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Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). Pp. xiv+290. £45.ISBN 0 19 818459 X

The first book-length study of Thomas Percy's *Reliques* to appear for a long time, Nick Groom's volume is at the same time a study of mid- to late eighteenth-century debates on ideas of origins and authenticity within antiquarianism; a study of Percy's *Reliques* as verse; and a careful reconstruction of what Groom calls the 'making' of this work, a rather simple term that implies 'social and cultural processes, changing conceptions of authorship and composition, material interventions in correspondence and lent books, and a series of bibliographical accidents from the fireplace to the print shop' (p. 245).

It is convenient to consider Groom's different approaches to the *Reliques* in separate ways, even though in reality his book cannot be exclusively read as a biographical reconstruction, a repertoire of themes and cultural concerns, or a microbibliographical analysis. In this multiple structure, Percy's work is approached anecdotally, although not in any familiar new-historicist fashion. Groom starts from a reference to the version of the thirteenth-century poem 'The Owl and the Nightingale' in Robert Dodsley's collection of *Select Fables of Esop* (1761), a volume to which Percy himself had contributed. In Percy's own reading of the tale, the nightingale allegorizes a minstrel in contrast with the figure of the owl, that is an ironic representation of an antiquarian. The fable's depiction of pedantry is then taken as emblematic of the polemical debate between the practice of antiquarianism and creativity proper to eighteenth-century culture. The fable specifically provides a strategic approach with which the *Reliques* may be put back into context.

Indeed Groom starts to recover the familiar contexts usually associated with the origins of the *Reliques*, locating them in a thick network of mid-century erudition, literary and social circles, and changing conceptions of versification and literary sensibility. Particularly interesting is the reconstruction of the different professional contacts established by Percy during the 'making' of his collection with intellectuals as diverse as William Shenstone and Samuel Johnson. The 'owl and nightingale' debate reveals the relevance of antiquarianism to contemporary concerns and removes the *Reliques* from any received idea of an august and aloof operation of textual retrieval meeting with immediate success and resulting in the inauguration of a new cultural era. Percy's collection is instead brought back to its original controversial arena which is both that of the revival of the ballad itself but also the introduction and elaboration of what Bourdieu might call new 'cultural capital' and a struggle about its control.

The most important of such struggles in Groom's study is the 'controversy' between

Percy and Macpherson. Their different but closely interconnected projects of cultural resurrection establish a contrast between the different kinds of prestige attached to oral or written sources. Both of these antiquarian operations aim at a definition of the national past which is also a form of moral and cultural aggrandizement, and Groom traces how Percy's written mode eventually became dominant. This contrast had a wide-ranging influence over Romanticism and contemporary conceptions of history and the nation, in Britain as well as other European cultures. It was Percy's idea of a scriptural source, as well as his interest in matters Gothic, that stimulated such collections in the German-language tradition as Bodmer's *Altenglische Balladen* (1780) or Herder's more famous *Volkslieder* (1778-79). As an addition to this European dimension, Groom also brings to the fore the link between the (racial and cultural) English Gothicism of Percy's texts and the ballad tradition of medieval Spain, its gory history and its own brand of (racial and cultural) Gothicism. Further, Groom's study captures Percy's adaptation of new ideas of authenticity circulating in the mid- to late eighteenth century, here approached through carefully selected theoretical texts such as Baudrillard's *System of Objects*, that leads to a fresh outlook on the mythological value of the antique object as a signifier from (and of) the past. Theory never encumbers Groom's discussions but usefully blends in with them. Examining a phenomenon that also concerns figures such as Chatterton, Macpherson or William Henry Ireland, he identifies a 'drive to authenticate' informing a whole cultural period for which 'authenticity and forgery seem less to be absolute terms than mutually supporting concepts' (p. 242).

The central part of the text is taken up by what might be called its 'microbibliographical' analysis of the *Reliques*, that is a careful reconstruction of how the text was conceived and developed, the collaborations that evolved around it, as well as the processes that led to its editing and printing. The step-by-step reconstruction is based on a variety of materials which help Groom's approach to move away from Lachmann's tradition based on the stemma codicum and a practice of textual philology fascinated with myths of origin.

Groom describes Percy's *Reliques* as one of the founding texts of English literature and a work which 'dramatically influenced Romanticism and the writing of Wordsworth [...] Coleridge [and] Walter Scott'. He supports this view by recovering the cultural drives behind the book, qualifying it as one of the most outstanding expressions of its cultural period and indicative of cultural phenomena at the roots of much Romantic writing. *Lyrical Ballads* is duly mentioned as a recipient of such influence, which also left its trace in Coleridge's additional side annotations to the *Ancient Mariner* and their ironic attack on the excesses of pedantic antiquarianism. Walter Scott then receives a mention together with the fact that his ballad-collecting was begun in explicit homage to Percy. Elaborating ideas of genealogy, origins, national identity, history and the 'national voice', Percy's *Reliques* played a crucial role in a literature that was in the process of delineating its own canon. And it is Groom's view that Percy's is 'the seminal, epoch-making work of English Romanticism' (p. 3). Although the definitive tone of such a statement might make Romantic scholars uneasy, Groom reveals the *Reliques* as a polemical, uneasy kind of seminal text. Therefore, instead of Samuel Johnson's professional idea of authorship, which might be supposed the dominant practice at this stage, Percy goes back to an idea of patronage of sponsored art that transposes the idea of the poet into that of a traditional minstrel aspiring to a greatness awarded by the feudal lord, or a wandering man of genius escaping all classifications, as well as the figure of a preserver and transmitter of cultural and imaginative lore. Percy's poet/minstrel is then an

incipiently Romantic figure, as it does not only fit the received idea of the bard but also that of Walter Scott's modern, militant and ideologically 'qualified' minstrel. In this light, Percy awards cultural relevance to an idea of the poet as genius that does not supplant, but coexists with, that of the professional poet in a kind of double formulation eventually coming to the fore around the turn of the century.

Written in an elegant and readable style, Groom's book is filled with much substantial, never gratuitously erudite, scholarship. More importantly it provides a unique occasion to rediscover a text that prefigures the contradictions, innovations and concerns of a whole cultural phase as one of the founding, epoch-making texts of British as well as European Romantic culture.

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Guinn Batten, *The Orphaned Imagination: Melancholy and Commodity Culture in English Romanticism*, Duke University Press 1998. Pp. 303pp. hb £40, pb £13.50. ISBN 0 8223 2205 60, 0 8223 2221 8.

The *Orphaned Imagination* is a book which presents peculiar difficulties to a British reviewer for two reasons. It belongs to that recent genre of American Romantic criticism (inaugurated by Clifford Siskin's *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*), which attempts simultaneously to conduct an argument about Romantic poetry and an argument about the modern critical interpretation of Romanticism - since the modern Romantic criticism referred to is almost exclusively American criticism of the past fifteen years (Batten admits in her lengthy 'Afterword' that her book's psychoanalytic account is confined to 'Romantic scholarship in America'), it is not easy for a reader less steeped in that tradition than Batten herself obviously is fully to appreciate the bearings of the book's argument.

The other difficulty lies in the way Batten deploys a vocabulary of critical terms derived from psychoanalysis. In part, this difficulty may reflect the greater degree of naturalization psychoanalytic terminology has achieved in the United States than in Britain; however, it also reflects a certain degree of ambiguity in the book about the kind of psychoanalytic reading in which Batten is engaged.

Despite frequent references to the French tradition of psychoanalytic thought (she deploys a notion of 'melancholia' borrowed from Kristeva, and she confesses her indebtedness to Slavoj Žižek's Lacanian reading of commodity culture), the often biographical focus of her critical accounts seem to testify to an understanding of psychoanalysis that is largely shaped by the American ego psychology against which Lacan reacted. This is shown, for example, when she comments on Shelley's thematics of the gaze: Batten suggests that, beyond the two pairs of eyes that mirror each other, there is a 'third gaze' which she identifies with 'the Other, the Law of the Father, that has become internalized as a superegoistical, inner tyrant who judges, punishes, and takes pleasure in identifying with all of the various players who are loving, enjoying, and suffering in this illuminated, imaginary theater' (p 136). In using the vocabulary of 'internalization', and personifying the Lacanian notion of the Law of the Father in this way, Batten seems to avoid the Lacanian emphasis on the structural nature of the human psyche in favour of a more narrative and developmental kind of psychoanalytic account. As a result, it is often difficult to know exactly what implications Batten intends her use of Lacanian terminology to have.

At the heart of Batten's argument lies a psychoanalytical interpretation of recent American Romantic criticism. She strongly disagrees with the self-abnegatory tone of new historicist critics such as Liu and Levinson; as she sees it, their anxiety to avoid 'complicity' with Romantic ideology amounts to a proclamation of the futility of Romantic criticism. It is this self-proclaimed futility which she interprets as symptomatic of a condition of melancholic 'abjection' on the part of these critics; in the kind of ironic turn we have come to expect after Jerome McGann's *The Romantic Ideology*, she finds that new historicist critics suffer from a kind of 'melancholia' which is characteristic of Romanticism itself, and for which 'commodity culture' is ultimately to blame. The difference for Batten between new historicist critics and the Romantics themselves, however, is that critics such as Levinson and Liu are in a state of denial about their own 'melancholia', something which leads them to repudiate the value of Romanticism, in contrast to the Romantics who acknowledge their own state of 'orphanhood' (both imaginative and literal) in relation to dead or absent forebears.

Batten's argument against the new historicists, presented in an 'Introduction' and a lengthy 'Afterword', brackets a series of studies of Byron, Blake, Shelley and Wordsworth which do not explicitly refer to her polemical stance, being designed to substantiate her claim that Romanticism is characterized by a condition of 'melancholia'. The accounts of Wordsworth and Shelley, conducted in terms of crisis in poetic vocation and Weiskel's notion of the 'Romantic Sublime', seem rather conventional in tone and are reminiscent of Hartman; those on Byron and Blake engage, as one might expect, with more recent trends in Romantic criticism.

Since the bulk of Batten's argument against the new historicists is presented in the 'Afterword', it is not easy on a first reading to see the relation of these sections to an overall argument. Even with the benefit of hindsight, Batten's tendency to structure chapters in terms of psychoanalytic narrative (a procedure which she doesn't attempt to justify on a theoretical level) often makes them seem somewhat rambling. Batten's presentation of her argument is not helped by the many incidental discussions of various Romantic critics, which tend to be rather disruptive of the thread of critical analysis.

My overall impression was that the form in which Batten had presented her argument was somewhat at odds with its content. Batten argues interestingly and convincingly in the 'Afterword' against the 'oedipalization' to which recent American criticism subjects Romantic writing, in the wake of Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, but the rather anxious name-checking (and a very defensive footnote towards the end on the subject of a recent presentation by Levinson at a NASSR conference) suggested a certain lack of confidence. Given the nature of her argument, and her obvious interest in French theory, I was surprised at the lack of reference to Deleuze and Guattari (whose *Anti-Oedipus* would seem very relevant to her thesis) and also to the later Barthes, whose writing on 'pleasure' might usefully have supported her protest against the tendency of new historicism to turn poetry into 'work'.

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Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic*. University of Michigan Press, 1999. pp. 281. £32.50. ISBN 0 472 10940 5

This is a book with a great deal of range. There is a chapter on *The Monk*, *Dracula* and the two film versions of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*; one on *The Italian*,

Psycho and De Palma's *Dressed to Kill*; one on Frankenstein and two stories by Hawthorne, 'The Birth-mark' and 'Rappaccini's Daughter'; one on LeFanu's 'Green Tea', Jekyll and Hyde and Stevenson's 'Olalla'; one on The Island of Doctor Moreau, Conan Doyle's 'Adventure of the Speckled Band', and *Heart of Darkness*; one on Jane Eyre, May Sinclair's 'Villa Désirée', and *Wide Sargasso Sea*; and a final one on, perhaps surprisingly, Jane Campion's film *The Piano*. These materials and chapters are arranged into three sections, on 'Masculinity and the Body', 'Masculinity and Science' and 'Masculinity and Imperialism'.

I think the major strength of the book lies in its detailed and often sharp critical treatment of those texts which have not already had criticism heaped upon them: for example, I found the reading of 'Green Tea' entirely persuasive, and the material on Doctor Moreau was full of fresh insights and connections. 'Olalla' and 'The Speckled Band' were also read attentively and convincingly, although in the latter case I was not entirely sure of the overall characterisation of Sherlock Holmes; to call him the 'rationalist par excellence', even when such an observation is tempered by reference to his cocaine habit, seems in some ways inadequate to the profound melancholy which appears, to me at least, his most distinguishing trait.

But I wonder whether this was not one effect of the attempt to fit these somewhat heterogeneous materials into the professed theme of the book – which is not 'masculinity and the Gothic', as the subtitle professes, but heterosexual masculinity and the Gothic; the homosexual, the homosocial, the queer are all strictly outlawed in favour of an argument that centres on the figure of the heterosexual male and his 'deconstruction' by the various deterritorialising forces at work within Gothic. For some perhaps related reason, the theme of hermaphroditism, although addressed at some length, is never allowed to be known by that name; the alternative discourse of 'one-sex bodies' and 'two-sex bodies' does indeed provide some historical illumination, but also shows signs of rhetorical strain.

Apart from the characterisation of Holmes there are other examples, I think, of how this insistent theme exerts pressure on otherwise excellent arguments. Is it really true, for example, that Vivaldi in *The Italian* is 'possessed' by Ellena? Again, Frankenstein is described as a distortion of some previous ideal – 'the male scientist', we learn, 'has served as a powerful image of autonomy and mastery within modern Western society', he has been 'the self-possessed, objective, rational, complacent foe of mortality', 'an ideal male subject'. One wonders to what extent literary evidence for this could be actually found, or whether what we are seeing is a back-projection made necessary by the book's emphasis on an enduring stereotype of heterosexual masculinity.

For these reasons, then, I did not find the excellence of the criticism fully matched by the book's overall argument, and in fact I wondered whether there were really several books in here trying to get out. If so, then it seemed to me that clearly the best of them would have been one on the Gothic and imperialism. Although Hendershot's argument about *Heart of Darkness* does not really take on the crucial contributions of Achebe among others, nevertheless the identification of the 'Gothic mode' of looking at issues of empire is convincing, well developed and historically apposite.

In several senses, though, it is the final chapter that is both the most interesting and the most puzzling. It is evidently true that *The Piano* contrasts two forms of masculinity; and it is at least reasonable to suggest that the terms in which this contrast takes place substantially revise the admiration of stereotypical heterosexual masculinity that runs – if ambivalently – through the Gothic. But the question that remains unaddressed is: in what sense is *The Piano* Gothic in the first place? The

Piano certainly deconstructs something, and Hendershot shows us, with force and accuracy, how it does so; but there remains something of an unresolved gap between the film and its (presumed) 'Gothic' forebears.

What does emerge in this chapter is an important comment that reverberates back through the rest of the book, namely that 'the female subject's belief in the powerful male subject is perhaps more powerful than the male subject's belief'. This, it seems to me, would indeed be a highly apposite starting point for a re-examination of, in particular, the relations between female authors and male protagonists in Gothic. However, no sooner had I encountered this very intriguing thought than I found myself reading something which seemed to me very odd indeed, in connection with the character of Baines in *The Piano* and his rhetorical abilities. 'While I am not denying', says Hendershot, 'that a nineteenth-century whaler could possess eloquence and sensitivity, how an illiterate one could do so remains puzzling. Where does Baines get his view of love if not from written discourse?' One can only remark that, odd though this might seem to a literary critic, the fact remains that there are other sources of love other than texts, and minor linguistic failings do not normally result in complete maturational atrophy (even, I perhaps ought to add, in men). However, to return to the main point: I think this is a good book, well written and full of interesting detail. If I am not sure that at the end of the day it quite succeeds in holding to a cogent argument, then perhaps that is because Hendershot has tried to stuff too many things into the cake, but again perhaps this is inevitable, given the enormity of her topic and the wide variety of material of which she treats; certainly she brings back to our attention a number of texts that have not before been subjected to much rigorous scrutiny, and treats them in ways that stimulate a great deal of fresh thought.

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Jeffrey C. Robinson, *Reception and Poetics in Keats: 'My Ended Poet'. Romanticism in Perspective: Texts, Cultures, Histories.* Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's, 1998. Pp. xiii + 205. #42.50. ISBN 0 333 71638 8.

Jeffrey Robinson combats, less and less obliquely as his engagingly quirky book develops, the reading of Keats as 'a fundamentally Tennysonian poet of closed forms and elegiac temperament' (p. 2). According to Robinson, such a reading governs Stuart Sperry's influential account of Keats as a poet who moves from the loosely associative towards 'rock-like structures' (p. 4). Certain words like 'heroic', 'closed' and 'elegiac' occur through Robinson's text as signals of wrong ways of seeing Keats's career. Even 'To Autumn' discloses a far from elegiac vision to this critic, who, taking his cue from the poet Thomas McGrath's 'The End of the World', comments perceptively on the way Keats's poetry 'Postpones the end of the world: in which we live forever' (quoted p. 156).

In fact, Robinson would have us believe that, in his 'generous exuberance' (p. 4) and negatively capable, chameleonic instincts, Keats is a forerunner of 'open-form poetry' (p. 6). This polemical simplification pulls some very disparate and discrete critical writing into a kind of repetitive, dreamy order, even as Robinson is sharp enough to highlight 'the highly volatile nature of reading' (p. 7) as a justification for his approach. The volatility of his chapters on a variety of poetic responses to Keats is not always helpful. The scrappy, biased view of Amy Clampitt's 'A Homage to John Keats' made me wonder whether we had read the same poem. Robinson's case is that

since for Clampitt 'Elegy seeps through all' (p. 83) she embraces a 'modern academic' conviction 'that great poetry belongs to the past' (p. 84). In so doing he misses completely the marvellous drive through Clampitt's suite of poems to enter into a present relationship with Keats's life and art; while recognizing that connection with past literature is not straightforward, Clampitt finds analogues and affinities between Keats and an array of subsequent poets, such as Mandelstam, Crane, Stevens, and, more covertly, herself. Her poem itself is a fascinating mix of 'open' and 'closed' forms, in Robinson's terms, and restlessly sustains a live connection with the dead poet.

When Robinson is attuned to the texts he discusses, the resulting prose can be genuinely exciting. His account of Tom Clark's *Junkets on a Sad Planet* argues that Clark presents Keats less as victimized by death than as allowing death to 'go free, mingling deeply with the poetic self and then with the reader' (p. 88). Robinson offers some suggestive distinctions between speaking in a social/historical voice -- that normally accorded to Keats by critics who read the poetry in the light of the life -- and speaking in a voice that is 'extraordinary, transpersonal, mythic' (p. 90). It is such a voice, on Robinson's reading, that Clark succeeds in conveying in his sequence, as in the following lines from section 5, 'Phosphorescence': 'All through that aching starlit spring / In Hampstead the god kept being born / As the stunned, exhausted player was abandoned'. Between this passage and certain effects in Clampitt's sequence -- the description, for instance, of the writing of 'The Eve of St Agnes' -- there is less difference than Robinson concedes: Clark's lines recommend themselves to him, not because they are 'better' poetry', but because they are closer to that oddly sentimental modernism that sees poetry as the product not of a 'person or poem' but of 'the energy or spirit' (p. 91). One notices, though, that Clark, more than Robinson concedes, is haunted by the gap --and, therefore, link -- between the consumed life and the immortal art.

Robinson's is a form of reception theory, but one which is more individual and creative than is usually conveyed by that critical label. He even evokes and decodes the changing meanings of atmosphere in the great Keatsian shrines and museums in Hampstead, Rome and Harvard; in Hampstead, for instance, he detects in Keats House a 'sense of emptiness' (p. 29) which he relates to Keats's own eschewal of domesticity; in Rome, he reflects hauntingly, in terms that recall the end of Stephen Spender's 'Thoughts during an Air-Raid', on 'the incommunicable inwardness -- or is it emptiness? -- that dying can produce' (p. 41). He is fascinating on the temptation, succumbed to by many late Victorian poets (about whom, to his credit, Robinson is not at all patronising), to see Keats as a martyr, victim, or hero, as in the phrase from Alice Meynell which supplies the book's sub-title: 'My ended poet'. Here he is always alert to stirring, budding intimations in the tribute poems of a more 'open-form' potential in Keats's work: Meynell herself, writing on flowers and Keats's tomb, is, he claims, concerned, in an open field way, with 'the poet's dissolution into the life of the world itself' (p. 76). Closer to the present, Galway Kinnell's 'Oatmeal' is also interpreted as reading Keats as 'groping or inclined towards a more open form' (p. 101). Most acutely and amusingly, Robinson reads Mark Halliday's 'There' as deconstructing a notion that Keats yearned for some utopian, transcendent, wordless serenity. By virtue of its allusions to the 'Epistle to J. H. Reynolds, Esq.', Halliday's poem claims Keats for a poetry of 'pains and troubles' and also 'of confusions, pleasures, and wordplay' (p. 107).

The book also reprints (in slightly expanded form) a sensitive review (first published in the Wordsworth Circle) of Carol Kyros Walker's book on the Walking Tour of

Scotland. Robinson disagrees with Walker's sombre emphasis on death and disease, and plays up the element of adventure in Keats's journeying. His final 'Memos on Keats for the Next Millennium' repeats in various ways his preference for seeing Keats's work as 'a poetry freed from the ego in order to emanate from the world' (p. 143). There is loss as well as reward in Robinson's distaste for the heroic Keats associated with Bate, Sperry, and Vendler, and his argument can seem assertive rather than persuasive; he is a critic of real perceptiveness, yet his disinclination to read the poems steadily and as wholes can be a disadvantage. Certainly, though, this readable book will only help to refocus attention where it is needed: on the distinctive, ever-surprising nature of Keats's poetic achievement. It also contains a very useful anthology of some of the poems about Keats which it discusses.

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Chloe Chard. *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999. Pp. 278. hb £45, pb £16.99. ISBN 0 7190 4804 4, 0 7190 4805 2.

Chloe Chard's book is a welcome and significant addition to the fast-developing area of travel writing studies, as well as to the longer-established tradition of scholarship on the Grand Tour. As she points out in her introductory chapter, the latter tradition has tended towards the social-historical in its treatment of the Tour, with little regard for the specificities of textual mediation, so her focus upon the Grand Tour as the object of a discourse, or set of interconnected discourses, is a refreshing one. Her study is far from theoretically self-absorbed, however; instead, her investigation of 'the range and limits of what can be said or written about the topography of the Grand Tour over the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (p. 13) consists mainly of very practical rhetorical analysis. Her preferred term for understanding the forms and figures which characterize the literature of the Tour is 'imaginative geography', for which she borrows Christian Jacob's formulation designating a particular real-world space on which a culture overwrites its representations of alterity. As such, it is a concept which only carries meaning in contra-reference to the project of scientific or philosophical travel to establish a more disinterested knowledge of the world.

The discursive field which Chard surveys on this basis encompasses both English and French texts (she moves comfortably amongst the latter, supplying both the originals and her own translations), and covers poetry and novels as well as the predominant first-person travel narratives. *Pleasure and Guilt* has a challengingly long time-frame, and Chard is sensitive to the ways in which the discourse of travel evolved between her end-dates; it is to her credit that she does not let familiar periodisations control her argument, but lets the differences emerge naturally from her empirical (and broadly chronological) account. In terms of geographical bias, Chard views the passage from North to South as central to the imaginative experience of the Grand Tour: there is thus a heavy concentration on Italy, the traditional spiritual centre of the Tour, a rather less intense focus on the Alpine passage, and negligible attention to France and to most of the return route. Inevitably, there is considerable interest in the dense mediation of travellers' experiences -- of Italy especially -- by their reading of earlier travels, and their knowledge of history and of classical and modern literature. Chard is

alert to gender issues, not only in connection with female-authored texts (which become more numerous towards the end of her time-span), but also with respect to the gendered topography of the Tour: the regularity with which the 'warm South' presents itself as an alluring yet potentially destabilising feminine contrary to the manly northern regions from which travellers come.

In the seventeenth century, the literature of the Grand Tour is taken up with the rarities, wonders and curiosities of Italian culture and landscape, and travellers often appear as self-conscious stylists whose rhetorical extravagance matches the richness of the topography - a technique which nevertheless permits language 'to assume a primacy over reference to the exterior world' (p. 75). In the eighteenth century hyperbolic language is applied more commonly to natural scenery than to cultural monuments or the fertility of the land, and Chard understandably has much to say about the incorporation of the new aesthetics of the sublime and the beautiful into travel narratives. She also writes illuminatingly about the perennial fascination for Tourists of such foreign customs as monasticism and *cicisbeism*, where unnatural restraint is taken to produce a correspondent level of transgression; the rhetorical linkage between the otherness of women and 'the intriguing inaccessibility of the foreign' (p. 130); and the prevalence of pictorial metaphors. Chard's final two chapters concern the crucial period of transition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and provide an admirable introduction to Romantic concepts of travel: on the one hand, the view of travel as an adventure 'in which the traveller is propelled across boundaries by his or her personal needs and desires' (p. 183), or the darker Byronic theme of addictive motion towards an unattainable goal; on the other, the proto-touristic approach of seeking out temporary, superficial distractions and carefully managed thrills. Her approach to tourism as a discourse structurally opposed to the Romantic proves its worth against the familiar social-historical narrative which puts its origins no earlier than the 1820s.

Pleasure and Guilt has been exhaustively researched and thoughtfully assembled, the perfect example of a book written as a labour of love rather than to garner RAE points. This undoubted strength sometimes becomes a weakness. Chard rarely dwells on any particular travel text, preferring to move briskly from one topos, trope or theme to the next, culling a number of examples at each stage. Her marshalling of evidence is authoritative, but at times one has the uncomfortable impression of hearing the rustle of index cards. One might also cavil at the fact that Chard has eight entries in her own bibliography -- more than any other writer, and consisting mainly of articles that represent earlier versions of chapters of *Pleasure and Guilt*. No other writer in the secondary bibliography, which includes some highly distinguished names, has more than two entries. Inevitably, this inflates her pre-eminence in the field and downgrades the contribution of other critics. One senses a certain resentment here, some statement about a life lived 'almost completely apart from academic institutions' and tainted by 'the desolate drudgery of part-time lecturing' (p. vii). *Pleasure and Guilt* is the vindication of the author's hard work and dedication over many years; it is a shame she has to protest her own cause too much, and in so doing distort the picture of modern travel writing studies, which is vigorous and expanding. All those with an interest in the literature of the Grand Tour are nonetheless in her debt for this elegant and accomplished book.

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John Wyatt, *Wordsworth's Poems of Travel, 1819-42: 'Such Sweet Wayfaring'*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999. Pp. 172 pages. hb #00. ISBN 0 333 74813 1.

John Wyatt's second book on Wordsworth finds its place amongst an increasing number of texts which, towards the end of the twentieth century, have begun to turn their attention to the little-read works of the older poet. This book declares itself as 'an attempt to reinstate Wordsworth's writing from 1819 onwards as a body of work which earns more than the passing glance and which does not deserve the occlusion of not being seen at all' (p. 2). The major principle underlying this attempt is that such works 'require reading in the sequence in which they were actually published' (p. 5). For Wyatt, volumes represent 'sets of creative endeavour' (p. 7) in which individual poems are to be read as 'one poetic exercise' (p. 15). Each chapter therefore works chronologically through the various collections, looking at relations between the poems and prose texts as they are placed together in their first published form. There is certainly some justification for looking holistically at the arrangement of works, and the relation of poetry to prose, within particular volumes of Wordsworth's writing. Wordsworth's description (in the Preface to *The Excursion*) of the 'Recluse' project as 'a gothic Church' in which *The Prelude* is 'the Anti-chapel' and earlier works are 'to be likened to the little Cells, Oratories and sepulchral Recesses, ordinarily included in those Edifices' clearly suggests that at the widest level the poet himself viewed all his work as 'one poetic exercise', as does his constant re-editing and re-working of poems throughout his life time.

The strengths of Wyatt's approach emerge most clearly where an unambiguous justification for it is provided by the poet himself. So, for example, in the Duddon volume of 1822, as Wyatt reminds us, Wordsworth himself deliberately follows the sonnets with extensive prose notes and 'The Topographical Description', stating that the latter is placed there: 'From a consciousness of its having been written in the same spirit which dictated several of the poems and from a belief that it will tend materially to alter them.' Of this statement Wyatt comments 'This last phrase . . . is a striking remark in the poet's interpretation of how a reader receives a set of poems in the context of other poems in proximity' (p. 31). Indeed it is, yet at such times one feels that Wyatt is content simply to point out such intertextual moments rather than to explore the significance of them, not only for Wordsworth's sense of himself as a poet, but also for the texts themselves. What does it mean to read the Duddon sonnets alone, without biographical and topographical information, and how does the presence of the latter alongside the former demand a re-assessment of the first reading? What is the relationship between poetry and prose here, and how does Wordsworth seek to manipulate it? These are questions which the poet explicitly raises in the original publication, and it is disappointing that Wyatt seems so reluctant to explore them in any detail.

One interesting aspect of Wordsworth as traveller in later life, which the book reminds us of, is the significance of Dorothy as literal and literary companion. Wyatt draws our attention to the existence of Dorothy's 'Recollections' written at the same time as Wordsworth composed his *Memorials of a Tour*, 1820 and comments that 'Her perceptions of Scotland from her journal of 1803 in particular are a living text in her brother's poems written almost thirty years later' (p 82). The importance of her presence becomes most poignant when she is no longer capable of travelling alongside her brother. When he sets off without her for Scotland in 1833, via the Isle of Man, Wyatt suggests that 'Her brother was impelled to follow the path described in her diary . . . the experiences recorded in her short 'Journal' of that visit were a

hidden determinant of Wordsworth's selection of the places he chose to address in the verses about the island' (p.103). The question of companionship on his journeys and the loss of Wordsworth's closest companion is an interesting one, as is the degree to which Dorothy's constant second (prose) perspective continued to feed into Wordsworth's own, allowing him to revisit a place twice over.

Wyatt does successfully remind us of important connections and re-evaluations to be gained from looking at texts in the context of their original published form -- as, for example, when he suggests that a political aspect to 'Yarrow Revisited' emerges when the poems are looked at in relation to 'The Postscript' originally published with them. However, the inevitable emphasis on connections between poems within a volume rather than the contents of such poems leaves the reader with a sense of having passed over a large number of works rather than having achieved any real engagement with any particular one. The problem with Wyatt's approach is that it, in itself, ends up being little more than a tour, a 'Sweet wayfaring', through a number of volumes. Not only the methodology but also the presentation of the chapters suggest that this book is itself best viewed as a 'reader's guide' (p. 5) through these poems. Ultimately, this book raises for the reader of the later Wordsworth the on-going question of how to respond to the sheer weight of material produced by the poet in his maturity, a question fiercely debated by the Victorians and won by Matthew Arnold's argument in favour of selection. Modern criticism seems, rightly, to be in favour of 'stretching the . . . canon' (138) and of looking with more care at the later Wordsworth. But we must surely also ask how far it can, or should, be stretched, and what is lost at the expense of the kind of inclusivity which this book propounds.

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Stanley Gardner, *The Tyger The Lamb and the Terrible Desart*. London: Cygnus Arts, 1999. Pp.264. £37.50. ISBN 1 900541 351.

William Blake: The Illuminated Books. London: The William Blake Trust/The Tate Gallery. Volume 1: Jerusalem, ed. Morton Paley. Pp.301, 105 illus. £20. ISBN 1 85437 260 2. Volume 2: Songs of Innocence, ed. Andrew Lincoln. Pp. 209, 66 illus. £15. ISBN 1 85437 261 0. Volume 3: The Early Illuminated Books, eds. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Pp. 286, 113 illus. £20. ISBN 1 85437 262 9. Volume 4: The Continental Prophecies, ed. D. W. Dörrbecker. Pp. 367, 77 illus. £20. ISBN 1 85437 263 7. Volume 5: Milton, A Poem, eds. Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Pp. 286, 71 illus. £18. ISBN 1 85437 264 5. Volume 6: The Urizen Books, ed. David Worrall. Pp. 231, 57 illus. ISBN 1 85437 265 3

Stanley Gardner's book, published posthumously, is divided into two parts: a historical survey of the contexts surrounding Songs of Innocence and of Experience followed by a facsimile of two editions of the Songs with commentary, the coloured version being copy I from the Widener Collection, Harvard University, and a black and white engraved version, copy B at the Houghton Library, also Harvard. The aim of the first part of *The Tyger, The Lamb and the Terrible Desart* is to chart the historic background of Blake's Songs, both the personal history of his biography and the social history of eighteenth-century London, drawing on Gilchrist, Malkin and Cunningham as well as other contemporary documents. With regard to Blake's biography, a great deal of material here fleshes out the bones of Bentley's Blake

Records and Gilchrist's Life, but where the book is more useful (and more stimulating) is in recording some of those 'minute particulars' which have revitalised Blake Studies in the UK in the past decade or so.

Gardner's own text does not burn with the political fire that most British historicists, tracing their descent from Thompson, have brought to Blake studies. If, as Helen Bruder has recently pointed out in her survey of Blake criticism from the eighties and nineties that begins *William Blake and the Daughters of Albion*, the Left has not succeeded in making Blake its own, then the past two decades have at least removed Blake from the wasteland of a politically vague post-modernist centre. In contrast to work conducted by Mee, Worrall and Thompson himself, *The Tyger, The Lamb and the Terrible Desert* seems to lack bite: indeed, in the opening chapters, comments such as 'William had chosen his parents well' appear nothing short of smug (p.7). Elsewhere, his discussion of the alienation of the poor, caused by repression in the years immediately following the French Revolution tends to diminish some of his claims for the radicalism of Blake's politics when he describes this as a Freudian neurosis, rather than a Marxist or post-Marxist state of ideological control. What makes this frustrating is that the repression he describes, so widespread, so mundane and trivial to the privileged but so affective of the poor (as in the substitution of schools of subordination for the liberal charity institutions that preceded them), is a real cause of pain.

For if Gardner lacks the teeth of the tyger, it is with his evocation of the lamb that the terrible desert of London becomes a vivid garden for a while. Gardner reminds us just how rural London was by today's standards: the nurses for the parish of St James, for example, were based in Wimbledon, and the dealings of the Blake family with them meant that it is not so unusual that a city man should have created such pastoral visions. 'Wimbledon Common rejoiced for him with the voices of children he knew. If the concept of Innocence took substance from reality, the matrix was here.' (p. 44)

In his descriptions of these blossoming lives in Wimbledon and King Street School Gardner, while never denying the terrible poverty that existed at the time, depicts with sensitivity a world of the 1780s where even the poorest could find pleasure. Lest the delights of innocence obscure the pains of experience, Gardner reminds us of incidental terrors, such as the Female Orphan Asylum, previously the Hercules Inn, where girls between nine and twelve years old were saved from prostitution, or how James Hanway's 1788 campaign to protect chimney sweeps was evaded by masters using their own children. In *Experience*, as Gardner writes, 'we move into the brick-fields, chapels, bedrooms, nurseries, ditches and secret gardens of peoples' lives.' (p.120)

Nonetheless, that *Experience* succeeds *Innocence* is not simply to deny the latter: a trend I have particularly noticed among students reading the Songs is that many students immediately fix upon one or two Songs of *Experience* as having some relevance, but nearly all – at least initially – are disenfranchised by the overtly Christian and mellifluous hymns of *Innocence*. The fact that a writer, however, who can envisage the tyger or the poison tree can also see the lamb and sunflower often indicates to at least some of them that there may be more to this childhood pastoral than they first give credit.

Hence Gardner's assertion that Blake's radicalism is greater even than that of Paine or Wollstonecraft, for he never distinguishes between class, but reacts against the alienation of mean-minded education by the upper and middle classes. By situating Blake's texts as flashes of light within the context of moralistic children's publishing and tracing the painful decay of public-minded education, Gardner reiterates that such

dreams of perfectibility are not to be dismissed, that every criminal and failure was an innocent child once: 'While it is unremarkable that Experience should be reflected so widely in the epic, as a reaction to unrelenting oppression, the sustaining influence of Innocence, given its tragic brevity, is another matter.' (p.151) This is the keynote of the book: that there was innocence in London, even if it was snuffed out by the reaction to revolution and the Napoleonic wars.

The publication of Blake's Illuminated Books by the William Blake Trust and the Tate Gallery between 1990 and 1995 marked the first opportunity for many readers to experience Blake's exceptional works as full colour reproductions. Prior facsimiles were largely accounted for by Erdman's affordable but mundane one-volume *The Illuminated Blake*, the standard reference text to accompany his edition of the Poetry and Prose, or the elaborate but rare and expensive Trianon Press editions of the illuminated works, which were gradually completed between 1949 and 1987, several of the texts being hand-coloured in a process that rivalled Blake's own printing methods in terms of expense and devotion.

The six titles of the series (originally five, but the Blake Trust and Tate Gallery were sensible enough to allow the initial plan to overrun when required) have recently been re-issued as paperback, and it may be said that the Trust has finally achieved its aim of making the Illuminated books accessible in high-quality reproductions.

Each volume contains an introduction to and commentary on the texts, which are reproduced as single page illustrations with a letterpress version on the facing page or, in the case of *Jerusalem* a separate section with notes. Although the entire set is handsomely presented, the series is not uniform in terms of its selections of original illuminated copies to reproduce. Indeed, this is a fundamental problem with the reproduction of Blake's illuminated corpus (one noted by several of the editors), that differences between each printed version, whether minute, such as printing errors, or significant, such as transposition of page sequences, can result in very different readings of those illuminated texts. As Joseph Viscomi's *Blake and the Idea of the Book* so vividly demonstrated, Blake scholars must pay careful attention to bibliographic detail which an apparently authoritative edition such as this may succeed in disguising.

In certain cases, the criteria for selecting a particular printed copy may be fairly self-evident. This is, for example, the case with volume 1 of the series, *Jerusalem*, edited by Morton Paley, of which only one complete coloured copy (E) was issued, the other four complete copies being monochrome. As the general editor of the series, David Bindman notes, the Mellon edition of *Jerusalem* was the obvious candidate. With the second volume, however, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, such a choice must be considerably more difficult. With nearly twenty-six copies of *Songs of Innocence* and over twenty combined copies of *Innocence and Experience*, selecting a definitive edition becomes extremely problematic, particularly as Blake frequently changed the orders of the songs, to such an extent that it can seriously affect interpretations of the *Songs* depending on whether, for example, a poem such as 'The School Boy' or 'The Voice of the Ancient Bard' is included in *Innocence* or *Experience* (as in the King's College version reproduced in volume two). While the editors are generally extremely sensitive to these bibliographical variations, pointing out most differences in notes, introductions and commentaries, it remains a fact that the unwary reader may feel that they have encountered the authoritative version simply by virtue of these titles being gathered together in this series. Ultimately, this will remain a problem until a facsimile collection is provided that reproduces all versions of Blake's illuminated

books, a reproduction unlikely to occur in expensive print but which may be achieved one day on the Internet-based Blake archive.

There is also a possible question regarding the selection of texts with regard to those most suitable for a scholarly audience and those that will be most appreciated by a wider audience. The reproductions are always of the highest quality and have generally been made of the finest copies, but in one case I must admit to being disappointed. In volume 4, *The Continental Prophecies*, edited by D. W. Dörrebecker, the version of *America: a Prophecy* that is reproduced is copy H from the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Copy H is a monochrome version as, Dörrebecker notes, were all the early versions of *America*, unlike the colour printed texts of *Europe* and *The Song of Los* also reproduced in this volume. The reason for Dörrebecker's selection is impeccable – including a monochrome edition enables the reader to appreciate some of Blake's calligraphic skill that is not always so clear in coloured copies, and he also wishes to indicate as clearly as possible any relations between those texts which were written and printed so close together. And yet, when returning to this particular text, it is the magnificently coloured copy M reproduced by Dover which I find more appealing.

Commentaries and notes to the texts are generally exceptional, although there is some variation across the titles. Morton Paley's exposition on *Jerusalem* continues the hermeneutic approach of such works as *The Continuing City*, an approach which seems somewhat less valuable to me than the cultural materialist critiques of editors such as David Worrall and Dörrebecker. Nonetheless, in every title the footnotes alone are worth the price for Blake scholars and the editors bring a wealth of contextual information to each text. Indeed, in at least one case, that of volume 4, *The Continental Prophecies*, the superb textual and contextual commentary threatens to swallow up the original plates, which is less of a problem for the Blake researcher but could intimidate more general readers.

Indeed, *William Blake: The Illuminated Books* offers a brief outline of who's who in Blake studies at the end of the twentieth century. As is to be expected, there is no single consistent theme running through each volume's explicatory material, but in the majority of cases the editors chosen have conducted important bibliographical work, reflecting the importance that the material text (whether literary or, as in David Bindman's case, artistic) has assumed in Blake criticism during the eighties and nineties. One thing that becomes increasingly frustrating upon returning to this edition of the *Illuminated Books*, however, is that references to other, non-illuminated works such as the *Notebook*, the *Blake-Varley Sketchbook* and, most important of all, *The Four Zoas*, indicates a significant limitation of this collection. It is, of course, appropriate that the Blake Trust and Tate Gallery should concentrate on publishing Blake's beautiful printed works, but other manuscripts and editions are now out of print and unlikely, in the near future, to be reissued.

The eminent Blake scholar and collector (and co-editor of two of these volumes), Robert Essick, has repeatedly advised serious researchers to return to Blake's original manuscripts. The importance of this was brought home to me when I encountered the *Blake-Varley sketchbook* in the Tate Gallery and realized that an assumption I had made about the relation of its images was simply wrong: the ability to view those manuscripts and printed works first hand, however, particularly when so many are held in American institutions, is not always possible. The *Tate Gallery/Blake Trust Illuminated Blake*, its acknowledged limitations aside, is thus an invaluable starting point for both the serious scholar and the general reader who has only previously encountered Blake as the printed, rather than illuminated, word.

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Michael O'Neill, ed. *Literature of the Romantic Period: A Bibliographical Guide* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. vii + 410. (US\$ [?]). ISBN: 0 19 871120 (hb); 0 19 871121 2 (pb).

Perhaps the most prominent question raised by the essays in this useful volume is whether or not the new historicist and gender-related approaches to Romanticism which have developed in the last two decades are likely further to increase their influence over work in this field. Most of the contributors can be arranged on one side or the other of these questions, though -- surprisingly, perhaps -- enthusiastic advocates of the newer contextual approaches are in a minority. Jerrold Hogle, for example, is notable for his confidence that 'the most important revelations in the immediate future of Shelley criticism are going to come from new and revived forms of historical - and cultural historical - study' (p. 133), albeit this view is echoed in Greg Kucich's sense that the 'increasingly urgent search for ways to evaluate Keatsian poetic formulations within materialist frames constitutes one of the strongest challenges for Keats critics' (p. 151). At the opposite end of the critical spectrum, David Fuller's essay on Blake criticism is sceptical about those studies which seek to displace the author's 'conscious beliefs' through reference to contextual or material factors, though enthusiastic both about Thompson's historical readings and about the important studies by Frye and Paley (pp. 30-32). Nicholas Roe is perhaps still more judicious in his treatment of the sometimes 'acrimonious' debate surrounding materialist readings of Wordsworth, particularly questioning 'the coercive tenor of some new historicist criticism' (p. 49). Nicola Trott intelligently predicts an increased conviction of Coleridge's being 'rescuable' from historicist and other 'detractors' (p. 70), highlighting the perhaps unique diversity and complexity of this author in discussions of criticism relating variously to individual poems, to specific areas of his prose writing, and to topics such as his political character and relationship to Wordsworth. Jennifer Breen interestingly questions recently-fashionable views on gender in Romanticism, suggesting that many female poets of the period may be valued as much for their historical interest as for the inherent qualities of their writing (pp. 183-5). Anne Mellor's claims as to the greater 'rationality' of female poets, she suggests, are principally due to the greater proximity of many of these authors (such as Hannah More) to eighteenth-century modes; and the same critic's influential view of women poets as focusing on domesticity and uninterested in the sublime is treated with similar scepticism (p. 186). Mellor's theories are also questioned by Pamela Clemit, who notes that the recently-dominant view of Frankenstein as a protest 'in the name of domesticity against the destructive effects of the Romantic heroic ideal' is likely to be substantially altered by forthcoming reinterpretations (p. 293). Michael Rossington highlights the extent to which interest even in Cowper has recently diminished by comparison with the attention devoted to 'recover[ing] the contemporary profile of poetry by women' (p. 195), while Fiona Stafford reminds us of how recently, in the history of Jane Austen criticism, she has come to be seen as expressing 'the conservative side in an active war of ideas', rather than as a realist or as a stylist skilled in the portrayal of convincing characters (pp. 252, 256). Like several other contributors, however, Stafford reserves judgement on the controversies she highlights, preferring to emphasize the diversity of critical approaches to this field. Michael O'Neill's opening survey of 'General Studies of the Romantic Period'

similarly notes the insights to be derived both from historicist readings and from those focusing on aesthetics or the history of ideas, while Andrew Nicholson is notably comprehensive in his survey of recent approaches to Byron -- including the 'historicist-cultural', the 'socialist-feminist', and the Bakhtinian, as well as the more canonical work of Gleckner and McGann -- finding much to admire in examples of several of these genres. P.M.S. Dawson's survey of Clare criticism is distinctive in appreciating new historicist approaches while eschewing the identification of Clare himself as a radical (pp. 171-2). Essays by Fiona Robertson, J.P. Donovan, and Susan Matthews seek to strengthen the growing recovery of authors as diverse as Scott, Peacock, Edgeworth, and Inchbald from the relative critical neglect into which their works had fallen by the 1970s, while Peter Garside usefully surveys the shifting political and psychological interpretations of the Gothic. Finally, Robert Morrison's article on 'Essayists', and John Whale's on 'Political Prose of the Romantic Period', will be of considerable value to researchers in a wide variety of areas.

In addition to providing helpful information on the most reliable texts, therefore, this volume not only reduces the problem of the impossibility of reading everything about Romanticism, but also -- through the combined authority of its contributors -- presents a message which many will find both surprising and reassuring: namely that far from approaching the limits of scholarly interest or ingenuity, Romantic studies remains a field of notable vigour and diversity, in which scholars of varying schools still have much to contribute to our understanding of the period.

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Peter J. Kitson and Debbie Lee, gen eds, *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period*. 8 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999. ISBN 1 85196 513 0. Pp. 3,200 pp. £595.00.

One important way scholarship on the romantic movement has been transformed in the past five years has been in relation to 'race' theory and related matters such as abolitionism. This extensive collection of reprinted texts, with introductions, notes, and bibliographies, is both a product of such scholarship and a stimulus to new work.

It should be emphasized at the outset that these are 'Writings in the British Romantic Period.' The selection is largely confined to the period 1770-1840. Apart from a 1679 medical work the earliest text reproduced here is from 1742; the latest, from 1840.

The bulk of selections fall between 1770 and 1830. A set of volumes representing the entire history of resistance to transatlantic slavery would have to begin much earlier, around 1620 if not before, and continue to at least the last decades of the nineteenth century. To an historian of early modern Britain, the very idea of a collection of anti-slavery writings from the 'romantic period' might seem rather odd.

This potential criticism has been well anticipated by Peter Kitson and Debbie Lee, who point out that 'The anti-slavery movement in Britain . . . coincided with the rise of print culture and a middle-class reading public' (1, p. x), which is to say, with the rise of the romantic movement. The claim appears in slightly different form in volume 2: 'The Romantic Period in English literature coincided with the time when the British Atlantic slave trade was at its height' (2, p. ix). To study the romantic movement without being aware of the slave trade is to leave out of account a formative contemporary debate that had crucial implications for Britons' sense of themselves, in politics, commerce, morals, and religion. It was, as Peter Kitson says, a

long-running and 'ferocious' debate (2, p. xi) that must have impinged on the consciousness of everyone who read a newspaper, heard a sermon, or was in the smallest degree politically aware.

There is far more at stake here than can be subsumed under the concept of 'background' to the 'literature,' however. What these volumes singly and cumulatively indicate is that the existence of the slave trade, and the debate over slavery, forced many, perhaps most, writers of the time either to confront or somehow evade their sense of responsibility towards fellow human beings. To cite just one of the abolitionists' favourite themes, if you put sugar in your tea you were complicit in a trade sustained by the annual transportation of between 25,000 and 50,000 Africans from West Africa to America and the West Indies, under conditions that were unimaginably horrific. The historian David Brion Davis has argued that the campaign against slavery was a turning-point in the development of a modern humanitarian ethic and in 'man's image of himself' (2, p. xi). From Samuel Johnson to L.E.L., writers not only recorded the social and economic impact of the plantation system on British commerce but reflected on the ethical issues that the institution of slavery raised.

The first volume of the collection is devoted to 'Black Writers.' As editors Sukhdev Sandhu and David Dabydeen admit, placing these writers at the beginning of the collection reflects a modern sense of what is appropriate rather than any claim that Black writers made a crucial contribution, in political terms, to the abolitionist cause (1, pp. 1-li). They begin with the work that 'inaugurates black British literature' (1, p. 1), Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's *Narrative* (printed complete). It also includes selections or complete texts from Cugoana, Equiano, Prince, Wheatley, and four others. The very existence of writings of which Black men and women claimed authorship was controversial, as the editors make clear in their lucid introduction. It was one thing for Africans in Britain to be treasured as exotic domestic servants, or even to make a living as pugilists or entertainers; it was quite another for an African to write, since the century 'doubted whether black people possessed the intellectual and creative faculties required to produce literature' (1, p. xlviii). If it could be proved that they could write, one of the main ideological underpinnings of slavery, the theory of African racial inferiority, would be refuted. Hence the frequent accusation, when a life narrative, poem, or tract by a Black writer was published, that its author could not really have written it. Gronniosaw, Jea, Wedderburn and others did benefit from the help of amanuenses, but most modern readers would be unlikely to feel this disqualified them from the title of 'author.' The more interesting point here, really, is how closely the language of Black abolitionists was intertwined with, and dependent on, that of their white colleagues. Sandhu and Dabydeen warn that it would be a mistake to read these texts as evidence of an eighteenth-century Black sensibility -- let alone as the unmediated voices of early, marginalised Afro-British activists.

The second volume, edited by Peter Kitson, contains a representative selection of documents from the debate on abolition of the slave trade, from 1784 (the Anglican priest and surgeon James Ramsay's *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves*) to 1808 (S.T. Coleridge's review of Clarkson's *History*). Pro-slavery writers are also represented. Volume 3 (edited by Debbie Lee), devoted to the emancipation debate of the 1820s, includes pamphlets and speeches by George Canning, Thomas Clarkson, John Hampden, James Stephen, and William Wilberforce. The discourse of the emancipation debate, as represented here, is less dramatic, less stocked with horrifying images, than the abolition debate, but in some ways probes more deeply into ideological assumptions about personhood and human

rights. As Clarkson points out in *Thoughts on . . . Improving the Condition of . . . Slaves*, 'Abolition could be effected immediately, and with . . . no danger. Emancipation, on the other hand, appeared to be rather a work of time. It was beset too with many difficulties, which required deep consideration, and which, if not treated with great caution and prudence, threatened the most alarming results' (III, p. 85). It is not difficult to understand what these alarming results might be, from the point of view of liberal middle-class humanitarians like Clarkson: having gained their freedom, African men and women in the West Indies and other British possessions might refuse to become good Christian citizens of the empire that had been envisioned by Edmund Burke, and was to play so large a role in British foreign and domestic policy in the nineteenth century. Already there was the example of Haiti. The fear of revolution and the fear that British paternalism would be rejected drove Wilberforce and other advocates of emancipation to stress the need for 'caution and prudence,' and for Christian instruction to be administered immediately to all slaves. Emancipation also raised the question of compensation to be paid to slave-owners. Wilberforce welcomed the news that the British Parliament had voted twenty million pounds to compensate slave-owners, a clear example of how quickly class interests overrode philanthropic ideals.

Volumes 4, 5, and 6 (edited by Alan Richardson, Jeffrey N. Cox, and Srinivas Aravamudan, respectively) contain selections of the verse, prose fiction, and drama of the period. With a few minor exceptions these works of imaginative literature devoted to the cause of abolition make depressing reading. Philanthropic indignation does not guarantee literary brilliance. Reading these selections, with their repetitive allusions to 'the Sable race,' 'Afric's sorrows,' the 'tortur'd bosoms' of 'Afric's sons,' not to mention plays with Black characters who say things like 'O Massa--You make poor black free,' one wonders whether there was not a massive, collective failure of imagination here; whether British writers were not so thrilled with the opportunity to exploit the emotive, tear-jerking possibilities of such a subject -- and serve a good cause into the bargain -- that they abandoned every attempt at self-criticism. 'Pity for Poor Africans' (as Cowper entitled one of his poems) was self-evidently good and noble. Some more critical writers attacked the self-indulgence of such writing, and its complacent readers weeping genteel tears at the latest 'Negro's Complaint' or 'Slave's Lament' while stirring more sugar into their tea, but calls to a more politicized response seem to have had little effect on the tide of sentimental protest. Impersonating the 'suffering Negro,' the literary equivalent of donning blackface for a part in a long-running melodrama, was too attractive and marketable a ploy for white writers to give up. The very few African writers in England who might have mocked this literary fashion were either too insecure to challenge it, or (more likely) were aware that they appealed to the same audience and similar sentiments.

This is not to deny the historical significance of anti-slavery drama, fiction, and poetry in British literature 1770-1840. These volumes point the way to a more ambitious and complex project, however. That project has to do precisely with the literature that does not openly refer to the sufferings of the poor Negro, that may not even mention Africa or the slave trade at all, but that nevertheless betrays, in the way it constructs its models of guilt, heroism, danger, wealth, or Englishness, a sense of Britain's complicity in a genocidal but extremely lucrative trade; an undercurrent of defensive arrogance, fear, shame, or confusion.

Toni Morrison has posited a 'black presence' at the core of American literature, the Euro-American construction of Africans and 'blackness.' Perhaps, she suggests, the vaunted characteristics of American literature are actually 'responses to a dark,

abiding, signing Africanist presence.' In its 'startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts . . . one can see that a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to [writers'] sense of Americanness' (*Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* [New York: Vintage, 1992] pp. 5-6). In Britain after 1772 there was no resident slave population, as there continued to be in the United States, but Britons were obviously aware of slavery and the close national connections with it. The most important question that Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation raises may be how deeply British literature carries what Morrison calls the 'virus' of an 'Africanist' presence. In this respect the most interesting volumes are possibly the last two, *Medicine and the West Indian Slave Trade* (edited by Alan Bewell) and *Theories of Race* (edited by Peter Kitson). Such critics as John Barrell, Nigel Leask and Charles Rzepka have already traced in *De Quincey* the nexus of imperial anxieties coded in metaphors of infection, fever, and delirium; *De Quincey's* own plantation connections return to haunt him. From *The Monk* to *Jane Eyre*, romantic gothicism has links to plantation wealth, plantation culture, and the denials they engendered. If the abolitionist campaign instigated the long journey towards a new humanitarian ethic, then the 'cultural myths' (7, p. xiii) surrounding racial difference, pathology, and medicine, as well as the medical advances that ultimately emerged from this genocidal trade, also changed British national identity in ways that have yet to be fully explored.

Kitson and Lee's eight volumes put some of the most important documents in this area within the reach of smaller libraries. As a teaching resource and a critically suggestive compilation opening new perspectives on the romantic movement, this collection will quickly prove its value.

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The Examiner 1813-1817. 5 Vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1997. £550. Set ISBN: 1 85196 433 9.

This set of facsimile reprints, following the initial set covering 1808-1812, includes many items of particular interest: Leigh Hunt's article introducing Shelley, Reynolds, and Keats as 'The Young Poets', his review of Keats's *Poems* of 1817, and several poems by Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Hunt himself. One of the most prominent developments is the growing presence of Hazlitt after his break with *The Champion* in 1815.

In 1813 Hunt was imprisoned for a libel on the Prince of Wales, inevitably the subject of the year's opening editorials, and had to relinquish the dramatic criticism to Thomas Barnes. On regaining his liberty in 1815 he found the job too demanding and Hazlitt, who had marked his ambition with a combative letter on the character of Iago, took over. Hazlitt expanded his contributions in the 'Round Table' series and started the 'Literary Notices' section with *éclat*, supplying the 'manuscript' line which he claimed Coleridge had omitted from the published 'Christabel'. These sections proved hospitable to Hazlitt's wider interests. The theatrical notices could include a criticism of Schlegel. The 'theatrical' account of *Coriolanus* originally included a reference to Henry Hunt's Spa Fields reform meeting in 1817, cut in *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. The 'Round Table' could become a forum for philosophical argument about the claims of Hobbes as the founder of the 'new' philosophy and thoughts on 'Gusto' in art. He further trespassed on the preserve of the paper's art

critic Richard Hunt by reviewing exhibition catalogues in the Literary Notices. Hazlitt's political views inevitably dominated his treatment as he took publications such as Southey's Letter to William Smith as the opportunity for extended vituperation. Even more controversial political views were aired in articles signed XYZ or pseudonymous letters. One of the latter supplemented his review of Coleridge's first Lay Sermon with the account of his preaching in 1798 later included in 'My first Acquaintance with Poets'.

Hazlitt's prominence must have focused the dissatisfaction with the paper's political views which has been seen as responsible for the relative decline of circulation after Waterloo. He seems, however, to have received editorial approval. In 1816 the 'Literary Notices' section replaces Hunt's political editorial in pride of first place as a vehicle for Hazlitt's attack on The Times and all it stood for. In this period extracts from periodicals such as the Courier and The Times, formerly left unannotated, are often presented with ironic editorial comment. Hunt's championing of reform and retrenchment on an individual basis, his violent criticisms of militarism, sinecurists and 'seat-sellers', and his depiction of a 'reform or revolution' crisis in Britain and Europe become repetitive. Repeated illustrations of 'Fellow creatures suffered to die for want' must have made uncomfortable reading. In 1813 Hunt's political criticism had been focused more directly, if with circumspection, on the character of the Regent. The Prince's treatment of his wife and daughter provided a context in which upholding the traditional responsibilities of family life constituted a political position. Hunt contributed to the radicals' hopeful interest in Princess Charlotte as the heir to the throne and addressed a series of articles to her education. On her death in 1817 he refused to participate in the nation's protracted mourning and counterpointed the event with the execution of Brandreth, Ludlam, and Turner. Though he did not go as far as to quote Paine's remark about pitying the plumage and forgetting the dying bird as Shelley did in his unpublished 'Address' on the subject, Hunt obviously invited adverse public reaction.

The increasing radicalism of the paper and its expanded literary and philosophical interests were all of a piece to Hunt. Surveying the European scene in 1816 he came to the conclusion that the whole intellectual and artistic world of Europe worthy of the name was inimical to the ruling spirit of its politics (9, pp. 66-7). In his appeals for reform he invokes an ecumenical English tradition of art and feeling as well as the customary republican heroes, Chaucer and even Wordsworth and Coleridge as well as Sydney, Milton, and Bentham. As in Shelley's less nationalistic saving tradition, not only poetry but the 'poetry of life' is enlisted:

There is not a youth who walks out of doors with a book, not a single scholar who has got beyond his syntax, not a reader of newspapers or reviews, not an individual, young or old, who loves to go to the theatre and hear SHAKESPEARE, not an admirer of the beauties of nature, or of any thing truly ornamental, not a reader of POPE, of ADDISON, of STEELE, of BYRON, or CAMPBELL, or MOORE, or WORDSWORTH, or SPENSER, - not a lover who ever wrote a verse, nor even a lady who ever read one, - that ought not to blush at seeing a nation, renowned for every species of literature and greatness governed against its will by a junto who neither feel what is English, nor can even talk it.

(10, p. 146)

Inevitably one looks for influence and shared ideas, and the wider availability of these volumes will certainly lead to new connections and further study of acknowledged instances. Keats's sonnet on Kosciusko might have been suggested by

an anecdote of the latter's effect on the liberating Russian troops extracted from a work by Helen Maria Williams. Wordsworth's sonnet to Haydon follows Haydon's trenchant defence of the artistic value of the Elgin Marbles. Though he took some time to realize the extent of Napoleon's Russian catastrophe, Hunt compared it to the destruction of Sennacherib. Perhaps this contributed to Byron's poems fitting Napoleon into Biblical contexts.

The reproduction of the text has been computer-enhanced and illegible pages supplied from other copies. Though superior to microfilm versions, the quality is still very variable, mostly due to reasons of economy acknowledged in the original. It was printed on poor paper and the type deteriorated rapidly. In 1813 Hunt promised new type for the new year but announced that extracts from other sources would be printed in a smaller font. It is not easy reading, but every page is legible - at least with the aid of a magnifying glass. It is an immensely valuable achievement to have saved this indispensable record from decay. Now that the published volumes cover all the years of Hunt's editorship to 1822 we can expect new studies of his work. Every institution where Romanticism is studied seriously should possess this work.

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John Mullan, gen ed., *Lives of the Great Romantics III: Godwin, Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley by their Contemporaries. Volume 1: Godwin, ed. Pamela Clemit, pp. xlv + 327; Volume 2: Wollstonecraft, ed. Harriet Jump, pp. xxxvi + 381; Volume 3: Mary Shelley, ed. Betty T. Bennett, pp. xxxix + 206. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999. #225. ISBN 1 85196 5122 (set).*

The third set in the *Lives of the Great Romantics* will probably prove the most useful of the volumes published so far. The biographical items collected in these volumes are not as familiar as some of those included in the previous editions, which were all concerned with the canonical Romantic writers (Walter Scott standing, in at this stage, for William Blake). Unusual for such collections is the absence of a General Introduction by the overall editor of the edition. Mullan himself was the editor of the volume on Shelley in the first series of the *Lives*. Thus, the reader of the volumes has to construct for him or herself the rationale for the series. It is clear that the first two sets of this edition (with the possible exception of Scott) all feature 'Great Romantics' in the sense that they cover the major canonical figures of the period. Many critics of the writing of the period will, of course, be unhappy with both terms and even more so with their combination, nevertheless it is an identifiable label for the subjects of the edition, although some space whereby the problematics of the term are explored would be welcome. It is not, however, immediately obvious in what sense of the term Godwin, Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley are to be regarded as 'Great Romantics'. Probably most critics would place William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft as Enlightenment writers, opposed to the coming trends of Romanticism. Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey famously defined their own aesthetic and political beliefs in opposition to Godwin. Mary Shelley's relationship to Romanticism is much more difficult to define. Although central to the second generation of Romantic writers, some critics have often found her writing to be antithetical and critical of some of the main tenets espoused by Percy Shelley and Byron. Mary Shelley's status as a canonical Romantic writer (a status confirmed in Pickering and Chatto's excellent edition of her novels) is a much more belated affair. Though it is a claim that Betty Bennett argues for strenuously and authoritatively in her introduction to the third

volume in this set.

Placing this cavil aside and accepting the title as a flag of convenience under which an array of important and useful biographical accounts of important period writers may be assembled, this three-volume set is extremely welcome. It has a more collaborative feel than the previous two sets. Obviously this is partially because its three subjects constitute a literary family, and the reception of one figure obviously clearly impacts on the others. More so than this, Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798) (extracts printed in volume 2) was crucial in establishing an influential view of Mary Wollstonecraft, and Mary Shelley herself was important in bequeathing to the later nineteenth century the image that would represent her parents. The volume on William Godwin, edited by Pamela Clemit, makes the case for its subject as a powerful intellectual, whose work clearly influenced the 'Great Romantics'. Deprived of a full-length biographical study until Charles Kegan Paul's *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries of 1876*, Godwin's controversial and lengthy career was subject to a number of competing views. Most valuable is Clemit's transcription and publication of passages from Mary Shelley's 'Life of William Godwin', the fragmentary remains of the first, abortive attempt to provide an authorized biography. Published for the first time, these selections present Godwin, not as the isolated individual, but as one of the central figures of an intellectual circle. Her father emerges from these passages as a warm and social personality whose intellectual vision of social and political change is essentially moderate. The figure of the isolated and enthusiastic rationalist is not maintained by the other selections. They range from the fictional, the sympathetic, and the impersonal to the hostile. Included are several political accounts from radicals, such as Joseph Gerrald and John Binns. Binns, an Irish radical, records how Godwin and Holcroft proved to be the most 'diffuse and tiresome of speakers' for whom, when they spoke, it was necessary to utilise a 'fifteen minute glass'. Binns adds that he never remembered the glasses been turned for any who rise to speak, save Godwin and Holcroft (1, p. 165). Other accounts of Godwin by Francis Place and John Thelwall, radicals who both knew Godwin well, might have been included. Perhaps also hostile political comments by Sir James Macintosh and Samuel might have found a place. Clemit provides an excellent and concise introduction, surveying Godwin's career and discriminating between the multiple views of her subject. She also provides detailed and scholarly headnotes to each selection packed with fascinating information. The headnote for Sir G. S. Mackenzie's phrenological discussion of Godwin's head, for instance, contains a brief resume the ideas of the 'science' and Godwin's own views of it.

Harriet Jump's selection of biographical accounts of Mary Wollstonecraft (the largest volume in the set) presents an equally problematic 'Great Romantic'. Wollstonecraft suffered even more acutely from the great silence that afflicted Godwin's life and work until Sir Percy Florence Shelley and his wife Lady Jane commissioned Charles Kegan Paul to write his sympathetic biography. This volume is thus unusual for the series because of the paucity of contemporary accounts of its subject. To blame for this state of affairs, of course, was Godwin's total misjudgement of the sensibilities of the reading public when confronted by his touching but frank *Memoirs* (1798). Jump's introduction shows how it was not until the publication of the revelations about Wollstonecraft's private life, contained in the *Memoirs*, that Wollstonecraft's reputation as sexually voracious atheist became established, preventing friends from publishing their biographical information and recollections. Jump provides a list of associates who, sadly, did not provide such information, though it would have been

interesting if they had. It was also not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that Wollstonecraft's status as a feminist icon was confirmed. Most of the comments about Wollstonecraft are therefore from people who knew her by repute, and Jump prints several extracts from the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and satirical writing, such as Richard Polwhele's *The Unsex'd Females* (1798). The longest extract is from Godwin's *Memoirs* which is followed by an extremely useful selection of reviews of the work from the periodical press. As the *Memoir* is printed, like all the extracts in facsimile, its large typeface takes up a great deal of space. Perhaps a resetting of this text would have allowed for the inclusion of the text in its entirety.

The final, and slimmest, volume in this set is Betty T. Bennett's edition of accounts of the life of Mary Shelley. Bennett points out that Mary Shelley was also the subject of her son and daughter-in-law's to re-make the image of the Godwin-Shelley circle, de-politicising her work and reducing her to the status of her husband's help-mate, a strategy seen in George Gillifan's account of her in his 'Female Authors' series for Tait's *Edinburgh Magazine*. Bennett expertly sketches in her introduction, headnotes and selections, the conduct of the biographical wars over Percy Shelley in accounts by Trelawny, Leigh Hunt, Hogg, Medwin and others, wars in which Mary's reputation served as a pawn in the aggrandizement of the biographers own role. For Bennett, Shelley remains the 'daring Romantic, committed to a socio-political reform predicated on universal love rather than power' (3, p. xx), a figure that the various accounts collected in her volume attempt to bowdlerize and soften. Taken together these three volumes are an excellent selection of primary materials for students interested in the Godwin-Shelley circle. They are impeccably edited by three scholars who possess a wealth of knowledge about their particular subjects.

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Robert Bloomfield, *Selected Poems*, ed. John Goodridge and John Lucas, with an introduction by John Lucas. Nottingham: Trent Editions, 1998. Pp. xxv+140. Pb. #7.99. ISBN 0 905 48894 6.

To the poetry-reading public of the first decade of the nineteenth century, the year 1798 was notable for the emergence of a highly significant new nature poet, a provincial writer who was preoccupied with the experience of the rural poor, a poet notable for endorsing the notion of 'simplicity' and for his powerful descriptions of natural scenery. For 1798 saw the composition of Robert Bloomfield's *The Farmer's Boy: A Rural Poem*. *The Farmer's Boy*, completed in April 1798, was published in 1800. It was an immediate best seller; as the DNB notes, 'The success of the "Farmer's Boy" was remarkable; twenty-six thousand copies, it is estimated, were sold in less than three years'. Perhaps it is not entirely fanciful to speculate that some of the dissatisfaction with the 'public' evident in Wordsworth's critical writings was motivated by that body's preference for Bloomfield's nature poetry (which one might characterize as the matter of Thomson in the manner of Pope) over the poetical innovations of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Indeed in a review of the poem for April 1800, the *New London Review*'s saw the it as epoch making, in terms which the modern reader would reserve for Wordsworth. Bloomfield is notable for his emphasis upon 'primitive simplicity': In short, ... *THE FARMER'S BOY* may be looked upon as a new model of genuine pastoral'. This is not an opinion which many twentieth-century readers have shared, and as a consequence of the canonical peripeteia which has

overtaken the poetry of the early nineteenth century and our preoccupation with addressing Romanticism as the period's central literary formation, Bloomfield's 'genuine pastoral' has tended to be forgotten. However, over the last few years there has been a welcome critical reassessment of Bloomfield, a reassessment in which John Goodridge and John Lucas have featured largely. Given this, it was high time that an accessible and scholarly selection from the poet's work was made available. Such an edition has been a long time coming and Goodridge and Lucas are to be highly praised for delivering one, and for delivering it so well.

Selected Poems is a judicious, very well-priced and fairly generous selection from Bloomfield, and one which is scrupulously edited. Organized chronologically, the edition offers a representative selection, ranging from *The Farmer's Boy* (which I am pleased to say is included complete), *Rural Tales* (1802) and *Wild Flowers* (1806), through to extracts from the posthumously published *Remains* (1824). For me, the revelations come in late Bloomfield, the absorbing *May Day with the Muses* most particularly. The text of the selections is accurate and well set (if a little cramped, to the point where it often reaches the page foot). I welcome the decision to include representative cuts (though many of these -- at least in my copy -- are rather murkily reproduced). It is also good to have so much of Bloomfield's prose included.

However, I would argue, against the editors, that it might have been useful to have included representative extracts from Capel Lofft's prefatory material to the first edition of *The Farmer's Boy*. Whilst I share the editors' (and indeed Bloomfield's) queasiness about the patronising and intrusive nature of Lofft's interventions, they are vital to an understanding of the poet's contemporary significance, given that they were crucial to his early reception and, indeed, to Vernor and Hood's accomplished marketing of the Suffolk 'peasant poet'.

This edition is furnished with an impressive introduction by John Lucas: clear, well-judged and wearing its erudition lightly. I would endorse Lucas's argument that 'we cannot hope properly to understand that historical period which is habitually called Romanticism if we do not pay attention to the works of Robert Bloomfield'.

However, it is rather a pity that this is the introduction's final sentence and that Lucas nowhere develops the theme. Instead, he confines himself to dwelling on the particulars of Bloomfield's work and, taken on those terms, his readings of individual poems are exemplary. Lucas is also strong on the social resonance of Bloomfield's work, and, as one might expect, the poet's relationship to Clare. I particularly enjoyed the comparatively extended discussion of *May Day with the Muses* (though, to carp, it is odd that the introduction uses *May-Day* rather than the *May Day* uniformly given elsewhere in the edition). I have one or two quibbles. Though both use tetrameters, it seems unlikely to me that Dyer's curtailed trochaics in 'Grongar Hill' provided the metrical model for Bloomfield's in *The Banks of Wye*. And one might dispute Lucas's opening sentence, 'Robert Bloomfield's fame died before he did', given that the poet (as Lucas himself later points out) was republished throughout much of the nineteenth century. Indeed, nearly two decades after Bloomfield's death, John Wilson could declare that *The Farmer's Boy* is a wonderful poem -- and will live in the poetry of England'. But these are minor issues; Goodridge and Lucas have done an excellent job in bringing *The Farmer's Boy*, and other key works of Bloomfield, back to life and it is to be hoped that their selection will quickly prompt a full scholarly edition of the poet. In the meantime, this is a most welcome volume. Though I dare say that Bloomfield's sales in 2000 will not rival those of 1800, I would urge all BARS members to avail themselves of this book.

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