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Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co, 1998. Pp. xxii +.960. £30. ISBN 0 393 04623 0.

This is the longest book on Wordsworth since Mary Moorman's two-volume biography of 1957 and 1965. It is rich in detail and comment on every page; monumental, and unified. A key item of fact was only unearthed in 1993. It points to Wordsworth's involvement in government intelligence in Germany in February-March 1799. That period is one of the three sets of 'lost months' (p. 656) for which there is no surviving record. The other two were the autumn of 1793 (did Wordsworth revisit Annette Vallon in France?) and early 1795 (did he and William Mathews edit *The Philanthropist*?). Johnston says yes to all three - Wordsworth did work for the government - but concedes the fineness of the evidence each time. The new item is a list of payments by the Duke of Portland (overseer of the British secret service) including one to Richard Ford and another to a 'Mr. Wordsworth'. In 1797 James Walsh (he of the 'Spy Nozy' incident) had told his intelligence superiors that Wordsworth's name was already known to Ford, a secret service organizer. If Wordsworth was involved, we must still ask how far the word 'spy' is justified in this book's jingling subtitle ('Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy'). A key distinction appears (p. 848) as to those who were 'not professional spies but occasional employees' and/or 'not permanent enemies of the state but temporary enthusiasts of the French Revolution'. Hardly a spy - a mere informer - but certainly a hidden Wordsworth. On the 1793 French visit there are no major new facts, but old evidence gets a forty-page reappraisal (chapters 15 and 16). Johnston even suggests that Wordsworth and Gorlas travelled to Paris together, 'wild as it seems' (p. 381). On *The Philanthropist*, Johnston matches details from Wordsworth's actions and writing with appearances of the journal and its contents. But there are no actual links, and not a hint of the poet's involvement ever appeared later. Yet these hidden events firm up the poet's youthful tendency (Johnston's account ends at 1807) to be a self-constructor more generally. Key matters are sexuality, attitude to nature, and Wordsworth's creation of himself as a great poet. No shred of evidence appears of any dallying with prostitutes at Cambridge. But Johnston's belief in a liaison with a 'dark-haired Italian' around Lake Como is convincing (pp. 213-32). This is compared, in ethos, with the erotically-expressed confrontation with God (*Prelude* [1805] 4: 140-2) after a night of partying at Hawkshead in summer 1788. In Italy the confrontation was with the mountains; but in both cases there is not contrast but continuity. Yet on Wordsworth, nature and what Johnston throughout calls Wordsworth's 'self-creation as a Poet', one might demur. Wordsworth was a violent and melancholy child, his behaviour toward nature destructive. Johnston makes much of sentimental (or National Trust) ideas of Wordsworth-and-nature, and like others today sees that link as invented. The 'naked savage' image (*Prelude* [1805] 1:304) is unreal next to life at the big family residence at Cockermouth. Again and again too, Wordsworth anticipated sublimity in a great

natural experience but then made great poetry out of what turned out a disappointment. Finding it 'difficult to achieve peace' even in Grasmere in 1800, this very tension led to some of his greatest poetry. Yet it all tells us only that being a poet is complex; being 'neither fit nor well' does not tempt the Muse into convenient service. Furthermore, the Immortality Ode is scarcely mentioned. Only the four-stanza version of 1802 gets any attention. Surely the visionary outburst on childhood's majesty, so early in the Grasmere years, must be part of how the poet rounded down his peripatetic existence into that final, reposeful domesticity? There is another misallocation. The sonnet 'Surprised by joy' is said to be about Caroline Vallon and written at Calais in 1802; we are even told that 'thousands of readers' have wrongly associated it with Wordsworth's daughter Dora (p. 784). Yet it was written in 1813 or 1814 at the death of her sister Catharine. This one mistake (in nine hundred pages) seems tied to Johnston's evident lack of interest in the childhood theme, and in Wordsworth's life after 1807. (For example, the mine-owning Curwen family are cited in some detail, but it isn't mentioned that the poet's eldest son John married into it, the sort of detail Johnston usually relishes). Of course the later years are not Johnston's topic. But the impression he leaves, is that childhood and nature were preliminaries to Wordsworth's true if unwitting theme; namely, the subversive side of his personality, given full rein on all fronts for many years. Yet despite the historicism of two decades, childhood and nature may still have been the true foundation, needing only the demons of some vital years spent contra to find the tension that great poetry requires. We are still left with the questions of poetry's nature, how poets take experience and intuition up into language, and how readers can be deeply moved with no knowledge of the poet's life. In the self-creation of a poet, what is created, the poet or the poems? But this remains a massive book. Again and again a period, a publication event, a relationship, are retold as depth-stories all their own. The orphans' alienation from uncles, aunts and grandparents is meticulously documented. The Hawkshead years bring out the peer-group basis on which adult male friendships commonly build. Speed-walking with Jones or Dorothy, often thirty miles a day, becomes energetically visible. The Tintern Abbey debate is lifted to a new level; the 'thoughtless youth' taking forward the think and thoughts which lurk in so many of the 1798 ballads. Wordsworth's financial troubles are exhaustively detailed. And the tangle of near-incestuous relationships at Grasmere, with John heartrendingly distressed when he loses Mary Hutchinson to his brother, leaves the poet as dominant figure. The broken Coleridge writes his last great poem in honour of his friend's epic, addressed to himself. In all of this the critical and biographical strands intertwine, a delicate balance held constantly between them. Early on we see how the poet's sense of a peaceful lakeland moment would 'sink down unimpeded onto his naked psyche', to reappear when his need for a home became most desperate. It epitomizes what his latest biographer has so relentlessly sought, with stirring results.

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John Rieder, Wordsworth's Counterrevolutionary Turn: Community, Virtue, and Vision in the 1790s. University of Delaware Press. Associated University Presses. 1997. Pp. 273 £34.50. ISBN 0 87413 610 5.

The question raised at the beginning of this excellent study, 'Why at the end of the twentieth century do we continue to read William Wordsworth's poetry?' may seem otiose to a non-academic audience. But Rieder's question is of course directed at that very narrow band of readers identified with the production, distribution and reception

of critical knowledge. The peculiar pleasure of reading that defines the experience of this community -- here Rieder imagines his reader (no pun intended) to be situated in a university library, office or study -- is uncannily related to the concluding lines of 'Tintern Abbey' with Dorothy's 'mansion of all lovely forms' providing a model for the institutional determination of literary value. That Wordsworth should, in the conclusion of this book, come to be identified with the set of practices we call literature is hardly surprising; his work is valued precisely because it confirms the myth of individual transcendence that informs the collective aspirations of homo academicus. In Rieder's terms, Wordsworth works for us because his poetry 'celebrates the paradoxical community and isolation of the literary spectator, the reader'. Rather like the 'resistance to theory' it seems that there is no way of escaping this fantasy; indeed, as Kant argues in his paradoxical formulation of the character of aesthetic judgements, there is a sense in which there is no passage from 'sympathy to evaluation or from passive convention to critical judgement, except by way of the impossible concept of a subjective universality'. This sounds like a de Manian expression of critical despair but it worth stating here that Rieder is not seeking to cancel out the findings of ideology critique and restore some primitive notion of Romantic self-sufficiency. The insistence on the unrealizable nature of the universal provides us with a clue to the underlying aims of this project. As Rieder elaborates, subjective universality is impossible because the contingency of history ensures that it may never be realized, and at the same time necessary because critical judgement cannot do without this ideal. What makes this observation relevant to the study of Wordsworth's poetry and politics is the way in which it reflects on the shortcomings of current ideology critique. Where McGann, Levinson and Liu et al have emphasized the extent to which the poet's fantasy of transcending class barriers in the name of an essentialist humanity actively silences real, historical differences, Rieder notes that the desire on the critic's part to rescue particularity, situatedness and otherness from the mists of reification is itself dependent on some fairly Wordsworthian notions about the power of poetical originality in overturning stale conventions. The way out of the binary opposition between false universality and historical contingency is not to regard the latter as 'the real thing', since this would merely replace 'Humanity' with 'History' as the transcendental signifier of poetry, but to recognize the impossibility of all such claims to identification. Rieder's study affirms the view that poetry, at its best, is able to remind readers of both the necessity and the insufficiency of transcendental ideals in forging a coherent sense of the world. Lest I give the impression that this is a theory-driven book it should be made clear that these findings emerge in the course of some acutely observed readings of primary texts. Whether the work in question is the Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, the Lyrical Ballads or the Salisbury Plain poems, Rieder is committed to the idea that literary criticism must be grounded in the close scrutiny of texts and not in the assessment of contexts. This is a crucial distinction as it seeks to return to poetry the power that new historicist criticism has systematically elided. At the centre of this argument is the timely claim that 'culture reproduces the reading practices that keep poetry alive more by seduction and fantasy than by sheer overbearing insistence.' The statement is so obvious that one wonders why it has been forgotten in the rush to uncover the deleterious effects of Wordsworthian repression. By reminding us of the pleasures of Wordsworth's writing Rieder allows us to perceive what is most appealing and most duplicitous about the concept of a literary community. Poetry, like power, is not a force that weighs down on its participants; it works by gratifying desires rather than denying them. Thus a poem like 'Tintern Abbey' derives its force from its ability to construct a total rather than a partial vision.

Readers of the 1790s, familiar with the loco-descriptive conventions of contemporary periodical verse would not have been troubled by the non-representation of the social. Indeed, the elision of beggars and charcoal manufacture is one of 'Tintern Abbey's' least remarkable features. Of greater interest is the way the poem produces an ideologically comforting means of self-recognition within the boundaries of what one might call, via Foucault, 'a discipline of literary pleasure'. Here there is no point in simply disclosing the underlying class contradictions of the poetry or, for that matter, uncovering Wordsworth's misrepresentation of social reality, for in sense it is the structuring of these antagonisms that constitutes the poetry's bid for subjective freedom. By constructing a totality of vision (not, as Levinson insists, a 'partial gaze overlooking the totality of social relations'), Wordsworth's greatest ode enables its readers to 'turn even the unveiling of its error into another version of its call to the pleasures of recognition'. This is strength indeed, for at its close the Horatian poetics of retirement and the metaphor of the 'mansion' powerfully suggest the class position readers must assume if they are to exercise the gift of discernment. Rieder's patient approach to the poetry and politics of the 1790s produces some felicitous insights, not least in the chapter on 'Wordsworth's Ethos' where a close analysis of the poet's interest in moral as opposed to political virtue replaces the habitual view of the counterrevolutionary turn as a simple transition from radicalism to conservatism. The debate between Burke and Paine is thus replaced by a more exacting focus on the class politics and moral rhetoric of the humanitarian tradition. From here on, Rieder demonstrates that Wordsworth's fantasies of community are related to pervasive anxieties about social unanimity in the wake of the French Revolution. The poet's fascination with 'elementary feelings', and the 'essential passions of the heart' makes sense when we view his work as part of a wider attempt to substantiate the self-representations of the middle rank. The point that bears repeating here is that Wordsworth's poetry does not repress social differences rather it translates them into the experience of quasi-familial intimacy we call literature.

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Theresa M. Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Pp. xv + 345, ISBN 0 521 43207-3.

Theresa Kelley's book sets out to retrace the ways in which allegory continually re-emerges and is reinvented as 'incrementally different, yet strangely familiar' (p. 14) in a modernity that is fundamentally hostile to its figural play. The book's focus is on two related questions: 'why does allegory survive modernity and what does modernity (still) have against it?' (p. 2). This frame sets up a particular philosophical model of modernity which, loosely described, is one based firmly on scientific rationality, empiricism, realism and plain speech. In contrast to this, Kelly argues, '[a]llegory is alien; its ancient rhetorical status as 'other speech' survives all other adjustments. There is always an irreducible difference between allegorical representation and its referent' (p. 5). On the face of it, this claim seems to run the risk of presenting a somewhat rigid picture of allegory and modernity locked in an unchanging opposition of mutual 'otherness', but the range of literary, historical and philosophical analysis in the body of Kelley's book avoids this sort of sterile formalism entirely. Rather, the painstaking description of allegory's continual reinvention as a different form of 'other speech' by the various modernist projects presents the complexity and irreducibility of this rhetorical genre with admirable precision. By the time one reaches such

conclusions as 'modern allegory survives somewhere between philosophy and literature' (p. 251), the wealth of specific textual reference has drawn out so many of the nuances and possibilities of this 'somewhere' that there can be no question of the claim being either rigid or vague. Kelley opens with a chapter on Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* that elucidates the links that obtain between allegory and phantasia from ancient Greek thought to Renaissance early modernism, and locates allegory at the centre of sense-making activity. This relation is then traced through its various manifestations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a series of exemplary readings of works by, among others, Milton, Hobbes, Diderot and DeFoe. Although Kelley explains that her approach is 'selective and textual, not encyclopaedic' (p. 3), the range of reference and the acuity of the scholarship in these analyses produces a rich and intricate genealogy that is extremely compelling and prepares the ground for her discussion of the Romantic period. The central chapters of the book focus on Romanticism, where Kelley contends that allegory is crucial to 'the crisis of representation [that] scholars have identified with the Romantic era' (p. 132). As in the earlier chapters, the range of reference is impressive: Kelley concentrates on re-reading the place of allegory in the work of canonical writers such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hegel and Keats, but supplements these analyses with insightful vignettes about other writers to build a complex and convincing picture of the period. The main argument of this chapter is that Romanticism instantiates a problematic relation between allegoric and historical representation: it 'propels allegory into the space of thought and history. Because time's ravages to the present are always going on, history can be indicated, but not encased, by poems and works of art. Both work instead like indexical signs that point (obscurely or explicitly) to events, other material objects, beliefs, feelings, and suppositions about how all these do or do not impinge on each other - the whole array of phenomena that constitute what we know or call history' (pp. 170-1). The disruptive conjunction of allegory and history works not only to problematise the realism that emerges during the nineteenth century (Kelley's next port of call in a series of insightful readings of Turner, Browning and George Eliot), but also to anticipate many of the arguments of modern critical thought. The book concludes with the assertion that 'allegory remains a capable figure, not because it asserts that referentiality or reality are washed up, which it does not, but because its figural interventions can clear paths and help human reason make its way' (p. 278). This perspective provides one of the most important arguments in the book, namely that contemporary forms of allegorical representation are not simply part of a postmodern break with the realism of past centuries but, rather, another set of possibilities in the range of rhetorical disruptions that 'work within and against the realist, experiential disposition of modern thought' (p. 278). The book's argument engages with many of the most important theories of allegory from Hegel to Benjamin and de Man, relating them to both historical and philosophical contexts, and thereby builds a complex but extremely lucid account of the possibilities that attention to the disruptive agency of allegory might offer the modern critic. Kelley's readings of literary and other cultural texts are always precise, original and, more often than not, startlingly insightful. All told, this is a very important book, not only for the Romanticist but for any critic of modern literature.

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Robert M. Ryan, *The Romantic Reformation: Religious Politics in English Literature 1789-1824*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. P. 292. £35 (\$59.95). ISBN 0 521 57008 5.

Ryan's *The Romantic Reformation* falls within a tradition of studies of the relationship between the poetry and thinking of the great English Romantic poets and religion, of which the most well known is Stephen Prickett's *Romanticism and Religion* (1976). Ryan differs from Prickett, however, in that his book is both more comprehensive (Prickett concentrates on Coleridge and Wordsworth) and more lightly argued. This is an excellent example of the interdisciplinary study of literature and religion, exploring how poets and their craft can contribute significantly to religious thinking and even practice as they respond to cultural and political influences often in ways which are profoundly contradictory to the orthodoxies of church and state. The main chapters of the book are detailed studies of Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Mary Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The obvious omission, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is quite deliberate, although he is, in many ways, the most overtly theological of them all. But he alone, and especially in his *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1830) -- which falls outside the years covered by Ryan -- offers something like a 'specific program of religious reform' (p. 226), while all the others work entirely outside organized groups or churches, founding no schools, even though all, in their various ways, were enormously influential on later theologians, poets and thinkers. We see here clearly that although these six writers are very different, they share a common vision and awareness of the power and importance of religion in public life. Beginning with Blake, who is the most radical of all, Ryan shows the poet's energetic opposition to the privileged status of the Church of England and its function in upholding the social inequalities of the England of the early Industrial Revolution, as well as his dramatic call for the reform and revival of true spirit of Christianity. For Blake, this meant moving far beyond the limits of 'orthodox' Christianity in a visionary celebration of revealed religion which theology has never been able to condone except in the work of marginalized figures like Thomas Altizer, who describes Blake as 'our most Christocentric visionary, who imaginatively discovered a totally apocalyptic Jesus'" (*The Contemporary Jesus* [1997], p.x). Ryan, who acknowledges the work of Altizer (p. 231), would seem to agree with this. Wordsworth, on the other hand, ends up within the fold of Anglican church practice, though Ryan argues that this is not inconsistent with his earlier radicalism, but merely another phase in his 'awareness that religion would be a critical factor in determining the kind of society England would become' (p. 118). These two early chapters on Blake and Wordsworth are the best and offer fascinating parallels and differences. As the book progresses, Ryan becomes a little less sure-footed, though he sustains his thesis admirably, except, perhaps, in the case of Keats. Here the complete disregard for anything outside English Romanticism becomes a real handicap, for it would have been instructive to consider others in Germany, and even Scandinavia, who were concerned also with 'the politics of Greek religion'-- one thinks particularly of Hölderlin and Grundtvig -- and its place within the Christian tradition of Europe. These Romantic writers offer a powerful and varied enlivening of the Christian tradition in the early years of the nineteenth century. At the beginning and end of the book respectively, we find Blake and Shelley insisting, in their different ways, that historical Christianity consistently betrays the real teaching and example of Jesus. But it has to be said that their legacy was, in the end, a poor one for the nineteenth century. For although there were exceptions even within the Church, such as F. D. Maurice, the passionate recall to Jesus's defence of the poor against intractable vested interests in society was smothered in the smug acceptance of hierarchy most famously expressed in Mrs C. F. Alexander's hymn (one of her 1848 Hymns for Little Children,

endorsed by John Keble, had only a year or two earlier dedicated his collected lectures as Oxford Professor of Poetry to Wordsworth):

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them all, high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.

And yet, as Ryan's concluding chapter indicated, these Romantic visionaries and poets have always had followers and disciples, perhaps never more so than at the present time. Wordsworth, indeed, has suffered most from being an institutional figure, yet the spirit of Romantic reformation has been kept alive even in deeply conservative men like Cardinal Newman, and has burst into new flame in the present century in James Joyce, Thomas Merton, Thomas Altizer and many others. Most interestingly, and this is a point not made by Ryan, the very discontinuities and even failures of the great Romantics have come alive once more in various discussions withing 'postmodernism', suggestive of numerous connections between the nervous, celebratory thinking and millennial preoccupations of these two eras at the end of the eighteenth and the end of the twentieth centuries. This is a well-written, well-researched and mature book which should provoke much discussion. Although there are one or two false notes - for example, the introduction of Karl Barth into the chapter on Blake (although the link, as Altizer also has noted, is not that remote) - this is one of the best studies in literature and religion of recent years, combining a fine sense of poetry with a clear understanding of theology, and sustaining well the complex connections between them.

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Terence Allan Hoagwood, Politics, Philosophy, and the Production of Romantic Texts. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. Pp. x + 222. \$32. ISBN 0 875 80206 0.

The historicist orientation of this study is in the tradition of Liu, Levinson, Simpson, and especially McGann. It is a further blast against the 'Romantic Ideology' enshrined not in the works of the Romantics but in those of twentieth-century interpreters. Hoagwood contends that the famous apostasy and retreat from history into subjectivism, aestheticism, and universal themes was a change not of heart, but of the form of discourse. Duplicity is the key to this discourse, the duplicity of government, fomenting plots to justify repression, the duplicity of writers forced into a language of symbolic displacement. Hoagwood's well-researched account of the scale of repression contains little that is new but provides a formidable rejoinder to those who minimize its impact on Romantic writing. He sees 'hermeneutic reflection', the consciousness of the artificiality of cultural forms, as part of the same historical development. The 'historical ungrounding' of literature is contradicted by these ubiquitous historical features. Hoagwood calls his approach a sort of 'textual materialism', paying particular attention to the physical artefact of the book in its historical relations. These elude meanings, whether designed or not. It is something of a weakness that Hoagwood rarely confronts major examples on which the charges of subjectivism, aestheticism, and universalism are based. His thesis retreats from its initial denial to the modified assertion that these were not the 'dominant mode' of the period (p.94). His politicizations tend to be piecemeal, though provocative. The presence of treason trials and government spies might be felt in Coleridge's lime-tree

bower prison or in the frost's secret ministry but can it add much to the poems? The suggestion that *Dejection: An Ode* be removed from the private context and replaced in the public, political forum where it appeared is more productive. Two individual studies pay meticulous attention to the material circumstances of publication. The variations of text and illustrations in versions of Blake's *Urizen* are seen as the mark of history on the text. The ambiguous imagery and shifts of viewpoint are expertly related to the iconographic, historical, political, and philosophical background of the 1790s and beyond. While Hoagwood maintains that the material resists harmonization he suggests that a meaning can be forged out of that very incoherence, involving condemnation of 'books of law'. John Murray's joint publication of Byron's *Lara* and Rogers's *Jacqueline* after the defeat of Napoleon is presented as an attempt to defuse Byron's attack on military glory and lament for a failed revolution. Here *Jacqueline*'s sentimental picture of social unity in chivalric enterprise, together with advertisements for other literary celebrations of patriotic heroism follow *Lara*. Byron's 'courtesy' had requested that Rogers have first place, which Hoagwood interprets as his actual wish to have the last (deflating) word. The other two studies, less concerned with publication details, attack customary views of Charlotte Smith and Mary Hays as apolitical, sentimental writers enmeshed in lachrymose self-pity and the delusions of romantic love. Again he pays scant attention to the works most often adduced (though Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* invite his textual approach in prefatory material that from 1792 framed them as the laments of a victim of 'Honourable Men'). Hoagwood vigorously elucidates the radical criticism conveyed in *The Victim of Prejudice* and *Beachy Head*. Both texts, he argues, expose the fictionality of mental manacles created by social formations and condemn the Romantic imagination that fabricates equally imprisoning, self-centred fictions, 'self-defeating reflexes of defeat that produce isolation, enfeeblement, madness, and finally death in despair' (p. 148). Such an extreme 'anti-Romantic' stance leads Hoagwood to ignore the ambivalence of Hays's *Presentation of love* and Smith's quite explicit defence of fictions of 'ideal bliss' as the (only) basis of hope. Just as Burke did not deny the man-made fictionality of customs and institutions, so Hays cannot deny their overmastering power. Hoagwood is in danger of denying the very ability to forge counter-narratives.

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Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*. London: Macmillan, 1997. Pp. 246. £45 (\$59.95). ISBN 0 333 65814 0.

This is a deeply engaging book. Like the pedestrian mode which it takes as its subject it is unhurried, ambulatory, association; and yet at the same time it is also fully animated by a thoroughgoing sense of definite purpose and direction -- even if, appropriately enough, its ultimate end is almost always to celebrate the opportunities afforded by certain kinds of digression (both poetic and peripatetic) over and above the seeming necessity of reaching a final destination. Broadly speaking its aim is to assert the significant role walking played in the poetic experiments of the 1790s and also in the central tradition of Romantic writing as a whole. And by walking Jarvis is keen to make clear that he is referring not merely to a literary trope but also to a physical practice; he is interested in pedestrianism both as an activity and an idea, arguing that to seek to separate the two is to misunderstand the fundamental nature of Romantic attitudes to the subject. 'The creativity of Romantic verbal art' he writes, 'is repeatedly referred to the conditions, qualities and rhythms of a body in motion, a travelling self making excited passage over the land, or through the streets,

discovering locomotive and representational freedoms that were unavailable to previous generations'. From the beginning, Jarvis acknowledges but also seeks to differentiate himself from Anne Wallace's recent work on Romantic peripatetic literature *Walking, Literature and English Culture*, offering not so much a refutation of the latter's materialist thesis, but rather a series of subtle and sensitive qualifications of it. In her book, Wallace strove to locate the rise of pedestrian tourism in the transport revolution of the mid-to-late eighteenth century, arguing that it was only after the rise of the coach and carriage systems, and the gradual separation, in the minds of the middle classes, of the practice of strenuous walking from the daily round of work and business, that pedestrianism could feasibly be re-invented as a leisure activity, a source of polite pleasure. While broadly agreeing with the general import of this argument, Jarvis sets out to contextualise it further by emphasizing the prejudices that would have been encountered by the first middle-class walkers of the 1780s and 1790s, the extent to which the enthusiasm for voluntary pedestrianism would have been frowned upon, found dangerous even, by contemporary polite society. He cites evidence to suggest that, far from being immediately assimilable into the broader culture of middle-class tourism, at first the peripatetic would have been a self-consciously radical mode of travel combining an assertion of personal freedom (from the tyranny of coach timetables, from the road system) with an affirmation of democratic principles. So much so, indeed, that as Jarvis himself puts it: 'it seems inescapable . . . that there was an element of deliberate social nonconformism, of oppositionality, in the self-levelling expeditions of most early pedestrians' (p.27). His first concern, then, is to recover some sense of the politics of walking in the early 1790s, through reference to such figures as Wordsworth and Coleridge (of course) but also John 'Walking' Stewart, William Coxe and John Thelwall. But moving on from this, he then becomes concerned to get beyond considering pedestrianism simply in the light of a social activity and to begin to explore its more philosophical aspects. He is fascinated, as he thinks the first Romantics were, in the intimate relationship that is set up between the mind and the body in the act of walking--the tendency of the instabilities of motion to open up a certain kind of intense inwardness, a form of heightened subjectivity. But he is also extremely interested in the extent to which walking might be seen to figure and facilitate a 'progressive' approach to knowledge, the way in which moving slowly through a landscape on foot might be seen to encourage an epistemological perspective at once open-ended and self-consciously temporal, quite distinct from the 'enlightenment' impulse to synchronic categorization. And appropriately enough, this is all undertaken in a style that is relaxed as well as reflective, so that the book itself comes to read like a peculiarly pleasurable kind of walk, with its well-prepared 'bridges' and smoothly-conducted transitions, its anecdotal byways and its more formal resting-places. Of central interest to scholars working in the period will be the extended critical discussion, in Chapter Three, of the subtle relationship between pedestrianism and picturesque tourism, in which Jarvis finds an enabling spirit of mental 'play' and 'process' in Gilpin's travel writing that is quite at odds with many recent schematizations of the picturesque. And then, of course, there is the central chapter of this study, in which Jarvis gives an admirable account of the role and function of walking in early Wordsworth. He begins by paying all due respect to Wallace's writing on the subject, her reading of peripatetic form in *Home at Grasmere* and *The Excursion* as a type of revived georgic. But he himself admits to being far more interested in the poetry of the Racedown and Alfoxden periods, where he finds a far greater ambivalence in the poet's treatment of the subject, with walking sometimes being viewed as a concrete, physical symbol of the

ideal relationship between temporal process and moral reflection (he makes much of the to-ings and fro-ings of the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage* in this respect), and at others as an activity which always brings the poet-pedestrian into a kind of dangerous proximity with poverty, vagrancy, alienation and madness. By drawing attention to the fruitful dialectical tension existing between the twin poles of Wordsworth's complex sensibility, namely 'the itinerant and the settled, the vagrant and the domestic, the free and the bounded' Jarvis succeeds in giving an extremely compelling account of the parameters within which the poet interpreted the peripatetic. But more than this, he also gives a convincing account of 'textual pedestrianism' in the poetry itself, the way-ward, anti-synthetic element in the very texture of the verse, its ongoing commitment to 'the experience of passage', a quality almost entirely absent from eighteenth-century landscape poetry, but having the status of a formal principle in a poem like *The Prelude*, in which there is a 'progressive' principle inherent in the forward movement of the blank verse itself, as well as in the current and conduct of its verse narrative. To concentrate too much on the Wordsworth chapter, however, would be to give a rather misleading impression of what is in fact an impressively wide-ranging and nuanced study, taking in Thelwall's *Peripatetic*, Coleridge *Notebooks* and conversation poems, Dorothy Wordsworth's travel writings, Clare's journey out of Essex (as well as several poems from the Helpston period), Keats's tour of the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands, Hazlitt's 'On Going A Journey', Sarah Hazlitt's Scottish journal of 1822, and (somewhat briefly, as a kind of urban epilogue) the metropolitan peripatetics of Leigh Hunt and De Quincey. So varied is this book, indeed, that it is difficult to summarise its cumulative effect in such a short space, essentially because in each of the chapters under consideration the point -- as well as the pleasure -- is often in the detail. But suffice it to say that, after having set up a broad framework for the understanding of the role of the peripatetic within the middle-class literature of the picturesque, Jarvis then proceeds into a series of case studies which serve both to elaborate, and also to question, that model. In Coleridge's prose travel writings, for example, Jarvis argues that any residual debts to the language of the picturesque become very thin on the ground as the peripatetic is transformed into a mode of internal psychological analysis, with landscape description transforming itself into a means of monitoring the minutest twists and turns of the consciousness-in-motion. But in John Clare, by contrast, Jarvis finds a writer for whom, primarily because of his social situation, but also on account of his tragic personal history, walking was only ever fitfully an expression of mental freedom, and, all too often, either a guilty pleasure (as during the Helpston period) or else a sign of absolute objection (as during the journey out of Essex). In the discussion of 'Late Romantic Voices', the treatment of Wilham Hazlitt's 'On Going A Journey' is especially good, admirably sensitive to the peculiar significance of walking in Hazlitt's work, as well as to his relation to his 'Laker' models. But it is here, if anywhere, that an opportunity was missed to draw together several of the overriding themes of the book, and particularly, for rounding off the relationship between politics and peripatetic form that had been broached in the early chapter. Jarvis quotes a passage from 'On Going A Journey' (1822) in which Hazlitt commemorates a walk he took along the Llangollen valley in 1798 by embarking upon a kind of prose parody of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. And as so often with Hazlitt, the allusions are bruising, for behind the series of apparently casual references to *Tintern Abbey*, *Resolution and Independence* and Coleridge's *Reflections* there lie the seeds of a political critique. His ostensible concern is to link his own youthful walking habits with the radical pedestrianism of the Alfoxden poets, and hence with all that was best

and most laudable about the English Jacobin movement of the 1790s. Nevertheless, his underlying intention is to remind the reader of how Wordsworth and Coleridge were subsequently to abandon the prospect of 'Genius, Love, Liberty and Virtue' that youthful fellow-travelling had briefly unfolded upon their 'reward sight'. In this way Hazlitt's essay can be seen as an historically self-conscious (and also deeply self-regarding) elegy for the decline of 'Jacobin' pedestrianism, while remaining an eloquent testament of the radical potential formerly possessed by the peripatetic mode. That this passage on Llangollen valley is framed by a broader allusion to the work of Hazlitt's beloved Rousseau is entirely appropriate in this respect, as it was in Rousseau that the truly transgressive potential of walking was first expressed in Romantic writing. Not only did the *Confessions* contain a remarkably detailed account of Jean-Jacques' early life on the road -- its pleasures, its pains, the condition of his stomach, the state of his shoes -- it was also one of the first Romantic texts to actively demonstrate the close relation between walking and free thought between the peripatetic and philosophical inquiry. It was, after all, in the course of making the long walk from Paris to Vincennes (to see his friend Diderot in prison) that Rousseau underwent the profound revolution of mind which led to his celebrated *Discourse on Inequality*. Given the suitability of the Genevan philosopher-vagabond to the broad current of the pedestrian theme, it is perhaps surprising that Jarvis did not find time to discuss him, or to dwell a little longer on the political subtext of Hazlitt's allusions in 'On Going A Journey'. But from another point of view, it only really serves to demonstrate the richness and suggestivity of Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel, and its very material relevance to any consideration of Romantic thought, that in the course of reading it one should be so often inspired to follow up some of its many 'hints and guesses', and to pursue for oneself one or two of its 'paths not taken'.

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Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp.248. £37.50 (\$59.95), pb.£13.95 (\$18.95). ISBN 0 521 58438 8; 0 521 586046.

This book makes the bold claim not only that 'Romanticism cannot be understood properly without reference to modern imperialism and modern capitalism', but also that 'Modern imperialism and modern capitalism cannot be properly understood without reference to romanticism' (p.xi). Where Nigel Leask's *British Romantic Writers and the East* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) -- the previous major study in this field of recent years (also a previous volume in this series) -- has something of a careful, albeit theoretically sophisticated, preliminary mapping of the field about it, this volume has the definite whiff of a full frontal assault on the high citadels of the Romantic canon and of Romantic literary studies in general. Judging by the publisher's decision to put it straight into paperback, this is an assault which is expected to encounter little resistance. Does it deserve to succeed? Or does it collapse under the weight of its own grand ambitions? Like Leask's study, and most other investigations of romanticism's relationship with colonialism, Makdisi is in the business of both applying Edward Said's general thesis in *Orientalism* (1979) whilst at the same time trying to avoid some of its faults, principally the tendency to present 'orientalism' as too much of a unidirectional, monolithic, totalizing discourse leaving little room for 'native' resistance or negotiation. But in addition to attempting to revise Said's work on culture and imperialism, Makdisi is (very self-consciously, as he

makes clear in the preface) also trying to revise Frederic Jameson's work on culture and capitalism at the same time. His ambition is nothing less than a transformation of the whole 'political and intellectual forcefield defined by Said and Jameson' (p. xiii) through a reinterpretation of romanticism and modernization as cultural processes inextricably bound up with each other, and with the emergence of global capitalism and imperialism. As an example of what he means by modernization as a cultural process, Makdisi points to James Mill's *History of British India* (1817) which attempts to absorb India -- defined as a pre-modern space, occupied by a people without history -- into the narrative of a universal history: the world history of modernization. Romanticism, according to Makdisi, can be seen as a heterogeneous series of reactions to this process of homogenising modernization, but one whose oppositional potential is hampered by its reliance on the same epistemological underpinnings -- the distinction between self and nature, for example -- as the process which it critiques. The paradigmatic example here is Wordsworth, and the notion of the 'spot of time', which, for Makdisi, represents a doomed attempt to preserve a space of anti-modern cultural otherness from the ever-expanding spread of modernization. Makdisi appropriates this Wordsworthian concept in order to use it as a way of understanding other attempts to preserve such sites of cultural difference as the Scottish Highlands (in Scott) and the Orient (in Byron). The reading of Wordsworth is spread over two chapters. In the first, a reading of Book VII of Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1805) interprets the poet's unease in London as stemming from his inability to gain an individual cognitive point of view from which to comprehend the experience of the metropolis. This experience is that of London as the centre, not just of Britain, but of a world empire, and Wordsworth's fear of the London crowd is not just due to its unruly, potentially revolutionary character, but also to the presence of colonial elements. In the second Wordsworth chapter, Makdisi develops his view of 'the spot of time', discovering an early example of it in *An Evening Walk* (1793). Driving Wordsworth's desire for 'an everlasting and unchanging Nature, and . . . for an (impossible) resilience against the history of modernization' (p.67) is his 'obsession' with 'a new way of viewing and controlling world . . . from the standpoint of a solitary observing subject' (p.67). Yet, crucially, for Makdisi, the epistemological point of view which Wordsworth is helping to develop in his poetry is the same as that of the cultural forces driving modernization and imperialism. And, furthermore, even the oppositional, critical aspect of 'the spot of time' (and other 'anti-modern' spaces, like Scott's Highlands, or Byron's Orient) is vitiated by the fact that it not only stands against modernization, but also enables it by providing an Other against which to define itself, thus turning out to be 'in effect an affirmation of modernization' (p.16). The great exception to this unwitting 'affirmation of modernization' amongst the Romantics for Makdisi is William Blake. For Blake tries to resist the cultural process of modernization and industrialisation by refusing to criticise it by means of its own epistemology, and, instead, inventing his own with which to do so. Blake's self-image as prophet is endorsed by Makdisi who sees him as having an apparently unique insight into the truly global implications of the process of modernization which he expressed in the notion of 'Universal Empire'. Unlike Wordsworth, Blake was prepared to accept and envision the forces unleashed by globalization rebounding onto London in order to join with Albion's people in a revolutionary transformation. Wordsworth and Blake are, then, at opposite poles of Makdisi's map of romanticism, and the book is nicely structured by beginning and ending with them. In between, there are chapters on Scott's *Waverley*, which is seen as a cultural partner to the more brutal methods of modernization used in the Highland Clearances; on the

'transformations of Britain's Orient, 1785-1835', the main change being from the Enlightenment Orientalism of Jones and Burke, which saw India as different but valuable, to the Romantic Orientalism of Mill and Macaulay, which saw it as backward and in dire need of reform; and on what are, for Makdisi, the 'radically opposed concepts of empire, of Orientalism, and of history' (p. 123) articulated in Cantos I and II of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and Shelley's *Alastor*, the former seeing the Orient as a valuable space into which to escape from modernity, the latter's vision of the East 'ruthlessly violent' as he 'symbolically depopulates a space in order to establish the possibility . . . of its reclamation as part of some suddenly invented "Western" heritage' (p. 142). There are criticisms to be made of the book. Some may feel that the equation between *Waverley* and the Highland Clearances is too simple; that the role of gender in constructions of the Orient in the period is not sufficiently emphasized, indeed is rather nodded to than seriously addressed; that the distinction between the Orientalism of Byron and Shelley is too sharply drawn (one link being, as Leask points out, precisely the figuratively female oriental ideal); that for a book concerned with the global implications of romanticism there is surprisingly little reference to, for example, the West Indies and the Americas, and little sense (in contrast to Leask's book) of the huge range of writing in the period concerned with issues of Britain's global empire, including that by hybrid, globalised subjectivities such as those of the ex-slave Olaudah Equiano, or the ex-native soldier of the Bengal Army Dean Mahomed. This narrowness of range is an effect, perhaps, of what I alluded to earlier as the book's 'canon-storming' character -- Wordsworth must be captured for 'post-colonial' criticism -- but it can also be justified in the book's own terms, since one of the strongest parts of its argument is to show how even writers, like Wordsworth and Blake, whose central concern might seem to be British society and politics were also engaged in their different ways in coming to terms with the process of global modernization in which Britain was beginning to play such a pivotal role. For Makdisi's conclusion is that, in the Romantic period, Britain itself was still undergoing the process of modernization, and thus was still in the process of defining itself as fully modern in opposition to regions now becoming seen as 'peripheral' to the 'centre' of modernity, time and history; and that British romanticism played a key role in this process. Whether this insight fulfills Makdisi's ambition to change the whole way we look at the modern history of imperialism and capitalism, as well as British romanticism, I doubt. In many ways, this is a work of synthesis, consolidation, and clarification -- the chapter in which he makes clear that what Said is talking about is really modern Orientalism, and just doesn't fit people like Jones and Burke is important for example -- rather than of startling originality. But it is lucid, engaged, historically and theoretically informed, yet willing to respond evocatively to the texts, and makes an undoubted contribution to our understanding of the role which British romanticism played in the emergence of the culture of modernity.

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Michael O'Neill, *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. 308. £40. ISBN 0 19 812285 3.

By O'Neill's own claim this is an ambitious book. He tells us that it is intended to raise 'questions about the vantage-point from which Romantic poetry is viewed, constructed, and evaluated' (p. 273). 'Throughout,' he writes, 'I have urged an emphasis on the aesthetic and imaginative achievement embodied in self-conscious poems, even as those poems often mount a vigilant critique of the pretensions of

poetry.' These are clearly important and praiseworthy aims. Yet what exactly a 'self-conscious' poem is, and how it differs from other Romantic poems that lack this valuable quality of self-consciousness is not entirely clear. What descriptions we get tend to rely more on the pathetic fallacy than communicable distinctions. Of Shelley's Adonais O'Neill writes 'A split second after you have finished the poem you know that you have read one of the greatest poems in the language, and what is more you know that the poem--in no boastful spirit, merely in a spirit of certainty--knows this too.' (p. 131). Of Auden's poem In Memory of W.B. Yeats he comments that 'even this . . . of Auden's readers, yet indicative of a refusal to forget that poetry is always a verbal performance designed to persuade or even deceive.' (p. 265). Even were we all able to recognize not merely greatness, but also (which is surely harder) the poem's own consciousness of greatness, in a poem with the same skill, such a method of approach may leave a certain unease. As metaphors, chance illuminations, such throw-away lines have a certain charm; as critical descriptions, they seem more off-the-wall than off-the-cuff. To begin with, self-consciousness is almost a hallmark of what we mean by 'romanticism'. Which Romantic poems are not self-conscious, one wonders? O'Neill certainly does not tell us. What he does make clear is that this self-consciousness (or reflexiveness) is not merely an inherent quality of Romanticism, but apparently one of the criteria of poetry itself. 'Poetry' here would seem to be in the same kind of free-standing genre as 'literary criticism' to an unreconstructed Leavisite --a 'pure discipline':

[T]his reflexiveness reveals Shelley to be, in a high and embattled sense of the word, a poet, and a poet of crisscrossing perspectives--not a philosopher manqué, not a (heterodox) theologian manqué, not a political theorist manqué. To be a poet involves, for Shelley, an impassioned but complicated trust in the imagination and its products. (p. 119)

All this is, of course, quite true. But the problem with such a style of criticism is that the word 'imagination' is not a talisman. Poetry may not be an academic discipline in the sense that philosophy is (whether theology and political theory are properly academic disciplines is another question) but it undoubtedly raises questions that are inescapably philosophic, theological, and--yes--even political in the widest sense. As Shelley knew very well, an aesthetic medium is not an excuse for sloppy thinking. Nor does that word 'complicated' offer a saving qualification. 'Trusting the imagination' is a bit like believing in sincerity'. It is, notoriously, not enough. Such critical inarticulacy is the greater pity because O'Neill is actually a very articulate practical critic. Stripped of its curiously confused theoretical structure, there is a great deal of valuable insight, scholarship, and close reading to be found in this book. Especially interesting, for me, was a 'Coda' on a number of modern poets whose work O'Neill sees as continuing the kind of self-consciousness he has been studying in Romantic poets--Yeats, Stevens, Auden, and Amy Clampitt. Again, the actual criteria of selection are vague, but the connections he draws with the earlier generation of poets are illuminating. For this we are much in his debt.

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Ralph Pite, *The Circle of Our Vision: Dante's Presence in English Romantic Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1994. Pp. xv + 267 pp. £ 30. ISBN 0 19 811294 7.

The study of the reception of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in England in the early nineteenth century is a fascinating subject. At the beginning of the century the English reading public could rely on two English translations of the poem: Henry Boyd's (London, 1802) and Henry Francis Cary's (London: 1814; 1819). Between 1818 and 1900 seventeen complete translations of the poem were published. The motives for this increasing interest in Dante are various and complex. Cary's translation clearly played a major role in making Dante popular. Ralph Pite quotes Peacock's *Mr Listless* to show how 'Dante turned from a specialist interest into a necessary acquisition for the cultivated person' (p.1). Cary's *The Vision* has been analysed in the context of eighteenth-century translation studies (see Valeria Tinkler-Villani, *Visions of Dante in English Poetry*, Amsterdam, 1989), however, there have been few studies devoted to the assessment of its influence. Ralph Pite's *The Circle of our Vision* is thus the first book to devote serious attention to Cary's influence. The introduction is primarily an analysis of *The Vision* in the context of eighteenth-century English references to Dante. I believe this gives the book the essential context needed for the understanding of any Dantean influence on the Romantics. By choosing 'The Vision' as title for his translation Cary 'lifts Dante above the sordid demands of narrative' and evokes an association with Burke's idea of the sublime (p. 15). His translation is satisfactory according to modern standards, however, Pite writes, 'Dante's text will not be satisfied with fidelity' (p.25). A similar concern with Dante's critical reception informs the second chapter of Pite's book, devoted only partially to the study of illustrations of the *Divine Comedy* in the Romantic period. This analysis touches on Taaffe's commentary on the *Inferno* (London, 1822) and on Boyd's moralistic preface to his translation of the poem. Pite thus perceptively shows how Dante's religion clashed with eighteenth-century Anglican thought about the afterlife. Like Albert S. Roe (*Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy*, Princeton, 1953), Pite believes that Blake shares this criticism and that he considers Dante to be a supporter of the Law of the Old Testament. He is thus at variance with recent interpretations of the illustrations by Rodney M. Baine and David Fuller. The study of the influence of *The Vision* is then pursued in the fourth chapter, devoted to Keats's *Fall of Hyperion*. This is certainly the most successful and thorough chapter in the book. Dante's influence is placed besides Milton's: the change from the pathetic and well-informed account of the Gods' suffering in *Hyperion* to the clinical detachment of *The Fall* is marked, if not originated, by an interest in 'the brief pathos of Dante'. Both Dante and Milton's influence is identified in *Hyperion* and Pite rejects any clear-cut application of Bate's and Bloom's theory of influence. A similar approach can be found in Pite's study of Shelley's *Triumph of Life*. Here his contribution lies in the analysis of Shelley's Rousseau, 'to be blamed for not continuing the unceasing pursuit of the vision of Love that Dante (more passively) attained and that Shelley now takes up' (p. 182). Pite's interpretation of the *Defence of Poetry* is, however, limiting: 'Shelley himself claimed that Dante could not himself have believed the *Commedia's* theology' (p. 198). One should emphasize here Shelley's role as reader of the *Divine Comedy*, a reader who was concerned about his contemporaries' need to disregard its theology. In Chapters III and VI the study of Dantean influence gives way to an appreciation of Byron's and Coleridge's writings in their own right, preferring an analogical approach to Dante. Byron's *Don Juan* reveals a debt to, and similarity with, Dante's treatment of 'pity and peace'. Pite's study of Coleridge is more complex and focuses on the less-discussed years in Malta. It aims to show how the 1818 edition of *The Friend* expresses his newly-formulated idea of the symbol. Pite examines Coleridge's 1819 'Lecture on Dante' as well as his Notebook comments on Dante's canzone *Tre donne intorno al*

cor mi son venute. Pite does not regard allegory and as opposites in Coleridge's thought, leaving space for a comparison with Dante 'for his employment of the forms of attention and self-attention . . . that are required of symbolist prose' (p. 117). Echoes from Dante are listed and discussed extensively. The notes to this book demonstrate an invaluable scholarship. Some of them do in fact suggest and discuss Dantean echoes and new critical interpretations of the works studied (see p. 37, n 66; p. 165, n. 14; p. 174, n 35; p. 180, n. 40; p. 186, n 46; p. 188, n 49; p. 197, n 63; p. 225, n 41). Similarly the bibliography is comprehensive and essential for any scholar of the Romantic reception of Dante. The limitations of Pite's work are only due to the vastness of the topic, still allowing plenty of scope for further enquiry.

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Jennifer Ford, Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams and the Medical Imagination Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. 256. £37.50 (US\$59.95). ISBN 0 521 58316 0.

Jennifer Ford's *Coleridge on Dreaming* is a conundrum - albeit, perhaps, of a not unfamiliar kind. The meaning of 'medical imagination' - a phrase suggesting an iconoclastically materialist interpretation of Romanticism - is never satisfactorily explained, though the idea that imagination might have a 'medical' character or function is repeated so insistently as at least to make the author's materialist emphasis unambiguous. That imagination might act upon the body as well as vice versa is a view with numerous parallels in Coleridge, yet one which Ford mentions only briefly, preferring to focus on the ill-health which often forms the context for Coleridge's descriptions of his dreams. The 'translating' or 'transmuting' of physical sensations into dream-images is also a process often described by Coleridge, yet neither the problems this seemed to create for idealist theories, nor his numerous attempts to overcome these difficulties, are substantially discussed by Ford, who focuses instead on contemporary medicine and what she eccentrically calls 'Coleridge's contemporary writers on dreams' (p. 2). This absence of discussion of the philosophical issues is a problem - not because Ford's preferred approach is a materialist one, but rather because the view of Romantic imagination she explicitly opposes is so insubstantial. Her central claim that Coleridge's 'insistence on the corporeal, medical character of imagination challenges the notion of a purely aesthetic, idealist imagination entirely separated from material or bodily concerns' (p. 203) might be persuasive but for three factors: firstly, that we are never told how this 'imagination' relates to even the most celebrated contemporary theories (Coleridge's own discussions of the topic are scarcely mentioned), but are merely informed that 'the concept of the imagination . . . was hotly debated at this time' (p. 186); secondly, that 'idealist' is hardly the same as 'aesthetic' - though here as elsewhere Ford implicitly reduces Romantic philosophy to an aestheticism so flimsy as to need no further comment; and thirdly, that however important a role imagination (at least in Ford's implicit definition) might have played in Coleridge's dreams, he never describes it as having a 'medical' character (and if he had, would probably have thrown more light on the meaning of this phrase). To a significant extent, therefore, Ford's book is a game played with terminology, whose explicit aim is to focus our attention 'downwards' - towards the material 'base' from which Romanticism arises - rather than upwards, towards the theoretical issues she chooses to ignore. Despite her substantial disengagement from these issues, however, certain of her claims invite correction - perhaps most prominently, her statement that 'Coleridge's profound intellectual affinities from the early 1790s are with medicine

and the organicist life sciences' (p. 6). The most important of Coleridge's intellectual interests - from the Neo-Platonists to Kant and beyond - are thus arbitrarily dismissed (Boehme, Cudworth, Fichte, and Schelling are among those notably unrepresented in her bibliography, and the only work by Kant is the *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*), while such topics as mesmerism acquire an oddly inflated importance. Scarcely less problematic is Ford's avoidance of discussing the conflict between free-will and determinism underlying most of Coleridge's reflections on dreams: the moral importance he attaches to the question of their origin, she writes, 'is principally due to the theological repercussions of [his] vocabulary' (p. 151). The concluding statement of her most theoretical chapter - namely that Coleridge's 'explorations into the nature of [the] relationship [between his body and his dreams] led him to consider that his health and his body played significant roles in the formation of his dreams' (p. 158) is hard to disagree with; yet it has not taken us significantly beyond Coleridge's own references to the apparent influence of the stomach and the bladder, several of which have been in print since the mid-nineteenth century. Her extensive quotations from unpublished notebooks may well be useful as source-material for further discussions of this topic; yet the somewhat amorphous nature of her study is often accompanied by a vagueness of expression which inevitably recalls Coleridge's own views on the dangers of an imprecise use of language. Since space is limited, a few examples must suffice: firstly, the syntactical errors of 'both independent and dependent upon waking thoughts' (p. 39), of 'like Coleridge, the deep-seated anxiety and guilt De Quincey experiences . . .' (p. 41), and of 'another attempt to rationalise why he had not completed the poem' (p. 96); secondly, the vagueness of 'the truth of the reality of the magnetist's powers' (p. 107), and of 'he was then able to factor the imagination into the dreaming equation' (p. 183); and thirdly, the uncontextualized 'deconstructive' play (or perhaps the mere copy-editing error?) of 'the often cited/sighted occurrences of ghosts' (p. 96). If Ford's arguments were more substantial, they would inevitably be weakened by such lack of clarity; yet these relatively minor instances reflect a larger failure to engage effectively with the central issues of Coleridge's thought about dreaming or imagination, or significantly to clarify the complex relationships between ideal and physical in Coleridge's work.

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Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. Pp. 219. \$34.50. ISBN 0 812 23351 4

With its oblique reference to *Queer Nation*, Schmitt's *Alien Nation* maps the role of the Gothic as a cultural narrative in its articulation of the anxieties surrounding the formation of national identity. At a time of xenophobia and imperialist expansion, he argues that the intervention of the Gothic opened up a generic space wherein the notion of "Englishness" may be constructed. The texts through which he has chosen to consider this question and others are principally Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, Wilkie Collins, *Women in White* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. His willingness to cross frontiers as in the discussion of the film *The Crying Game* in regard to cross dressing enhances his analysis of Brontë's *Villette* in Chapter Three appropriately called 'Border Crossings'. Schmitt's assumption of the centrality of Englishness to notions of Britishness is undoubtedly true for the English. But for those on the periphery this could be construed as little more than a Gothic fiction. Schmitt's claim that Ireland is

the oldest English colony overlooks the colonization that took place nearer home. Predating the colonization of Ireland, Wales has become so assimilated as to be no longer even recognized as a colony even though the country retains a sense of national identity. Aside from this hegemonic over-view, Schmitt's points out that Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* perceived the Celts as light-hearted and bright. Such a representation is opposed to the melancholy penchant for graveyards and stagnant gloom that has characterized parts of the Celtic world elsewhere. Was such an optimistic representation an adjunct to Englishness, a deliberate departure from a polarized otherness, or dissolution of binary boundaries for the good of the Empire? These are questions that could have been considered. Furthermore, what was lost in the process of the colonization of Wales was a Welsh Gothic. For the Welsh people, Gothic was no longer a text but had become so internalised as to be an expression of their state of oppression. That Ireland and Scotland retained their own brand of Gothic may have helped to retain a greater international recognition of their own sense of separateness. Schmitt is alive to the dangers of the Gothic for nation making 'insofar as it lays bare modernity's selective use of the past and, in doing so, highlights what nationalists would obscure: the novelty and constructedness of the nation' (p. 167). Nowhere is this illustrated better than in his exploration of *Dracula* which includes some rich pickings on Irish politics. There is a lost opportunity to relate Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra more closely to his paradigm of the relationship of women to nationhood. Drawing on the Indian Mutiny in connection with the chapter on Charlotte Brontë, Schmitt maps the degeneration of woman from sacrificial victim, followed by her representation of the nation itself, through to being figured as an alien predator who contaminates the angelic sphere of English domestic life. In his account of the Opium Wars, De Quincey portrays England as the feminized victim and China as the persecutor. Schmidt draws the fascinating conclusion that 'the construction of a victimized identity at the national level, that is, provided the most powerful nation in the world with a rationale for aggression based, paradoxically, in a sense of itself as the beleaguered heroine of gothic romance'(p. 75). It is in relation to gender that the resonance of name symbolism is particularly striking. For instance, there is that of Professor Pesca in *Woman in White* whose naming is not fortuitous when he fails the swimming test of English manliness by sinking to the bottom of the sea (p. 125). In a novel whose prevailing discourse is Orientalist, Lucy Westenra who, as a woman is an English national subject, has a surname that represents her as occidental. It is also here in the chapter on Stoker entitled 'Mother Dracula', where we are reminded of how the eponymous hero sails to England in a ship called the Demeter. According to Schmitt 'like that other mythological mother, he returns from the underworld bringing new growth to a dead land, fresh blood to an enervated race'. (p. 155) Naming is crucial to nation and its symbolic nuances, whether it be those of British or the United Kingdom, is an area that could have been given further consideration. *Alien Nation* pushes forward the proverbial frontiers by colonizing a new area of Gothic studies that breaks down the borders around postcolonial literature. While it realigns the Gothic with questions of national importance, the way in which political issues and incidents are Gothicized serves to further break down the interface between nation and narrative. *Alien Nation* is a vanguard of the Gothic Empire.

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The Handbook to Gothic Literature, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts. London: Macmillan, 1998. Pp. 325. £47.50, pb, £15.99. ISBN 0 333 64037 3, 0 333 67069 8.

This book attempts to provide a definition of the meanings and boundaries of Gothic predominantly for undergraduates and those approaching the subject for the first time: 'The impulse to catalogue and classify in the spirit of Augustan taxonomy serves us with the illusion of gaining control over the otherwise uncontrollable. The murky flux of the formless mass of Gothic space becomes less terrifying when confined to a handbook, particularly one that is arranged in alphabetical order. . . . The Handbook to Gothic Literature sets out to delineate the contours, points of transgression, cross-over and cross-fertilisation that characterise Gothic literature and its tangential disciplines: architecture, art, film, music and photography' (p. xv). Aiding this creation of an overall impression of Gothic is a useful system of cross-referencing between articles which uses bold print in the text: 'the compendium is divided into entries that are predominantly mainstream and those that are primarily peripheral' (p. xvi) that are respectively entitled 'Gothic Writers and Key Terms' and 'Gothic Specialisms.' Marie Mulvey-Roberts in her introduction declares the Handbook was inspired by, and is complementary to, Frederick S. Frank's glossary of terms in *The First Gothics*. The articles are written by leading Gothic specialists, freelance writers, poets, artists, and postgraduates. The selection of subjects is substantial and wide-ranging, although Roberts mentions omissions caused by space and the particular needs of undergraduates, and even more experienced Gothicists may be prompted to explore new and interesting areas such as 'San Francisco Gothic' and 'Australian Gothic.' Although the discussions of popular Gothic authors, national characteristics of Gothic, and major subjects allow themselves more space for critical analysis, the introductions to lesser figures and topics tend to provide a larger proportion of factual information. Robert Miles's discussion of Ann Radcliffe (pp. 181-8) is informative, and also reassesses her literary reputation by returning to contemporaneous reviews of her work. He admonishes that twentieth-century criticism equates Radcliffe's explained supernatural with 'conservative, eighteenth-century rationalism' (p. 182), and which regards her 'female Gothic' style as less important than 'male Gothic'. Instead he stresses Radcliffe's contributions to the development of the Gothic tradition, such as her continual exploration of sensibility, indentifying the 'radical rhetoric' (p. 185) of the new order sweeping away the old in her novels, and emphasizing her liberal politics. Nicola Trott's article on 'Matthew Lewis' is a finely balanced examination of his association with Gothicists such as Ann Radcliffe and the German Schauerroman school, *The Monk*, his dramas, translations, poetry, and relevant and interesting information about Lewis's background and views. Many of the major Gothic writers are allocated individual sections, and those who are not such as Godwin, Charlotte Dacre, Wilkie Collins, and Clara Reeve are examined in other sections, for example in the 'Sublime.' Likewise, in many cases, the tradition of Gothic criticism may be gleaned from the relevant sections. It is inevitable that when dealing with major authors or closely related subjects information may be repeated: for example, the 'Supernatural' included much information on the occult and spiritualism, which have their own sections elsewhere. However, this kind of repetition is on the whole kept to a minimum. Modern criticism in both Gothic and English literature is recognized in sections such as 'Orientalism,' 'Colonial Gothic,' 'Postcolonial Gothic,' 'Female Gothic,' and 'The Gothic Body.' Michael Franklin's interesting discussion of Orientalism relates this subject to the Gothic through their roots in pre-novelistic romance: 'Certainly there was significant overlap as the Oriental and the Gothic continued to encode the alien and the other in terms of both external threat and internal corruption' (p. 169). Both genres share an ambiguity and breadth of reference such as their relationship to the Bible. Franklin argues that both

William Jones and the later exponents of scholarly British Romantic Orientalism employed the Gothic aesthetic and tropes at some time, particularly when they wanted to show decadence, decay, desire and terror. (The association of Gothic and Romanticism is examined by Philip W. Martin in a discussion of 'Romanticism.')

Franklin also argues that Southey's Gothic India was a reaction against the pervasiveness of contemporaneous Orientalism; that Percy Shelley used Gothic (in combination with the influence of the Orientalist Sydney Owenson) to criticize the corruption of society; and that Byron's Orientalism stemmed from his love of 'Philhellenism and pederasty' (p. 171). He claims *Vathek* as the high watermark of Gothic Orientalism and his complementary article on 'William Beckford' gives a useful short history of the cross-over points between Oriental, Gothic, and Romantic literature. He describes *Vathek*'s complex publication history, examines Gothic elements in Modern Novel Writing and *Azemia*, and considers Fonthill Abbey as part of the Gothic Revival, but his comments on *Vathek* itself perhaps over-emphasize an autobiographical-Gothic reading and risk becoming reductive. In spite of the Romantic elements described in Franklin's discussions of Oriental Gothic, the article on 'Colonial Gothic,' admittedly placed among the shorter 'Gothic Specialisms' articles, does not admit any examples of colonial Gothic prior to *Jane Eyre*. However, there is a useful delineation between colonial Gothic dealing with a threat to the nation from outside, and the need to control or domesticate the colonial other in the colony. The short articles collectively entitled 'Gothic Specialisms,' some of which have been mentioned above, deal with less central themes ('Cabbalism,' 'Sensibility,' and 'Hermeticism' for example), peripheral sub-genres (such as 'Illuminati Novels,' 'Rosicrucian Fiction' and 'Schauerroman'), and the interdisciplinary links of Gothic (with 'Gothic Art' and 'Gothic Photography'). These articles are less discursive and some are simply definitions, although the articles on 'Gothic Science Fiction' and 'The Grotesque' give concise accounts of the core issues involved in the subject. The sections on 'Politico-Gothic' and 'Historico-Gothic' concentrate on minor strands which gained only passing mention in previous articles, and give more space to examine the work of Godwin and Scott. The Handbook's Bibliography contains an ample selection of the most recent writing on the Gothic, along with the most authoritative older texts. Individual short bibliographies are reserved for the Female Gothic, Angela Carter, Poe, Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, Stoker, and Walpole. Although major exclusions may be cited, and criticism aimed at some of the inclusions, the bibliographies, like the Handbook, is an extremely useful reference work and introduction for students of the Gothic.

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Laura L. Runge, *Gender and Language in British Literary Criticism 1660 - 1790*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. ix + 233. £37.50. ISBN 0 521 57009 3.

This book is a committed exploration of the way gender and language interact to determine literary value. Its focus is upon the eighteenth century but it provides constant reminders of the way twentieth-century literary criticism has been determined by these earlier texts. Perhaps for this reason it contains some often surprisingly lengthy discussions of twentieth-century material. Its author does not, however, make the mistake of straightforwardly equating the mode of critical discourse in the two periods. Rather, by discussing a wide range of published materials, she acknowledges the distance between the diversity of the eighteenth-

century market and today's often professionalized and institutionalized criticism. Runge begins by examining the debate over the constitution of literary authority in the eighteenth century. Here she takes the time to outline how various definitions of human nature and formulations of the subject position worked to marginalize the feminine. However, she notes, this marginalization was frequently complicated by the rather different discourse of gallantry. Particular attention is drawn to the change in the signification of gender in the period and its interaction with altering models of criticism, from Augustan to subjective. Her second chapter on Dryden traces the way the complex relation between gender and aesthetics in his poetry is elided by later critics' concentration upon his use of the masculine heroic. Far more interesting than her discussion of later criticism on Dryden, however, is the way in which she proceeds to complicate the literary 'fact' of his masculinity. In the light of this complication, she alters an interesting account of Dryden's ambiguity in the ode to Anne Killigrew. This ambiguity, she argues, arises from Dryden's struggle to reconcile the requirements of gallantry with his demand for certain poetic qualities which he associates with the masculine. Runge also examines the relation between gender and the early status of the novel. Here too the time she spends exploring twentieth-century criticism of the novel and its use of gender is perhaps excessive; more profitable is her analysis of early comments on the novel form found in preface dedications. Particularly interesting is her comparison between the way gallantry is often used protectively in criticism such as Dryden's while being deployed with ambiguity and eroticism within the marginal spaces of the novel. Runge's lengthy close readings of the texts of a number of female critics are also timely and informative. In many cases, she has deliberately chosen not to isolate them in a tradition of women's writing but to examine them in dialogue with male critics. Only in the fourth chapter does she deal with the work of female critics alone, discussing criticism by Behn, Lennox, Fielding and Reeve. She explains this departure from her stated methodology by suggesting that it facilitates one of her major purposes -- to demonstrate the existence of female critics in the eighteenth century. Runge may be right to attempt to hammer home this point; certainly the profile of such writers could hardly be described as high. However, their existence is not so unacknowledged as she seems to want to claim. In her final chapter 'Returning to the Beautiful' Runge points out the lack of critical attention which has been paid to the beautiful as a discourse of the sublime. Her reading of Burke in this chapter owes much to Frances Ferguson's work on the sublime and the beautiful, but it nevertheless usefully prepares the ground for her insightful discussion of Lord Kames and Hannah More. The reading of More is particularly interesting as Runge refuses to present her as a reactionary, instead demonstrating how the addition of historical context alters her positioning. More may have had an ontological understanding of the difference between the sexes but comparison with Kames shows her much greater anxiety about the usefulness of the masculine sublime. The scope of Runge's work is impressive but its very range means she is sometimes forced to jump too abruptly from general historical information to textual specifics. However, her reading of female critics alongside their contemporaries is insightful and worthwhile. These close but contextualized readings are the real strength of the work. They ensure that Runge's book makes an important contribution to the discussion of gender and critical discourse.

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Catherine B. Burroughs, *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. Pp. 238. £37.95. ISBN 0 8122 3393 X.

One of the reasons Catherine B. Burroughs's *Closet Stages* has already proven itself a valuable contribution to the fields of British Romanticism, theatre history, and women's and gender studies is because it teaches us so much. A leader in revising conceptions of Romantic theatre, Burroughs demonstrates that returning women's theories and their dramas back to the scene in which they were active players changes substantially the ways in which we perceive and understand Romantic drama and theatre culture. *Closet Stages* examines drama written for the closet and for the public theatre as well as plays written for private theatricals; at the conclusion of its persuasive argument the notion of the Romantic closet as an anti-theatrical reaction has been recast with the representation of a vital, highly theatrical Romantic drama that acts on a variety of stages. Joanna Baillie is the central figure of the study and *Closet Stages* is the first work to address her contribution to theatre theory and practice in such a detailed and substantive manner. In illuminating Baillie's theatrical and dramatic context, Burroughs recovers or reinterprets a number of works by Romantic-era women. Protesting the erasure of women as critical thinkers and theorists of theatre, Burroughs writes them back into history as theorists of the stage and advocates their positions and accomplishments as forerunners to late-twentieth-century theatre theories, practices and concepts, such as the psychologically intimate performance space, domestic 'private' performances, and the social performance of gender. One of Burroughs's strongest acts is recovering the theatre theory of Romantic women, an act manifested by her extensive research and by her perceptive argument that we need to reconsider limitations on the label 'theory'. Although there were few women writing and publishing formal theoretical treatises, Burroughs reveals the theories that they articulated in letters, journals, prefaces, and play prologues. She reminds us that we have become accustomed to thinking of Keats's letters as theoretical texts, and should likewise consider the various suppositions and postulations in informal texts written by women as valid and indeed valuable sources for theatre theory. Her groundbreaking work on the effects of women's theories on Romantic dramaturgy, on the public representation of the female actor through celebrity narratives, and on the actress as theorist, both (re)introduces the reader to the ideas of women such as Elizabeth Inchbald, Hannah More, Anna Jameson, Mary Berry, Sarah Siddons, Dorothy Jordan, and Helen Maria Williams, and serves as substantial preparation and context for her analysis of Joanna Baillie's writing, which constitutes three-fifths of the book. *Closet Stages* examines closely Baillie's reworking of the closet and public stages, her position in relation to other Romantic dramatists, and her influential and prescient theories of performance styles. Burroughs has been influential in setting the stage for Baillie's emergence as a key figure of British Romanticism, and she distinguishes Baillie for her ability to mend the split we, in the twentieth century, have perceived between Romantic drama and the Romantic stage; her plays help us to make connections between the drama produced at the time and the actual stages for which it was produced. Explicating the 'Introductory Discourse' and *De Monfort* and *Basil* from Baillie's *Plays on the Passions*, Burroughs argues that both plays explored and questioned conventional social performances of gender, for men as well as women, and that in *De Monfort* Baillie put into play her own theories about performance style by creating characters who performed their social selves according to different and conflicting visions. While the histrionic Jane

De Monfort worked beautifully onstage with Sarah Siddons in the role, the prefiguration of the Romantic hero in De Monfort needed the later acting style of Kean, which it anticipates. In her analysis of Baillie's earliest comedy, *The Tryal*, which was considered for private theatrical production, Burroughs argues that through its presentation of amateur acting and improvisation it acknowledges the place of the 'familiar' and the >ordinary,= the examination of such in women's lives, and women's explorations and assertions of control over these elements of their own lives. The central project of *Closet Stages* is Burroughs's revision of the conception of closet drama. Rather than serving in opposition to the public stage or patent house, the closet acted as a space for the expression of internal states and as an experimental space for women to work out the social performance of gender and to conceive new possibilities for representation. The supposed 'anomaly' and 'strangeness' of the closet drama actually highlights the dynamic tensions of theatre between the script and the live performance; thus, because 'the closet play makes dramaturgically explicit the bifurcated character of all dramatic literature' (p. 16), it deconstructs long-held assumptions that a play is either literary or theatrical. The private theatrical movement, the years 1770-1810, celebrated the exploration and use of domestic spaces that had long been the domain of women, which in turn granted women agency and authority for their experiences in these spaces. Instrumental theorizing and practicing of the roles of middle- and upper-class women took place at this time, although it has taken nearly two centuries to discover and appreciate the results. Burroughs's careful historical excavation and analysis of Romantic-era theories in conjunction with contemporary feminist and queer theatre theories that have redefined and reappraised the idea of the 'closet' serve to augment and modify our knowledge and perception of Romantic drama and theatre culture. In addition, Burroughs is a first-rate teacher; her accessible prose, clear definitions, thorough introductions to each figure, and generous references, including detailed notes and an appendix listing texts of women=s theatre theory published in Great Britain 1790-1850, are welcome and appreciated.

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Susan Blood, *Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. 208. £30 (US\$39.50). ISBN 0 804 72809 7.

In this complex and challenging book, Susan Blood sets out to examine the relationship between Baudelaire, Modernism and other critical perspectives of the present century. Hers is a self-avowedly revisionist stance; viewing Modernism as a historical process enables her to question its portrait of Baudelaire, finding, as she claims, 'the impurities in pure poetry and the moments of reaction in an otherwise progressive aesthetics'. Professor Blood's central texts are Valéry's *Situation de Baudelaire*, representing the post-World War I period and Sartre's *Baudelaire of 1947*. As a prelude to her discussion of these texts, Baudelaire's canonization in the early twentieth century is revealingly contrasted with his controversial status during his lifetime and in the decades that followed. A re-evaluation of Sartre's resistance to the sacralization of Baudelaire convincingly (if surprisingly) demonstrates that he may offer a new way of re-thinking the poet, and that the notion of bad faith can contribute to the discussion of Baudelaire's aesthetics. The book contains interesting chapters on caricature, on the 'secret architecture' of *Les Fleurs du mal* and on the totalizing potential of Baudelaire's allegory. In the penultimate chapter Professor Blood focusses on Baudelaire's condemnation of photography viewed through the prism of two essays

on the subject by Walter Benjamin. Having established the high degree of interdependence between the history of Modernism and the aesthetic assessment of Baudelaire, Susan Blood in her conclusion ponders the future application of her project and its revelations to other writers. In her opinion, very few of these, however innovative they might be, possess the same deeply historical character as Baudelaire. However, the seeming contemporaneity of Valéry to both Mallarmé and Sartre suggests that this 'almost unreadable' poet might prove a fruitful subject for a revisionist biography.

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