As Reno notes, poems such as "The Progress of Rhyme" lack the final Wordsworthian strophe in which the poet returns to abstractions (91). In Clare's form of transcendence, then, his absorption in detail leads him to become enmeshed in nature. Coleridge.

Wordsworthian, the trajectory of Wordsworth's contemplative poetry is itself indebted to the "Conversation" poems of Coleridge would have helped to illuminate the discussion. While Clare's transcendent response to natural objects may be subjectivity precipitated by his ecophilia--his accentuated commitment to nature. Here again, though, some reference to English literary canon. In his middle to late career, furthermore, Reno finds Clare torn between personal love and the loss of aspiration towards universal love is frustrated by earthly concerns such as personal ties and politics. Yet these cannot be discarded in favor of an impersonal union with nature because, Reno writes, "ecological love requires human love" (48).

This challenge to the dominant interpretations of young Wordsworth as an unadulterated Pantheist is welcome. While Reno spends a great deal of time recapitulating previous criticism, the first chapter breaks new ground in explaining Erasmus Darwin's influence on Wordsworth. Though The Botanic Garden (1791) represents organized nature as inherently happy, Darwin left to others the task of deriving an ethical model from his research. According to Reno, the meditative passages of "Tintern Abbey" develop "Darwinian neuroscience" into an aesthetic and ethical model of love (66): a model in which sublimity emerges not from spirituality but from biology. Rather than escaping bodily limits, the poet needs them in order to impart to the listening Dorothy what he has learned.

Yet Reno could have said much more about Dorothy: on how her company altered the poet's style as well as on how she affected Coleridge, whom Reno tends to slight. For Coleridge, Dorothy was a "perfect electrometer" whose responsiveness vitally influenced his poetry of interconnection. The human interconnectedness that underlies transcendence in Reno's reading requires some notice of such influences: of the literary community that nurtured philosophical poetry.

Furthermore, intellectual love could well be construed as an expression of what Coleridge called the mind's "esemplastic power," its power to unify. In Wordsworth's essay on The Convention of Cintra (1809), the unifying power of intellectual love is central to the poet's vision for European renewal: "The higher mode of being does not exclude, but necessarily includes, the lower; the intellectual does not exclude, but necessarily includes, the sentient; the sentient, the animal; and the animal, the vital -- to its lowest degrees" (Wordsworth, The Convention of Cintra [Oxford 1899] 189). Yet Reno does not mention this essay because his study ceases with the 1805 Prelude. Like his avoidance of Coleridge, his exclusionary focus on the early Wordsworth costs him opportunities to resolve areas of the discussion.

Having argued that Wordsworthian "transcendence" is "physiological" rather than utterly metaphysical (72), Reno makes the most of antagonistic theorists by taking intermediary positions. In the chapter on Percy Bysshe Shelley, for instance, he sets out to "temper Bonca's microbiography with Ulmer's formalist deconstruction" (116): that is, to set Teddi Chichester Bonca's Shelley's Mirrors of Love (1988) beside William Ulmer's deconstructive analyses of the poet. Comparably, he reads John Clare both as a "local poet" (88) and as a canny operator in the London poetry market with aspirations to the English literary canon. In his middle to late career, furthermore, Reno finds Clare torn between personal love and the loss of subjectivity precipitated by his ecophilia--his accentuated commitment to nature. Here again, though, some reference to Coleridge would have helped to illuminate the discussion. While Clare's transcendent response to natural objects may be Wordsworthian, the trajectory of Wordsworth's contemplative poetry is itself indebted to the "Conversation" poems of Coleridge.

Following Timothy Morton's The Ecological Thought (2010), Reno affirms that Clare values description but is wary of abstractions (91). In Clare's form of transcendence, then, his absorption in detail leads him to become enmeshed in nature. As Reno notes, poems such as "The Progress of Rhyme" lack the final Wordsworthian strophe in which the poet returns to...
personal concerns, and unlike Wordsworth, Reno shows, Clare avoids "symbolic" language where he articulates the disintegration of identity (93). Yet Reno tends to understate Clare's debts to Wordsworth. In quoting a passage from Clare's "Pastoral Poetry," for instance, he fails to note how Wordsworthian the word "elevated" is. Reno also prompts resistance when he claims that the "feelings satisfied" at the end of the poem marks an "emptying of self." Since Clare connects the gratification derived from natural beauty to a pre-existing need or desire, the reference back to those "feelings" cannot signify utter loss of subjectivity.

Reno's analysis of Clare's sonnets, "Summer Moods," and later works would similarly benefit from more demonstration of how the self disintegrates. In some of these poems, as in the fragment quoted on page 95, the personal pronoun persists throughout, and in others the voices of nature remain distinct within the overall harmony. Nevertheless, the book stimulates thought about Clare's mode of escapism.

In his chapter on Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet much concerned with utopianism, Reno explores what he calls "negative dialectics." Since Shelley views love as a force that releases the self, or enables escape, Reno infers that Shelley's translation of Plato's Symposium elides its homosexual aspects because they make love too individual. In works such as Queen Mab, we are told, the experience of love is questing or philosophical. From Godwin, Reno explains, Shelley derives a belief that love is a force that harmonizes the self with society. In a more personal observation, Reno argues that the belovéd's capacity to move beyond "self" is encoded in the "perpetual delay" of "the Lady of Shalott" (202). The problem may lie with Queen Mab itself, which cannot envision how to overcome the obstacles to human interrelation.

To address this uncertainty, Shelley's conception of interconnection more firmly establishes itself as no less Wordsworthian in what Reno shows in his analysis of "Mont Blanc." Here, Reno says, "Shelley situates love as a kind of affective epistemology: he thinks critically through love" (143). Yet here as elsewhere in the book, Reno tends to use the word "love" as a substitute for other terms typically used in critical analyses of Shelley's poetry: terms such as "pantheism," "interconnection," or "ecology." While these terms designate concepts that could be said to cohere in a philosophy of love, it is sometimes hard to know just what Reno means by the word.

For instance, Reno contends that Felicia Hemans's allusion to a "vein of melancholy love" in Songs of the Affections connotes a "theory of love" (166), and elsewhere Reno derives a "poetics of love" or a "politics of love" from a quotation or a thematic inclination. In each case the claim seems overstated. Usefully, Reno observes that Hemans was "strong armed" into writing on domestic subjects (171) even though her true ideal was a Christianized, universal love. For Hemans, Reno argues, the affections serve to mediate between the personal and the transcendent. Yet in trying to elicit a general vision of love from Hemans's poetry, Reno is hindered by the particularity of female subjects in Records of Woman as well as by the ways in which the poet herself changes: as Reno notes, she became more radical in her critiques of domesticity and skeptical about the possibility of realizing ideal love.

In the final chapter, which examines Victorian poets' responses to their Romantic predecessors, Reno reads Tennyson's "Mariana" as a critique of Romantic intellectual love, which is encoded as impossible in the "perpetual delay" of the beloved's delay. To infer, Reno argues, Tennyson intimates that "love and art must be socially engaged" in poems such as "The Lady of Shalott" (202). A comparable story of intellectual love interrogated and finally rejected, we are told, can be found in the work of Matthew Arnold. Rather than harvesting any Wordsworthian recompense or prompting the poet to hope for a higher love, poems such as "The Buried Life" furnish only glimpses of evidence that it could exist. Arnold's vision of love is said to spring from his pessimism: "Dover Beach" promotes individual love because it is more realistically attainable than Romantic abstractions of love writ large.

Yet in turn, this notion springs from a general Victorian suspicion that intellectual love was an imposture or impossibility because love really meant sex. In that light, it is a pity that Reno does not discuss the cynical treatment of intellectual love in Byrons's Don Juan. But Reno is right, in his last paragraph, about the countercultural vision of "All You Need is Love," (1967). By inviting comparable skepticism, Reno contends, the Beatles' famous song intimates that intellectual love has persisted as an object of inquiry. While much remains for scholarship to say on intellectual love, this book offers substantial contributions.