

Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. Pp. x + 424. hb £42.50 (\$59), pb £14.95. ISBN 0 8223 2283 8, 0 8223 2315 X.

An unusually ambitious book, *Tropicopolitans* makes for a challenging, difficult, and uneven read. Often brilliant and sometimes opaque, Aravamudan's study of colonialism and agency reexamines the British literary tradition from the Glorious Revolution through the establishment of Haitian independence. Both 'British' and 'literary tradition', however, are shown to be anything but self-evident terms, as canonical texts by English and Irish writers are placed into critical dialogue with slave narratives and travel journals, French Enlightenment critiques of New World slavery and New World responses, polemics on the disastrous Sierra Leone scheme and letters from the 'liberated' slaves forcibly resettled there. 'Tropicopolitan', a term Aravamudan slyly appropriates from botany, carries a double valence throughout the study. As a counterweight to 'metropolitan' and 'cosmopolitan', the term seeks to subvert the center/periphery binary that informs even some very good work on literature and colonialism – Saree Makdisi's *Romanticism and Imperialism* is a case in point – by reasserting the crucial role of the 'tropics' in forming British culture in the long eighteenth-century, and of the 'tropicopolitan' individuals – like Olaudah Equiano, Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Sierra Leone settlers – whose acts and voices at once challenge and extend notions like Britishness, Enlightenment, and freedom. Aravamudan simultaneously plays (or tropes?) on the rhetorical sense of 'tropical', attending to the ways that colonial subjects figure in an array of fictional texts, from Behn's *Oroonoko* to Wordsworth's sonnet on Toussaint. The studied ambiguity of his key term gives Aravamudan a good deal of critical flexibility, making for a book that is full of interpretive turns and twists, entertaining, surprising, and dense. Added to the crafty slipperiness of his critical terminology is Aravamudan's exemplary sense of the 'messy' character of the 'legacies of empire', which do not always clearly belong either to the hegemonic or oppositional, the hybrid or the authentic, but can reveal facets of each (p. 14).

Aravamudan describes his main task as 'interpreting a series of texts concerned with colonialist representation and anticolonial agency within the eighteenth-century literary corpus'. (p. 12). But Aravamudan is often no less concerned with the recent history of interpretation of those texts than with the literary works themselves. His provocative chapter on *Oroonoko*, for example, includes a trenchant critique of the 'veritable oroonokoism' practiced by recent critics and anthologists of the period (p. 29). In accusing his fellow critics of indulging in an 'oroonokoist feeding frenzy', however, Aravamudan seems to ignore how recently it was that working on a colonialist text by a relatively obscure woman writer could be an act of professional courage rather than simply riding a wave of critical commodification (p. 31). Aravamudan's reading of Montagu's 'Turkish Embassy Letters', one of the best chapters in the book, more deftly opposes the 'monolithic interpretation of orientalism' practiced by some earlier critics (p. 159), and discloses a complex movement from 'relativization' through 'idealization' to 'reaggregation' at work in Montagu's text (p. 161). Other chapters shift the focus from recently rediscovered writers like Behn and Montagu to chestnuts of the old eighteenth-century canon like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Addison's *Cato*, and Johnson's *Rasselas*. Some of these readings strain to make the text in question relevant to Aravamudan's larger enterprise; *Rasselas*, for one, has less to do with issues of colonialism and empire than Aravamudan would like, and a good deal of overinterpretation is the result.

The chapters on Equiano and Toussaint at the end of the book, on the other hand, showcase Aravamudan's considerable interpretive skills at their finest. Making good on his claim to 'identify the institutions and reading practices' that account for the shifting 'political values' of the texts studied – or ignored – by scholars of the period (pp. 14-15), Aravamudan analyzes both the dynamics of literacy enacted in Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, and the dynamics of literariness that account for its rapid canonization over the past decade or so. In his intricate reading of Raynal's

Histoire des deux Indes in relation to Toussaint, and especially to Toussaint's likely appropriation of the famous 'Black Spartacus' passage, Aravamudan powerfully opposes the tendency to reduce the 'subaltern' to an impotent muteness, arguing instead for greater attention to the 'metaliteracy' represented by 'tropicopolitans' like Equiano and Toussaint (p. 314). If Aravamudan's evident desire to render up a 'postcolonial eighteenth century' leads him occasionally to overreach, his analysis is at its most useful and inspiring when it spills over into the Romantic era, offering some of the most weighty and revealing readings of Equiano, the Sierra Leone affair, and the cultural politics of the Haitian revolution to date.

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Jerome Christensen, *Romanticism at the End of History*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp 236. £35. ISBN 0 801 86319 8.

Jerome Christensen, sometime pupil of M.H. Abrams but assiduously conversant in all serious emergent critical idioms, has written a brilliant book as timely and intellectually demanding as one would expect. Historicists will not like it, he believes, but he thinks of himself as writing after the capstone has been set on historicist criticism by such as James Chandler. The eponymous provocation Christensen offers historicists recalls Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama, no longer the latest thing he tried to define himself as necessarily being, is, ironically, Christensen's historical source for postmodern samenesses of all sorts, from marxisant suspensions of narrative to the new, universal, neo-liberal story told by pragmatists and globalists. Christensen's persuasion by this world-picture is, however, tempered by his persistent commitment to romanticism. More redolent of Stanley Cavell, his romanticism is less a period of study, more the writing of a salutary scepticism, 'a conspiracy against the given'.

Driven by the engine of anachronism, Christensen's romanticism aligns the accidental and the radical to produce an exemplary sort of historical unaccountability. The unanswerability of romantic discursive contrivance replaces the familiar imaginative alternative to reality, ritually denounced as an idealist sublimation from McGann's *The Romantic Ideology* onwards, with a new reality we can recognise as virtual, or materialistic on its own terms. Romantic invention now marks a pre-political realm with a sometimes knowing, sometimes unconscious interjection of the demotic, unmanageable sources of existing political agenda. The romantic exposes the artifice by which social aspiration is controlled and, in unashamedly liberal fashion, it hopes for the ultimate compatibility of the currently Cain-like energies thus uncovered and disciplined in literary discourse.

Christensen concentrates on the forms of social cognisance showing through romantic writing at those moments when the historical engine is apparently idling, declutched from what had until that moment been an entirely defining purpose. His main instances are the Peace of Amiens of 1802 and the post-Napoleonic settlement. Prior to and as if preparing to exploit them, are times of recantation. He has Wordsworth colour in what he cannot read in his contemporary circumstances. In Book Ten of *The Prelude*, his crossing of the Place de la Carrousel, scene of the September massacres, blacks it out, producing an icon of the unmanageable Revolutionary machine, a depiction confessing its own inability to square this circle. Such incapacity to represent does not deny history, but registers experience of it, the more historical for being incapable of externalising it in story. Christensen cites Jameson, here, as source of this escape from Hegel, although there were plenty of contemporary anti-Hegelian wordings of it at the time in Germany. Christensen becomes comparably involved in the rhetoric of Coleridge's autobiographical searches for a self-apostrophe whose immediacy will escape the presiding narratives of Rousseauvian Revolution and Burkean counter-Revolution. In this light, Coleridge's plagiarisms and his increasing indigence in his

relations with Wordsworth can be re-read as productive of a uniquely expressive cadence, at once a disabling falling-off and a poignantly successful music.

Christensen reviews the first *Edinburgh Review*, looking for unorthodox civilities reflecting the temporary abeyance in 1802 of the dominant historical mission against Boney. Within the *Edinburgh's* rhetoric, he moves easily between the imaginary community implied by, *pace* Linda Colley, the recently successful establishment of a British nationalism capable of withstanding Revolutionary threats, to the community of credit enforced by suspension of the gold standard in 1797, to the tacit valuing of common affect in that first number's attack on the Lakers in a review of Southey's *Thalaba*. These contradictory allegiances give Christensen the historical register, as opposed to consistent narrative, that he wants. Elsewhere his desire to see in romantic writing the anachronistic, post-historical colour of experience leads him to readings that are self-confessedly paranoid, and which find everywhere signs allegorical once more of the alternative to historical narrative Christensen believes symptomatic of the Peace of Amiens. Coleridge's story of the Maid of Buttermere is thus destroyed by puns until a new 'hope', entirely different from the seducer of that name, sort of emerges.

Scott's *Waverley* though, is Christensen's paradigm for re-inventing the common world. The novel perpetrates a kind of bureaucratic operation by which the effect of teaching is to make us think we knew the Hanoverian lesson all along. Scott institutes a vocabulary of 'real history' once the Jacobite narrative has been recounted, but this telling historical 'economy' was there all along, conditioning his Jacobite romance, an heraldic style to be recognised not learnt, assimilated not dictated. Apparent loss of a public sphere within the commercial conglomerate of British Hanoverianism replaces contentious narrative with efficiency in the telling, from which all can benefit. In this achievement, Christensen believes Scott addresses the contemporary dilemma which fascinates him, Christensen: 'digital media production', another benchmark of communicative efficiency, has become a hegemonic influence without possessing 'any conception of what a public might be'. Christensen's own adventures as a hyper-text teacher lead him to out-think Nike, Microsoft and Bill Gates through an anterior romantic sensitivity. Finally, a tincture of De Quincey reconciles that 'openness to accident', which refuses the given in order to play the market, with Christensen's romantic ideal of restoring a common world picture outside historical narrative.

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James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and The Case of Romantic Historicism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Pp. 606. hb £22.50, pb £13.50. ISBN 0 226 10108 8.

In his preface to *England in 1819*, James Chandler states that 'while I hope, naturally, that every reader who picks it up will read this book in its entirety – still better, at one sitting – I recognise that such a hope might be a little unrealistic' (p. xvii). Such a hope *is* unrealistic. This is a big book, in terms of ambition and scope as well as length, and not to be rapidly digested.

In terms of structural organization it is clearly divided into two major parts. The first of these is an assessment of the historical situation of Romanticism which employs a doubled perspective: of the author upon his own past self and his articulation of twentieth-century historicism, and of Romanticism in 1819 as self-consciously representative of a moment of cultural and historical development. The second half of the book then offers us a series of 'case' histories: particular examples of Romantic literary texts which, Chandler argues, embody this major cultural shift in historical awareness.

In his introduction, Chandler gives a disarming account of the book's origins, coming out of an undergraduate course, constructed by him in 1981, around the years 1798 and 1819. The historicization of his own earlier self is reassuring and attractive: 'I understood that my interest in historicizing literary and cultural studies was part of a wider transformation of the field but was not yet aware that this development was about to have its own name, its own "ism"' (p. 8). At the same time, the origins of the critical text out of this 'teaching experiment' (p. 7) conducted by Chandler over many years may provide a partial explanation for the difficulties this text creates for the reader. Often, particularly in the first three chapters, the book seems to circle upon itself, returning again and again to key moments, critics, theorists, as a course might well do. In itself, this is perhaps an inevitable part of Chandler's ambitious attempt to outline an intellectual genealogy for historicism, but it does also create a sense of inertness in the early chapters. Nonetheless, this is to criticize what is clearly a remarkably well-informed and self-aware articulation of Romantic historicism. At times Chandler uses the retrospective perspective of his own earlier self to raise questions about the project: 'Unseemly questions began to pose themselves. What was the basis of the kind of periodization I had adopted for this study? What narrative status did it have? ... Was my sense of the self-consciousness about historicity in England in 1819 ... nothing more than an especially convoluted form of anachronism?' (pp. 32-33) The recapitulation of such doubts leads the author on to the articulation of one of the central aims of the book:

that the interest in cultural chronology, rather than being explained away as an anachronistic cultural projection from the present onto the late-Romantic period, could be understood instead ... as a suppressed residue from the earlier period still operative in the contemporary practice of literary and cultural history (p. 33).

Chandler's aim then is to historicize twice over, both the literary culture of 1819 and the literary culture of our own recent history.

Some of the most interesting material in the first half comes when Chandler explores and sets up (for the second half of the book) certain historical models by which we can reconsider our means of defining history. He draws upon the arguments of Sartre and Levi Strauss to articulate multiple levels of historical coding, with the largest scale potentially existing at the 'level of the millennium' (p. 74) and the smallest at 'the level of the year' (p. 74). This section of the book is also interesting in drawing attention to the effect of placing emphasis on dates, and the process of dating, by which Romanticism emerges as a 'hot chronology' in which literary intensity and critical interest is disproportionate to the length of the period, as well as one which is aware of itself as a 'dated culture' (p. 67). With the discussion of the term 'case' in Chapter Four, the text really begins to engage and sets up well for the second half of the book, as Chandler considers this form as an anomaly within a general scheme which is capable of 'the posing of a problem for the framework' (pp. 207-8).

The second half of the book, the 'book-within-a-book' (p. xvi), is divided into various 'cases' as represented in Scott, Byron, Keats and Shelley. In his 'interchapter' (a space within the book which seems to operate something along the lines of a Coleridgean 'landing place') Chandler undertakes a 'thought experiment in historical stage setting' (p. 273) as he 'conjure[s] up' the image of the poet Thomas Moore, reading on New Year's day, 1819. Through this unexpected, though not unwelcome, imaginative device Chandler links the 'body of the time' (p. 275) as represented by *The Morning Chronicle* to the 'spirit of the age' (p. 275) as represented by the once-popular Moore. The cases that follow then focus on texts that were either composed or published in 1819 and that show a deliberate and self-conscious awareness of historicization. In the case of Scott, Chandler looks at the way *Heart of Midlothian* juxtaposes two kinds of historical episode and 'two kinds of cases, moral and legal' (p. 314) as well as exploring the open-endedness of the 'case' as a form by considering at a close textual level this novel's relation with *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the next in

Scott's series. Throughout, Chandler attends closely to each 'case' under consideration, with great attention to detail, as in the discussion of Keats' use of the term 'smokeable' as a criticism of his own work or his echo of Wordsworthian terms from *The Excursion* in the 'Ode to Psyche'. The scope of the first half of the book is thus more than matched by the detailed attention of the second.

Clearly there is the danger with such a weighty text, divided in this way, that readers will be tempted to skip much of the earlier discussion to 'get on' to the rooted examples of the second half, (and perhaps this is a reflection of the peculiar charms of the 'case' as a form). To do this, however, would be to do an injustice to a work, which offers a remarkably thorough and multi-layered reconsideration of what it means to historicize, both for the Romantics and for the critic today. We may not read at one sitting, but we should read this book in its entirety.

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Alan Rawes, *Byron's Poetic Experimentation*. Nineteenth Century Series. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000. Pp. 162. £39.95. ISBN 0 754 60171 4.

Paul Elledge, *Byron at Harrow School*. London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xii+221. £31. ISBN 0801863430.

Byron wrote to Thomas More: 'A man's poetry is a distinct faculty, or soul, and has no more to do with the every day individual than the Inspiration with the Pythoness when removed from her tripod'. Both Alan Rawes's *Byron's Poetic Experimentation*, which forms part of Ashgate's impressive Nineteenth Century Series, and Paul Elledge's *Lord Byron at Harrow School*, which in their different ways seek to understand Byron's work in relation to the 'every day individual', might have done well to heed this observation.

Rawes begins with an examination of the first parts of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in order to trace what he sees as an inevitable movement away from 'cathartic self therapy' and the assumed limitations of the tragic idiom, towards the detached comic mode of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. His study is shaped both in terms of a chronological, not to say teleological, drive and, following the work of Gleckner, McGann and others, by the view that restless experimentation with form leads to some kind of coherent vision; and this struggle in particular is focused around an illuminating discussion of Byron's ambivalent relationship with Wordsworthian idealism. Much is done here to relocate Byron usefully within (British) Romanticism: the central argument being that Byron moves from narrative strategies to extended lyric, or even Greater Romantic Lyric, within the early cantos of *Childe Harold*, and that consequently poems like *The Giaour* and the Tales written between 1812 and 1816, can be read as 'lyricized narratives'. This process, it is argued, culminates in canto III of *Childe Harold* which is seen as 'a poetic quest for self identity' and, in the subtly explored collapsing distinctions between narrator and subject, as an 'existential spiritual quest' on the part of a very Wordsworthian Harold/narrator/Byron.

Samuel Chew pointed out long ago that 'Byron, more than most poets, works again and again along the same grooves of thought'. Even accepting this, I cannot help thinking that Rawes' main point, charting this move from narrative to lyric, is made rather too often, and, perhaps, to the detriment of other ways of reading the poems – *Childe Harold* as travelogue, *The Giaour* as political allegory, for example. Nonetheless, such an interpretative thrust does allow for interesting readings of individual poems. By subtly tracing developments in ms versions, and through sensitive close reading (a characteristic of the book as a whole), the case is well made for seeing *The Giaour* as primarily concerned with questions of the relationship between the narrative 'consciousness' and the events narrated. Similarly, it is argued that *The Prisoner of Chillon*, like *The Giaour*, might best

be understood both within the Romantic lyric tradition and as prefiguring the Victorian dramatic monologue. Thus, the prisoner is seen 'as a reworking of Byron's own experience'; as an ultimately 'unsuccessful' cathartic exercise, perhaps even an exorcising of the anxieties of the troubled and troublesome 'every day individual'. A similar reading is offered of *The Dream*, which following McGann, Rawes sees as essentially autobiographical. And, in fact, all of these readings are related back to the central concern with a kind Wordsworthian lyrical (self) expression identified, particularly in canto III of *Childe Harold*.

Rawes argues that what characterises canto III of *Childe Harold* is a concentration upon 'spontaneous sensation' very much in the tradition of poems like *Resolution and Independence*. In touching lightly on, for example, Barthesian analysis of narrative strategy, and Hartman's view of the nostalgic construction of the Romantic 'I', the study moves well beyond consideration of crude influence, however. In seeing much of Byron's earlier work as an 'ongoing reconsideration of Wordsworth's idealistic vision', it is concerned with understanding the shift in Byron away from the tragic to the (Byronic) comic in terms of an anxiety about the ways in which the self is expressed in poetry. Of course, one might want to agree with Byron that the self has little to do with it. At times Rawes does seem to forget the complexities of poetic utterance (is it possible, as is claimed here, to 'privilege' 'sensation' over 'language' in a text?), and to read individual poems in terms of his overall thesis. For example, *The Prisoner of Chillon* can only be read as 'unsuccessful' if it is assumed to be a poem about 'the writing subject's experience of selfhood', attempting to negotiate a Wordsworthian 'track'.

Nonetheless, whilst it might lead to slightly limited readings of individual poems, the overall argument as a means of plotting the emergence of the mature Byronic persona has considerable merit. For Rawes, Byron's 'way into comedy' is made both necessary and possible by a movement beyond Wordsworthian idealism to what is characterized in a finely detailed and sensitive reading of *Manfred* as 'Promethean-esque humanism'. And, this shift is completed, for Rawes at least, in canto IV of *Childe Harold*. Here, it is argued, that Wordsworth is finally displaced by a kind of Byronic 'transcendentalism' in which 'benevolent Nature' is seen as an imagined but necessary fiction, and anxieties about the self give way (or are masked by) the playfulness of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

In tracing this development from what it sees as self expression through an essentially tragic idiom, to a denial of (or escape from) questions of the self, Rawes, has much in common with a great deal of recent work on Byron. As much as anything, he asks the question: how and why did the person of Lord Byron become, or create, the persona Byron? If such a creation is dependant upon a 'transcendence' of Wordsworthian, or more broadly what we might call (British) Romantic priorities, then it could be argued that this process, of knowingly playing with necessary fictions, begins much earlier than canto IV of *Childe Harold*. This is certainly the contention in Elledge's *Lord Byron at Harrow School*.

Building on the more general work of Bate, Carlson, Henderson, Pascoe and others, Elledge argues that 'Romantic lives', and Byron's in particular, are best seen as 'self-conscious inventions ... as staged affairs'. This act of self creation through performance begins for Elledge not in his European tour, nor, as it does for McGann and Rawes, in the scandal of 1816, but in Byron's time at Harrow School from as early as 1801. Like all good Romantics, in recounting with great facility the well known details of Byron's early biography, he argues generally that childhood experiences are formative; and, more specifically, that the key elements of the Byronic (anti-) hero were already firmly established as defence mechanisms, against hostile tutors, class and disability conscious fellow pupils, a predatory tenant, and a demanding mother, by the schoolboy Byron. These 'psychobiographical tensions', already establishing the outsider rebel consciously manipulating audiences, are fascinatingly teased out through a detailed analysis of the letters Byron wrote at this time, particularly to Augusta, and by locating the would be poet's developing persona in the speech day tradition of the English Public School.

Much original insight is brought to diligent but engagingly and lightly handled research to (re)establish the significance of the Speech Day for the Public School at the turn of the nineteenth century. And, the study is at its most fascinating when it relates this essentially limited arena to the larger contemporary mania for performance, most notably in its consideration of the possible impact of the child actor William Betty upon Byron. It also traces well, if briefly, the possible origins of Byron the would-be political orator, and at more length Byron the amateur performer.

Byron himself chose to recite extracts from the *Aeneid*, the speech of the (Byronic) villain Zanga over the dead body of Alonzo from Edward Young's *The Revenge*, and parts of Lear's speeches. For Elledge, despite his own disavowal of Freud – a denial that in its own way might be questioned, as he questions many of Byron's own silences and elisions – each speech and its accompanying correspondence is rich in psychological resonance. Thus, to take the best known example, Byron's choice of Lear on the Heath generates a number of insights from the specific to the general: Lear's predicament is seen as attractive as direct reversal of the parent-child relationship Byron is said to have, in his imagination at least, with his mother; more convincingly, it enabled Byron to play with the ambiguous figure of the mad king otherwise absent from the Regency stage; and, reference to the *Lear* plot is seen as a direct comment on the three way struggle for the headmastership (throne?) of Harrow at the time.

It is this final reading which is obviously the most difficult to swallow. Elledge's defence from the outset is that to some extent he is 'imagin[ing]' a story. And, it is a great story he tells. Throughout, often intriguing, sometimes tenuous, observations are qualified as at best 'inferential criticism' and at worst 'slippery guesswork' and 'hazardous speculation'. Such 'speculation' leads ultimately to the claim that Juan's shoes 'reconfigure' the 'boot' worn by the lame schoolboy Byron. Like Rawes, in his conflation of not only subject and narrator, but also poet and narrator, Elledge cannot resist the claim that the Byron's 'choices of texts are about Byron himself'. We might respond, with Byron himself, that there is more at stake in all the choices that the poet makes than the concerns of the 'every day individual'

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Richard W. Clancey, *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong: Education, Rhetoric and Poetic Truth*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000; New York: St Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. xiii + 215. £42.50. ISBN 0 333 76034 4 (UK); 0 312 2560 1 (US).

Richard W. Clancey's *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong* will take its place among a group of recent studies that have examined the presence of the classical in Wordsworth's poetry. Clancey focuses on the classical education Wordsworth received at Hawkshead Grammar School, and the way that education informed his mature poetry, especially *The Prelude*. Clancey argues that the Aristotelian concept of ethical proof, articulated in the *Rhetoric*, and Horace's *Epistle to Florus* (*Epistles* II. ii) provide crucial models for Wordsworth's representation of himself as a philosophical poet:

The operative presence and normative value of the classics are a constant in Wordsworth, especially perceived in his overarching prophetic intention. This presence is what I call classical undersong. Its primary component is an epic-like design grounded in the classical tradition and immediately exemplified by Milton. But this design requires an artistic courage and correspondingly secure sense of authority. Here the Aristotelian ethical proof serves Wordsworth well. It endowed his voice rhetorically and lyrically and helped engender the goal Wordsworth envisioned and never actually ceased to work for. (p. xxiii)

In the early chapters of the book, Clancey attempts to reconstruct the curriculum and pedagogical practices in place at Hawkshead Grammar School when Wordsworth attended there. He gives special attention to James Peake, headmaster from 1766-81, and thus headmaster when Wordsworth first enrolled in 1779. Peake, educated at the Manchester Free School and St. John's College, Cambridge, instituted several curricular reforms at Hawkshead, modelled after similar reforms at Manchester. Among these was a more rigorous training in mathematics than was usual in English grammar schools, training which was especially useful in preparing students for Cambridge. But mathematics is not Clancey's primary focus; he looks instead at how classical languages and literature were taught under Peake. For Latin, rather than use the traditional Eton grammar, written solely in Latin and taught by rote memorization, Peake used Thomas Dyche's grammar, which was dual-language. Peake also seems to have encouraged the use of translations of classical authors, often with Latin or Greek on the facing page, and not to have required or encouraged poetic composition in Latin. Now, at first glance, these may appear to be the kind of compromises in standards that one would expect at an out of the way, provincial grammar school. But Clancey argues that they in fact made for a more vital understanding of the classics, especially the classical poets, for they allowed Peake to move more quickly and effectively through the niceties of grammar, and to cover a broader range of authors than was usual at even the best public schools. And it is hard to argue with Peake's results: he sent wrangler after wrangler up to Cambridge, usually to St. John's, and established Hawkshead as the premier grammar school in the north of England.

Clancey gives similar close attention to the headmastership of William Taylor, who was one of Peake's first students at Hawkshead, and went on to distinguish himself at Emanuel College, Cambridge. Very little about Taylor has survived. Other than Wordsworth's affectionate account in *The Prelude* and an equally affectionate memoir by George Dyer, who was friends with Taylor when the two were at Cambridge together (Dyer's memoir can be found in his two-volume *History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*), there are the usual parish and university records, a book or two from his library, and, most important for Clancey, his will. From these scattered bits of data, Clancey constructs a portrait of a dedicated teacher who regularly drew analogies between classical and contemporary poets, whose favorite contemporaries were Gray and Chatterton, who conducted evening seminars on contemporary literature for the local gentry, and who had an extensive and valuable personal library to which promising young scholars like Wordsworth probably had access. He was also a crack mathematician, second wrangler in the mathematics tripos. And, of course, he encouraged more than one of his students to write poetry of their own.

The importance of Clancey's discussion of Hawkshead's Grammar School must be underscored. It is simply the most thorough account we have of Wordsworth's early education, and thus is an essential supplement to biographical and textual studies of the poet's early years. *The Prelude* recounts the games the schoolboys played; T.W. Thompson gives us the anecdotes that lie behind the mature poetry. Clancey tells of the hard work of formal education, work that was sweetened by the tact and intelligence of skilled teachers. And since education was one of Wordsworth's principal poetic subjects – he is the poet, after all, who wanted to be a teacher, or nothing – Clancey's work also supplements and corrects the work of scholars who have explored Romantic, and specifically Wordsworthian, ideas about education.

The next section of the book explores the ways in which Wordsworth's early training in the classics informs his understanding of the nature of poetry and his representation of himself in his poems. This is what Clancey calls Wordsworth's 'classical undersong', and it is especially to be found in his poetic rendering of what Aristotle identifies as the ethical mode of argument. (p. 67) Clancey argues that Wordsworth's training in classical rhetoric provided him with an understanding of how the orator uses *ethos*, the representation of one's own character, as a crucial means of convincing an audience. Wordsworth transfers this understanding from oratory to poetry, to create

the kind of prophetic and philosophical *ethos* necessary for a massive poetical project like *The Recluse*. The works of Horace, especially the *Ars Poetica* and the *Epistle to Florus*, are crucial to this transfer. In these epistles, Horace presents arguments in defense of poetry, claiming both an 'exalted status' for the poet, and 'special order of poetic truth'. (p. 79) Horace's rationale is largely ethical: by means of 'a fully accomplished mimesis', the poet is able 'to look carefully at the exemplary instance of human conduct' and hold it up for ethical analysis. (p. 79) The *Epistle to Florus* is particularly important, for it ends 'with a priestly tribute to poetry and to the vatic ideal of a true poet', (p. 72) that, according to Clancey, 'is clearly at the heart of Wordsworth's critical doctrine'. (p. 77)

Clancey closes his book with a fifty-page reading of *The Prelude*, mainly employing Aristotelian rhetorical ideas and terminology in his analysis. *The Prelude*, he suggests, begins as a kind of rhetorical argument, partly deliberative, that is, concerned with what the poet should do, and partly judicial, that is, supplying evidence (the spots of time, for instance) that his poetical *ethos* is suited for the task he has chosen. By the end of the poem, however, and especially with the ascent of Snowdon, the rhetorical mode shifts to epideictic, to praise of the *ethos* he has achieved and what it will achieve, through the writing of philosophical poetry like *The Recluse*. Throughout this analysis, Clancey discusses what he calls 'poetic truth', a kind of truth that, in Clancey's view, transcends human reason, and thus historical or biographical fact. This kind of insight to truth can only be communicated to others by means of a poetic *ethos*, such as the one Wordsworth achieves by the end of the poem. *The Prelude* recounts and celebrates the development of just this sort of *ethos*. As Cicero, the orator, is not Cicero, the historical personage, so Wordsworth, the poetic and prophetic voice of *The Prelude*, is qualitatively different from William Wordsworth, who lived from 1770-1850, and that voice, or poetic *ethos*, must be different, it must be idealized, to achieve its purpose. Oddly enough, Clancey's argument is remarkably similar to Kenneth Johnston's in *The Hidden Wordsworth*, although two works more different in tone and method are hard to imagine.

There are two characteristics of Clancey's writing that will be troubling to a number of readers. First, Clancey is extraordinarily self-effacing, and tends to develop his own arguments by summarising, sometimes at great length, the published arguments of others. In fact, his tendency to summarise often obscures the originality of his own arguments, which are more than able to stand on their own without all the elaborate props he supplies. Second, Clancey's own rhetorical mode is unabashedly epideictic: this is a book in praise of Wordsworth and in praise of his teachers, and it abounds in the kinds of appreciative adjectives that make those of a more skeptical turn of mind uncomfortable and perhaps dismissive. But to dismiss this work on these grounds is wrong-headed. *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong* makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of Wordsworth's early years, and we should be grateful to Richard Clancey for his labors.

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John Dolan, *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth, Early Modern Literature in History*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). Pp. vii + 219. £45 (\$59.95). ISBN 0 333 73358 4 (UK); 0 312 22094 4 (US).

Wonderful! Marvelous! Riveting! Bracing! The best way to begin a review of John Dolan's *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth* must be to catalog the adjectives that reading it summons to mind. Dolan argues a thesis that should surely be received in controversy but which is presented so magisterially, so lucidly, and so convincingly that his text is, in short, a pleasure to read and from which to learn.

Painstakingly, Dolan establishes an argument, which, in sum, traces the evolution of poetic idiom from occasional to imaginative, from poetry that was public, arid, and rigid as a result of stiffly trained, imitative writers, he restores to consideration the context of John Milton's great elegy 'Lycidas', which appeared in a volume of tribute, occasioned by the drowning of Edward Young, to which other Cambridge wannabe poets contribute singly to outdo one another, as well as, collectively, to outshine an Oxford anthology memorializing Ben Jonson (p. 55). Thus contextualizing Milton, Dolan finds that 'Milton's belatedness, paralysis, and fear of invention is representative of a generation of literary aspirants who define themselves as students' (p. 21) and set a course for poetry that persists for a century and a half of English writing as young versifiers compose just like one another and shove and jostle to clamber to the top of the poetry-making pile to claim elusive, transient fame and glory. Ambition and rivalry become the bedrock of a jaded and cynical art.

From Milton, Dolan moves to the young Dryden, whom he situates 'in the position of a merchant facing the competition of thousands of other entrepreneurs; ... frustrated by the perennial famine of occasions, [he comes] to develop fully ... the poet's fear and hatred of those he regarded as purveyors of hastily produced, shoddy occasional wares: that is, of trade rivals' (p. 68). The mercantilizing of poetry coincides with the rise of publishers and booksellers, who, as we well know today, traffic in the realm of imitation of and superfluous sequels to previous successes and where inventiveness is anathema and originality a vice.

Dolan minces no words in describing post-Dryden England as a period 'of failure in English poetry; that the poets and readers of the time, constrained by occasional truth, had to force an ever-increasing volume of literary ambition into an ever-shrinking, increasingly overcrowded and violent literary world' (p. 88). He shows consistently that, from Milton onward, students interested in language and literature found themselves 'trained in ... formulaic literary competence. The leveling of literary production is one of the most notable effects of school-training of poets (and may still be observed in contemporary literary workshops)' (p. 99)! And what suffers preeminently is anything novel or new.

Toward this fix rides rescue in the verse of Thomas Gray and Edward Young, who devise the innovations that make it possible for William Wordsworth to express his creativity, and '[i]n his works, the sort of poem invented by Gray and Young became *the* English lyric poem – the paradigm of modern poetic narrative'. (p. 191). Dolan declares the 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' 'revolutionary' because it transforms the vice of occasion – which has been strangling originality and therefore poetry, from the words of a speaker who was merely a 'device (i.e. the vehicle in whose mind the funereal occasion takes place) to [the] focus of the occasion' (p. 134) – into the opportunity for invention and therefore clears the way for the mental activity of the speaker to become a fit poetic subject. For Wordsworth, then, Aristotelian '[e]thos ... was the key, the landscape in which the mental-occasion poem took place; and everything in Wordsworth's life and work is subsumed to dominating the ethos-landscape' (p. 200). Thus, the image or character of the poet projected in the poem becomes the crucible of creativity, instead of contentious, competitive ambition and formulaic models, finally and deservedly left behind and buried. The text ends a bit abruptly with Wordsworth's appearance; one yearns for more of the sage examination and disquisition, deployed earnestly and followed easily and assiduously to this point.

There are hidden gems in this book, such as when Dolan identifies a confusion of antecedents in a poem as 'a shell-game of pronouns' (p. 143), when he observes of eighteenth-century verse that much came from a 'poetics of trellised envy' (p. 116), when he notes that, 'Halifax's poem cannot keep up with his titles' (p. 104), and, my favorite, 'in Dryden's poem "Upon the Death of Lord Hastings", even the very pustules which caused the death mourn it' (p. 132). Besides his own published scholarship on poets, especially of the eighteenth-century, who feature largely in this monograph and demonstrate that its author is indeed qualified to make his case, he is also a poet, which may explain his consummate sensitivity to language and his ability to craft a prose that

grips one even as it enlightens and informs. Bereft of the faux professional jargon of our lit-crit trade, the argument is clear and focused in sharp and perceptive close readings of the poetry it examines and makes expert use of the very terminology of language which we have sadly, frequently, abandoned but which was once the touchstone of critical reading. I was happily driven to the dictionary to remind – or, I should confess, educate – myself of the precise definitions of such handy terms in understanding poetics as ‘anaphora’, ‘aposiopesis’, ‘aporia’, ‘enallage’, ‘enthymeme’, ‘epanorthosis’, ‘epideictic’, ‘litotes’, ‘periphrasis’, ‘polysyndeton’, ‘praeteritic’, ‘tmesis’, and the beautiful ‘zeugma’, which truly so illuminate poetry capably written and studied by educated folks. Such is the stuff upon which our language should be built, and our appreciation and our understanding suffer when we neglect it, as this text illustrates.

Thus, I sing the praises of John Dolan and *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth*. It in effect instructs us why we value what we do in poetry today, a singular contribution to the history of an art and the appreciation of a genre, much needed and, I hope, to be widely read.

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David Morse, *The Age of Virtue: British Culture from the Restoration to Romanticism*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000. Pp. viii + 330. £47.50. ISBN 0 312 22353 6.

Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xii + 268. £35 (\$59.95). ISBN 0 521 64144 6.

David Morse’s ambitious study of ‘British culture from Restoration to Romanticism’ seeks to meet the real need for a history of the eighteenth-century British discourse on virtue. If it ultimately fails to provide that history, then this is at least partly due to the sheer scope of the attempt. Virtue, as Morse amply demonstrates, is a notoriously slippery concept in the eighteenth century, invoking a shifting array of historical, religious, and socio-political assumptions. Faced with this diversity of allusion, a broad study of the discourse on virtue always runs the risk of becoming reductive, of constraining that discourse within a set of programmatic and potentially pre-formulated assertions. Morse’s study partly succumbs to this risk: witness his Introduction, which feels the need to supplement the definition of virtue in Johnson’s *Dictionary* with ‘three further definitions’ that Morse himself believes to be ‘more typical of [Johnson’s] time’ (p. 3). It is precisely this level of authorial intervention – this failure to let the discourse on virtue speak, as it were, for itself – that is the book’s most consistent shortcoming.

Despite these methodological problems, however, Morse undoubtedly provides a valuable and comprehensive survey of the discourse on virtue (although non-‘literary’ texts should certainly have received more attention; for example, while Morse correctly identifies Mandeville as the bugbear of eighteenth-century aretologists, he has little to say about other important figures like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Smith). Locating the heyday of that discourse in public condemnation (Addison, *et al.*) of the corrupt Walpole administration, Morse ably delineates some of its key features: the relationship between virtue and class, between virtue and education, between virtue and gender, between virtue and commerce, etc. The effect of this is a sustained and immensely revealing emphasis on the extent to which the discourse on virtue was never merely a matter of private benevolence, but was always intensely social and political in register: ‘more a coded political discourse’ than ‘a language of morality’ (p. 34). Hence Morse’s discussion of ‘Provincial Virtue’ in Chapter 5 – undoubtedly the strongest section of the book – provides a fascinating account of the extent to which the discourse on virtue was repeatedly mobilized by American, Irish and Scottish

nationalists keen to enlist a sense of moral superiority behind their struggle for liberty from the perceived degeneracy of the imperial centre. This reading, in turn, is built upon Chapter 4's useful recognition of the tendency within England itself, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, to invoke the supposed purity of the rural and lower classes as a foil to the immorality of the ruling nobility.

Morse's most significant – and, ultimately, most problematic – claims about the history of the discourse on virtue come, however, in his account of its decline. He is, broadly speaking, correct to point out that this decline parallels the rise of Romanticism, although there are notable exceptions – like Godwin and Shelley – whom he discusses at some length. What is questionable, however, is his decision to lay the blame for that decline at the door of the persistently *classical* registers of the discourse on virtue. He rightly identifies that discourse as 'a kind of short-hand for a model of the world – the classical world – in which the intervention of the individual could really count', and argues that the gradual collapse of this world-view came to a head with the French Revolution which, he suggests, decisively 'problematise[d] the role of the individual in history' (pp. 22, 243). Arguably, however, the French Revolution sought to legitimate itself precisely *by* appealing to the classical, republican discourse on virtue (one thinks, for example, of David's work, of which Morse makes scant mention). Nor is it immediately clear why the discourse on virtue – which Morse himself identifies as a discourse of the 'auto-authoritative' subject – should decline with the rise of Romanticism: itself quintessentially a discourse of the 'auto-authoritative' subject.

The underlying problem here is Morse's tendency to equate the antique classical registers of the discourse on virtue with eighteenth-century neo-classicism. Hence he can identify 'the whole ethical dilemma of Romanticism' as an opposition between rationally grounded virtue and the poetic imagination, as a situation where 'virtue and the imagination are at odds' (pp. 239, 238). Even if virtue did fall within the province of rationalism during the eighteenth-century – and Morse makes no mention, for example, of Smith's theory of Sympathy – the question is still begged as to whether Romanticism was actually marked by such a dilemma. Shelley's work, for example, makes virtue *conditional* upon imagination (and vice versa), a dependency that Morse's lengthy reading never really discerns. One thinks also of William Hazlitt's 'important metaphysical discovery' – the connection between imagination and disinterested benevolence – in his 1805 *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*. In short, then, Morse's study reduces the history of the discourse on virtue to the old scholarly story about the rise of Romanticism from the Augustan eighteenth century. It is, again, this kind of monolithic approach that most undermines what is otherwise an insightful and much-needed account of a central, though critically neglected aspect of eighteenth-century culture.

Canonical Romanticism's concern with posthumous recognition – in and of its texts – might at first glance appear to confirm Morse's claim that virtue and the Romantic imagination were strangers. Such a concern, after all, seems to accord well enough with the allegations of monolithic egotism sometimes levelled at Romanticism's leading (male) protagonists. In his fascinating account of 'the apparently self-fulfilling logic of the Romantic culture of posterity', Andrew Bennett – expanding on his 1994 study of Keats and 'the posthumous life of writing' – examines 'the way in which those poets who were self-consciously concerned with the nature of the future reception of literary texts have been isolated from their contemporaries and inserted – have inserted themselves – into a tradition of high literary culture' (p. 202). Faced with the sheer breadth of the discussion of posthumous fame in the Romantic period, Bennett's study bravely eschews a safe, explicatory approach in favour of an attempt to 'move away from the *fact* of the centrality of posterity for Romanticism towards an examination of the *consequences* of that fact for a reading of these poets' (p. 6). The result is a highly innovative and rewarding – if occasionally uneven – account of a familiar story: how 'Romanticism develops a theory of writing and reception which stresses the

importance ... of the work of art as an expression of the self uncontaminated by market forces' (p. 3).

The first section of the book traces the pre-history of this theory – in effect, the discourse of posterity – in the eighteenth century, and identifies the redefinition and *engendering* of that discourse in the Romantic period in response to the emergence of the literary market-place and the new author-reader relationship it involved. Bennett's work on Romanticism's female writers is particularly illuminating here in its suggestion that their conscious rejection of the supposed consolations of the (male) culture of posthumous recognition has, in effect, contributed to their exclusion from the canon articulated in and by that very culture. The theoretical backdrop to the first section of the book is followed up, in the second section, by readings of the five canonical (male) Romantic poets, with Bennett again keen to point out that his book 'attempts to account for precisely the canonization that it appears to confirm and reinforce' (p. 202). Chapter 5's reading of Coleridge, perhaps, is the most notable. Taking up Hazlitt's claim that STC bartered posthumous recognition of his writing for the short-term gratification of conversation, Bennett argues that it is with Coleridge that the central Romantic 'conflict between the immediacy and ephemerality of talk ... and the potential permanence of writing, its abstraction, ... is most acute' (p. 134). This 'conflict', he suggests, led Coleridge to develop a 'sonocentric' poetics, a poetics concerned to retain 'the noise ... of a poetic voice' (p. 117).

Notwithstanding Bennett's sensitivity to the nuances Romantic culture of posterity, however, one is still left with the sense that it is Wordsworth and Keats – above all – who largely determine for him the paradigms of that culture. The extent of this determination explains some of the book's more unconvincing moments, such as its claim that Shelley's 'Ozymandias' 'presents monumentalism in terms of the survival of the passions of the King of Kings on the 'lifeless' stone, beyond the sculptor who is explicitly described as a *reader*' (p. 177). Indeed, while Bennett's methodological decision to focus largely on poetry – in the belief that 'the predicament of the early nineteenth-century novelist, dramatist, or essayist' would 'require a very different kind of analysis' – is understandable, one would like to have seen more attention paid to Romanticism's many prose-theorists of posterity (p. 7). In Chapter 2, for example, Bennett identifies Hazlitt as 'the single most determined and most comprehensive theorist of posterity from the period' and yet has comparatively little to say about him (p. 61). Thomas De Quincey, too, is a significant absence from the text. After all, the English Opium-Eater was in a very real sense – indeed even self-consciously – Romanticism's posterity, and his work is intensely concerned with the impact of history in and on the self. Notwithstanding these caveats, however, Bennett's book remains an enormously valuable contribution to our understanding not only of the Romantic period itself, but also of the extent to which that period still determines our idea of 'literature' and the 'author'.

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Jacqueline M. Labbe, *The Romantic Paradox. Love, Violence and the Uses of Romance, 1760-1830*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000. Pp. 211. £42.50. ISBN 0 333 76032 8.

Romanticism's obsessive relationship with romance, which is both explicit and (perhaps more often) implicit in its manifestations, has long been recognized by literary scholars. However, with only a few notable exceptions (recently in the work of, for example, Stuart Curran and David Duff), such recognition has not resulted in sustained critical attention to the complexities of the obsession. As our sense of romantic-era writing becomes increasingly inclusive, an examination of the romance in its multiplicity of forms becomes particularly important. From the sensational novels of the Minerva Press to the narrative poems of the annuals, the romance reveals its mark as clearly as

it does in the work of the canonical poets. In this context, Jacqueline Labbe's book offers a timely critical intervention. Taking the period's poetry as its primary subject matter, *The Romantic Paradox* works through a series of sharply focused case studies, balancing canonical and recently re-discovered writers to suggest the various 'uses of romance' to be found in the period's literary culture.

Each of the central chapters of *The Romantic Paradox* is concerned with a specific aspect of the romance and 'explores its manipulations and metamorphoses by representative poets' (p. 8). The first chapter provides an overview of critical writing on the genre during the period, discussing a range of writers including Bishop Hurd, Anna Barbauld, Clara Reeve and Mary Robinson. Labbe usefully directs our attention to the complex contradictions within attitudes towards the genre, highlighting the ways in which it 'both preserves and threatens the social order' (p. 35). Depicting both chivalrous decorum and the possibility of extreme violence which subverted such decorous behaviour, the subject matter of romance offered the opportunity for poets to engage directly and indirectly with the social and political tensions of their age. As Labbe notes, 'the central paradox of the romance ... is its engagement with violence on a variety of textual levels; the cultural inability to decide the status of the romance thereby allows poets to rewrite and refocus its terms' (p. 38). The remaining chapters provide an illuminating account of this 'rewriting' in practice.

The book's second chapter examines the amatory exchanges of 'Della Crusca' and 'Anna Matilda' as they appeared within the pages of, initially, *The World* and then, in a carefully re-packaged form, *The British Album*. Labbe's argument is that this poetic sequence depends upon the romance for both its implied narrative structure and the generic contract it enters into with the reader. At the same time, the highly charged suggestiveness of the poetry pushes at the limits of what romance permits within its decorous confines: 'Della Cruscan poetry projects an erotics of form, a teasing opening to the world of sexual pursuit: the barrier separating romance and pornography' (p. 42). If this chapter analyses the potentially improper relationships between a Della Cruscan hero and heroine, the next chapter, on Coleridge and Keats, looks at the ways in which both poets subvert notions of heroic masculinity. Focusing (perhaps rather arbitrarily) on Coleridge's 'conversation' poems, Labbe convincingly demonstrates how the poet plots successive narratives of failure: 'Coleridge, attracted to and repelled by the pre-eminence of the hero, sets him on his quest and systematically sabotages his efforts to follow it' (p. 84). In the more self-evidently romance narratives of 'Isabella', 'Lamia' and 'The Eve of St. Agnes', Labbe detects a similarly self-thwarting masculinity in which 'what has been labelled effeminacy, immaturity, or a male poet's version of feminine Romanticism acts ... as a narrative of conviction, questioning gender' (p. 87).

The book's fourth chapter discusses the 'interrupted' romances of Mary Robinson and Felicia Hemans. Both poets are seen to subvert the genre they ostensibly deploy, Robinson through the inclusion of violent visionary or gothic passages that threaten to subvert the poems' apparent moralizing, and Hemans by the way in which she kills off her male heroes and turns her back on a 'romantic' resolution through her advocacy of a feminized domesticity. Labbe, whilst alert to the complex generic engagement such strategies imply, nonetheless concludes that 'although the romances of Robinson and Hemans are explosive and revelatory, they are also sterile' (p. 134). Both poets challenge the limitations of romance ideology without being able to suggest alternatives that are not, in effect, a form of retreat from the cultural problems they identify.

Labbe notes that 'as long as the romance is false, it will destroy its own meaning' (p. 134) and, in the course of the book's argument so far, it is the falsity of romance that has been emphasized in the work of each of the poets discussed. However, in the poetry of Lord Byron and Letitia Landon, which is the subject of the final chapter, romance itself undergoes a generic transformation. In an extremely rich reading of both poets, Labbe describes the ways in which romance modulates into melodrama, a genre which 'opens a space for the unsayable' because 'in its exaggerations can be detected critiques of the values it so hyperbolically supports' (p. 173). In

Byron's case, the melodramatic re-working of romance gives rise to a series of poems, including 'The Bride of Abydos' and 'The Giaour', in which the rivalries of romantic love provide a pretext for the representation of homosocial desire. For Landon, the melodramatic elements of 'The Venetian Bracelet' and 'Roland's Tower' highlight the delusiveness of 'romantic happiness'. Taking issue with Anne Mellor's earlier reading of the poet, Labbe usefully suggests that Landon 'works, not "within", but *with* essentialist constructions, exploring the results of acculturation, exposing the risks of wholesale reliance on love' (p. 159).

Whilst Labbe's account of romance is far from definitive in its range of coverage, it is both enlightening in its specific analysis and highly suggestive in its broad outlines. Her readings of Robinson, Hemans and Landon are particularly rewarding, providing us with helpful generic and cultural contexts within which to appreciate the complexity of these often seemingly clichéd poets. In reaffirming the centrality of romance to romanticism, Labbe has also reminded us of the contradictions within romanticism itself and of the potential for violence masked by the romantic ideology in even its apparently most innocuous forms.

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Matthew Gibson, *Yeats, Coleridge and the Romantic Sage*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000. Pp. 224. £42.50. ISBN 0 333 74625 2

Matthew Gibson sets out to illustrate how the older Yeats found a new poetic role, that of sage, through his reading of Coleridge: how, too, Coleridge aided him in his philosophical readings and in the writing of his later poetry. Gibson analyses the effects on Yeats's writings of his complex readings and misreadings of Coleridge, tracing the intertextual intricacies of all these with great care. The book is divided into three parts on 'Personality', on 'Transcendence and Immanence', and on 'Metaphor'. The main focus of Part One is Yeats's developing idea of himself as a Coleridge-like sage and includes a section on Yeats's reading of a 1929 critical work on Coleridge, John Charpentier's *Coleridge, the Sublime Somnambulist*. So Gibson does not only deal with Yeats's reading of Coleridge, but with a text, which to some extent directed that reading. The argument in this part of the book is concerned with Yeats's sense of the importance of 'Personality' in the work of poets, with the rooting of abstraction in the concrete and with the sage's need to be, as Yeats saw Coleridge, of the world and in it.

This leads on to the related philosophical tension between 'Transcendence and Immanence', the title of Part 2. The emphasis in this part is more philosophical, dealing with difficult, esoteric texts such as, *A Vision*. A section of this part contains two diagrams from Yeats's *A Vision* and some of the attendant explanation perhaps needs amplification, especially the arcane use of terms such as 'husk'. Matthew Gibson has missed an opportunity, just here at least, of rendering the difficulties of the system illustrated by Yeats's diagrams as clear as possible. Yeats's reading of Coleridge's *The Friend* enabled him to relate human faculties (Reason and Understanding) to cyclical, historical patterns of rise and fall and to discover 'correlations' for the 'macrocosmic, historical movements of the gyres ... in the work of anthropologists such as Gerald Heard and Flinders Petrie'. The mention of anthropology, and the section on time, suggests interesting comparisons with contemporary modernists such as Eliot. Such links would be extraneous to the argument, however, which is to trace how Coleridge helped Yeats to 'concretise' the spiritual. A section on Yeats's 'supernatural' poems sets out to develop this point. Arguments are persuasive, though perhaps there might have been some potential in considering links between Coleridge's 'pleasure-dome' in 'Kubla Khan' and Yeats's 'starlit or moonlit dome' in 'Sailing to Byzantium',

both arguably concretizations of eternity (Edmund Burke saw a dome or 'rotund' as 'a kind of artificial eternity').

Part 3, entitled 'Metaphor', is perhaps the most readable and congenial part of the book. It has a most interesting section on mirror images and a particularly astute tracing, through Yeats's writings, of a phrase from Chapter Seven of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* – 'the mere quick-silver plating behind a looking-glass', being Coleridge's metaphor for the self in Hartley's psychology. This discussion and the section on Berkeley bring out very clearly how Yeats resorted to eighteenth-century philosophical preoccupations to work out entirely modern, even modernist, perplexities about consciousness. The equally interesting chapter on metaphors of unity which concludes the book includes a consideration of sexual difference. This section owes more to Swedenborg than to Coleridge, though it is Coleridge's reading of the text in question which is the starting-point. The text is Swedenborg's *The Delights of Wisdom relating to Conjugal Love* and, as Matthew Gibson points out, 'masculine and feminine valences are legion in cabalistic and Rosicrucian literature'. An interest in Swedenborg is certainly something that Coleridge and Yeats had unambiguously in common and Yeats does not need to misread Coleridge here in the pursuit of his own purposes, but simply follow him. One of these shared (Swedenborgian) purposes, as Coleridge would certainly have perceived it, was an interest in Blake.

This is a rich and dense book, dealing with a multiplicity of materials and the notes themselves are fascinating. The style on occasion is involved at points where lucidity of explanation is very much needed. There are also a few typographical errors, two in the first sentence of Chapter 2. 'In an unpublished letter of 11 November 1929, Coleridge (sic) informed his friend Oliver St John Gogarty that he was 'just setting out on a study of Coleridge (sic) verse and prose'. It would be unfair to end on such a note. The book is deft in its study of complex, intertextual connections, adding Coleridge to the list of Romantic writers with whom Yeats was deeply involved and breaking new ground in the way it elucidates Coleridge's considerable influence on the later Yeats.

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Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran, ed., *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. 311. £33. ISBN 0 8018 6334 1.

Of the fifteen essays in *Mary Shelley in her Times*, half are primarily concerned with her achievement as a novelist, and offer detailed discussions of *Frankenstein*, *Matilda*, *Valperga*, and *The Last Man*. There are also contributions on the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, Shelley's writing for the Annuals (primarily *The Keepsake*), her biographical essays for Dionysius Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, and her editing of Percy Shelley. Essays by Gary Kelly and Mitzi Myers offer a less text specific contextual interrogation of Shelley's work. This is a book to be commended not only for the range of topics it offers, but for the way in which it represents a wide range of styles and approaches. It remains, however, something of a disappointment that Shelley's last three novels, *Perkin Warbeck* (1830), *Lodore* (1835), and *Falkner* (1837) are given relatively little space. In the first essay of the collection, Betty T. Bennett writes illuminatingly about *Falkner*, comparing Elizabeth Lavenza of *Frankenstein* with Elizabeth Raby of *Falkner*. The latter novel is described as a 'reversioning' of *Frankenstein* which reveals the development of Shelley's radical political agenda. But this is the last we hear of *Falkner*. Jeanne Moskal refers to *Lodore* in her discussion of the significance of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* for the Shelley circle, and there is no mention at-all of *Perkin Warbeck*.

Two essays (by Pamela Clemit and Charles E. Robinson) make a claim for *Matilda* as a novel worthy of serious study, and both essays, very different in their approaches, do their job well.

Clemit considers the unpublished manuscript of *Matilda* alongside the rough draft, *The Fields of Fancy*, arguing that a parallel study provides fresh insight into Shelley's 'experimentation with and revaluation of literary themes and techniques shared with Godwin and P. B. Shelley' (p.64). But given the discussions that take place elsewhere in this book on Shelley's other work, it is questionable whether the opening statement of Charles Robinson's essay is justified. Is *Matilda* 'arguably [Shelley's] second most important text'? (p.76) Less controversially, perhaps, *Valperga* is the main subject of two essays, as is *The Last Man*.

The relationship between Mary Shelley's own life, her fiction, Romanticism, and the study of history and politics provides the basis for all of the essays. I have long been intrigued with the problem of considering the *roman à clef* in a critical context. It invites the accusation of reductionism and trivialization. Tilottama Rajan seeks to avoid this problem by renaming the phenomenon 'auto-narration'. Rajan offers a perceptive discussion of the way Shelley reads history with reference to contemporary novels, and most interestingly, with reference to the influence of Leibniz on the intellectual climate within which Shelley was working. Reference here to the significance of the English Republican tradition leads on into Michael Rossington's essay, where it becomes the main concern. All the authors have helpful and original things to say about how public and private histories are deployed, bringing us back repeatedly to the interplay between Mary Shelley's stature as an author, and her role within the generally evolving public consciousness of a 'Romantic Movement' in English literature. Constance Walker, for example, discusses *The Last Man* with reference to Melanie Klein's work on bereavement in the early twentieth century, setting this against the evolution of nineteenth century responses through literature to infant deaths. This issue is also addressed in Judith Pascoe's essay on Shelley's contributions to the *Annuals*. Gary Kelly's essay places Shelley's 'use of autobiography' within the context of a category of fiction he proposes to call 'the coterie novel': 'It was intended to promote the political and cultural authority of the coterie that produced it, during critical periods in the struggle for leadership among the revolutionary middle classes' (p.147).

Given what is certainly a stimulating variety of Shelleyan topics, it may seem churlish still to regret that relatively little space was given to new work on *Perkin Warbeck*, *Lodore*, and on the final travelogue, *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844). It is understandable why E. Douka Kabitoglou's piece on Mary Shelley and Liz Lochhead was chosen as the final contribution to the collection, and I enjoyed reading it; but it had little to offer on the subject of Mary Shelley 'in her time', and it did occur to me that here was space for a further discussion of the later work. This is not to overlook the fact that Michael O'Neill's essay on Shelley's editing of her husband's work is a measured, carefully argued reassessment of the subject. Here, as elsewhere, we are to understand that Shelley's writing throughout her career reveals a continued commitment to revolutionary, reforming ideas. The situation is summarised by Greg Kucich writing on Shelley's contributions to Lardner's *Cyclopaedia*: 'the project of revisioning history helped give a maturing Mary Shelley the courage, steadiness, and self-worth to carry on her own political interventions, in however mediated form, throughout even the darkest of times' (pp.212-3).

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Vivien Jones, ed. *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 320. hb £27.50, pb £13.95. ISBN 0 521 58347 0; 0 521 58680 1.

'If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?' Mary Astell's furious challenge in the year 1700 signals the start of the century's fascination with women and their right to political and intellectual entitlement. By the 1790s, however, the urgency of her question had been

significantly modified, as the reformulation of marriage and women's domestic space was matched by their ability to communicate articulately and influentially on the public stage. As Vivien Jones's edited collection of essays, *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*, most cogently argues, one pivotal factor in this process of transformation was print culture, a growing medium for giving a voice to those who had previously been marginalized and which legitimated the previously unsayable.

Women in Literature in Britain 1700-1800 is a collection of fourteen essays by some of the leading scholars and critics of eighteenth-century culture. It charts the intellectual geography of the century, and in aligning the complementary domains of literature and political change shows clearly the symbiotic relationship between authorship and power. The volume forms a perfect companion piece to Jones's earlier anthology, *Women in the Eighteenth Century*, a work that has already become something of a standard resource for students of the period. Whereas that book brought together the authentic voices of eighteenth-century women through a startlingly eclectic range of texts, this new collection probes more critically the debates surrounding gender politics and their literary manifestations. It provides a once and for all definitive antidote to those earlier authorized versions of the literary eighteenth century, already becoming increasingly shaky and exemplified most starkly by Ian Watt's classic account of *The Rise of the Novel*, a work on which many of these critics were raised.

If women scholars seemed initially slow to refute Watt and other 'official' accounts of the period, they have certainly made up for it in the last twenty years. *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800* draws on the work of these recent feminist historians and on the texts they have been so effective in unearthing. The collection is divided into two complementary sections, which together form a mutually informing dialogue. The first deals with eighteenth-century constructions of femininity, and on women's status as domestic, sexual, racial, legal and civic beings before moving on to the purely literary world. For in the years following Mary Astell's anguished appeal, women achieved genuine fame, as well as notoriety, through journals and letters to their work as educators of other women and girls and even extended to legal interventions. Their most pervasive influence outside the home, however, remained in the field of literature for leisure purposes.

Reflecting this, by far the greatest proportion of this volume is devoted to the novel, the most potent influence on women's increased public presence and the imaginative amalgamation of many other literary forms: the conduct books, educational primers, courtesy and domestic manuals, private diaries as well as an endorsement for the fantasies of power that so enchanted their contemporary audience. For women's relationship with print culture was essentially a dynamic one. Whereas in 1700 barely forty percent of the female population was literate, by mid-century women were both authors and avid consumers. Given this dramatic shift, it is not difficult to understand why so much popular literature of the period figures strong and intriguing heroines, with plots that repeatedly turn on the debates about femininity that were so fundamental to society's self-realization.

Yet it took time for women to establish a distinctively female voice – a gendered intervention into the multiple debates of the period – and beyond. Indeed at the turn of the new century it was more common for women to seek advice from male authority than from members of their own sex. The early conduct books for girls and women are from fathers or equally stern parental substitutes. Lord Halifax's *Advice to a Daughter* or *The Whole Duty of Man* are typically famous examples. In the 1690s the first ever agony column, in the *Athenian Mercury*, was written by a man, John Dunton, although the correspondents were frequently women. Ironically then, if unsurprisingly, the novelist who appears as most illustrative of the century's attitudes is also a man, that printer *extraordinaire*, Samuel Richardson. Publishing in mid-century, this male documentor of women's experience recorded the most comprehensive shifts in women's lives that had occurred since the early 1700s, and went on to influence writers at the end of the period, including most famously, Jane Austen who counted *Sir Charles Gandison* among her favourite reads.

Clarissa of course, which supremely features a scribbling woman, embodies both the prescriptions and the avenues to liberation that authorship confers. As Ros Ballaster suggests here, ‘the hierarchy of male prescript and female imitation is central to the plots, forms, and history of the eighteenth-century novel’: and not only in the novel. If women wanted to be listened to – as well as heard – they had to adopt the postures of more established figures than themselves, those who were already taken seriously: men. No wonder that so many women published under pseudonyms. Yet, as Ballaster intriguingly posits, women protagonists behaved very differently from their authors. Again and again in novels of the period girls are told to be silent, are warned against displaying their learning and forbidden to parade themselves or their intelligence. Thank goodness their creators ignored that conventional advice.

Such discrepancies between the real and the imagined worlds surface with particular intensity throughout this collection. Gillian Skinner’s essay on women and the law, for instance, makes one wonder yet again at the preponderance of the marriage plot in eighteenth-century fiction. If married women were genuinely in ‘a worse condition than slavery itself’, why on earth should they have pursued the activity of husband hunting with such intent? But as more than one essay illustrates, it is in the fiction of the period that the answer to this and other similarly imponderable questions can be found. In a period in which the ideal of the companionate marriage took hold, it is in the novel that the most profound exploration of the social and personal tensions, the anxieties, the familial obligations and the shifts in cultural and economic expectations are disclosed. Both male and female novelists exploited the narrative framework to bring life for an increasingly literate and educated female readership the contemporary debates that had a bearing on their own situation.

It is therefore particularly appropriate that the second half of this collection should return to the well-worked business of literary representation, not just as a platform for women’s articulacy but as licensed territory for enacting the central dialogues of the day. The recurrence of the orphan plot, for example, and the literary motifs of family reunions and illegally diverted inheritance as itemized in Ruth Perry’s essay, reflect the shift in familial relations which privileged the conjugal family over the ties of blood relationships, and resulted in an insidious displacement of women. Perry suggests how daughters consequently came to be seen as occupying a temporary place in the family structure – easily disinherited and displaced. In this, as in a number of these essays, the volume reveals how women were being reconceptualized so as to become dispensable items (and saleable assets) in the family economy.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Barrett Browning looked everywhere for literary grandmothers and found none. This volume goes a long way to explaining why her search was so fruitless. As Isobel Grundy points out in one of the most trenchant pieces in the collection, the rich store of women’s texts remained hidden from public view in a conspiracy of silence and denigration by a male academy of critics, scholars, editors, and publishers. It has taken nearly two centuries for the recovery project to make its presence felt in the wider marketplace as well as in the classroom. *Women and Literature 1700-1800* confirms the centrality of this project to our view of that controversial century.

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John Clare, *Poems of the Middle Period, 1822-1837, Volumes III and IV*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. 1 + 622, xvi + 644. £160 (£80 per volume). ISBN 0 19 812341 8 (vol. III); 0 19 812385 X (vol. IV); 0 19 818298 8 (both vols).

These two volumes, the seventh and eighth of their nine-volume series to appear, focus on Clare’s most ambitious project, *The Midsummer Cushion*. This was his heroic attempt, in the 1830s, to

gather together the best of his uncollected poetry, and fashion from it a substantial and saleable volume. The name comes from the folk idiom. It was, Clare tells us, ‘a very old custom among villagers in summer time to stick a piece of greensward full of field flowers & place it as an ornament in their cottages which ornaments are called Midsummer Cushions’. (In the flyleaf blurb to the first volume under review, these become ‘rectangles of turf’, and the villagers become ‘children’: anachronistic errors originating, I suspect, in the modern ceremony by which Helpstone schoolchildren place rectangular trays of beflowered turf around Clare’s grave on the poet’s birthday.) Clare worked hard to get subscribers for the volume; and the remnants of his subscription lists are usefully gathered in the Introduction to these volumes, drawing heavily on Bob Heyes’s research. But it was in vain: a far more modest and predictable volume was published instead, *The Rural Muse* (1835). *The Midsummer Cushion* itself, Clare’s beautifully self-edited compendium of his very best work, and one of the most important poetry books of its century, was not published until 1979. Its editors then were Anne Tibble and Kelsey Thornton, and the 1990 corrected paperback of that edition has been an invaluable resource for Clare scholars for the last decade. Its Introduction remains the best short essay on *The Midsummer Cushion* to date, though it is usefully supplemented by some of the valuable information in the Introduction to the edition under review.

In editorial terms the two editions are very similar, which is to say that they both follow the ‘textual primitivist’ strategy of presenting Clare without editorial alterations to the (minimal) punctuation or orthography of his manuscripts. Jonathan Bate, reviewing the present volumes in the 1999 *John Clare Society Journal* highlights the oddity of having two ‘unedited’ modern editions of this key work and no ‘edited’ one. A major debate on how Clare should be edited has indeed erupted in the last year or two, fuelled not only by the growing reaction against ‘textual primitivism’, but by the connected issue of Clare’s copyright, currently claimed as his own private property by the General Editor of this edition, Eric Robinson, a claim hotly disputed by Simon Kövesi (and others including the present reviewer). Copyright apart, the oddity Bate highlights represent a genuine problem, and although we can hardly expect Robinson, Powell and Dawson to abandon their ‘primitivist’ strategy at this late stage in the Clarendon edition, we shall certainly still need an ‘edited’ text, too. The Clarendon edition can not be regarded as in any sense final.

What these two Clarendon volumes *do* offer that is not in the Tibble/Thornton edition, apart from the subscription lists, is a wealth of manuscript variants, so that we have a much richer sense of the poems and their development. Some unpublished passages are unearthed, such as Clare’s description of animal shadow-puppet-making, among the revelries of ‘St Martins Eve’:

Then one with fingers linked will shadow plain
A rabbit on the wall—that mumps & broods
& starts its ears & drops them down again
Simple device caught from the heaths & woods
By length of toil well known & understood
& then another not to be out done
Makes with his fist a boreshead champing grain
Increase of shouts & laughter ekes the fun
& other tricks as droll still add to those begun (III, 274)

Like much of folk culture this ‘simple device’ devolved down to children’s entertainment and may now have died out, and Clare’s unmatched ability to catch and preserve such ritual culture in a literary form is still one of the most valued features of his poetry.

We are also given here some 240 pages of ‘Poems in Other Manuscripts’. Their relationship with the *Midsummer Cushion* material is not made precisely clear, but the impression given is that these are the remnants of the Helpstone-period poetry that have not yet been published in any other volume. They include important poems like ‘Triumphs of Time’, Clare’s best piece on the sense of

antiquity. There is the childrens' poem 'The Moth & The Faireys a Tale', strangely redolent of some of Bloomfield's narrative poems (Bloomfield also wrote well for children). And there are several of Clare's feisty and hitherto uncollected political satires, including 'The Summons', 'The Hue and Cry', and a 'Familiar Epistle to a Friend' that Clare describes as 'another shoot at follies as they flye', but which feels more like a drinking song:

Now ranting madmen take the street
A sort of saintish smugglers
Who bawl their cant to all they meet
Like Mountebanks & jugglers
Poor sinners like to you & I
With terrors they regale us
Of brimstone drink when h—lls adry
As if nick kept an alehouse (IV, 511)

(Those lacking the necessary £160 will be relieved to know that this group of political/carnavalesque poems is also reprinted in the new Carcanet volume of Clare's political writings, *A Champion for the Poor*, edited by P.M.S. Dawson *et al.*)

There are still exciting discoveries to be made, then, among the enormous sprawl of Clare's poetry manuscripts, and one is grateful to the Clarendon editors for their continuing Herculean labours in the archives. Eight down; one to go: and if the ardour for textual primitivism, described by John Barrell as being like 'discovering the original of a great painting previously known only through engravings', seems now to have cooled, then this great edition will be its monument, one that no future Clare editor or reader can afford to ignore.

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***The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Volume One.* Eds. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xlviii + 492. £58 (\$75). ISBN 0 8018 6119 5.**

Reiman and Fraistat pay generous tribute to their great predecessor. Mary Shelley began her editorial work soon after her husband's death. She gathered letters, and first editions, and she studied his manuscripts: 'Working with her intimate and unequalled knowledge of PBS's hand and his habits of composition', she deciphered fragments 'scrawled nearly indecipherably into notebooks wherever PBS could find space, so that sometimes drafts for different poems are jumbled together on the same page or a single poem is interspersed with others throughout a notebook, or even continued in other notebooks without any indication'. The outcome was the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, and two editions of the *Poetical Works* in 1839 and 1840. Only in 1946, when most of the notebooks in the possession of the Shelley family were donated to the Bodleian, did it become possible to produce an edition of the poetry that superseded Mary Shelley's, and the task fell to the distinguished scholar, Neville Rogers. His was to be in four volumes: the first was published by Oxford University Press in 1972 and the second in 1975, and their reception was such that the Press decided to discontinue the edition. The decision was a blow to Shelley scholarship and a personal tragedy for Rogers, but it was right. Rogers had come to the view that Shelley's manuscripts and first editions had less authority than the texts produced by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editors, such as W. M. Rossetti and Thomas Hutchinson, who had, because of their incomplete access to the primary materials, necessarily edited on impressionistic principles.

Rogers dismissed as a 'myth' the notion that it was the task of Shelley's editor to correct the text of poems unpublished in Shelley's lifetime by reference to the manuscripts on the ground that Shelley's successive editors have worked to correct errors 'of which his manuscripts are usually the source'. Meanwhile, Longman had commissioned Geoffrey Matthews to produce an edition of Shelley for their series, 'Annotated English Poets', which, in the wake of the Rogers debacle, was anticipated as the definitive edition of Shelley's poems. But in 1984 Matthews died. It fell to Matthews's student, Kelvin Everest, to complete the edition, the first volume of which was published in 1989, the second in 2000, and the third and final volume will follow in 2002. All of the poems included in Reiman and Fraistat's volume (of a projected six) – *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, *The Wandering Jew*, *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*, the poems from *St Irvyne*, *The Devil's Walk*, and ten early poems – appear in the first volume of the Longman with the exception of a single lyric, 'Oh wretched mortal, hard thy fate!', which Reiman and Fraistat have been able to add to the canon. In these circumstances my task is not simply to describe Reiman and Fraistat's version but to indicate its differences from Everest's.

Both editions are based on a study of manuscripts and first editions. The editorial principles of the Longman series obliged Everest to arrange the poems in chronological order of composition, which is problematic because few of Shelley's unpublished poems can be precisely dated. For example, Everest ascribes the fragment, 'Sadak the Wanderer' (a poem that Reiman and Fraistat argue convincingly is probably not by Shelley and may well have been written in the 1820s) to the year 1809, but the headnote to the poem accepts that the date of composition is unknown. Reiman and Fraistat's principle of arrangement depends upon a rigorous distinction between 'released' and 'unreleased' poetry. In this volume only the advantages of the decision are apparent. Most importantly, it allows Reiman and Fraistat to preserve in their edition the integrity of the nine volumes of verse that Shelley published in his lifetime. In this volume, for example, *Original Poetry: by Victor and Cazire* is edited in its entirety: Everest omits two poems as the work of 'Cazire', Shelley's sister Elizabeth, and a third, 'St Edmond's Eve', because it is a wholesale plagiarism of a poem probably by Matthew Lewis. But, as Reiman and Fraistat note, even though the two omitted poems are almost certainly the work of Elizabeth, it may well be that they were re-worked by her brother, and in any case there is a virtue in making available to the reader the contents of the entire volume. As they proceed, Reiman and Fraistat will encounter some tricky problems of how to deal with volumes that Shelley tried but failed to publish, or only spoke of publishing, and problems too about what constitutes publication. But so far the principle seems to work well.

Reiman and Fraistat preserve spelling, except for clear errors, and preserve punctuation except when it is positively misleading. Everest modernizes spelling, except when there is good reason not to. His tendency is to preserve punctuation, but he is prepared to re-punctuate when to do so helps to clarify the sense. This is a crucial difference in method, but its effect will not be apparent until it is possible to compare, for example, the editions of *Prometheus Unbound*, because in most of these juvenile poems there is not much sense, and what sense there is is neither very difficult nor very interesting.

Reiman and Fraistat, unlike Everest, have collated all primary authorities, and this in itself establishes the Reiman and Fraistat edition as the more authoritative text. Reiman brought to the project an unequalled knowledge of Shelley's manuscripts, and the additional work that he and Fraistat have undertaken for even this first volume is prodigious. Of six known first editions of the *Posthumous Fragments*, for example, Reiman and Fraistat have examined and collated five. In addition, they have collated all major later editions of the poems, so that the volume offers not just a full explanation of the editors' textual decisions but also a full history of the editing of each of the poems included.

Nevertheless, this edition complements rather than supersedes Everest's. First, Reiman and Fraistat separate their text of the poems from their commentary. Everest's notes are on the same

page as his text, and this makes his the more convenient reading edition for most purposes. Second, Reiman and Fraistat edit more conservatively than Everest, following their copy text whenever it is possible to make some sort of sense of it. Everest emends rarely, but often with great intelligence, as when in 'Sadaq the Wanderer' he conjectures that the reference to the 'sheltered brow' of a mountain is the printer's misreading of the phrase 'shattered brow'. Both editions are founded on the skill of the editors in deciphering Shelley's manuscripts, but there are times when Everest's reading seems the more probable. In the version of 'The Devil's Walk' transcribed in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, for example, Everest equips the Devil with 'Iron teeth', Reiman and Fraistat with 'hore teeth', which is, as they note, unmetrical, and relies for its sense on Shelley using adjectivally an obsolete word meaning 'filth'.

This volume of 492 pages offers an edition of forty-one poems. Everest's first volume, a hundred pages longer, includes 141 poems. The difference is more extreme than this comparison suggests, because Everest's first volume includes *Queen Mab*. It is hard to see how, at this rate, Reiman and Fraistat will succeed in completing their edition of Shelley's poems (nearly five hundred of them, some of them lengthy) in six volumes. The editorial matter reveals an awesome depth and range of knowledge, but it is diffusely presented. There are advantages in this. It is possible to read through the commentaries as if one were reading an unusually well-informed critical work, and it is impossible to read through them without learning a very great deal; about publishing and printing practices, about Shelley's compositional habits, and about other contemporary writing. But it does suggest that there is a real danger that the edition will not be completed by its present editors, and this first volume is so very good that that would be a matter for great regret.

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Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (General Eds.), *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion 1770-1835*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000. 4 vols (Vol. 1, *North America*, ed. Tim Fulford with Carol Bolton. Pp. 405; Vol. 2, *Far East*, eds. Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson. Pp. 389; Vol. 3, *North and South Poles*, ed. Peter J. Kitson. Pp. 401; Vol. 4, *Middle East and Index*, ed. Tilar J. Mazzeo. Pp. 368). £350. ISBN 1 851 967206 (set).

Travel writing was a vast field of literary production in the Romantic era, with a place in the print culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and in the consciousness of readers, that can hardly be overstated. As the *Annual Review* noted in 1806, 'narratives of voyages and travels, and foreign topography, are of all books, perhaps, the best calculated to excite a strong and general interest in the reading part of the community'. This popularity was created by a flood of new travel narratives recounting journeys to almost every corner of the world. Thomas De Quincey fashions a vignette in *Suspiria De Profundis* in which his childhood self inadvertently signs up for a fifteen-thousand-volume series of voyage narratives, and whilst De Quincey is here employing the comic grotesque (young De Quincey has nightmares in which books arrive by cart- and wagon-load), this scene is not wholly divorced from reality. De Quincey has in mind, no doubt, ventures such as William Mavor's *Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries* (1796-1801) and John Pinkerton's *General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels* (1808-1814), which weighed in at a daunting twenty-five volumes and seventeen volumes respectively. These and similar (if smaller) series sought to marshal and delimit a genre which was both exhilaratingly and bewilderingly fertile. Stimulating science, fantasy and

anxiety in equal measure, travel literature offered Romantic readers new ideas and images, new heroes and villains – and, not least, a vertiginous sense of information-overload.

Something of the excitement, energy and sheer prolixity of the genre is restored to us with the publication of *Travels, Explorations and Empires*. This handsomely-produced anthology of Romantic era travel writing, under the general editorship of Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson, rides a growing wave of academic interest in travel writing, as evidenced in the work of Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, John Barrell, Nigel Leask, Alan Richardson, Sonia Hofkosh, Saree Makdisi and many others. Yet a problem attendant on this resurgent interest in ‘Voyages and Travels’ has always been the difficulty of getting hold of the primary texts, at least for those without access to a major research library. *Travels, Explorations and Empires* should do much to rectify this situation, not least because it is a publishing project on the scale of those by Mavor and Pinkerton (whilst falling reassuringly short of fifteen-thousand volumes). There are four volumes in the present series, covering North America, the Far East, the North and South Poles, and the Middle East (this volume also includes an index to the whole collection). A further series, due out in January 2002, will add another four volumes, taking in the South and Central Pacific, Africa, South America and the Caribbean, and India. *En masse*, the eight-volume series will give us something of the world as it was encountered both by travellers and by readers in the Romantic age.

The four volumes currently available offer substantial extracts, reproduced in facsimile, from forty-nine travel narratives. In each case these include both the landmark texts which did most to construct a given region for contemporary science and for the contemporary reader – Hearne and Mackenzie in North America, for example, or Parry and Franklin in connection with the North West Passage – and a variety of less familiar documents: missionary accounts, captivity narratives and the like. The emphasis is on British knowledge of a region, and it is accordingly British and North American travellers who are best represented, although foreign works that were generally known in Britain are also included. Each extract, and each volume as a whole, is ably introduced, giving the reader a brisk but coherent overview of the commercial, diplomatic and military contexts in which the texts were produced (although the absence of any maps is somewhat inconvenient); there are also excellent, up-to-date bibliographies giving pointers to further reading.

Each individual volume thus constitutes an outstanding introduction to Britain’s knowledge of, and engagement with, a given region of the world, at a critical historical juncture in which Britain was emerging as the pre-eminent world power. In combination, however, the volumes are still more valuable. The institutional forces driving exploration become clearly apparent when one compares exploratory activity in areas far-removed from each other; also highlighted in this way is the key role played by central figures such as Sir Joseph Banks at the Royal Society. The dominant discourses which provided exploration and empire with their rationale – Enlightenment science (particularly in its Linnaean form), sentimentalism, mercantilism, evangelicalism and the like – likewise come more sharply into focus when one perceives similar rhetorical strategies used to describe very different peoples and places. If the inevitable limitation of this collection is that we only have extracts from the original narratives, the strength of this anthologising approach is the scope it offers for illuminating comparisons and contrasts of this sort.

‘Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions’. So writes De Quincey in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and the global reach of De Quincey’s imagination here is replicated in innumerable fictions and poems of the age (think of *Alastor*, *Childe Harold* 1 and 2, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Frankenstein*...). *Travels, Explorations and Empires* reconstructs the privileged position of the Romantic author, able as never before to make a pan-optic survey of the whole world, and then to refashion that world in literature. More importantly, since there are few today who subscribe unequivocally to the ‘Romantic Ideology’, which sees literature as transcendent of its historical circumstances, this collection allows us to interrogate such acts of imaginative appropriation (which may or may not be complicit with

more material forms of appropriation). *Travels, Explorations and Empires* should itself enable an exploration of Romanticism's complex entanglement with the many expansionist discourses of the era; it is an expensive collection, but any library seeking to represent seriously the writings of the Romantic age should make the investment.

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