

The Poet of Eyam
Rediscovering Richard Furness



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Abstract

Most scholars interested in literature are aware of the greater English Romantic poets. Names like William Wordsworth and Anna Seward would sound familiar to many researchers. However, some great poets ended up in obscurity. Richard Furness is one of those poets. Although he is from the same village as Seward, he is the much lesser known poet from Eyam. This place, like the county of Derbyshire to which it belongs, has a peculiar spirit which may have influenced the works of several literary geniuses, such as Jane Austen, Anna Seward and Erasmus Darwin. This thesis will focus on how this “genius loci” determines Furness' poetry and, since he is placed in the context of several Romantic writers, will show that Furness is a Romantic poet who deserves more scholarly attention.

To determine the genius loci of the Peak District, chapter one will compare the descriptions of this area in the works of Austen, Seward and Darwin. All three authors wrote about the Peak District, which means that their writings should provide enough information to establish its spirit. After establishing this spirit of place, chapter two will focus on how it determines Furness' poetry. Finally, since Furness lived in the Romantic period, the third chapter will analyse how his poems fit into the Romantic tradition to which the earlier mentioned writers belong.

Introduction

"My love, should not you like to see a place of which you have heard so much? [...] A place too, with which so many of your acquaintance are connected" (Austen 42). This is what Mrs Gardiner says to Elizabeth when the latter is disappointed of the change in holiday destination and does not want to go to Pemberley (Austen 42). Jane Austen's heroine in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet, expected to go to the Lake District, a popular holiday destination in the nineteenth century (Heeley 62). However, due to other obligations in London, the Gardiners and Elizabeth "were to go no farther northward than Derbyshire" (Austen 42). This means that the Peak District, in this narrative, can be seen as a tourist destination that is, according to Mrs Gardiner, a good alternative for the Lake District, since "there was enough to be seen there" and "the town where they were to spend a few days, was probably as great an object of her curiosity, as all the celebrated beauties of Matlock, Chatsworth, Dovedale, or the Peak" (Austen 42).

When Elizabeth and the Gardiners are enjoying themselves with a walk on Mr. Darcy's estate, Pemberley, Elizabeth explains the beauty of the landscape found there. First she says that its "many charming views" "gave the eye power to wander" (Austen 43). However, after crossing a bridge, she and the Gardiners perceive a completely different type of landscape, since "it was a spot less adorned than any they had yet visited; and the valley, here contracted into a glen, allowed room only for the stream, and a narrow walk amidst the rough coppice wood which bordered it" (Austen 43). The landscape in Derbyshire seems to be charming and rough at the same time. Although the scenery in Derbyshire is not discussed in great detail, the people from the Peak District are.

Most characters in *Pride and Prejudice* seem to be rather straightforward in their personality. Mr Darcy's and Mr Wickham's personalities, on the other hand, are more difficult

to grasp. These two characters, who are both from the Peak District, share the same duality in their personalities as can be found in the landscape of this area, since they both turn out to be the complete opposite of what people thought about them at first (Austen 35). At the beginning of the novel, Mr Darcy is described as being "at the same time haughty, reserved and fastidious, and his manners, though well bred, were not inviting" (Austen 4). His main flaw seems to be his pride, which Elizabeth thinks is what makes him disagreeable and made him try to persuade Mr Bingley into not marrying her sister, Jane (Austen 34). She thinks that Mr Darcy does not approve of a marriage between a man of wealth and high social standing and a woman who is inferior in both respects (Austen 33). However, Mr Darcy is misunderstood, since it was not pride that made him interfere in Jane and Mr Bingley's relationship. In his letter to Elizabeth, he explains that he tried to do so because he observed that Mr Bingley was interested in Elizabeth's sister, while Jane "received his attentions with pleasure, [but] did not invite them by any participation of sentiment" (Austen 35). This shows that Mr Darcy only cared about his friend Mr Bingley. Mr Wickham, however, only cares about money. Quite contrary to Mr Darcy, he is believed to be very handsome, "pleasing in his address" and a victim of Darcy's pride (15; 24). However, when Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter, she finds out that Wickham's good features are a facade and that he actually is only looking for financial gain and, according to Mrs Reynolds, "turned out very wild" (Austen 35; 43).

The Spirit of Derbyshire

It does not seem to be a coincidence that Darcy's and Wickham's personalities show similarities to the nature of the Peak District. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, who explains how places are given meaning, "people demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations", which makes these similarities between the landscape and Austen's characters less surprising (410). Moreover, Tuan states that places may have a spirit, but only people can have a sense of place (410). This spirit of a place, or *genius loci*, seems to be important in *Pride and Prejudice*, although it is unclear what the *genius loci* is.

The Latin term *genius loci* literally translates to *spirit of place*. This term captures the Greco-Roman idea that some places were inhabited by a god (Brook 141). Isis Brook, who proposes several possibilities of defining a *genius loci*, states that "when we try to describe some places it becomes necessary to include something that is not an inventory of their contents or description of our feelings about them" (150). She is of the opinion that something else, although she does not know what, plays an important role as well (150). Tuan, however, thinks that "the personality of a place is a composite of natural endowment [...] and the modifications wrought by successive generations of human beings" (409). He "distinguish[es] between places that yield their meaning to the eye and places that are known only after prolonged experience" (412). The latter is a place someone shares with people who are important to them, to which he ascribes specific senses and is tied to because of a form of kinship (Tuan 417-8). The former functions as a symbol, the place either has a literal spirit, for instance a god, or a monument that "gives prominence and an air of significance to localities" (Tuan 413). In this sense, it can be argued that the *genius loci* is a combination of perceivable natural features, supernatural features and something connected to human beings and their emotions, like relationships and subjective ideas about a place.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth and the Gardiners visited Mr Darcy's estate and stay, for at least a part of their holiday, in Bakewell (Austen 43). "Only six miles north of" this village lies Eyam, a place of both historical and literary importance (Wood 14). In 1068, this village was mentioned in the Domesday Book as a very small place worth one pound, which belonged to King William (Palmer). Ever since the Romans started mining there, Eyam has been a place of economic interest (Wood 32-3). Mining continued until 1956, when the last mine, Magpie mine, was closed (Peak District Information). The seventeenth century marked another important event in the history of Eyam. From 1665 to 1666, this village was struck by an epidemic of the plague (Wood 41). This horrible pestilence is mentioned in the following lines Anna Seward, born in Eyam, wrote to Emma:

Upon the first appearance of the pestilence at Eyam, Mr. Mompesson informed the earl of Devonshire, then residing at Chatsworth, that he believed he could prevail upon his parishioners to confine themselves within the limits of the village, provided his lordship would exert himself to induce the country round to supply them with necessaries, leaving such provisions as might be requested, in appointed places, and at appointed hours, upon the neighbouring hills. (18)

Seward's letters, according to Teresa Barnard, who wrote Seward biography, formed a sort of first draft for her poems (1). One of the people she wrote to was Emma, Seward's imaginary pen pal (Barnard 9). The example mentioned above comes from one of those letters to Emma and also describes the villagers in a way that resembles Austen's description of Mr Darcy and Mr Wickham from *Pride and Prejudice*:

[I]t is most remarkable, that when the pestilence became beyond conception terrible, not a single inhabitant attempted to pass the deathful bounds of the village, though a regiment of soldiers could not, in that rocky and open country, have detained them against their will ; much less could any watch, which might have been set by the neighbourhood, have effected that infinitely important purpose. (Seward to Emma 18)

In this description it seems that both the sublime and the picturesque features of the Peak District are represented in the people of Eyam as well. Sublime landscapes can be described as landscapes that inspire terror and awe, but are also considered as being aesthetic (Siddal 33). The picturesque, on the other hand, is smoother and more relaxing and lies between the beautiful and the sublime (Siddall 30). On the one hand the inhabitants of this village are gentle beings, since they try to protect the rest of the country by sacrificing themselves, while on the other their will is so strong that they could not be held back by a regiment of soldiers. It seems as if the people of Eyam share the same features of gentleness and roughness as the nature that can be found there.

Similarly, in his "The Economy of Vegetation" of *The Botanic Garden* (1791), Erasmus Darwin, who was befriended with Seward, represents the spirit of Derbyshire in its inhabitants (Bowerbank). For instance, he mentions the miners in the following lines:

"Go, gentle GNOMES [...]"

[...]

Oh, watch, where bosom'd in the teeming earth,

Green swells the germ, impatient for its birth;

Guard from rapacious worms its tender shoots,

And drive the mining beetle from its roots;
 With ceaseless efforts rend the obdurate clay,
 And give my vegetable babes to day! (Part I 537-54)

He refers to the miners as being "mining beetle[s]" that threaten the "vegetable babes" (Part I 552-4). On the one hand this image indicates the destructive intentions of the miners, while they also are, like beetles, a part of nature. In these creatures Darwin combines the sublime and the picturesque, which is quite similar to what Seward does with the people from Eyam. Moreover, Darwin assigns the task of protecting nature against these beetles to the gnomes. The image of gnomes and beetles in his poetry seems to correspond to that of the nature of the Peak District, since the one protects the earth while the other is threatening it, which is similar to the earlier mentioned feelings that are connected to the picturesque and the sublime.

Seward later moved from Eyam to Lichfield, hence her title *Swan of Lichfield* (Bowerbank). In her poem "Eyam"(1788), she reminisces about her time in Eyam and shows how special this village is to her.

Not two short miles from thee, can I refrain
 Thy haunts, my native EYAM, long unseen?-
 Thou and thy lov'd inhabitants, again
 Shall meet my transient gaze.-Thy rocky screen,
 Thy airy cliffs I mount; and seek thy shade,
 Thy roofs, that brow the steep, romantic glade. (l. 9-14)

Seward seeks the shade so she can reminisce about the beauties of her native village and write this poem¹. In this sense, she is inspired and moved by her native land. However, her memories of Eyam are based on things perceived so long ago, that all the changes Eyam underwent make the village look worse and painful to her. She explains this in “[r]ough, and unsightly;- by the long, coarse grass / Of the once smooth, and vivid green, with sighs / To the deserted Rectory I pass” (26-8).

However, Seward's memories lead her to "[t]he soft, romantic vallies, high o'er-peer'd / [b]y hills and rocks, in savage grandeur rear'd" (Eyam 7-8). This description of the Peak District incorporates the same paradoxical features as Austen's description of Pemberley. According to Noah Heringman, who discusses the importance of the Peak District in literature, the term *savage grandeur* that Seward uses is not exclusively used for describing the Peak District, but it seems to cluster around this area (231). This term can also be found in James Croston's *On Foot through the Peak; or a Summer Saunter among the Hills and Dales of Derbyshire* (1868), in which he describes the Peak District and mentions that the “savage grandeur of the prospect” of “[t]he entrance to Dove Dale” startles the spectator (294). He also quotes a poem, “Castleton”, by John Leigh (1813-1887) (qtd. in Croston 54-8; Reilly 272). In this poem Leigh mentions the grandeur of a castle that is gone, but still receives praise, and the “savage strength” a hunter has to have to kill his prey² (qtd. in Croston l. 49; 68-72). Moreover, Heringman states that the Peak District provided “a local basis for abstract concepts such as the sublime and picturesque” (231). Seward's "Eyam" combines these two contrasting concepts of the sublime and the picturesque in the previously mentioned lines and in "Thy airy cliffs I mount; and seek thy shade, / Thy roofs, that brow the steep, romantic glade;" (7-8; 13-4). In this description of the Peak District's beauty we find the valleys which

¹ The question mark after "long unseen" seems to indicate that she is indeed reminiscing, since the place haunts her memories and she questions herself whether it has been a long time or not (Seward l. 10).

² Both Dove Dale and Castleton are situated in the Peak District.

are soft. However, these valleys are "o'er-peer'd" by hills and rocks, which fill the viewer with awe. Seward, in her previously mentioned letter to Emma, explains how these two opposites work together. She says that "[t]he top of this eastern elevation, so majestic and picturesque amidst all its barren brownness, presents us, on ascending it, with the eagle's view of several lovely valleys" (Seward to Emma 13). Seemingly, the sublime features in close proximity of Eyam make the picturesque features stand out even more. This suggests that, to Seward, this combination of features defines the Peak District.

However, as Seward implies in her poem "Eyam", things are changing for the worse. Unfortunately, this means that the landscape changes too. Seward knows what exactly is responsible for these changes. For instance, in her letter to Emma, Seward discusses the destructive influence of industry on this landscape. She tells Emma that "[t]he towers and turrets of these lofty rocks are [...] continually growing less and less distinct, picturesque and noble" because their materials are used for industrial purposes (14). Heringman states that Seward omitted mills from her poems, when describing Eyam and its surroundings probably because she, just like Wordsworth, did not think these mills contributed anything to the aesthetic value of the place (232-3). Heringman mentions Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (1798), since the poet omitted the iron works that could be found in close proximity of the abbey from this poem (232-3). However, from her description to Emma it does not seem merely the aesthetic value which makes her decide not to incorporate the mills in her poetry, but there seems to be another reason as well. Seward blames these economic constructions for destroying the beauty of the Peak District. This also means that these mills destroy the savage grandeur of the Peak District, which could mean that excluding them from her poems is a way of preserving the features that make this area so dear to her.

Darwin does not share Seward's opinion of the destructive effects of the economy. In the following lines from "The Loves of the Plants" from *The Botanic Garden* (1791), he describes the interaction between nature and the economy, or rather the mills.

So now, where Derwent rolls his dusky floods
 Through vaulted mountains, and a night of woods,
 The Nymph, GOSSYPPIA, treads the velvet sod,
 And warms with rosy smiles the watery God;
 His ponderous oars to slender spindles turns,
 And pours o'er massy wheels his foamy urns;
 With playful charms her hoary lover wins,
 And wields his trident,—while the Monarch spins. (II 85-92)

Darwin explains in his notes that "Gossypia" refers to the cotton plant of which Arkwright spun clothing in his mills (Part II 87-88)³. Alan Bewell, who analyses Darwin's view on nature as represented in *The Botanic Garden*, states that Darwin's vision of nature is commercial and that the poet knows people are able to change ecologies (21; 40). This may be an explanation of why Darwin incorporates Arkwright's mills in his poetry, namely because, to him, these mills establish a whole new sort of ecology. It seems as if the nymph, who represents the mills, invigorates the "watery God" with her "rosy smiles", changing the rolling waves into heavier ones that can turn "massy wheels" (Darwin 88; 90). Moreover, the god and the nymph, like the earlier mentioned gnomes, add literal spirits of place to the Derwent and the mills and together form a combination of sublime and picturesque features which define the Peak District. This means that, while Seward thinks that the *savage grandeur* of the Peak

³ The fact that Darwin wrote about Arkwright's mills, situated in close proximity of Matlock, and mentions the Derwent proves that he wrote about the Peak District (Heringman 230).

District is threatened by the economy, Darwin considers the mills as something that contributes to this genius loci.

This allows for a definition of the genius loci of the Peak District. Since both Austen and Seward describe this landscape as being sublime and picturesque at the same time and the inhabitants seem to follow this example, the Peak District's spirit of place has to incorporate both parts of this description. The term *savage grandeur*, as used by Anna Seward, seems to be the best name to give to this area, since it encapsulates the roughness in the word *savage* and the picturesque in the word *grandeur*. However, there is a difference of opinion when it comes to whether industrial influence contributes to or destroys the genius loci of the Peak District.

Furness and the Spirit of Place

Now that the genius loci of the Peak District has been named and defined, this chapter will focus on how this *savage grandeur* determines Furness' poetry. Richard Furness (1791-1857), or *The Poet of Eyam*, shows similarities in his description of the Peak District, since in "The Astrologer" (1836) both the picturesque beauties of nature as well as the sublimity of the landscape are described (Sutton 2014). The following lines almost literally draw a picture of the place where the miner's cottage can be found:

Where Hollow-brook in angry winter floods,
 Falls, foams, and flows down Roylee's shelving woods;
 Deep in a limestone dell, which shrubs adorn --
 Where the rock-cistus scents the vernal morn;
 [...]
 In pleasing solitude the cottage stood;
 Low were its walls and nicely trimm'd the roof,
 With heathy turf and straw, made water-proof :
 The aye green houseleek claim'd the southern side,
 And hardy stone-crop prick'd its yellow pride
 O'er tufted moss, along the ridging grown,
 Adorn'd the thatch and fasten'd on the stone ;
 Where the short chimney through the ivy broke,
 Peeped through the sods and just discharged the smoke (I)

This picturesque description of the Peak District, in which different types of plants adorn the valley and the house, is followed by the description of a more rugged terrain.

However, unlike the other authors, Furness uses the history of a place to determine its spirit. "The Astrologer" describes the life of a miner who, later, falls ill (I-II). Randum Rider needs to go to the conjuror in Bakewell to get the recipe for a cure (II). When he is on his way to Bakewell, he passes Raven-tor of which its history seems to influence the genius loci.

For cliff and crag were demons of the night,
 The future world seem'd open to his sight ;
 In Raven-tor the nestlings croak'd aloud,
 Death seem'd awaking from his silent shroud ;
 For now, the Scotsman issued from the cave
 Of Caelwark dark, sepulchre and grave ;
 Throat cut, a gory, gaping, ghastly corse. (II)

The described murder of a Scotsman happened about half a century before Furness' works were published (Calvert Holland 148). Moreover, the rocks and cliffs are "demons of the night", which strikes the "Randum Rider" with fear of the place he passes and adds to the sublime features of the Peak District (II).

Local history takes in a prominent role in Furness' works and partly determines the narrative of his poems. For instance, the spirit of Raven-Tor, described above, frightens the Randum Rider and forces him to resume his journey to Bakewell (II). Moreover, this spirit seems to determine the narrative, since the image of death issuing from the cave seems to be a warning for what will happen later in the poem because the recipe does not cure the miner from his disease (II).

Moreover, the mining industry, which flourished in the eighteenth century, is part of the Peak District's history as well (Peak District Information). However, while Darwin thinks

industry and landscape together can define the *genius loci* and Seward thinks it destroys this spirit, Furness' opinion is that the economic use of the landscape is of cultural importance. In his introduction to "The Astrologer", he mentions that it will not take long before there is nothing left to mine, which means that the labourers' "customs and manners" and much of the jargon used by them will disappear (125). Although Furness does think it a shame that the wealth of the earth is disappearing, he, rather than saving nature, wants to preserve the customs and the vocabulary of the miners by incorporating it in his poetry (125). For instance, the Randum Rider in "The Astrologer" seems to be a randomly chosen man. However, in the jargon of the miners, a *rider*, according to G. Calvert Holland, is a "[r]ock or thin cliff that lies between two ranges of a vein" that can "[become] so thick as to make one vein into two" and a *randum* is "the range or direction of a vein" (165).

The jargon Furness uses helps to predict the ending of the poem, since a *rider* does something similar to what the character does by making a mistake in the recipe for the miner (Furness "Astrologer" III). When the latter finds out the conjuror's cure does not rid him of his illness, he gets angry and wants to "[...] stop the thief from poisoning many more" (III)! In this sense, Randum Rider's mistake breaks the connection between the conjuror and the sick man, which is what the jargon words already implied.

The reason Furness incorporates these things also shows that the *savage grandeur* of the area determines its inhabitants and vice versa, since the customs and manners of the miners change the place and this change will ultimately lead to a change in the customs of the labourers. It can, therefore, be stated that, in line with Tuan, Furness thinks "the personality of a place is a composite of natural endowment [...] and the modifications wrought by successive generations of human beings" (409). The *savage grandeur* of the Peak therefore determines

Furness' poem because he is aware it can change and wants to save it from fading into oblivion.

In these miners, similar to the other authors, Furness incorporates the *genius loci* of the Peak District. For instance, in "The Astrologer" Furness states of the miner that "[...] by wise Lavater's law-- / A face more honest yet we never saw" (I). According to John Graham, Lavater was a Swiss physiognomist whose works became very popular in nineteenth century Britain (561)⁴. This means that the miner's facial features show that he has a good personality. However, there is a rough side to him as well. When he is at work in the mines, Furness describes that the miner

[...] was matchless at a tearing blast:

[...]

Those rocky regions, at the stated hour,

Have witness'd all the thunder of his power. (I)

This representation of the miner shows similarities with Seward's description of the villagers of Eyam, who in the one situation are compassionate people, but in the other are as strong as an army.

The spirit of the Peak District also supports Furness' message. Furness does not only show the *genius loci* in his characters and his descriptions of nature, but, like Darwin, seems to use what Tuan and Brook would call a literal spirit of place (413; 141). However, while Darwin uses mythical creatures to represent the spirits of places, Furness captures the *genius loci* in nature itself. In his "Invitation to Matlock Baths, Derbyshire" Furness personifies the place by giving it its own opinion and ability to judge. This poem is an invitation to Matlock,

⁴ Physiognomists believe that a person's facial features show someone's character.

a popular spa village for rich people in the nineteenth century, when the Napoleonic wars made tourism to the continent difficult (Matlock Bath Parish Council).

Favoured few of wealth and ease,
Who can wander where you please ;
In some charming clime, that lies,
Under more indulgent skies. (1-4)

It seems that nature is more lenient in the places where the rich can go and that the Peak District, and Furness, will not be as permissive as to let rich people enjoy its beauties. This invitation, therefore, does not only come from Furness, but, to a certain degree, also from nature itself.

According to Tuan, although modern people have lost it, "only human beings can have a sense of place" (410). However, the previous examples show that Furness still has it and that it determines his poetry. Quite similar to the other authors, the *genius loci* of the Peak District determines the personality of the people who live there. However, in Furness' works the *savage grandeur* of the Peak District also determines the plot of his poems and reinforces the message the poet wants to get across.

Furness as a Romantic Poet

This chapter will focus on how Furness fits into the Romantic tradition. The reason for this is that this thesis has already compared his representation of the Peak District's *savage grandeur* with those of several Romantic writers. Moreover, one of his poems has already been compared to a work of a Romanticist.

James Montgomery, a poet and owner of the *Sheffield Iris*⁵, thought that Furness' "The Old Year's Funeral" "was worthy of being compared to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's ode 'On the Departing Year'" (qtd. in Holland and Everett 232). As the titles imply, the two poems are about the end of a year. Not only are the subjects similar, but both poets use similar imagery as well. For example, in both poems nature is made powerless. In Furness' poem death takes the old year to his grave and makes nature defenceless, since "[s]cared thunder threw off his helm-- look'd pale-- / [b]roke his sulphurous shafts on his knees of mail" (l. 61-4). In Coleridge's poem nature is defenceless because she is sick (Strophe II).

Nature takes in an important role in the two poems and is important in Romantic literature. However, according to J.R. Watson, the Romantic poets were not "trying to lose themselves in nature", but "are interested in themselves", a sort of self-awareness (84). This self-consciousness, he says, can be enhanced by nature (Watson 84). Coleridge shows this in his "Work without Hope" (1825) when the narrator sees that nature is working hard, but he is "the sole unbusy thing, / [n]or honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing" (l. 5-4). According to John L. Mahoney, the narrator thinks he is useless because of this (207). He only seems to realise this because nature is awaking from its slumber (l. 3).

Nature's enhancing power to this type of consciousness can also be found in Furness' "Stanzas, On Frighting a Bird from Its Nest". In this poem the poet disturbs this "[l]ittle affectionate" from its home and asks it to return to its children so he can protect them (l. 1;

⁵ The *Sheffield Iris* is the newspaper that published several of Richard Furness' works.

16). This image of the frightened bird makes Furness conscious of the similarities between him and this animal. He literally asks himself "what [he is], but that bird with its nest in the thorn" (l. 21).

Watson, as well as Frederick Garber, states that self-consciousness leads to Romantic irony, in which the world is seen as chaotic and Romantic poetry as a response that creates order (85; 208). However, they also mention that Romantic poets are aware of their limitations (Garber 211; Watson 85). Furness is aware of his limitations as well. Although, in "Frighting a Bird from Its Nest", he knows he is capable of providing shelter to his children, he is not able to keep his children with him (l. 23). He, therefore, asks God to protect them (l. 25-8).

This plea for God's help is something that makes Furness stand out from the Romantic poets, since it is not in line with what Watson states (25). Watson argues that "[a]ll the Romantic Poets are [...] sceptical about the use of [...] religious influence", since "religion seems the pious luxury of a flaccid middle class" (79). However, by letting the narrator ask for God's divine help, Furness does not seem to be sceptical about this type of influence. This view can be found in "The Astrologer" as well, since the narrator states that there is but one God and that we should believe in Him (III). The fact that Furness is not sceptical about religious influence can be explained by the fact that he served as a preacher and, therefore, felt a stronger connection to religion (Sutton 2004).

Watson's statement about religion being a luxurious aspect in the life of middle class people implies that the Romantic poets were not fond of these people. This is probably because the Romantics thought of the labouring, lower class as being more authentic, since "they are not protected by money or the structures of society" (Watson 79). Wordsworth, in his "Perfect Woman", describes what he thinks is a perfect woman. According to Kevin MacCallum, this perfect woman was his wife, Mary (25). Wordsworth describes his wife as

someone who works in the household and "[a] creature not too bright or good / [f]or human nature's daily food" (l. 13; 17-8). In this sense he portrays her in a more authentic way, not too good for normal food and not having someone to do the household.

Although Furness uses religious influence, he does not prefer the wealthier people. In his "Invitation to Matlock Baths, Derbyshire" Furness describes a tourist sight, but at the same time he seems to be against the tourists as can be seen in the following lines:

Favoured few of wealth and ease,

[...]

Tis not you that I invite :

But the sons of care and toil. (1-7)

These lines show that Furness and nature only want the labourers to enjoy the beauty of Matlock's dale and not the wealthier people, as described in chapter two.

Furness, however, is very aggressive towards the unwanted visitors, as can be seen in the following lines from the same poem about Matlock:

And the commonwealth of bees
Stands beneath the elder trees,
Whence they roam abroad, and bring
Sweets upon their loaded wing;
Or assailed, in angry swarms,
Sally forth with poisoned arms;
For each others wrongs to die --
For their common property;

Tumble drone and sinecure
 Deadly wounded out of door,
 Buzzing in each victim's ear,
 Idle folks shall not live here. (l 75-86)

This image of all working bees fighting against the sinecure⁶ almost seems like a threat to the rich Englishmen who want to come to the Peak District. Furness thinks that the Peak District belongs to the labourers and not to the wealthy. According to Watson, "[a]ll the Romantic poets are compassionate about the poor", since nothing protects them (79). Edwin Berry Burgum adds to this that the Romantic poets stopped looking at "the miseries of the poor" and "[see] a general improvement in store for everybody" (486). However, "progress", according to Burgum, "looked too much like a revolt" (486). This seems to be the case in Furness' poem as well, since the image of the "[d]eadly wounded out of door" and the warning the victims get are signs that the labourers are willing to fight for their place (84-6).

Furness, however, does not only revolt against the rich tourists, but he also seems to be sceptical about political power. According to Watson, this is a common feature of Romantic poets (79). In his introduction to "The Astrologer", Furness states that

it is still far more honourable to dig in your mines, than like a lounging belted scoundrel, to murder mankind by millions, to ride in wealth and splendour on the public Rosinante, and to call that glory, which, in the mind of every honest man, deserves a halter rather than a garter. (126)

⁶ A sinecure is a position in which someone does little to no work, but does receive status or financial gain (sinecure).

Rosinante is Don Quixote's horse, which means that Furness compares the murdering, wealthy people to this would-be knight (Cull 37). Apparently, Furness thinks politicians to be incapable of achieving what they ought to be, just like Don Quixote is incapable of being a proper knight. Moreover, "the public Rosinante" implies that the normal people help the murdering scoundrels while they are probably unaware of it (126). The following lines from "The Astrologer", which show the miner's opinion about politics and politicians, support the idea of politicians being unable to do what they should, since they:

Bark -- bite the people, and themselves by turns
 Turn rabid oft, foam, wander, wild, afar
 And worry half the world in hateful war. (I)

The politicians, in this description, do not seem to know what they are doing. They do not only hurt the people of England, but they hurt themselves and half the world by starting wars.

This information results in the decision to place Furness in the Romantic tradition. Not only does he use nature to get a sense of self-awareness which leads to the recognition of his own limits, he also shares the Romantic views on the different social classes. However, Furness differs from Romantic poets because of his relation to religion.

Conclusion

Furness can be seen as a Romantic poet whose poetry is determined by its locale. The genius loci plays a crucial role in this, since Furness describes the Peak District in terms of the *savage grandeur*. This genius loci, in Furness' poetry, is determined by his use of local history and has its effect on the narrative of Furness' poems. Moreover, it determines who the inhabitants of the Peak District are, whose habits Furness wants to preserve in his poetry. Furness' Romanticism is also influenced by this spirit of place, since it shares his opinion about the different social classes. Moreover, nature makes him aware of himself and his limitations. Although these examples show that Furness is a Romantic poet, his use of God makes him stand out from this group.

However, it is impossible to discuss every aspect of English Romanticism in Furness' works in a thesis of the current size. This thesis therefore focused on the genius loci of the Peak District and how it determines Furness' works. Further research could be done into other aspects of Romanticism in Furness' writings, or into the representation of the genius loci in the poet's other works.

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L.S.

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