Eva ANGLESSY **N° étudiant : xxxxxxxx**

Université de Lorraine **ERUDI-M1 Mondes Anglophones** **Année 2020/2021**

UE 801 – Séminaires, Colloques et Conférences

FINAL REPORT

Table of Content

Critical Review……pp. 2-6

ANNEXES

Annex 1…….……...…..pp. 7-13

Examples of Shakespeare's and Keats's influences in the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings

Annex 2…….pp. 14-17

Corpus of lectures

Last term, after a general introduction to the Romantic poets and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB), I explored the relationships of both artistic movements with Nature, focusing on the first generation of artists in each movement. This term, starting from the themes that the PRB painters chose to represent, I have sought to understand why so many narratives in their works were inspired either by the poems of the second generation of the Romantic poets (especially Keats's) or by Shakespeare's plays. I thus explored the lives and works of Lord Byron, Shelley and Keats as well as Hazlitt's. Indeed, his critical essays and lectures–especially those about Shakespeare's plays and characters–had a great influence on Keats's thoughts and poetry. Finally, in order to apprehend why Shakespeare's influence may have been so important in Romantic poetry (especially in Keats's poetic development), then in the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings, I have tried to find some clues into the fascinating lectures of three renowned scholars about the Bard's fame and humanity. Indeed, Harold Bloom and Stephen Greenblatt, who both are American and Jewish academics, as well as Jonathan Bate, a British professor who often participates in the BBC programs, have specialized not only in Shakespeare but also in the Romantic poets, as a confirmation of my own perception that a natural link exists between these literary monuments.

In his lecture "The Victorians: Art and Culture", Professor Evans summarizes the cultural evolution throughout the 19th century, from the "bowdlerization" of Shakespeare in 1804 to the Modernist and decadent artists at the close of the century. A passage that is particularly relevant to my report regards Romanticism, and how Byron and Shelley rebelled against conventional morality, just as Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites used working-class girls and prostitutes as models. "Yet Romanticism also contained the seeds of a different kind of aesthetic moral code: by emphasizing the primacy of emotions in the human spirit, it opened the way for religion to escape the scorn of Enlightenment rationalists. A return to the Middle Ages for inspiration could not avoid taking up the religious subjects that were central to the aesthetic of the era". No wonder that Jesus Christ appears on top of the List of Immortals[1] (with four stars), as a source of inspiration. The seriousness of Victorian art was also shared by the moral purposefulness of Victorian literature. Early Romantic writing in Britain sought to convey in lyrical form the individual's reactions to the world of nature (as in Wordsworth's,

[1] See Annex, picture 1: The PRB's List of Immortals

Coleridge's or Keats's works) or the individual's progress through a picaresque series of Romantic adventures (as in Byron's and Scott's works). By the mid-century, however, prose had replaced poetry as the favoured reading matter of the middle classes, and above all, the realist novel, whose master was of course Charles Dickens.

In their paintings, the Pre-Raphaelites drew inspiration from the works of great poets, such as Chaucer, Milton, Byron, Burns[2] etc. and more particularly from Shakespeare's plays and Keats's poems. Professor Holmes explains in his lecture that their engagement with Shakespeare's heroines[3] may be understood as an artistic investigation of their characters, an attempt to represent their psychological make-up. For example, Ophelia's character was interpreted in no less than eight different paintings. Deverell and Tupper, in a collaborative work[4] for an issue of *The Germ*, reimagined the relationships between Viola and Olivia, the two heroines of *Twelfth Night*, thus creating some ambiguity which does not happen within the play. Considering the Victorian thoughts about homosexuality, this was an extraordinarily advanced, independent way of thinking. Similar artistic investigations of the PRB painters appear in their many interpretations of Keats's narrative poems, such as *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*[5] or *The Eve of St Agnes*[6], whose sensuality and gorgeous imagery provided them with an abundant source of imagination. Their paintings focus on the tension between romantic and sexual love, and between love and aesthetics[7].

The appeal of the three Romantic poets of the second generation (Byron, Shelley and Keats) to the imagination of the Pre-Raphaelite painters led me to explore the lives and works of these young artists through another series of lectures, which allowed me to realize how different they were, even though they were artificially grouped together several decades later.

Simon Browne's lecture "Byron, an introduction: still 'mad, bad and dangerous to know'?" and Jonathan Bate's "Byron and the Age of Sensation" converge in presenting Lord Byron as the embodiment of the new poetic spirit of the age, as "the original celebrity author": a poet and satirist whose poetry and personality captured the imagination of Europe. "Some of

[2] See Annex, picture 2: Ford Madox Brown, *The Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry*
[3] See Annex, pictures 3 to 5
[4] See Annex, picture 4
[5] See Annex, Pictures 8 to 11.
[6] See Annex, Pictures 6 and 7
[7] See Article: "The Theme of *The Eve of St. Agnes* in the Pre-Raphaelite Movement", http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/prb/ringel12.html

the most celebrated Romantic heroes are to be found in his poetry, but Byron himself is the quintessential Romantic hero". Contrary to the cliché of the poor and solitary poet starving in his garret (like Chatterton), Byron sold extremely well and wrote pieces for the popular market. As to politics, however, he was revolutionary and went off to fight for Greek independence. Contrary to Wordsworth, who wanted to capture the tone of voice of spoken speech in his poems, Byron liked the verse of Spencer and Pope, and his style of poetry became less fashionable after his death. Now, he is more esteemed for the satiric realism of *Don Juan*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley led during his short life a passionate search for personal love and social justice. According to Professor Richard Holmes, "he embraced rebellion and disgrace without thought of the cost to himself or to others. A radical agitator, atheist, apostle of free love, he also was a brilliant and uncompromising poetic innovator". In his lecture "Prometheus²: The Two Shelleys and Romantic Science", Holmes compares Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* with Shelley's poetic masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*: both writers shared the same journal; they were reading the same scientific materials (Erasmus Darwin, William Herschel, Giovanni Aldini, William Lawrence, and Humphry Davy). However, despite some wonderful passages, Shelley's *Prometheus* was maybe too complex to reach an audience, while *Frankenstein* has remained a very popular work, adapted many times for the cinema.

Byron and Shelley were both of noble stock, and learned their classics at University. They became genuine political radicals and had to flee England after either personal scandals or inflammatory publications against the Regent or his government. Nothing of the sort for John Keats, the poet 'under six foot and not a lord'[8]: he came from a middle-class family and faced financial difficulties since he gave up medicine to become a poet. In his lecture "The Cockney Romantics – John Keats and His Friends", Professor Bate discusses the literary collaboration among the circle of young artists who revolved around Leigh Hunt, including Keats and sometimes Shelley.

The last born of the English romantic poets and the first to die "devoted his short life to the perfection of a poetry marked by vivid imagery, great sensuous appeal, and an attempt to express a philosophy through classical legends[9]". The series of online lectures given by Keats House in June 2020, explore the influences of Spencer, Chatterton and other 18th century poets

[8] *John Keats Selected Letters*, Oxford World's Classics, p. 198
[9] See the article on John Keats in the Encyclopaedia Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Keats

in Keats's faux-medieval poem *La Belle Dame Sans Merci,* and compare the readings of this poem with Shelley's *Epipsychedion* and Byron's *Don Juan*.

Keats also discovered Shakespeare's plays through Hazlitt's lectures and Kean's interpretations on stage. Indeed, in a BBC podcast about William Hazlitt – an essayist and theatre critic who was demonized and ridiculed by the Regency elite – we learn that his response to Kean's performances was instrumental for "pushing Shakespeare forward". His idea was that Shakespeare could become any of the characters that he represents, a genius who has no self. This theory shaped Keats's thinking about the opposition between Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime" and Shakespeare's "negative capability"[10]. An example of Shakespeare's influence on Keats's poems can also be found in Professor Jack's lecture about Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*: she suggests that lines 43-49 of the poem appear to echo some of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, II.i.249-252.

The engagement of the Romantic poets with Shakespeare is a fascinating subject. Though renowned scholars (including Harold Bloom and Jonathan Bate) have already treated it at length, I would like to explore this theme a little further in the coming years. For the present, I can only notice that the attention of Romantic artists and the Pre-Raphaelite painters mainly focus on Shakespeare's characters (especially female characters in the case of the PRB). What is so special about them?

In his lecture "Shakespeare's Fame", Jonathan Bate reminds us that Margaret Cavendish was one of the first critics to 'praise Shakespeare for his extraordinary ability to enter into his vast array of characters, to "express the divers and different humours, or natures, or several passions in mankind'". David Garrick (1717-79), with his groundbreaking interpretation of Richard III, "established a pattern for later generations: the revolutionary new reading of a major Shakespearean part. William Hogarth's painting of Garrick in this role inaugurated the whole tradition of large-scale Shakespearean painting. In the Romantic era, Kean's interpretation of Shylock captured Hazlitt's attention (and that of his contemporaries). The latter thus wrote that Shakespeare "seemed scarcely to have an individual existence of his own, but to borrow that of others at will, and to pass successively through 'every variety of untried being,'—to be now Hamlet, now Othello, now Lear, now Falstaff, now Ariel".

[10] *John Keats Selected Letters*, Oxford World's Classics, p. 41

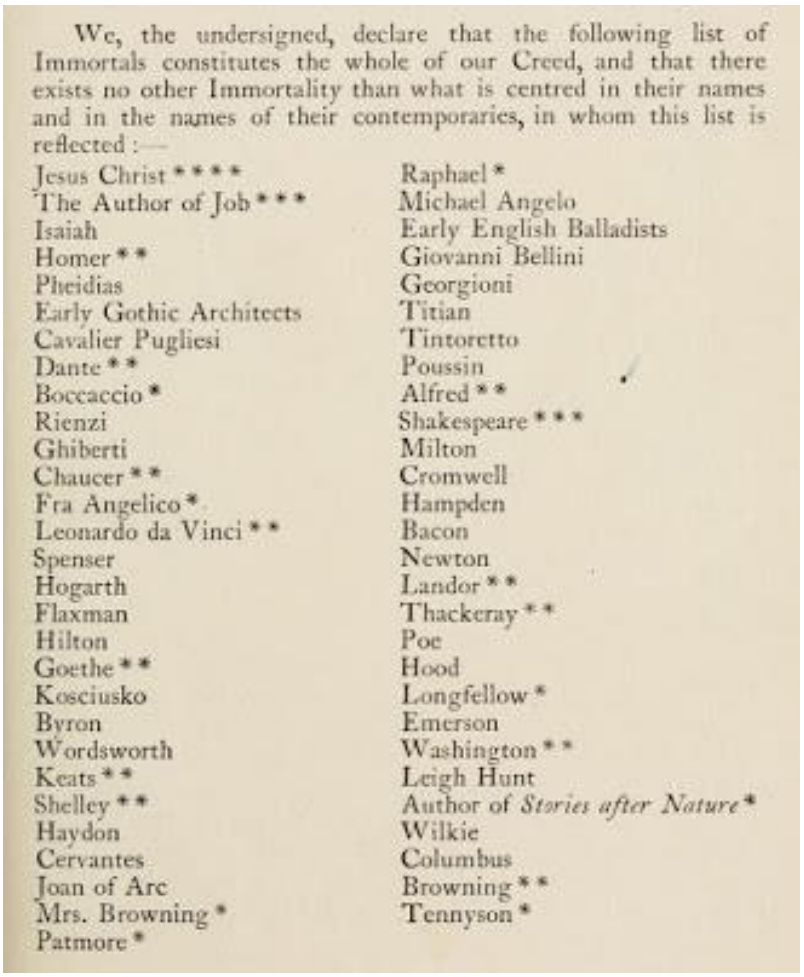
Harold Bloom, in his book and his lecture *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human,* declares that he "seek[s] to extend a tradition of interpretation that includes Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt (…). Shakespeare's characters are roles for actors, and they are considerably more than that: their influence upon life has been very nearly as enormous as their effect upon post-Shakespearean literature". To Bloom, "there is **an overflowing element in the plays, an excess beyond representation, that** is close to the metaphor we call 'creation'". In his lecture "Shakespeare's Life-Making", Professor Stephen Greenblatt illustrates what he calls "Shakespeare's signature" through the example of Shylock, the villain in *The Merchant of Venice,* who had so much theatrical **vitality**, so much "**urgent compelling life**" that he had to disappear at the end of Act IV not to "kill the play" (like Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*). In other words, Shakespeare's ability to enter deeply (too deeply for the purpose of the plot?) into almost every character he deployed, helps to explain the strange illusion that certain of his characters have a life independent of the play in which they appear. In an attempt to explain how Shakespeare may have achieved this extraordinary life making, Greenblatt uses a striking image, picturing Shakespeare attaching his characters as leeches to his arm and allowing them to suck his lifeblood. As conferring life is one of the essential qualities of the human imagination, Greenblatt concludes his lecture with these words: "Shakespeare's works of art are our living models, not because they offer a practical solution to the issues they brilliantly explore, but because they awake our awareness of the human lives that are at stake. (…) For that precious gift of imagination, we are for ever in Shakespeare's debt".

Shakespeare's ability to enter deeply into almost every character he deployed seems to have been a signature. Even his "secondary" characters, such as Shylock, Falstaff, Parolles, Caliban, along with dozens of other characters, possess a presence, a compelling immediacy, far in excess of the strict necessity of the plots in which they appear. Shakespeare's humanity, his uncanny ability to confer life upon the objects of imaginative attention, can explain the cunning magic of his plays, and the persistent attraction of his characters to the imagination of generations of artists since the 18th century. I have explored here his influence as well as Keats's on the PRB's works and started to apprehend the various literary influences in Keats's poems. What I would like to study next is the extent to which Shakespeare's literary works (his sonnets as well as his plays) have influenced the works of the Romantic poets, and more generally, investigate possible aesthetic links between the English Renaissance and the Romantic period.

ANNEX 1

Examples of Shakespeare's and Keats's influences in the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings

1. PRB – List of Immortals



We, the undersigned, declare that the following list of Immortals constitutes the whole of our Creed, and that there exists no other Immortality than what is centred in their names and in the names of their contemporaries, in whom this list is reflected :—

Jesus Christ ****
The Author of Job ***
Isaiah
Homer **
Pheidias
Early Gothic Architects
Cavalier Pugliesi
Dante **
Boccaccio *
Rienzi
Ghiberti
Chaucer **
Fra Angelico *
Leonardo da Vinci **
Spenser
Hogarth
Flaxman
Hilton
Goethe **
Kosciusko
Byron
Wordsworth
Keats **
Shelley **
Haydon
Cervantes
Joan of Arc
Mrs. Browning *
Patmore *

Raphael *
Michael Angelo
Early English Balladists
Giovanni Bellini
Georgioni
Titian
Tintoretto
Poussin
Alfred **
Shakespeare ***
Milton
Cromwell
Hampden
Bacon
Newton
Landor **
Thackeray **
Poe
Hood
Longfellow *
Emerson
Washington **
Leigh Hunt
Author of *Stories after Nature* *
Wilkie
Columbus
Browning **
Tennyson *

https://www.andrewrickard.ca/2017/11/the-immortals.html

2. Ford Madox Brown, *The Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry*, 1845

At its centre, the poet Geoffrey Chaucer; Milton, Shakespeare, and Spencer on the left-hand side; Byron, Pope and Burns on the right.

https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-seeds-and-fruits-of-english-poetry-141756

Shakespeare

3. John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariana_(Millais)#/media/File:John_Everett_Millais_-_Mariana_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

4. Walter Deverell, *Viola and Olivia*

http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/courses/ennc986/class/viol.jpg

5. **William Holman Hunt, Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1850-51**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentine_Rescuing_Sylvia_from_Proteus#/media/File:Valentine_Rescuing_Sylvia_from_Proteus.jpg

Keats

6. William Holman Hunt, *The Eve of St Agnes*, 1848

http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/whh/paintings/96.html

7. Arthur Hughes. *The Eve of St. Agnes*. 1856.

http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/hughes/paintings/1.html

8. John Everett Millais, *Isabella* (1848-49)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabella_(Millais_painting)#/media/File:John_Everett_Millais_-_Isabella.jpg

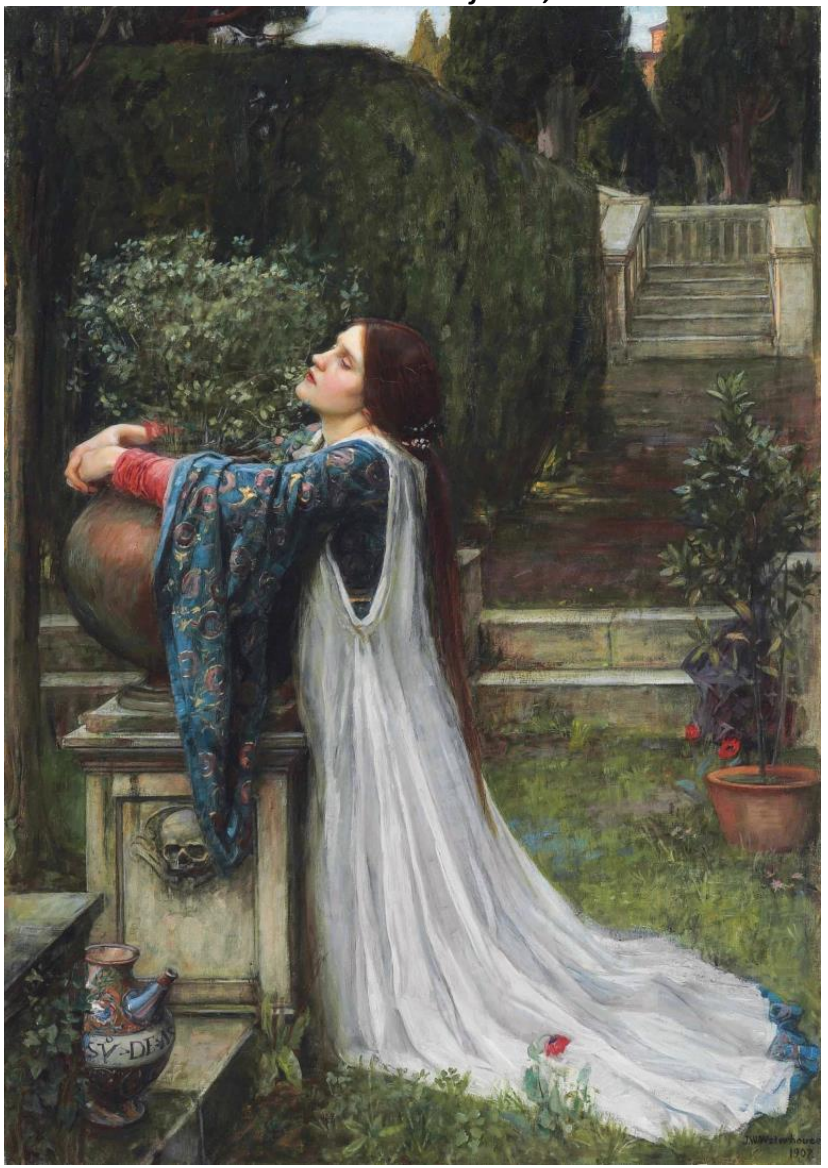
9. William Holman Hunt, *Lorenzo and Isabella*, 1849

https://fr.muzeo.com/reproduction-oeuvre/lorenzo-et-isabella-dapres-john-keats/william-holman-hunt

10. William Holman Hunt,
***Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, 1868**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabella_and_the_Pot_of_Basil

11. John William Waterhouse
***Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, 1907**



https://johnwilliamwaterhouse.home.blog/2019/05/12/isabella-and-the-pot-of-basil/

ANNEXE 2

CORPUS OF LECTURES/WEBINARS

1. Main field of interest

Last term, after a general introduction to the Romantic poets and the Pre-Raphaelite painters, I explored the relationships of both artistic movements with Nature, focusing on the **first generation** of artists in each movement.

This term, starting from **the themes** that the Pre-Raphaelite painters chose to represent, I will seek to understand why the narratives in many of their works were inspired either by the poems of the **second generation** of the Romantic poets (especially Keats's) or by Shakespeare's plays. Then, I will explore the lives and works of these three Romantic poets, who "lived fast and died young" (Lord Byron, Shelley and Keats), as well as Hazlitt's. Indeed, his critical essays and lectures−especially those about Shakespeare's plays and characters−had a great influence on Keats's thoughts and poetry. Finally, in order to apprehend why Shakespeare's influence may have been so important in Romantic poetry (especially in Keats's poetic development), then in the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings, I will try to find some clues into the fascinating lectures of three renowned scholars, about the Bard's fame and humanity. Indeed, Harold Bloom and Stephen Greenblatt, who both are American and Jewish academics, as well as Jonathan Bate, a British professor who often participates in the BBC programs, have specialized not only in Shakespeare but also in the Romantic poets, as if a natural link existed between these literary monuments.

2. List of lectures/webinars

"The Victorians: Art and Culture", by Professor Sir Richard Evans, Gresham College (October 2010)

The Victorian age began as an age of realism, in literature and the arts, and of nationalism and romanticism in music and culture. The first part of this lecture is a useful summary of the notions bearing upon Romanticism and the Pre-Raphaelite movement that I studied last term. Then Professor Evans describes the main features of Victorian art, such as bourgeois respectability and seriousness, shared "by the moral purposefulness of Victorian literature". By the end of the century, however, the high noon of Victorian culture was starting to give way to more disturbing developments – be it the arrival of modernism onto the artistic scene (Picasso, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Kandinsky), or the conscious revolt against Victorian values by the decadent movement.

https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-victorians-art-and-culture

Duration: 57 min

"Shakespeare in Victorian poetry and painting: The Pre-Raphaelites", by Professor John Holmes, University of Birmingham (January 2020)

Professor John Holmes looks at the significances of the Shakespeare canon for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, focusing on Shakespeare's heroines in Hamlet, Measure for Measure, and Twelfth Night.

https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/events/lecture-videos.aspx

Duration: 48 min

"200 years of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*", an event organised by Keats House (Summer 2020)

"To mark 200 years since the publication of 'La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad', Keats House presented a series of short online lectures. The poem may be based on medieval ballads, but it was also inspired by Keats's favourite poets from the eighteenth century. Dr Tess Somervell (University of Leeds) uncovers some of these lesser-known influences. Professor Kelvin Everest (University of Liverpool) considers in close detail the formal artistry of Keats's poem. Dr Anna Mercer (Cardiff University) discusses how we might read Keats's poem alongside works by other second-generation Romantic writers."

https://www.ourcitytogether.london/do/la-belle-dame-sans-merci

Total duration of the series of the three lectures: 49 min

"The Cockney Romantics: John Keats and his Friends", by Professor Sir Jonathan Bate, Gresham College (May 2019)

"The word Romanticism makes us think of mountain tops and stormy seas, but the younger generation of English Romantics (above all, John Keats) were Londoners through and through. They were even mocked as 'the Cockney School of Poetry'. Jonathan Bate tracks Keats to Hampstead and tells of the extraordinary circle of writers – opium-eater Thomas De Quincey, essayist Charles Lamb, master-critic William Hazlitt – who wrote for The London Magazine, until its gifted editor was killed in a duel with a rival critic."

https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/cockney-romantics-john-keats

Duration: 50 min

"William Hazlitt", program on BBC4 'In Our Time', (8 April 2010)

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00rtd0g

Melvyn Bragg and guests Jonathan Bate, Uttara Natarajan and AC Grayling discuss the life and works of William Hazlitt.

Duration: 45 min

"Poetry and Immortality: John Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*", by Professor Belinda Jack, Gresham College (January 2017)

'Thou wast not born for Death! Immortal bird/ No hungry generations tread thee down.' Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' contains these curious lines. How can a bird be 'immortal'? The poem is partly about immortality, but how does its complex poetic web work?

https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/poetry-immortality-john-keats-ode-to-a-nightingale

Duration: 50 min

'Prometheus²: The Two Shelleys and Romantic Science', by Richard Holmes (October 2011, The Institute of English Studies, in association with the Wordsworth Trust).

"Richard Holmes OBE is an author and academic, well known for his award-winning biographies of major figures of British and French Romanticism. His most recent work is The Age of Wonder, an exploration of scientific discovery in the Romantic period. His talk compares Mary Shelley's Frankenstein with Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound', looking at the scientific background to both of these works, their shared themes, possible collaboration and the reception that they received."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ifHWz-Sljo

Duration: 60 min

"Byron, an introduction: still 'mad, bad and dangerous to know'?" by Simon Browne, University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education (July 2020)

"Byron has divided critics since he first published in 1807. Wildly popular to contemporary readers, though reprimanded for immorality by censorious reviewers, he now lives on as the original Heathcliff – and is reprimanded for his aesthetics rather than his morality. This lecture looks at some of the elements that made him the hero of his age."

This talk was given by Simon Browne on Tuesday, 7 July 2020 and remained available on the following website until the 7th of August 2020:

https://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/virtual_summer_festival_of_learning/open-talks

Duration 47 min.

"Byron and the Age of Sensation", by Professor Sir Jonathan Bate, Gresham College (June 2019)

Jonathan Bate explores the life and work of the original celebrity poet - Lord Byron. He shows how Byron was simultaneously a Romantic and an anti-Romantic, and how his influence spread to almost every corner of Europe, from the Russia of Pushkin to the Greek War of Independence.

https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/byron-age-of-sensation

Duration 50 min.

“Shakespeare's Fame”, by Professor Sir Jonathan Bate, Gresham College (May 2018)

Ever since classical antiquity, poets and playwrights have written about famous heroes and anti-heroes, lovers and politicians. However, they have also yearned for posthumous fame themselves. How do they achieve it?

This lecture shows how Shakespeare helped to immortalize the famous figures of ancient Greece and Rome, and how he in turn became famous after his death – as the classics were to Shakespeare, so Shakespeare became a classic. He is our classic.

https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/shakespeares-fame

Duration: 48 min

“**Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human**” by Harold Bloom, at Yale (20 April 2012)

In this lecture, Bloom summarizes (or rather promotes) the main ideas discussed in one of his books, “Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human”. To him, Shakespeare, the ‘greatest and wittiest writer’, invented humanity as we know it. Bloom’s lecture takes us back to the heart of Shakespeare’s genius: his characters. “What we learned from Shakespeare’s most vital men and women is the knowledge they incarnate. The self-awareness of Falstaff, Hamlet, Iago and Cleopatra is the salient quality that renders them endless to meditation, ours and their own.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TzzWi5kPnA&t=328s&ab_channel=YaleUniversity

Duration: 44 min

"Shakespeare's Life-making", by Professor Stephen Greenblatt (The Holberg Lecture 2016)

A reflection on Shakespeare’s uncanny ability – the ability of the Humanities more generally – to confer life upon the objects of imaginative attention.

The clown in Titus Andronicus, young Flute the bellows-mender in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, the drunken Barnadine in Measure for Measure, Caliban in The Tempest, along with dozens of other characters, possess a presence, a compelling immediacy, far in excess of the strict necessity of the plots in which they appear. In some instances, Shakespeare’s plots almost collapse under the force of this vehement, insistent life. The greatest example is the villainous Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. And Shylock, Greenblatt will argue, offers us insight into the Humanities’ special contribution to the challenge of living together with those whom we may distrust and dislike.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfZdzEFJuiw

Duration: 1hour 28mn (the lecture itself lasts +/- 60 min)

Total duration: 608 min (10 hours)