
THE NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF ROMANTICISM (NASSR)

Panel 2: Re-collecting the Romantics

Organizer: Andrew Sargent (Western University)

This panel seeks papers that engage Romanticism's investment in archival re-collection as an editorial project and/or a politics of memory. Godwin's editing of Wollstonecraft's literary remains, Mary Shelley's re-assembling and sanitizing of P. B. Shelley's chaotic *Triumph of Life* manuscript, Coleridge's obsessive revising of his works, Wordsworth's literal remembering of his minor works in *The Prelude* and his compartmentalization of his corpus under specific genres and themes in his *Poems* (1842) — these instances testify to editorial activity as part of what Andrew Benet has called Romanticism's "culture of posterity," a self-conscious orientation toward literature's survival and future reception.

This panel asks how Romantic writers' re-collections both enable and resist their future perfect reception, or what de Man called their "monumentalization" as foundations of a future moment. For example, how might Blake's re-collection of his earlier texts within the esoteric "System" of his long prophecies, for which he thought himself "unlikely [to] get a customer," proleptically repel rather than seek a posterity that would appreciate him?

Papers are welcome to take practical or theoretical approaches to "re-collection" and its ethical and/or aesthetic ramifications. How do our contemporary practices of editing and anthologizing risk granting or denying Romantic texts and writers a future they may or may not have wanted? How might we square our editorial activity with Romanticism's uncertain re-collections of the literary archive, such as we see in the ominously "thrown open" libraries at the end of Shelley's *The Last Man* that could either release the archive from, or consign it to, ruin?