *A Condition of Doubt*, 1.
- <sup>28</sup> *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 213.
- <sup>29</sup> ‘Coleridge’s Dreaming Gut: Digestion, Genius, Hypochondria’, in *Cultures of the Abdomen: Diet, Digestion, and Fat in the Modern World*, ed. Christopher Forth and Ana Carden-Coyne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 109.
- <sup>30</sup> ‘Coleridge’s Dreaming Gut’, 109.
- <sup>31</sup> *Hypochondriasis, A Practical Treatise on the Nature and Cure of that Disorder* (London, 1766), 6.

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- <sup>32</sup> *Essays on Insanity, Hypochondriasis, and Other Nervous Affections* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 6.
- <sup>33</sup> See also Heather R. Beatty, *Nervous Disease in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Reality of a Fashionable Disorder* (London: Routledge, 2016) for a sustained study of how ‘disordered nerves’ (including hypochondria) ‘were laden with cultural meaning by the middle of the eighteenth century’ (5), and of the need to account more fully for the ‘constellation of “ordinary” citizens’ (4) who suffered from them within a cultural landscape of ‘fashionable’ disease.
- <sup>34</sup> *Early Poems*, 2: 287–96.
- <sup>35</sup> *Early Poems*, 1: 43–50.
- <sup>36</sup> *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 116.
- <sup>37</sup> *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases* (London: J. Tonson, 1730), 107.
- <sup>38</sup> ‘In Place and Out of Place: Clare in The Midsummer Cushion’, in *John Clare: New Approaches*, ed. John Goodridge and Simon Kövesi (Helpston: John Clare Society, 2000), 133–48.
- <sup>39</sup> *By Himself*, 17, 13.
- <sup>40</sup> *Middle Period*, 4: 331.
- <sup>41</sup> *Hypochondriasis*, 20–21.
- <sup>42</sup> *Later Poems*, 2: 928–29.
- <sup>43</sup> *Unfettering Poetry: Fancy in British Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.
- <sup>44</sup> *Essays on Insanity*, 250.
- <sup>45</sup> ‘Autumnal Affect in the Poetry of John Clare’, *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 58.4 (2018): 864.
- <sup>46</sup> *Letters*, 234.
- <sup>47</sup> *OED*, ‘pore’, v., senses 1a–1c.
- <sup>48</sup> ‘The First Partition’, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), 175.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 411.
- <sup>50</sup> *Robert Burton and the Transformative Powers of Melancholy* (London: Routledge, 2016), 125.
- <sup>51</sup> ‘Hypochondriacal; Hypochondriack, adj.’, senses 1 and 2, in *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic by Samuel Johnson*, ed. Brandi Besalke. <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/>.



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- <sup>52</sup> *Robert Burton and the Transformative Powers of Melancholy*, 127.
- <sup>53</sup> *John Clare's Romanticism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 68.
- <sup>54</sup> *John Clare's Romanticism*, 68.
- <sup>55</sup> See in particular Erica McAlpine, 'Keeping Nature at Bay: John Clare's Poetry of Wonder', *Studies in Romanticism* 50.1 (2011): 79–104; Michael Nicholson, 'The Itinerant 'I': John Clare's Lyric Defiance', *ELH* 82.2 (2015): 637–69.
- <sup>56</sup> See John Goodridge, 'Junkets and Clarissimus: the Clare-Keats Dialogue', in *John Clare and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59–82 for a sustained discussion of the connections and communications between Clare and Keats.
- <sup>57</sup> *Letters*, 132.
- <sup>58</sup> Letter to George and Tom Keats, December 21–7 1817, in *Keats's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2009), 109.
- <sup>59</sup> *Letters*, 513.
- <sup>60</sup> *Letters*, 613.
- <sup>61</sup> *Letters*, 615.
- <sup>62</sup> *Middle Period*, 1: 325–31.
- <sup>63</sup> *Middle Period*, 1: 332–38.
- <sup>64</sup> *The Poetry of John Clare: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), 58.
- <sup>65</sup> *Letters*, 298.
- <sup>66</sup> *Letters*, 615.
- <sup>67</sup> *Letters*, 222.
- <sup>68</sup> *Middle Period*, I, 371.
- <sup>69</sup> *Letters*, 269.
- <sup>70</sup> Charles Lamb, 'Witches, and other Night-fears', *London Magazine* 4.22 (October 1821): 384–7; Thomas De Quincey, 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, Being an Extract from the Life of a Scholar Part II', *London Magazine* 4.22 (October 1821): 353–79.
- <sup>71</sup> 'Witches', 384–5.
- <sup>72</sup> 'Confessions', 372.
- <sup>73</sup> 'Imagining the Exotic: De Quincey and Lamb in the London Magazine', *Romanticism* 17.3 (2011): 288–98.
- <sup>74</sup> See *Early Poems*, 2: 600.
- <sup>75</sup> 'A Reflection on Summer', *London Magazine* 4.22 (October 1821): 400, lines 1–14. I quote here from the edited version of the poem printed in the *London Magazine*. The manuscript version can be found in *Early Poems*, 2: 600 and in *Letters*, 214.

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<sup>76</sup> ‘Witches’, 386; ‘Confessions’, 353.

<sup>77</sup> *Age of Hypochondria*, 121.

<sup>78</sup> *Charles Lamb, Elia, and the London Magazine: Metropolitan Muse* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 84.

<sup>79</sup> ‘The Memoir of a Hypochondriac’, *London Magazine* 6.33 (September 1822): 250.

<sup>80</sup> *Charles Lamb, Elia, and the London Magazine*, 84.

<sup>81</sup> *Letters*, 214.