

informed discussion of how these new forms of moral architecture came into being, and the influences on their design. There are limits, too, to the inferences one can draw from these surviving records, and Fennelly is forced, more often than not, to speculate about how to translate what she can derive from two-dimensional plans into defensible conclusions about asylum life. She is honest about the speculative character of these inferences, but the repeated invocation of “may have beens” indicates just how difficult it is to move from material traces to experiential realities (87). Fennelly more than once alludes to the parallel construction of penitentiaries, and it is a pity that she seems unaware of the architectural historian Robin Evans’s book *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture, 1750–1840* (1982), perusal of which would have greatly enhanced her discussion.

Fennelly does note that massive overcrowding caused problems for those running these buildings. The press of patients meant that the initial intentions that had informed the authorities’ decisions about asylum buildings were rapidly overtaken by events, and compromises were almost immediately the rule. For example, she acknowledges how, “due to severe overcrowding in most asylums soon after they were constructed, careful division of small numbers of patients was made redundant quickly” (140). One issue that Fennelly discusses with advantage involves problems of movement and control and the ways in which these problems were addressed in the architects’ plans.

A notable feature of the large section of the book that attends to architectural issues is the amount of attention Fennelly devotes to Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon and its possible influence on asylum design. I presume that this focus derives from Michel Foucault’s famous invocation of this surveillance model in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Fennelly periodically genuflects in Foucault’s direction, sometimes in odd contexts, as when she cites him as an authority on eighteenth-century English madhouses, a topic about which Foucault knew next to nothing and had nothing useful to say. She spends many pages pursuing this chimera before finally conceding that the Benthamite traces one can find in the construction of the asylums she has studied are essentially nonexistent. In a final, strained attempt to justify all the space she gives to this will-o’-the-wisp, she points to the cupola that adorned the central administrative block of most asylums as a symbolic Benthamite gesture, though assuredly the cupola was a purely decorative flourish that was useless for the purposes of surveillance and control, and more a marker of where the central administration of the asylum was located. Overall, though, *An Archaeology of Lunacy* is a modest but useful addition to the literature on the peculiar world of the nineteenth-century asylum.

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Inspiration and Insanity in British Poetry: 1825–1855, by Joseph Crawford; pp. vii + 248. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, \$59.99, \$44.99 ebook, €51.99, €42.79 ebook.

“Mad poets” leap and sprawl throughout literary history in innumerable guises, sometimes fitted out for idealization and acclamation, often for notoriety and institutionalization (3).

In the annals of medicine, they are subjected to diagnostic, etiological, and prescriptive speculations and pronouncements. Well into the modern era, Platonic notions of supernatural possession were invoked as a defense against various charges and diagnoses of what we would call psychopathology. However, by the late eighteenth century, scientific empiricism, social reformism, and psychiatric professionalization had begun radically to transform Western attitudes toward mental illness and, consequently, the relation between poetic inspiration and insanity—the subject of Joseph Crawford’s *Inspiration and Insanity in British Poetry: 1825–1855*, which focuses on early Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning.

Crawford sees Tennyson and Browning moving away from the Shelleyan visionary enthusiasm of their youthful productions, relinquishing their devotion to a Romantic style as it became both vehicle for and subject of intensifying psychological scrutiny. On one hand, dream, vision, prophecy, revelation; on the other hand, hallucination, delusion, melancholy, hypersensitivity, madness. Both poets, Crawford observes, recognized that the poet’s “self-declared elevation above the mundane” increasingly was suspected of being “a deliberate self-exile from the ‘rational,’” or even an unwilling descent into the irrational (60). Poetry that reveled too fully in imagination, undisciplined by reason, might be regarded not as the work of transcendent genius, but as the ravings of lunacy.

Crawford argues that, in a climate that was turning hostile to Romanticism, Browning strategically distanced himself from the poetry of unregulated inspiration by objectifying madness in dramatic forms, making it more difficult to identify his own subjectivity with the imaginative excesses and psychological aberrations of various characters and personae, such as the speaker of “Porphyria’s Lover” (1836). Tennyson, meanwhile, interlarded his depictions of imaginative excess and psychological aberration with deep skepticism and ceaseless self-questioning, as in “The Two Voices” (1842). With Tennyson and Browning, Crawford implies, the post-Romantic “visionary company” self-consciously embraced its own neurotic tendencies, so as not to be charged with something much worse (Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* [Doubleday & Company]).

Crawford argues that these poets’ preoccupation with the struggle to distinguish between poetic imagination and madness was a crucial factor in their development. He makes them stand-ins for idealists of many stripes who were put on the defensive by the tendency of modern psychiatry to pathologize the supposedly divine madness of outlandish poetic visions, altered states of consciousness, heightened or acute perception, dreams and hypnagogic states, and other aberrant or excessive poetic effusions.

Yet Crawford’s history gives scant attention to the fact that many psychiatrists were beginning to recognize the diagnostic, therapeutic, and even artistic value of imaginative writing by their patients. During the period covered by this study of British poetry (an inflated term for its slim range of poets and poems), “inspiration and insanity” constituted no simple opposition. Nor were psychiatry and aesthetics entirely separate disciplines; in the early nineteenth century, they were interanimating spheres of inquiry, linked by their shared fascination with the psychology of imagination. In the 1830s, the rise of the very broad concept of “moral insanity” further complicated rigid distinctions between organic illness and counter-normative forms of thinking regarded as disturbing or dangerous according to the era’s religious and legal norms (84).

Crawford correctly observes that early nineteenth-century psychiatrists were making significant discoveries regarding delusional and chaotic thinking; psychogenic maladies and the effects of neurological damage were becoming much better understood. And it is easy to imagine poets feeling chastened in their enthusiasms by new evidence of the many ways in which the mind could be compromised by mental illness. However, there is a sizeable difference between explaining something and explaining it away. As Browning writes, “the world is not to be learned and thrown aside” (qtd. in Crawford 219). For us, “the world” is chiefly a matter of unconscious association, memory, dissociation, and fantasy. That the greatest writers (in prose and verse) understood this long before Sigmund Freud likely drove certain nineteenth-century crypto-heroic empiricists themselves to the brink of madness. Yet burgeoning interest in diseased minds among less alienated “alienists” also led to augmented interest in the complex expressivity of such minds (4). “Mad” poetry was still poetry, after all, drawing the attention of physicians and literary critics alike who recognized that even the “mad[dest]” verses were still evidence of poetic efforts to make meaning of experience.

For all of Tennyson and Browning’s foibles, eccentricities, and epistemological worries—including Tennyson’s legitimate fears of madness, exacerbated by the examples of his unstable and addiction-prone brothers—both poets were more or less sane (though both would continue, throughout their careers, to be accused of “insanity” by uncomprehending critics). But their contemporaries included many seriously ill men and women whose poetic productions increasingly were being studied by progressive psychiatrists and asylum managers (including Esprit Blanche, Charles Caldwell, and John Haslam) who were introducing humane, expressive therapies in Britain, Europe, and North America. Patients were given writing supplies. Medical journals (including *The American Journal of Insanity* [1844–present]) and literary periodicals (including Joseph Dennie’s *Port Folio* [1801–27]) published and reviewed their verses. By mid-century, anthologies of what was known as mad poetry, written by severely ill persons, including asylum inmates, began appearing in volumes like Octave Delapierre’s bilingual *Histoire littéraire des fous* (1860).

One such poet was John Clare, and Crawford devotes time to a largely speculative comparison of Clare and Tennyson, who overlapped as residents of High Beach, where the head of the local asylum, Matthew Allen, knew both men—one as a patient, the other as a friend and business associate. Yet Clare is an exceptional case, having long been regarded as a major poet, illness notwithstanding. Clare’s well-documented experience of illness, confinement, and notoriety makes him a kind of bogeyman in Crawford’s account, especially for young Tennyson: “surely better to sing songs and charm the birds than to end up like poor John Clare” (145).

Crawford’s study might seem less reductive and arbitrary if it had devoted more serious attention to the history of changing diagnostics and treatments during this dynamic period. His book puts little pressure on persistent terminological vagaries, just as it gives short shrift to many countervailing efforts to refine psychiatric nosology. The psychiatric imaginary of the early nineteenth century has been exhaustively researched and debated, particularly in relation to Michel Foucault’s polarizing 1961 *Madness and Civilization*. And it continues to be reinterpreted in light of contemporary disability studies—a field Crawford ignores, despite its direct relevance to the increasing somatization of mental

illness (Crawford's "new 'medico-psychological' orthodoxy") and the complex gendering of the relation between illness and insight during the period in question (192).

Recent psychoanalytic studies of Romantic and early Victorian poetry—including Matthew Rowlinson's provocative *Tennyson's Fixations: Psychoanalysis and the Topics of the Early Poetry* (1994)—also escape mention. Yet important advances in early nineteenth-century psychiatry anticipate key insights regarding the broad range of psychic functioning, the centrality of psychopathology to everyday life, and the heuristic value of dreams and delusions. In fact, as Tennyson worked arduously for seventeen years on the poem that would become *In Memoriam* (1850) (a poem Crawford barely mentions, no doubt because it refutes so many of his claims), he developed astonishingly perceptive, nuanced language for the phenomena Freud later described in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917). And Browning's interest, early and late, in excessive psychological states never flagged, neither in the objectifying dramatic monologues on which Crawford perseverates, nor in the astonishing, non-ironic rhetoric of dramatized subjectivation in *The Ring and the Book* (1868).

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Phonopoetics: The Making of Early Literary Recordings, by Jason Camlot; pp. xv + 229. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019, \$55.00.

Phonopoetics: The Making of Early Literary Recordings is an engaging and transformative study of what Jason Camlot refers to as an audiotextual critical approach to early sound recordings as literary works—a methodology that he develops across this book "to explore the historically specific convergences between audio-recording technologies, media formats, and the institutions and practices of the literary context" (4). Camlot does not explicitly frame this project concerning what he calls "phonopoetics," or the "making (poesis) of literary speech sounds (phono)," as an overtly media archaeological investigation, but his audiotextual methodology builds on the writings of media theorists and historians such as Wolfgang Ernst, Friedrich Kittler, and Jussi Parikka, and indeed might best be characterized as a media archaeology of literary sound recordings issuing from roughly 1880 to 1950 (5). While Ivan Kreilkamp, John Picker, and others have explored the range of Victorian soundscapes in intimate detail, *Phonopoetics* breaks fresh ground through its forensic analysis of a number of "case-studies" (7) concerning what Camlot characterizes as a "sociology of the audiotext" that "attends to the formal structure of the signal under consideration, but only as one facet of the broader consideration of the social realities and functions of the media in which it has appeared" (6).

Scholars of Victorian studies will likely find Camlot's chapters on early literary recordings of the work of Charles Dickens and Alfred Tennyson as most pertinent to broader concerns in the field. This review dwells with these, but not before noting Camlot's first chapter, which scrutinizes a range of nineteenth-century speech practices as well as recitation and elocutionary arts to contextualize the ways that the voices emanating from