

Julia Swindells, *Glorious Causes: The Grand Theatre of Political Change, 1789 to 1833*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp.202. £40. ISBN 0 19 818729 7.

Once considered the poor, uncultured relation of fiction and poetry, Romantic drama has recently undergone an exciting re-evaluation. Over the past decade critical studies like Gillian Russell's *The Theatres of War* (1995) and Judith Pascoe's *Romantic Theatricality* (1997) have presented the theatres of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as challenging and subversive arenas for staging the political concerns of the day. Julia Swindells's *Glorious Causes* updates the argument for theatrical prominence to the 1830s, when both the Reform Bill and the Dramatic Literature Act failed to achieve the applause expected of such dramatic gestures.

The 'glorious causes' of the title include 'the factory movement, the early women's movement, agrarian reform, the abolition movement, and above all the movement to reform the parliamentary franchise itself', all of which, Swindells argues, 'drew heavily on the rhetoric of the drama and theatrical forms' (p.137). While 'theatricality was indispensable' to the reforming zeal of this period (p. xi), theatre was similarly imbued with a profound political awareness: both dramatic content and audience 'politically informed and integrated' (p.74). Although the argument supporting the Romantic theatricality of politics and the politicization of theatre is no longer contested, Swindells occasionally over-defends her statements with dramatic flourish, no more so than in the slightly affected dramatization of the 1832 Select Committee on Dramatic Literature which forms the 'Epilogue' to the text.

Swindells's argument is most convincing when she leaves the well-trodden boards of English response to the French Revolution or the abolition of slavery and stages more incisive debates about the politics of factory and agrarian reform in the early nineteenth century. Plays such as Douglas Jerrold's *The Factory Girl* and John Walker's *The Factory Lad*, analyzed alongside Richard Oastler's *Eight Letters to the Duke of Wellington* (all 1832), provide incisive commentary on those subject to domestic exploitation and offered a contemporary audience 'warning[s] that fire and insurrection will follow if labour relations at home, in the sense of both hearth and nation, are not given proper consideration' (p.87). Dramatic depictions of agricultural labourers further contributed to raising awareness of rural poverty but also presented the theatre-going public with the full political complexity of the situation in the countryside. The 1830s saw the rise of incendiary rural agitation under the tutelage of the mythical Captain Swing and the theatre represented workers who, on the one hand, were violent participants in machine breaking, but, on the other, embodied 'the more durable passions and morals' (p.97).

Presenting 'theatre audiences [as] political audiences' and 'theatre [as] a rare if not unique forum', however, encourages Swindells often to elide the differences between audience members (p.147; p.152). While she does acknowledge that the architectural design of theatres and the 'hierarchy of ticket prices' 'undoubtedly ensured elements of segregation', Swindells uncritically employs the term 'audience response' throughout *Glorious Causes*. It is simply not enough to claim that: 'Theatre audiences generated a set of responses which could cross classes, could be articulated publicly in sets of exchanges between members from different class positions across the aristocratic-plebeian continuum, and between women and men' (p.152). Would a landowner who charged impossible rents for his distressed tenants, respond quite as favourably as an agricultural labourer to the sympathetically drawn protagonists in agrarian reform plays? And, at a time when the powerful aristocracy were deserting the theatre in droves, would those with political influence even concern themselves

with dramatic representations of the country's distress? Would a metropolitan worker feel quite the same sympathy for his or her rural counterpart?

Swindells deals more carefully with the vital relationship between actor and audience, politician and public by offering tentatively the 'concept of the moral actor' in the final chapter of *Glorious Causes*. While, by Swindells' own acknowledgment, this is a 'little vaguely formulated' (n.71, p.158), it offers a theorization of the ways in which an actor (or politician), embodying the position of humanitarian sensibility, can generate a feeling of group consciousness (p.154). As Swindells puts it: 'the context of theatricality lent to politics not only a dialectical audience process, but also an individual model of enactment. [. . .] [The moral actor] had the capacity not only to cross the boundary between classes and between political and theatrical performance, but also to offer an exploratory mode of enactment in doing so' (p.158). The concern with this form of representation to the public, as Diderot recognized in 'Paradoxe sur le Comédien' (published 1830), was the possibility of insincerity, how 'sensibility, via acting could constitute a dangerous form of misrepresentation, particularly, by implication, if misapplied by politicians' (Swindells, p.162). Swindells' final chapter, which could perhaps have appeared earlier in this text, seems to owe more than a little to Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759); a point Swindells does not acknowledge.

Glorious Causes is often a curious *mêlée* of incisive interpretation and tired performances. Most frustrating is the inclusion of some fascinating illustrations not discussed in the text, of which the satire on political debate in the form of a playbill, which would surely enhance Swindells's argument, is a startling omission. One feels that if Swindells had not sought to include and reiterate the often-narrated stories of every 'minority group' in her discussion, her book could have been placed gloriously centre stage rather than remaining expectantly in the wings. Although, in the least studied and least valued aspect of Romantic culture, Julia Swindells' *Glorious Causes* is still a welcome addition.

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Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic Period Writing*. The Nineteenth Century Series. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. vii + 229. £42.50. ISBN 0 7546 0332 6.

In her 'broadly historicist' study of 'animals in Romantic period writing', Christine Kenyon-Jones sets out to examine 'professional or cultural discourses which include approaches to animals alongside self-consciously literary or poetic writing' (p. 203). She is undoubtedly right to identify 'the Romantic era as a rich source of such material', although her study often points precisely to the blurring of this perceived distinction between the 'professional or cultural' and the 'literary or poetic' (p. 2). Drawing in particular on recent accounts of Romanticism's proto-ecological tendencies (Bate et al.), Kenyon-Jones suggests that 'it was in Romantic-period Europe', in the 'context of a new emphasis on nature', that 'humankind first seriously began to question its own centrality to the world in relation to animals' (p.1, p.2). Thus her Introduction locates the historical origins of the animal-related issues 'on which we still feel ourselves...deeply uncertain at the opening of the twenty-first century' firmly in the Romantic period (p.1). This is a thoughtful and provocative premise, not least since Green readings of Romanticism have not had a great deal to

say about animals, and if Kenyon-Jones does not develop it as thoroughly as one would wish, then this is due in part to the range of material she addresses. Her concluding chapter, 'Animals Then and Now', amply demonstrates this range, enumerating animal rights, vegetarianism, and the nascent evolutionary debate as but a few of the 'animal-related topics [which] had a new or emergent (as well as an old) importance in the Romantic period' (p. 204).

Kenyon-Jones begins with 'several different readings' of Byron's 'Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog', using them to present 'material which is relevant as a background' to her study 'as a whole' (p. 4). These readings introduce and describe Byron's 'theriophily', positioning it within a long history of enquiry into the relationship between animals and humans, and relating it to emerging questions about 'the rights of brutes' (p. 12, p. 38). These issues are followed up in Chapter 2's account of the use of animals in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century children's literature and educational theory. Starting with the 'contrast in value between instruction and imagination' that was central to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's understanding of the educational process, Kenyon-Jones describes the way in which early nineteenth-century children's literature inflected the varying use of animals in the foundational pedagogical treatises of Locke and Rousseau (p. 51). 'Animal material in particular', she suggests, 'was at the forefront of the debate [about education], since the ways in which children were defined in the adult world were often discussed in these texts through animal paradigms, while relationships with pets and other animals provided a way for children to explore their connection with the rest of society' (p. 56).

Social connections are explored at length in Chapter 3, 'Political Animals', which examines the 1800, 1802, and 1809 parliamentary debates about animal rights, showing how 'the issue of animal cruelty' was bound up with larger, post-Revolutionary questions about 'rights and citizenship' (p. 40). Kenyon-Jones ably demonstrates, here, that the politics of 'animal-related topics' was (as indeed it still is) a function of broader political debate, informed by the same 'complex antitheses between tradition and innovation, Englishness and foreignness, Gothicism and classicism, romantic chivalry and practical politics' that marked British political discourse *per se* after Burke's *Reflections* (80).

Despite its many perceptive readings, however, *Kindred Brutes* is occasionally unfocused, unsure of its direction. One might cite the discussion of Keats (in Chapter 6) as exemplary. Kenyon-Jones states that she will 'look at how [Keats] approaches animals from the *anatomical* inside, in his capacity as a student of science, aware of the theories and practices of his time which anatomised, dissected and displayed them inside-out' (p. 170). While her brief (9-page) analysis of Keats in no sense follows this agenda, we are given an interesting account of Keats's interest in 'monstrosities', an account which paves the way for the chapter's main discussion of Byron's engagement with catastrophism and evolutionism.

The range of 'literary' analysis here could also be questioned. Byron's work is 'taken' from the outset 'as both a typical exemplar of, and a polarised opposite to, many of the characteristic approaches to animals in his era' and throughout the book, it is Byron who receives by far the most sustained and rewarding attention. Indeed, despite useful overviews of Shelley's vegetarianism (Ch. 4), and of the curious absence of animals from Wordsworthian Nature (Ch. 5), one is left with the impression that, as far as the 'literary' is concerned, this is more a book about Byron than about 'Romantic period writing' *per se*. It has to be said, too, that while Kenyon-Jones draws attention to the 'literary approach' – the focus on 'the art of individual

texts' – which she believes distinguishes her book from 'many other cultural studies of animals', *Kindred Brutes* is consistently at its strongest when discussing non-'literary' sources (p. 6).

Overall, then, this is a revealing and informative safari into a long-neglected area of Romantic writing, but we don't see all the big game.

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Dustin Griffin, *Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002. Pp. 316. £40. ISBN 0 521 81118 X.

Recent years have seen a number of political studies of eighteenth-century poetry drawing on cultural studies and new historicism to revive interest in a politically vibrant era, the edge of which had been blunted by a long tradition of constitutional history and factional conflicts of Whig versus Tory. Although they should not be grouped together in terms of their approaches and arguments, texts such as Howard Weinbrot's *Britannia's Issue* (1993), Katie Trumpener's *Bardic Nationalism* (1997) and Colin Kidd's *British Identities before Nationalism* (1999), have focussed attention on the subject of literature and nationalism (which Griffin carefully – and correctly – distinguishes from patriotism) during the eighteenth century. The increasingly wide range of such books makes me slightly suspicious of Griffin's claim that there has been a dearth of serious attention paid to patriotic poetry during the twentieth century, something which is certainly not the case since the 1990s, but he is quite right to situate himself amongst studies of such poetry that reject an apolitical view of poetry between Pope and the Romantics. One of the most delightful features of this engaged and erudite study of mid- and late-eighteenth-century poetry is Griffin's demonstration, again and again, of the ways in which a private survey of the English countryside, or the labour and progress of shepherding, serve as a commentary on the state of the British nation, that an overarching theme of much verse during this period was to combine the pastoral and georgic so that, as in Virgil's *Georgics*, 'a vision of empire is given the shape of instruction in a rural art' (p.183).

Griffin suggests, in the opening chapters that offer an overview of eighteenth-century patriotic poetry, that nearly every poet during this time made claims that could be considered patriotic. The struggle with France for European hegemony, as well as commercial transformations at home and the Jacobite rebellion, raised a patriotic consciousness that was not always simply xenophobic – a point made by Roy Porter in his recent book on the Enlightenment. Griffin is even-handed and very fair in his assessment of the development of patriotic poetry during this time, including the public role of the poet: even the most apparently private of poets, such as Cowper, were very much concerned with the effect their work could have on the public, hence the significance of a role model such as Pindar, whose odes were intended as celebration of ideals to be emulated by public figures. Patriotism was, as ever, a complex subject, whereby the 'patriotic' Opposition to Walpole could portray itself as the more loyal preserver of traditional English 'liberties', at the same time that many commentators began to view such patriots as exploiting love of country for personal ambition. As such, writers increasingly aspired 'to be a "patriot" – small *p* – [and so could] aspire to be free even of Patriot ideology, and to serve the state directly' (p.72).

The main part of *Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain* concentrates on close and careful readings of a number of poets from Pope to Ann

Yearsley. For many of the writers considered by Griffin, notably James Thomson (of 'Rule Britannia' fame), the case for the public role of patriot-poet barely needs to be aired. Other figures, however, are considerably more contentious and generally more interesting than when dealing with overtly patriotic poets: Griffin is clear and concise when suggesting the ways in which writers such as Akenside, Collins and Gray must be viewed as intimately concerned with political debates of the day, rather than as reclusive precursors to a nineteenth-century myth of withdrawal that they would barely recognise. If such writers are concerned with the English countryside or the role of poetry, this is not an obsession with their own subjectivity in the landscape or language, but rather the creation of a particular vision of *Englishness* and the attempt to imagine the role of a poet who would be capable of intervening in public debate. While Griffin is correct that nearly every eighteenth century writer is much more concerned with politics than later critics have given them credit for, the danger must be that for all writers to be patriotic and political ends up with a potential inflation of those terms that does not always tell us very much. In the chapters on Smart and Cowper, Griffin's comments on Cowper as the monitor of the nation's conscience impress, but the reading of Smart left me with few other impressions than the fact that Smart was interested in politics like everyone else. Occasionally, Griffin is fighting an apolitical reading of eighteenth-century verse that has not really been in vogue for at least two decades, and is really no more than a straw target.

My favourite chapter, where the author's insight and research is a revelation, deals with John Dyer's *The Fleece*, an epic work on sheep-shearing generally considered more sinning than sinned against. Where Griffin excels, as here, he strips away conventional readings of a text to place it once again within the lively and engaged critical context where it was first received, demonstrating with this particular text how Dyer had 'invented a powerful vision of Britain as a community of labour – sheep-farmers, carders, spinners, weavers, and traders – united by their participation in one stage or other of the wool trade' (p.181). Griffin is aware of the tensions of this imagined community, that, in the words of Simon Schama, the *pax Britannia* had by the end of the eighteenth century somehow become the 'wrong empire'. At the same time, however, he argues convincingly for a renewed interest in the literary culture of the day that has been much neglected by subsequent readers of eighteenth-century poetry.

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Younglim Han, *Romantic Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001. Pp. 252. £35. ISBN 0 8386 3873 2.

The Romantic preoccupation with both the life and works of William Shakespeare has received considerable critical attention, particular during the last two decades. Studies of the literary influence of the poems and plays within the work of the canonical poets, analysis of the distinctive critical interventions of the period's prose writers, and accounts of the important theatrical re-interpretations of actors such as Edmund Kean and Sarah Siddons have broadened our understanding of the pervasive presence of Shakespeare within Romanticism. Central to this critical endeavour, of course, has been the work of Jonathon Bate, whose complementary volumes, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (1986) and *Shakespearean Constitutions* (1989),

together emphasise the interrelationship between a clearly defined literary influence and the wider cultural embeddedness of the Shakespeare canon.

Whilst it develops from within an awareness of this broad cultural context, Younglim Han's study limits its focus to a narrow definition of Romanticism which 'is confined to the critical ideas which the three Romantics – Lamb, Coleridge and Hazlitt – applied to their interpretations of Shakespeare's plays' (p.13). The methodological framework for the book is provided by sustained reference to twentieth-century reader response theory. Three author-focussed chapters are prefaced by two chapters that examine the literary and cultural contexts of the critics' work. The first of these discusses 'Romantic' criticism in light of contemporary stage practice and the development of an anti-theatricalism in response to a perceived over-reliance on stage spectacle. Han proceeds to argue that Romantic criticism developed the notion of an ideal 'socially and intellectually elite reader' who 'is able to view the author's language in terms of its organic relationship with the text as a whole' (p.54). This combination of 'elitism' and 'holism', she suggests, is reproduced in the practices of reader-response critics. The second chapter explores the relationship between the ostensibly empirical scholarship of Edmund Malone on the one hand and the apparently more idealising work of the Romantics on the other. Han argues that 'Malone's editorial and scholarly aims, such as the identification of the factual documents of Shakespeare's biography, the attempt to establish the authenticity of Shakespeare's texts, and the reconstruction of Shakespeare's personal experiences through in-depth readings of his works, paved way for Romantic critical practices' (p.55).

The majority of the volume comprises three chapters on Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Hazlitt. Lamb's work is discussed in relation to Wolfgang Iser's 'gap of indeterminacy'. Han suggests that both critics see the text as inviting the reader to respond with a creative engagement which is nonetheless contained within certain textually defined limits. Coleridge's criticism is approached via a reading of Stanley Fish's concept of an 'interpretative community'. The Romantic critic is defended against the often-made charge of plagiarism and seen instead to be working within an historically specific 'community' of shared critical endeavour. In a final chapter, Hazlitt's more radical and politically engaged accounts of Shakespeare's work is read against Hans Robert Jauss's idea of 'dialogic communication'. Jauss's 'theory of a progressive reception of past art' is related by Han to what she terms 'Hazlitt's approach to the theatre criticism as an act of constituting the meaning of a past work for the present time' (p.208).

There is no concluding chapter to the book and this absence highlights a possible central weakness. Whilst Han discusses a considerable amount of fascinating primary and secondary material, she largely works within the parameters of existing critical discussions. The book's claim to distinctiveness lies in its deployment of reader-response theories in relation to Romantic Shakespeare criticism. However, it is unclear in what ways these two areas of critical practice are being brought together. Early on, Han claims that 'the purpose of this study is to provide a rightful assessment of the validity and modernity of British Romanticism, by looking into a set of shared assumptions which exist between Romantic and contemporary theories of the relation of the text to the reader' (p.13). Here, and in the book as a whole, there seem to be three competing and not fully integrated arguments. The first of these reads Romantic Shakespeare criticism as a distinct product of its own historical moment. The second line of argument interprets the Romantic critics as 'modern' in their effective anticipation of twentieth-century critical theory. The final tendency seems to be

towards an argument that aims to establish a transhistorical ‘validity’ for Romantic critical pronouncements. As a result of this apparent confusion, the book’s focus is somewhat diffuse and the possibly arbitrary pairings of Romantic and reader-response critics can come to seem like an intellectual exercise which lacks a clear overall purpose.

However, apart from my reservations on these points, there is much in this book to entertain and instruct. Although the argument at local and general levels is somewhat unclear, the material discussed – ranging from eighteenth-century editorial practice to detailed accounts of late twentieth-century stage productions – is constantly interesting. Anyone working on the period’s engagement with the Shakespearean canon will benefit from the helpful overview provided by this book.

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Fiona Stafford, *Starting Lines in Scottish, Irish, and English Poetry: From Burns to Heaney*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000. Pp. 357. £50. ISBN 0 19 818637 1.

This is a book about predecessors, about the ways in which poets and poems draw on past models and influences. While it could be argued, as Fiona Stafford points out, that every poem starts with an earlier poem simply by adopting an established literary form and that many works begin with a general reference to an earlier work or tradition, the book concentrates on poems which start with a direct quotation from another poem.

The book celebrates the power of words and language. Stafford sets out to answer a series of questions. Does an eighteenth-century epigraph work in the same way as a post-modern quotation? How does the use of a quotation deepen and enrich the meaning of a later poem? What is the attitude of the later poet to the predecessor’s words? How can a preoccupation with originality (such as we find in both the Romantic period and in Irish twentieth-century poetry) be reconciled with the use of quotation?

All of the inter-poetic relationships discussed cross national boundaries, largely but not entirely within the British Isles (there is some discussion of Seamus Heaney’s use of quotation from Czeslaw Milosz, for example). This reflects the second of Stafford’s interests – the ways that texts interact within a framework of issues of nationhood, language, history and cultural tradition. After an introduction that explores an impressive range of ideas and issues, the remainder of the book is devoted to a series of close readings. The chosen poets and poems range over two centuries, from Burns’s ‘A Winter Night’ and its Shakespearean epigraph to Seamus Heaney’s use of a quotation drawn from Henry Vaughan’s elegy, ‘They are all gone into the world of light’. While herself admitting that the variety of literary encounters means that ‘the poems as a group seem resistant to any single theory of influence or intertextuality’, Stafford manages to draw convincing parallels between seemingly disparate poems from very different time periods.

Other poetic pairings singled out for detailed discussion include Coleridge’s reference to ‘Sir Patrick Spence’ in ‘Dejection: An Ode’; James Clarence Mangan’s quotation from Shelley at the beginning of ‘The Dying Enthusiast to His Friend’; Ciaran Carson’s use of Keats’s ‘Ode to a Nightingale’; and the transformation of Felicia Hemans’s ‘The Homes of England’ into Noel Coward’s parodic ‘The Stately Homes of England’, Hemans’s poem itself beginning with an epigraph from Scott.

Each of the selected poems is considered within its historical, political and cultural context, as Stafford attempts to uncover some of the ways in which the poem 'responds to, grows from, or coexists' with the earlier text. The relationships between the later poems and their opening quotations are complicated and multifaceted, often seeming to change under further investigation. The contextual information is rich and detailed and the book rests on a foundation of extensive reading and knowledge.

A poet's use of quotation to set up a dialogue with the past, of course, has the potential to be both positive and negative. For some poems, the use of quotation creates a site of conflict, while for others quotation offers, as Stafford suggests, 'the possibility of amusement, secret communication, and even deep consolation.' Later poems inevitably offer alternative perspectives in their responses – responding to changed circumstances and different contemporary demands. Tracing the ways in which new ideas of originality and equally new ideas of the nation were developing during the late eighteenth century, she examines the complex relationships between originality, influence and inheritance and explores some of the ways in which nationalism can be expressed through poetic choice, considering whether those choices are essentially political as well as literary.

Although Stafford considers poets and poems from England, Scotland and Ireland, she has a particular interest in Irish poetry. Arguing that 'for a modern Irish writer to begin a poem with a line from an English writer is overtly political', Stafford draws comparisons between twentieth-century Ireland and eighteenth-century Scotland – where she sees common preoccupations with language and national identity. Both of her twentieth-century examples (and one of the nineteenth-century poems) are by Irish poets. This has the unfortunate effect of making the book somewhat unbalanced. Consideration of twentieth-century Scottish and/or English texts would have allowed for a more even discussion and would have enabled some interesting comparisons to be made.

The close attention paid to a limited number of poems means that the author does not try to draw too many general conclusions. This is both a strength and a limitation of this book. Nevertheless, Stafford provides finely honed and at times exhilarating close readings and has opened up some exciting ways to approach the relationship between the poets and poetry of England, Ireland and Scotland. This is a rewarding and often elegant read and I found my own appreciation for and understanding of the selected poems considerably increased.

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Ghislaine McDayter, Guinn Batten, and Barry Milligan (ed.), *Romantic Generations: Essays in Honor of Robert F. Gleckner*. London and Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press/Associated University Presses, 2001. Pp. 301. £38 (\$46). ISBN 0 8387 5470 8

As festschrifts go, this one promises to be notably cohesive, since it demonstrates the work of a specific group of younger scholars taught by Robert F. Gleckner when he moved to Duke University in the 1980s. This was the period when, as the Introduction claims (p. 13), Duke was becoming 'one of the most exciting - and controversial - incubators of theory in America'. Furthermore, the group has continued to meet annually since then, as the Duke Romanticists Collective. But although the Duke-induced interest in poststructuralist theory is evident here, there is, in the spirit of

Gleckner, no over-riding allegiance to any particular school of criticism. Indeed, like the work of the distinguished romanticist whom it honours, the volume is eclectic in its approach and also in its extent, ranging widely and deeply over Romanticism, its antecedents and its inheritors. There is also a notably Irish flavour to the collection, with four essays on Irish writing, including Guinn Batten's impressive juxtaposition of Blake, Yeats and Paul Muldoon as 'fin de siècle' poets haunted by demiurgic contraries.

The collection aims to be 'a conversation', and as incitements to discussion I particularly liked two essays which proposed to excavate some of the more entrenched positions of the Romantic edifice. Saree Makdisi's 'Blake, America, and the World' (pp. 83-101) challenges the dominant narrative which arranges Blake's prophecies *Asia, Africa, Europe* and *America* into a sequence showing history sweeping westwards to revolution and then back east again. This approach has read *America* (after David Erdman) as telling the story, and celebrating the goals and accomplishments, of the American War of Independence. Makdisi questions not only the specific fit between *America* and America (particularly with regard to the place of slavery), but also the 'very logic of progressivism' as applied to the prophecies - in which, as he points out, 'anything resembling a unilinear, progressive, or developmental temporality is undermined and subverted' (pp. 85-6). Instead, Makdisi urges us to try to imagine the 'impossible "no-time" of freedom' which is 'the truest form of hope' of Blake's prophecies.

Although most of the myths which characterise Wordsworth as a poet of a comfortable and comforting certitude have now been undermined, the idea of his simply joyful homecoming to Grasmere in 1799 and his close identification with the Lake District remain a central part of our image of the poet. Scott McEathron's 'Stuck at Grasmere' (pp. 203-220), however, argues convincingly that the major poems of Wordsworth's early time at Dove Cottage - 'Michael', 'The Brothers' and 'Home at Grasmere' - reveal not so much the pleasure and fulfilment, as the anxieties and strains of settling into this new life. McEathron's fine analysis of the fracture lines in these poems shows how they actually express not only the 'weary and heavy weight of [the] burden of expectation' (p. 205) that Wordsworth felt about executing Coleridge's plan for *The Recluse*, but also his difficulties in practice with writing, as specified in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in 'the language really used by men'. In the early drafts of the poem, McEathron shows us Wordsworth's struggles to create a Michael who is neither painfully inexpressive, nor distinctly 'loose' in tongue (even threatening to usurp the interpretive role reserved for the poet himself). These difficulties link with the lost swans in 'Home at Grasmere' (who may have been shot by a local shepherd) to reveal 'a profound sense of alienation, even deracination, undergirding the Wordsworths' return to their "sweet" home' (p. 211) and even threaten 'the collapse of the central connection between himself and the Lake District, a connection that in fairly direct terms he sees as validating his poetic persona' (pp. 213-4).

John Waters's study of Irish topographical poetry is similarly strongly engaged with the writing's time and place of production: in this case the social system of land usage and land tenure in eighteenth-century Ireland, which undermines the very order which the form of the English topological poem sets out to celebrate. Such historicism is not, however, particularly characteristic of the collection, and other theoretical frameworks which are deftly used here include feminism and Lacanian psychoanalysis (by Ghislaine McDayter on Lady Caroline Lamb's presentation of Irish politics), and Queer Theory (by Amanda Berry on Burke's sexualized

representation of the Sublime as a violation of the ocular sphincter). The collection also celebrates its own time and place, as well as Gleckner as its muse, and British readers will hardly need reminding how thoroughly the study of Romanticism has become naturalised in the US when they find Barry Milligan, in a self-aware and delicate comparison of Byron's 1816 poems to Augusta and Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', several times unaccountably presenting Byron in Switzerland, and his half-sister in England, as being separated by the Atlantic ocean.

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**Clara Tuite, *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon*.
Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 49. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 2002. Pp.xii + 242. \$55. ISBN 0 521 80859 6.**

Clara Tuite studies Austen's 'betweenities', adopting the rather twee category by which her descendants described works not fit to be included in the published canon. She concentrates on the unfinished 'Catharine, or the Bower' and 'Sanditon', which provide insights applied principally to *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*. Her much-quoted guides to canon-formation and sexual politics are Clifford Siskin and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and the effect of her investigations is to widen the gap between the received, canonical Austen and the subversive speculations to which her works give rise in post-Romantic productions. If Austen reveres aristocratic values it is with a bourgeois propensity to turn them into fetishes and kitsch. If Austen promotes the status of the realistic domestic novel by purging it of feminine sensibility and its revolutionary, masturbatory and lesbian tendencies it is done with complicit sympathy with such tendencies. Austen therefore contributes to the bourgeois creation of a hygienic, heterosexual, patrilinear tradition, in which aristocratic values are misrecognised as a universal heritage, but does not really take it seriously. It is in this that Austen is related to the nostalgic 'heritage' celebration of decline which Tuite sees as the outcome of Romantic organicism. The 'canonical' Austen novel, viewed through the lens of Bourdieu, is itself a fetish, its social milieu misrecognised as aristocratic and its serious concerns the marks of competitive position-taking in the field of cultural production. Tuite employs audacious critical techniques, orchestrating a dazzling range of transpositions, displacements and inversions (including 'queering') with the panache of a baroque composer. She rejects the technicalities of 'free indirect discourse' but retains the term for her own wider sense of the 'double voice' and in many cases the inverted pyramid of speculative interpretation balances on some dubious textual allusion, instantiation, metonymy, synecdoche or epiphany. Tuite suggests some development in Austen's conscious presentation of her own ambivalences but it is often an open question whether the Austen revealed or 'produced' is deeply split or consciously manipulative.

Both conservative and subversive aspects of Austen's work are taken to extremes. Burke is an ever-present influence. His defence of the continuity of the British Monarchy by the incorporation of Princess Sophia provides the key to *Mansfield Park*'s reconstructive labours, while a Jacobite lament for the decapitated Charles I is heard in the apprehended fate of the avenue of oaks (signifying unbroken succession). 'Sanditon' takes up Burke's warning of the dire consequences of turning land into speculative, mobile paper. Austen, however, is herself involved in this transformation and promotes the upward mobility of the female of developed

subjectivity or ‘cultural capital’, which opens the door to subversion. Even Tom Bertram’s head is not safe if an inverted father/son analogy with the serially incapacitated George III runs its course. Fanny might yet inherit Mansfield. Fanny, however, is seen as a curator rather than a participant in aristocratic life, and Austen plays the same role. Tuite distances Austen from ‘aristocracy’, a category which for Tuite includes the landed gentry, and reduces Austen’s personal and political stake in the values she depicts. Austen represents an emulative, ‘bourgeois’ class, whose criticism shares a ‘Tory romance of aristocratic mystique’ (p. 143). This produces kitsch in the ‘making over of the aristocratic estate in the image of bourgeois Romantic desire, domesticity and nostalgia’ (p. 146). For Tuite the appendages of a ‘leisure class’, naturalized and aestheticized in the scopophilic gaze, give little indication of the real use and power that they signify. ‘Sanditon’ marks a greater consciousness of these subversive tendencies. Using a technique reminiscent of Gilbert and Gubar Tuite installs Lady Denham as central character, a ‘lesbian vampire’ (p.174) who accumulates aristocratic trophies by marriage and apparently intends to endow Clara Brereton with these fetishes by matrilinear descent.

The sanitisation of the novel of sensibility is ambivalent mainly because the figures of surveillance are suspect. Colonel Brandon is ‘a kind of rake figure’ (p.67) and Mrs Percival of ‘The Bower’ (linked to Spenser by the suppressed first name of prime minister Spencer Perceval) is apparently a suppressed lesbian and voyeur. Tuite’s critical ingenuity works to widen discrepancies, not investigate what there is of the ‘in-between’. We are told twice that Mrs Percival destroys the bower in homophobic panic before it is acknowledged that she merely voices a rhetorical ‘performative’ (p.48) and it is clear that Catharine’s bower does not merit Guyon-like destruction. Austen has already transformed the Rousseauistic bower of solipsistic and erotic impulses into a resource of more Romantic sensibility where Catharine recovers calmness and sociability.

There is much to enjoy and much to irritate in this exuberant play of critical wit. Tuite takes the ‘cue for speculation’ from modern adaptations and creates Austen in a similar mode, no longer the serious upholder of social values but involved herself in the mobility of writing and the pleasures of ‘desire, fantasy, speculation, supplementarity and masturbation’ (p.188).

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Jane Moore, *Mary Wollstonecraft*. London: British Council-Northcote House, 1999. Pp. 104. Pb £8.99. ISBN. 0746307470.

Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker, eds William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Broadview, 2001. Pp. 224. Pb £7.99 (\$15.95). ISBN 1551112590.

One can understand that grief might have caused William Godwin to write a memoir of his wife, but what on earth prompted him to *publish* it? A charitable answer would be that he wanted the world to see what a strong but sensitive woman she was, but surely the world knew that already from her own writings. Or one could suggest, less kindly, that he wanted to construct himself, à la Rousseau, as a ‘man of feeling’, unlike the ultra-rationalist persona he had earlier adopted. Certainly the publication of *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* did nothing for his wife’s reputation except cause her to be seen as ‘the most scandalous woman writer of

her generation', as Jane Moore puts it in her short work, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (p.1). It did little for his own reputation either, according to the introduction to Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker's edition of the *Memoirs*, which cites Southey's view that in publishing his reminiscences Godwin showed 'the want of all feeling in stripping his dead wife naked' (p.11).

Publication of the *Memoirs* not only broadcast Wollstonecraft's near-obsessive and self-destructive relationship with Gilbert Imlay and the illegitimacy of their daughter, but also made public her affair with the married Fuseli, her two suicide attempts (in a gesture worthy of Sappho she threw herself off Putney bridge), and her pregnancy at the time of her marriage to Godwin. If the *Memoirs* was written as private act of grief for a lost wife, it certainly backfired as a public epitaph. In publishing an apologia for his wife's life, Godwin succeeded only in unintentionally putting the final pegs, as it were, into the coffin of her precarious reputation. As Nicola Trott so neatly puts it public response to the *Memoirs* 're-present(ed) Godwin's glowing encomium as a cautionary tale') and Wollstonecraft became 'both amazon and whore' (in 'Sexing the Critic' in Richard Cronin, ed *1798: The Year of the Lyrical Ballads*, pp.35.40).

The two books under review here, however, do not encourage such harshness towards Godwin. Rather, they seek to put the *Memoirs* into the tradition of sentimental biographical writing. Clemit and Walker describe the *Memoirs* as a 'work of unprecedented biographical frankness ... an attempt to enact in the public sphere the revolutionary doctrine of sincerity [Godwin] had advocated in *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice*' (p.11). It is 'one of the most significant biographical documents in Revolutionary and Romantic writing' (p.12). Although we are told that 'the popular counter-revolutionary interpretation of the *Memoirs* as a work which yoked radicalism, feminism, and sexual immorality continued to shape attitudes to the lives and writings of both authors well into the nineteenth century' (p.12), Clemit and Walker are not concerned as to how or why Godwin could have failed to anticipate the disastrous consequences to Wollstonecraft's reputation (and his own) that would be effected by the *Memoirs*' 'popular counter-revolutionary interpretations'.

As one expects from Broadview, a wealth of useful background material is provided as well as the edited text. The first three appendices contain extracts from other biographers (Rousseau, Boswell and Madame Roland); from other works by Godwin; from Wollstonecraft's 'Letters to Imlay', and letters between Godwin and Wollstonecraft. The fourth appendix, 'Critical Reaction' is divided into two sections, 'Contemporary Reviews', where the reader can easily access extracts from the liberal Analytical Review and perhaps most importantly, the Anti-Jacobin Review. Passages from the Monthly Review and, interestingly, the Lady's Monitor are also included, as is the New Annual Register for 1798. The second section, 'Other Responses', provides part of Richard Polwhele's important satire 'The Unsex'd Females', along with extracts from women's writing which prove that not all responses to the *Memoirs* were hostile. These run from Anna Seward, Mary Hays, 'Anon' (who is likely to be female) and Amelia Opie, through to Virginia Woolf's rehabilitating and entertaining piece in *The Common Reader* (2nd Series), in which Godwin is referred to as 'the little man with the big head' (p.197) An earlier non-hostile response is John Fenwick's 'Mr Godwin', which cautions that for 'him who would benefit the human race', it is 'an object of infinite importance' that 'the heart should be known in all its windings':

Mr Godwin did not prefer a cowardly silence, nor treachery to the public, having chosen to write. Perhaps such works as the Memoirs of Mrs Godwin's

Life, and Rousseau's Confessions, will ever disgrace their writers with the meaner spirits of the world; but then it is to be remembered, that this herd neither confers nor can take away fame. (p.192).

The fifth and final Appendix provides the alterations Godwin made to the second edition. Overshadowed by the backlash to the first edition, it was not given the reading it deserved, and provides further evidence of Godwin's determination to celebrate male sentimentality. In the second edition, Godwin credits Wollstonecraft with his own development as a man of feeling (though in reality this seems to have been happening before he met her) with such words as: 'Her taste awakened mine; her sensibility determined me to a careful development of my feelings' (p.217).

Jane Moore's short biography of Mary Wollstonecraft also refuses to supply a 'knee-jerk' feminist response to Godwin. It, too, offers a generic explanation for hostile responses to the *Memoirs*: 'there was no precedent for frank and intimate biography of this kind' (p.4). Moore tells us, as Clemit and Walker's Appendix D demonstrates, that there were more positive responses to the *Memoirs* than we might think. Moore also rightly reminds us that the memoir 'thoroughly explores Wollstonecraft's personality, investigating her good and bad points alike, sometimes critically, though always with compassion and understanding' (p.4). Moore's book is a readable and balanced introduction to Wollstonecraft's life and works. It follows Wollstonecraft's writing chronologically, and points the reader to further critical reading, notably to the excellent work of Gary Kelly.

Although it would be unwise to deny that the *Memoirs* is ground-breaking biography, it is difficult to ignore Godwin's apologetic tone for his wife's behaviour and almost impossible to disengage the *Memoirs* from its effect on Wollstonecraft's reception. During her life Wollstonecraft had skilfully negotiated the fine line between unconventionality and the dangers of ostracism. Although this changed slightly when she married Godwin (most of her friends, for example, had maintained the polite pretence that they did not know that she and Imlay had not been officially married and that their daughter, Fanny, was illegitimate), it was not until the publication of the *Memoirs* that her reading public became aware of the full facts of her life, and were encouraged to read, or re-read, her work through her life. The publication of the *Memoirs* and its appropriation by the counter-Revolutionary press encouraged a whole new way of reading her work, one which caused her crafted fiction and philosophical radicalism to collapse into the 'scandalous' life-story.

As readers today, we can read Wollstonecraft in two ways: post-*Memoirs*, when we know the full facts of her life as disclosed by her husband, and pre-*Memoirs*, as Wollstonecraft chose to present herself. If one chooses to read Wollstonecraft autobiographically, through the *Memoirs*, it is essential also to engage in a parallel, pre-biographical reading, as her contemporary readers would have done before her death. Reading in this dual way is particularly valuable in relation to her fictional works and the popular *Letters written during a short residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*. Although it is important, as Jane Moore and the editors of the *Memoirs* tell us, to have access to the 'Letters to Imlay', it is also crucial to read the *Letters from Sweden* as fiction, as her contemporary readers would have done, without knowing that they had been addressed to Imlay, in whose shady and sad service Wollstonecraft had been travelling.

Finally, we might do well to remember that in the first edition of his *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, Godwin posed the choice of saving from a fire

an archbishop or the chambermaid (who might be ‘my wife or mother’) and argued that the rational, and therefore correct, answer would be to save the archbishop. Wollstonecraft may have saved Godwin from this kind of philosophical impartiality, but the re-constructed ‘man of feeling’ nonetheless ended up casting his wife into the anti-Jacobin flames. If Godwin had used more political acumen and simply written, but not published, his reminiscences, perhaps Wollstonecraft could have been protected from posthumous ridicule (one has only to look at the engraving of ‘Mrs Godwin’ by Chapman to see the satirized figure she came to be) and a century of neglect. But, then, if he had kept them in the drawer, we might have lost the facts of her life, which have furnished the material for these two excellent publications.

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G. E. Bentley, Jr., *The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. xxvii + 532 + 136 plates. £25 (\$39.95). ISBN: 0 300 08939 2.

The word ‘evidence’ comes up in nearly every sentence of the preface to *Stranger from Paradise*, the new Blake biography by G. E. Bentley, Jr.; sometimes it comes up twice. And this is indeed a biography dominated by a certain kind of evidence. Bentley, one of the most important scholars ever to study Blake, is the author or editor of dozens of books, articles, and editions, including the essential reference works *Blake Records* and its supplement (compendia of biographical materials), *Blake Books* and its supplement (bibliographies), as well as a valuable two-volume edition of Blake’s *Writings*. He knows the evidence better than anyone, and also that the evidence is not the same as the facts. But the very virtues that account for the substantial merits of this biography may also have contributed to its limitations: I often felt as I read that Bentley’s distinguished career as keeper of the trees inhibited a more radical survey of the forest, a reassessment that might have made this something more than a very good biography.

Yet very good it certainly is, whatever quibbling follows. Bentley’s Blake is not very far from Alexander Gilchrist’s or even Mona Wilson’s Blake, but he has carefully winnowed the evidence assembled by his predecessors and judiciously augmented it with a wealth of new material that consistently complements and/or improves upon the old. In addition to dozens of his own major discoveries, most of which he has published piecemeal elsewhere, Bentley has incorporated the very important information that Robert N. Essick, Joseph Viscomi and a few others have gleaned from Blake’s material artifacts, as well as hundreds of other tidbits that have turned up in the last century and a half. (Especially exciting are the excerpts from the journal of an early Blake enthusiast named John Clark Strange, so new that they had to be shoehorned in as an addendum). The result is that the Blake who emerges from Bentley’s account is considerably more rational and less mysterious, though no less extraordinary, than Gilchrist’s Victorian version of a Romantic Genius, and in spirit this book is a harmony of these good old and good new gospels.

One way in which Bentley foregrounds ‘the evidence’ is to let quotations from Blake’s contemporaries and near-contemporaries do a lot of the work, often without much indication of the writer’s agenda or shortcomings as an informant. The hierarchy of documentation (which may not have been Bentley’s choice) exacerbates the challenge that follows from this decision, for only content notes appear as

footnotes and almost all attributions are relegated to massed endnotes that make it very difficult to tell who is talking, or when or why they said what they said. When using *Blake Records* (which is soon to be available in a new edition) one always knows whose words one is reading, and can judge a given report or judgment from its place in a whole, but here the snippets often float contextlessly in the biographer's master narrative. Furthermore, Bentley, whose scholarship has always been dominated by a spirit of sober and reliable conservatism, doesn't consistently or searchingly examine biographical and scholarly orthodoxy: unless a long-accepted account is elbowed out by a substantially more reliable one, the same old story nearly always has to do.

Another nagging problem is that Bentley appears to have decided that good biographical evidence does not include the subjective features of Blake's art and poetry, and thus we fly past mental mountain ranges of his work without much sign that they are more relevant to understanding his mind or life than the commercial engravings he was doing at the same time, or the surviving minutiae of his quotidian existence. Rather than commenting on a Blake work himself, Bentley often provides some uncontroversial data about it and then reports the bafflement of one or more of Blake's contemporaries, which is interesting but not very helpful. This has nothing to do with Bentley's critical capabilities – he is an astute reader – but he appears to have settled on a biographical procedure, especially dubious in the case of a figure like Blake, in which hard evidence drives out all the fuzzy kinds, and the external life is preferred to the internal one. Although they all have significant shortcomings of their own, Peter Ackroyd's *Blake*, Michael Phillips' *The Creation of the Songs*, and E. P. Thompson's *Witness Against the Beast* all succeed much more consistently than *Stranger from Paradise* in presenting biographical and historical information alongside critical consideration of Blake's creations and their intellectual contexts, and doing it in such a way that the life, times, and works are simultaneously and freshly illuminated.

Even in the limited commentary on the works, little things occasionally aren't quite right. To take an example that is central to the basic Blake canon, Bentley writes that the title page of *Songs Of Experience* 'shows two young people weeping over a sculptured couple on a bier' (p. 144). Copies of the *Songs* often contain so many pictorial variations among them that efficient summary becomes impossible. But Bentley's concise description of the illustration on this page is flatly wrong in respect to most finished copies, and at most a weak possibility in a few. In some of those issued by Blake (e.g., R, AA) it is not incontrovertibly clear whether the couple are pallid corpses or stone effigies resting on real fabric (always tinted a contrasting color), but in all other copies of *Songs* that I checked in reproduction (C, F, L, S, T, U, and Z) their hands and/or faces are distinctly coloured pink, yellow-pink or bluish – startlingly, in copy U (Princeton) the 'dead' woman's (and perhaps the man's) eyes are open and radiant lines extend above the faces. Whatever copy one examines, the recumbent figures are best understood as newly dead (or dead and newly resurrected) bodies of parents, not sculptures of long-deceased ancestors. The difference is of paramount importance to viewers, for it serves to define this moment as one in which innocent adolescents, a little older than the secure youngsters reading at their nurse's knee in the title page to *Innocence*, have collided abruptly with Experience, a subtle modern version of *Et in Arcadia Ego*. It is meaningful that the bodies are laid out somewhat like sculptures on a tomb, but in finishing most copies Blake has gone to some trouble to help us distinguish between sculptures and real bodies.

If one reads this biography in a critical spirit it is possible to find more things to carp about, most of them matters of carelessness for which Yale University Press is more culpable than the author – for instance, as others have pointed out to me, many of the good but small-format plates have been silently and grievously cropped, and three have also been reversed: the prominent image of the ‘Angel of the Revolution’ [sic – make that ‘Angel of Revelation’] on the spine of the dust jacket and plate 79 is backwards, as is plate 114. It also seems that no editor ever took the time to read the manuscript through with full attention: material presented both topically and chronologically is often repeated in identical phrases that an attentive editor could have been expected to catch. Nevertheless, this large, learned biography will take its place in the six-foot shelf of indispensable Blake books, about half of which is already taken up by other works by G. E. Bentley, Jr.; its enduring value as a readable summary of the latest and hardest biographical evidence is secure.

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Michael Bradshaw, *Resurrection Songs: The Poetry of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. 256. £49.50. ISBN 075460103X

T. L. Beddoes (1803-48) was a physician disinclined to practice, and a writer averse to publishing. An expatriate and radical often at odds with the authorities, he made himself unwelcome in many of the places where he chose to live. His professional life was a series of disappointments and false starts. His personal life, so far as it can be pieced together, was a gradually intolerable sequence of losses and frustrations relieved, here and there, by homo-erotic relationships he was too proud to conceal and too difficult (or unlucky) to continue for very long. Much of his writing survives in fragments, and even his *magnum opus*, *Death's Jest-Book*, was left unfinished after more than twenty years of revision (1825-48). He was a strange and difficult man. He was no less peculiar as a writer: death-obsessed, bitterly ironic, and self-critical at times to the point of paralysis. After one hundred fifty odd years of sporadic scholarship and publication of his works, he remains little known.

Readers come across Beddoes's work one way or another, and when they do the experience of discovery is often memorable. Michael Bradshaw begins his new study of Beddoes by describing his first, startled encounter with ‘Resurrection Song’. ‘It was immediately embarrassing to think I had never read Beddoes before’, he writes. ‘I still feel there is nothing quite like it, certainly not in the literature of his own time’. There has not been anything quite like it since Beddoes's time either. The gargantuan size of the *Jest-Book*, the stylistic bravado of its composition, and no less the grim obsessiveness of its subject matter set it apart. This resilient singularity has frustrated attempts to place his work in relation to the canon, most often as a late Romantic epigone and borrower of Elizabethan-Jacobean conventions. Bradshaw is critical of this desire to place the work. ‘Beddoes's marginal reputation, instead of being seen as an opportunity for new discoveries, has too often become part of a circular, self-validating argument in which the defeated author is examined for signs of belatedness which then witness further to his own defeat’. Even those authors who have deliberately broken through this circle—most notably, Northrop Frye in his *Studies in Romanticism*—failed to rescue Beddoes from the faint damnation of belatedness.

What Beddoes scholars have not examined in detail as of this writing—his homosexuality, his involvement with Judaism, his persistent and perhaps eroticized interest in the dismembered body—says a lot about his marginal status. Bradshaw, in an understandably brief survey of the critical literature, gives only glancing reference to the psychoanalytic and Jungian studies of the transgressive Beddoes, dated as they are. His interest lies elsewhere: in Beddoes's depiction of the afterlife, and of resurrection in particular. In doing so, he displaces one obstacle to reading Beddoes—the obsessive references to death—with a subject that is conceptually, and perhaps emotionally, more accessible: the afterlife. That is, one can imagine a resurrected self—however it gets resurrected—seeing, talking, even eating or making love. Such scenarios were a staple of medieval eschatological writing, as Caroline Walker Bynum, among others, has shown. The world of the resurrection, like the worlds of much science fiction, could be similar in many respects to our own. Thus, the creepy ordinariness of Beddoes's resurrected hero, Wolfram, chatting with a former adversary, and the weirdly blasé humor of the clown, Homunculus Mandrake, emerging from the tomb after his false resurrection. As Mandrake observes, the dead are, in many ways, just like us; they pay taxes and go about their routines. So why worry about death and the afterlife, if what one gets in the hereafter is the same old same old?

Early editors of the *Jest-Book* deleted large portions of the resurrection scene, targeting Homunculus Mandrake's role in particular. One wonders whether Beddoes's humour was too irreverent for the times, or too frightening. The same question could be asked of Beddoes and his attitudes towards death and the afterlife. Bradshaw is deft at identifying and interrogating the many ways humour is used to fend off or deflect self-revelation in the resurrection scene of the *Jest-Book* and elsewhere in Beddoes's poetry and correspondence. And he is, in the best tradition of close reading, relentless in probing the often-convoluted ambiguities of Beddoes's attitudes towards the hereafter. Rather than trace a line of development in a writer so given to revising and interweaving his texts, *Resurrection Songs* takes a thematic approach. Fragmentation, the body, and ironic revision are examined in the light of theology, history of medicine, Romantic theory and nuanced, invariably persuasive close reading of the texts. Beddoes's interest in Paracelsus and medieval medicine is at last situated in Western discourse on immortality and death. His appropriation of images from Vesalius, little noted in previous studies, becomes the focus of an extensive survey of early modern representations of the dissected body, a matter of central importance to Beddoes as anatomist and poet. The Beddoes that emerges from this undertaking is far more serious and substantial than had been demonstrated in previous studies, and for this reason alone *Resurrection Songs* will be indispensable in future scholarship on the poet.

Equally important, Bradshaw exposes the text to the anatomizing gaze of theory. *Resurrection Songs*, as the title implies, focuses on the poetry, drawing parallels between personal and textual immortality in Beddoes's work. 'No discussion of the poet to date,' he writes, 'has made a sustained connection between the idea of immortality and patterns of regeneration in the form and structure of the texts'. Tropes of the risen, ghostly, or otherworldly text are common in Beddoes scholarship, as are similarly framed references to the complicated fate of the original manuscripts—some lost and found again, a good many destroyed after a fair copy was made. In a brief article, Ian Beck makes a start at a poststructuralist interweaving of textual lives and afterlives in the work Beddoes and Browning. Bradshaw goes further, drawing on the work of Thomas McFarland, Balachandra Rajan and Marjorie Levinson on the

Romantic fragment poem. *Resurrection Songs* focuses on the relation between Beddoes's futile search for a physiological or metaphysical key to the afterlife and his prolonged revision of the *Jest-Book*. 'A grand design of this nature,' writes Bradshaw, referring to the search for a principle of revitalization, 'is the very raw material of literary fragmentation; an attempt by an individual poet to reveal life's mysteries is directly conducive to the breaking up of his vision in the experience of disillusion'. Reader-response approaches meet this termination with a notional ever after; the fragment posits its completion. The work must be a fragment of something. I am not fully persuaded that the fragment will sustain the kind of transcendent re-inscription that theory imputes to it. Beddoes offers his own satirical image of closure in the metamorphosis of an aborted 'frog voice in the gloom'—in letters he refers several times to the *Jest-Book* as aborted or stillborn—into a monstrous assemblage in 'Squats on a Toadstool'. Nonetheless, reading the literary fragment in relation to the dissected body provides an arc to Beddoes's career that has, up to now, been missing in studies of the poet. Beddoes's late poems are seen as a form of literary suicide, his lines borrowing from Shelley and Keats to open a space for a 'successor-prophet' in the future.

The theme of suicide, however, also opens the question of death in Beddoes's work and experience, as opposed to the afterlife. There is a cognitive or epistemic difficulty in broaching this one reiterated subject in Beddoes's writing that must occasionally tease us out of thought on the imagined afterlives Bradshaw analyzes so persuasively in *Resurrection Songs*. The dead self is not a self; it isn't there anymore. And death is not a place or a state or a thing; it's simply a word, a marker, for the absence of a place or a state or a thing. Death as such, death as non-existence, or the 'quintessentially internal obliteration of the subject' to use Bradshaw's phrase, confounds analysis. Death stops thought, as Anthony Flew and James Carse have argued, returning our other concerns and obsessions to themselves. *Resurrection Songs* makes a very convincing case for Beddoes's eloquence as a poet of immortality. Future work on the poet may use this as the groundwork to consider the paradoxical remainder, the ineffable gap that death makes of the subject, whether the subject be Beddoes or anyone else. The fragment that opens prospectively to an integrated unity or whole may also signify something far bleaker: dis-integration, and beyond it, silence or death as an end, a consummation to be desired in and of itself. Further, one suspects that in Beddoes the ineffable was linked to the unspeakable, or what was such in his experience and in his time. More convincingly than any other longer study in the last half-century, *Resurrection Songs* makes the case that Beddoes is worth pursuing into that terrain, and others.

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Frederick Burwick. *Thomas De Quincey: Knowledge and Power*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. xiii + 192. £42.50. ISBN 0 333 77403 5.

Frederick Burwick's *Thomas De Quincey: Knowledge and Power* is primarily concerned with De Quincey's theories of what would be called reader response criticism today. With reference to a number of De Quincey's best known critical essays as well as unpublished manuscripts, Burwick aims to examine the writer's distinction between 'literature of knowledge' and 'literature of power', and to discuss how this informed his theories of consciousness.

The book's two opening chapters attempt to establish the critical and theoretical foundations which apparently underpin the textual analyses which follow. The first chapter discusses De Quincey's struggle with 'great antagonisms', sets of oppositions which create tensions within the individual mind and within culture in general. Burwick posits knowledge / power as the most pervasive of these oppositions, and thus accounts for the book's subtitle. In the second chapter he charts the development of De Quincey's identification of 'casuistry and idoloclasm' as the negative counterparts of knowledge and power, and illustrates their use in De Quincey's critical work.

Subsequent chapters examine De Quincey's critical tactics and manoeuvres across a broad range of texts. 'Sir Walter Scott and the Literary Pirates', one of the most interesting chapters, describes the circumstances surrounding De Quincey's liberal and creative translation into English of *Walladmor*, a German forgery of a non-existent Scott novel. In examining De Quincey's 'improvements' and revisions of the German imitation, Burwick also highlights some interesting differences between national conceptions of Romantic irony. Chapter four aims to engage with the 'aesthetics of violence' in texts such as 'Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts' and does deal with this subject in part. At certain points however, the thread of the argument becomes lost amongst an often-confusing mixture of biography and textual analysis. A great deal of energy, for example, is expended in speculations about whether or not De Quincey ever visited Germany, an exercise which seems largely irrelevant to the main discussion. It is not until the fifth chapter that Burwick gets to grips with De Quincey's concept of 'psychological criticism', and engages more significantly with his theory of consciousness. With reference to 'On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*', Burwick draws attention to that particular infusion of the personal and the autobiographical in De Quincey's critical account of Shakespeare's play, and explains how his life experiences served as psychological triggers in his understanding of the experiences of reading and writing. The book's penultimate chapter, 'Miltonic Overtures', discusses the influence of Milton's *Paradise Lost* on De Quincey's imagery in 'Dream Fugue', before going on to examine another set of oppositions - motion and stasis - in 'The English Mail Coach'. Delineating De Quincey's skills in depicting narrative time, Burwick illustrates how the writer used his knowledge of the workings of the human mind to produce certain effects upon his readers. Finishing with a chapter on associations in Wordsworth's poetry and De Quincey's appreciation of the psychological interconnections in his work, Burwick discusses De Quincey's understanding of 'the subconscious' to point out that he was the first writer to use this term in literary criticism.

Thomas De Quincey: Knowledge and Power is a very useful contribution to De Quincey studies, and presents a wealth of interesting information on the writer. However, it is also a book that thwarts readerly expectations, at times disconcertingly. When read cover to cover, it seems more like a collection of essays rather than a book about knowledge and power in De Quincey's work. As the author acknowledges, earlier versions of four chapters have already appeared in *The Wordsworth Circle* over a span of four years, two being 'radically revised' for this publication. However, the material written to pull these articles together into book format does not always succeed in doing so. The apparently unifying theme of 'knowledge and power' announced by the book's subtitle is, to a certain extent, neglected after the first chapter, forcing the reader to work hard to link subsequent chapters back to the topic in hand. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the chapters seem not to be arranged in an order that supports a progressive, developing argument. For example,

the chapter entitled 'Wordsworthian Associations', with which the book ends, would actually have provided an excellent introduction to the concept of psychological criticism, and as such would have preceded the chapters on Shakespeare and Milton very successfully. However, despite structural problems like these, Burwick's book provides a fund of interesting detail and a range of insightful textual analyses that suggest numerous points of departure for further research.

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John L Mahoney, *Wordsworth and the Critics: the Development of a Critical Reputation*. London: Camden House 2001. Pp. 166. £40, ISBN: 1 57113 090 X.

This book forms part of a series called *Literary Criticism in Perspective*, although since no other titles are listed it must be first, or at least early, in the series. The series is described as aiming 'to address a readership of scholars, students of literature at the graduate and undergraduate level, and the general reader', with the intention of revealing 'the impact of social and historical contexts on aesthetic judgements once considered objective and definitive'. In view of this programme, it is fair to say that the series' existence reflects the greater self-consciousness about the historical and ideological context of English literary studies which the development of new historicism has done so much to promote.

The choice of Wordsworth for an early volume in the series was perhaps an unfortunate one, since the sheer volume of Wordsworth criticism exacerbates a certain tension inherent in the spread of readerships which the series aims to address. The series' aspirations to deal with the 'social and historical contexts' of criticism would have the potential to be amply fulfilled for many nineteenth century writers, but to attempt an all-encompassing account of Wordsworth's reception in a volume of this modest length creates unavoidable difficulties. This is all the more the case in view of the centrality of Wordsworth criticism to the development of the institution of 'English' as a discipline, as Ian Reid has revealingly explored ('Fathering the Man: Journalism, Masculinity, and the Wordsworthian Formation of Academic Literary Studies', *Journal of Victorian Studies* 6 [2001] pp 201-230).

Mahoney has, then, been faced in this book with an impossible brief. Even granted this, however, he seems fundamentally out of sympathy with the stated rationale behind the series, of relating 'social and historical contexts' to 'aesthetic judgements', since the way the book is written seems implicitly to deny the relevance of such contexts to the understanding of the criticism which is its subject. Mahoney basically offers potted summaries of various critics' accounts of Wordsworth, relying heavily on quotation and echoing the vocabulary they employ even when he does not quote. The assumption behind this method seems to be that his readers will find these critical accounts intrinsically meaningful as descriptions of Wordsworth's writing, so that little needs to be done to set them in the context of the critical debates of the time.

A particularly clear example of the limitations of this approach can be found in the second chapter, 'Eminent Victorians and Others', where Mahoney is describing the nineteenth-century reception of Wordsworth. Starting with brief sketches of the reactions of Arnold, Stephens, Mill, Pater and W M Rossetti, he turns to Ruskin, the Oxford Movement and Keble, before switching to Swinburne, and then, a few pages later, offering an account of the Wordsworth Society which is largely derived from Stephen Gill's *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Clarendon, 0000, pp 31-42). Mahoney

makes no attempt to situate these various critics in relation to each other, and there is no indication that, for example, conservative Wordsworthians such as William Angus Knight or Stopford Brooke would have regarded Pater's associationist account of Wordsworth's poetry with abhorrence. Without this kind of information, it is hard to see how Mahoney's book provides anything which would not be better supplied by an anthology of Wordsworth criticism. The book is also not always factually accurate: F W Robertson (not F M, as in the book) is classed as a twentieth-century critic (p 54), presumably on the basis that his *Lectures on the Influence of Poetry and Wordsworth* were reprinted in 1902, but these were in fact first given in the early 1850s.

Another problem with the book is the lack of apparent rationale behind its organization. Although the general order of the chapters is chronological, within the chapters Mahoney frequently departs from a chronological presentation. This would have been understandable if Mahoney had been aiming at a synthesis of typical themes or issues in Wordsworthian criticism over a certain time-span, but in the absence of much attempt at explanation of why particular Wordsworthians took the positions they did, it makes the organization of the book appear largely arbitrary. For example, the section on the Wordsworth Society is followed by a discussion of biographies of Wordsworth, which ranges from the work of Knight right up to Kenneth Johnston's 1998 *The Hidden Wordsworth* (Norton, pp 45-50). In a discussion of biography particularly, one would have thought there was room for consideration of how different emphases reflected the times in which biographies were produced, of the sort in which the biographer Richard Holmes has sometimes engaged.

The problems of arbitrary organization and lack of contextualization dog Mahoney's account even when it deals with periods of Wordsworth criticism with which he is presumably more familiar, such as the last thirty years. It would perhaps be beside the point to complain that the book becomes almost entirely focussed on American Wordsworth criticism after 1900, but Mahoney is really making very few concessions not only to a trans-Atlantic readership, but even to the undergraduate or general reader at whom the series is supposedly aimed, when he makes a passing reference to 'the celebrated Humanities 6 course at Harvard University in the 1950s and early 1960s' (p 59). A book which would go into this kind of institutional and pedagogical history of American Romantic criticism would be a valuable addition to scholarly understanding, at least on this side of the Atlantic, and this represents something of a lost opportunity on Mahoney's part.

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***Felicia Hemans: Re-Imagining Poetry in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Nanora Sweet and Julie Melnyk. Basingstoke and New York, 2001. Pp xxix + 242. . £45. ISBN 0 333 80101 1**

At a time in which scholars are questioning the formation of literary value, as well as continuing the pursuit of forgotten women writers, a collection of essays on Felicia Hemans could not be more timely. As one of the most popular poets active in the 1820s and 1830s, Hemans's literary celebrity, and the reason for its demise, provide a case study in the process of critical recuperation and a focus for thinking through what to do with a writer recently brought back into both critical focus and the teaching canon. The essays collectively achieve a new and exciting sense of both the culture of Hemans and Hemans in culture.

Nanora Sweet (who has been particularly active in the challenge to the received understanding of 'Mrs. Hemans') and Julie Melnyk have brought together a diverse series of essays that confidently situate Hemans within her specific context. A number of concerns interleave through the volume, positioning the contributors in a rich correspondence: public discourse, the modern liberal state and public discourse, gender, memorialisation, the literary marketplace, reception, and Hemans's intertextuality. Almost every essay turns on what it means to be writing about Hemans and the value of bringing her work back into focus; as the editors' introduction attests, 'she was a remarkably productive and self-questioning writer who richly endows our self-questioning now about gender, culture, and the work of poetry' (p. 1). In a discussion of *The Forest Sanctuary*, John M. Anderson even suggests fleetingly that the author structures her own critical resurrection: 'Hemans herself may help to make straight the way for the current recovery of female voices, for she has to construct a haunting parable about the power of voices, about the importance of remembering them, and about the hazards and temptations of silence' (p. 55).

In his foreword, aptly entitled 'Now *Our* Hemans', Marlon B. Ross takes the long view of her reception history as he questions the function of the volume and the meaning of the 'resuscitation' of Hemans (p. x). He notes her attractiveness to Victorian readers, from her promotion of the hearth to her very insistent repetitions of rhythms, rhymes, words and images, and her decline that began with the advent of modernism and its poetics of depersonalization. Running like through this initial foray into a recuperated Hemans, however, is a ripple of anxiety about her rapid second flourishing in our post-modernity. Ross, like so many of the contributors, self-consciously presents the writer as a synecdoche for the thing we call Romanticism and its critical discourse. While this is a productive anxiety, especially in the careful meta-commentary offered at times within the volume, it does suggest a concern about what it means to name, even wryly, Hemans as 'ours'. Lurking beneath the possessive pronoun here is the Victorian Hemans, or what William Michael Rossetti terms in his 1884 edition of her *Works*, the poetic epitome of 'the monotone of mere sex'. As a 'poetess', Hemans for the Victorians helped define and prescribe not only women's writing as expressive but also the tremendous ideological power of the home and domestic affections. Together with Ross, Julie Melnyk, Stephen C. Behrendt, John M. Anderson and Gary Kelly all return explicitly to the problem of the Victorian Hemans (of course, itself in no sense monolithic), and many of the other essays implicitly position and appropriate Hemans for Romanticism. As the volume participates in her resurrection, it is also haunted by the spectre of the apparently conservative Victorian Hemans, a figure that ironically carried within itself the seeds of its own spectacular twentieth-century demise. In a panel at the 2001 MLA Convention devoted to Hemans, Tricia Lootens called for the recuperation of a Hemans untainted by her Victorian persona, and the politics of this recovery might perhaps have warranted here an essay of its own.

While the Victorian Hemans rests on her lyric and affective poetry, one of the most striking features of the volume is the insistence on the diversity and trajectory of her writing. In particular, Julie Melnyk's essay maps out the various stages in Hemans's career to foreground and excavate the neglected later phase of vatic poetry which, she argues, challenges male romanticism and specifically early Wordsworth, who becomes Christianized and feminized (a reading complimented by Susan J. Wolfson's deft unravelling of the complex relationship between Hemans and Byron). The analysis offered in support of this thesis are powerful and intriguing, as Melnyk demonstrates the poet's elevation of domestic poetry by claiming for it religious

transcendence (p. 78). Essays by Chad Edgar (on the post-Murray phase) and Barbara T. Taylor (on literary prizes) also present Hemans as an active and astute player in the literary marketplace. The most powerful reading of the relationship between Hemans and the shifting tastes in the market is, however, Stephen C. Behrendt's on her early reception in periodicals, which explicates the moment where the feminization of Hemans begins. Other highlights of the volume are essays by Grant F. Scott and Isobel Armstrong on, respectively, ekphrasis and monuments, which provide brilliant close readings of her aesthetics. Now that a more complex, multiple, and contradictory Hemans is before us, what is urgently needed is a complete annotated edition of her works.

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**Edward H. Jacobs, *Accidental Migrations: Archaeology of Gothic Discourse*.
Lewisburg: London and Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press/Associated
University Presses, 2000. Pp. 295. £37.50. ISBN 0 8387 5429 5.**

Accidental Migrations: Archaeology of Gothic Discourse by Edward H. Jacobs seeks to chart new territory in Gothic studies. The author sets out to unify disparate notions of the concept of the Gothic throughout many ages and places in an innovative and groundbreaking manner. Much of the book is clearly concerned with material productions of the times more than thematic or aesthetic issues that many preceding literary scholars of the Gothic have studied. Rather, the book intends to proceed from arguments advanced by Michel Foucault and is an exemplary of cultural study.

To begin, *Accidental Migrations* proceeds chronologically. It finds its discussion on considerations of pre eighteenth-century applications of the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic' in historical and geographical texts, and then as it approaches the Gothic in literature it examines the formats of eighteenth-century newspapers and their distribution of advertising and news across internal page spreads. Next, it looks at the organization and cataloguing of late eighteenth-century circulating libraries as much as literary pursuits of the meanings, implications, and analyses of texts of representative Gothic novels.

Jacobs's newspaper review sets up novelist Horace Walpole in a chapter called 'Walpole and the Culture of Triviality.' Thus the context for *The Castle of Otranto* is contemporary journalism, with Horace, as a kind of anxious Bloomian son—though Jacobs does not disturb his Foucault universe with another critical paradigm—reacting in his Gothic Strawberry Hill house and in his historical writing, as well as in his Gothic novel, against his Prime Minister father Robert's politics, writ large across the newspapers of the day. A case might be made in fact in support of the son's negative reaction through the example of the evil patriarch Manfred of the novel, but that is not the direction of this line of reasoning. Instead, Jacobs highlights material productions, again, in this case the furnishings of Strawberry Hill and object relations in Walpole's texts, to support the designation of 'triviality' derived from the ephemeral topicality of journalism and here deployed as an instrument of literary deconstruction.

The argument behind *Accidental Migrations* proceeds as it enters directly into a discussion of Gothic novels to a consideration of the Gothic library reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges's library of Babel, reflective and powerful, precise and unfathomable. The circulating library was publisher and distributor, advocate and

arbiter of taste, of fashion, of interest, and of authority for writers, women particularly, of the late eighteenth century, thus in a Borgesian sense, both alpha and omega of popular culture. The book, in fact, closes with a lengthy appendix comparing library publishers with others of the times by gender of authors published and also by listing all the publishers and their works catalogued by one typical library at the end of the century to demonstrate range and volume and obviously, too, to provide some ballast to the book.

But Jacobs also locates internally, inside the novels, a library structure. He writes, ‘Gothic romances collect and label a library of discursive modes according to the same basic serial installment strategy as newspapers and circulating libraries exercised’ (p. 192) in the patterns of narrative and structural movement, migration, he identifies, as he at last begins to review and examine actual Gothic stories. Circulating libraries, which form the material location for the argument, situate the peregrinations, the titular ‘migrations,’ of fictional characters through actions and geography in Gothic novels. Here, Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian* and Eliza (occasionally Elizabeth) Parsons’s *The Mysterious Warning* are the late eighteenth-century fare into which the book probes. Jacobs says, ‘... fundamentally discursive migrations structure the virtual words of mystery and confusion that Gothics construct’ (p. 193). In other words, the literal movement of characters through space as the plot dictates and the assignment of narrative perspective among characters to advance the actions become the migrations, the patterns, on which the Gothic, in this view, depend. Thus what might seem to be the text’s surface becomes in fact topics of scrutiny, of excavation, of the promised ‘archaeology’ of the title and of Foucault’s model for discussion and presentation.

The book is dappled with an unfortunate and excessive reliance upon the worst exigencies of jargon, so that ‘foreground’ is probably the most commonly used verb, sometimes cropping up in several paragraphs on one page. Consequently, much of the presentation is dense, diffuse, and difficult to follow and ultimately detracts from what might otherwise be a very provocative study. Still, for the serious reader there is much upon which to reflect in *Accidental Migrations*, a novel approach to the unflagging attempt to discover the heart of Gothicism and the source of its mystique and power and the repository, finally, for an ideology that might well have changed the world.

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Fred Botting, ed. *The Gothic*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer/ The English Association, 2001. Pp. 184. £30. ISBN 0 85991 619 7.

As Fred Botting observes in his Preface to this collection, Gothic criticism, much like Gothic works, has tended ‘to repeat a number of stock formulas’ (p.5). The essays in *The Gothic*, however, while returning to familiar texts, all make ‘significant departures from now standard readings and critical practices’ (p. 5). The claim perhaps needs some qualification. Readers familiar with recent Gothic criticism may not be entirely surprised to find such critics as David Punter and Elizabeth Bronfen discussing Gothic and theories of trauma, Robert Miles on abjection and nationalism, Jean-Jacques Lecercle offering a Greimassian account of *Dracula*, or Jerrold E. Hogle considering simulation in the Gothic of our last fin de siècle.

As the above list clearly demonstrates, this collection includes essays by many of the most respected and influential critics of the Gothic. And what they demonstrate, Botting observes, reveal that there has been a significant shift in Gothic criticism. Rather than being seen as an 'aberrant feature of an epoch insisting on rational social and scientific progress', Gothic now appears to be more 'a constituent element, albeit one that has strange, disturbing effects' (pp. 5-6). No longer associated only with violence, repression and antisocial energies, Gothic also appears integral to the 'formation, self-representation and maintenance of the modern world we inhabit' (p. 6).

Demonstrating the involvement of Gothic in these processes almost inevitably involves historicising the genre. The need for this is something upon which a number of critics have recently insisted, most notoriously, perhaps, Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, who, while not contributors, at moments seem to hover over this volume like some admonitory Walpolian body parts. One of the most interesting and carefully historicized accounts is E.J. Clery's essay on Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother*. Moving the focus of the incest tale away from Freudian readings and instead considering the play as a significant document in the history of female desire, Clery convincingly demonstrates one way in which the Gothic has been involved in the production of modern notions of sexual difference.

The move to historicize evident in the majority of these essays does not mean that psychoanalysis has loosened its grip on Gothic criticism. On the evidence of this collection, Jacques Lacan would seem to be on the way out, but Slavoj Žižek and Julia Kristeva are holding up well. Some of the best essays effectively combine the psychoanalytical with the historical approach. Robert Miles, for example, offers a carefully argued analysis of the relationship between the abject and nationalism, usefully rethinking both terms before moving to focus in on Walpole, with a particularly illuminating discussion of the prefaces to *Otranto*.

While some of the critics in this collection focus upon such 'classic' Gothic authors as Walpole, others consider the kind of cultural work being done by Gothic today. Helen Stoddart's complex but rewarding essay, '*The Passion of New Eve* and the Cinema: Hysteria, Spectacle, Masquerade', is especially interesting for the way it demonstrates how the cinema continues the 'spectralising habit' of earlier Gothic. With respect to the issue of fantasy and reality, Stoddart's essay can be usefully set against Jerrold E. Hogle's impressive discussion of 'The Gothic at our Turn of the Century: Our Culture of Simulation and the Return of the Body'. Hogle includes discussions of Morrison's *Beloved* and a number of short stories from the 1991 anthology *The New Gothic*, showing how the 'irrupting physical' has become one undeniable source of the haunting and the horrible. But which, he asks, is more Gothically monstrous: the 'reinsistence of this body with its primordial and final liquidity or the distancing and denial of that Real in systematic simulations that once made the Gothic possible as a form of fiction and drama?' (p. 168). The question is one he then goes on to consider in a brilliant discussion of *The X Files* before offering some concluding comments on how the resurgence of the physical in recent Gothic functions for us today.

Another highlight of the collection is Fred Botting's 'Candygothic'. Written with Botting's usual flair, the essay focuses on *Candyman*, a film 'riven with the concerns and contradictions of Reagan's and Thatcher's 1980s' (p. 139) and a 'horror story of meaning's disappearance' (p. 142). Botting has some particularly illuminating comments to make about the 'unresolved entwining of fantasy and reality' in the film;

indeed, the old question of fantasy and reality is addressed in new and challenging ways by a surprising number of critics in this collection.

These essays are, almost without exception, elegantly and confidently written and intelligently argued; this is a collection which everyone with an interest in the Gothic will want to read. And while Botting is certainly right to claim that these days it is increasingly difficult to speak of 'the Gothic' with any assurance' (p. 1), the one thing this collection does suggest is that the Gothic as a genre has been firmly repositioned. No longer marginal but central to our modern world and our sense of ourselves, 'the Gothic' has become a dreadfully serious issue.

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Tim Fulford (ed.), *Romanticism and Millenarianism*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. 248. Hb £ 40. ISBN 0 312 24011 2.

A photograph of a suitably beneficent looking Morton D. Paley greets the reader of this handsomely produced volume. Paley, whose work on apocalypse and millenarianism in English Romanticism provided much of the stimulus for *Romantic Revelations*, the 6th Annual International Conference of the British Association for Romantic Studies back in 1999, is honoured once again in this stimulating, engaging and, dare one say, timely collection. As one might expect, given the remit signalled by the title, most of the fourteen chapters of this book are concerned with topics close to Paley's heart. There are, appropriately, dedicated chapters on the apocalyptic and millennial visions of Cowper, Coleridge, Southey and Blake, all of which draw inspiration from and make generous reference to books, articles and editions spanning the length of Paley's forty-year (and counting) career.

Tim Fulford's informative and richly textured introductory chapter sets the tone for much of what follows, presenting familiar figures in new contexts enlivened by original research. Thus we learn not only of Blake's engagement with the millenarianism of Joseph Priestley, Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott but also of his connections with less well known figures such as William Bryan, John Wright, Joseph Bicheno and Francis Dobbs, all of whom maintained a literal belief in the coming of a New Jerusalem. That millenarianism ought not to be dismissed as either quaint or marginal to the concerns of the period is confirmed by Fulford's quoting of statistics: some 100,000 people are estimated to have accepted the teachings of Southcott; Brothers's impact on the social and political life of England in this period is no less considerable. The impact of apocalypse and millennium is not confined to Blake. As the chapters in this volume conform, Coleridge, Southey, Godwin, Shelley, Moore and Byron also gave serious attention to beliefs that, from a rational perspective, appear excessive not to mention absurd. That such belief should have emerged in this period is explained, as one might expect, by the traumatic course of the French Revolution and its violent aftermath. Pace Mao, we should not be surprised when post-revolutionary millenarianism impinges on the present, disturbing our claims to transcendental equanimity. The idea of the persistence of the past resonates in Nicholas Roe's subtle meditation on the arts of exile and emigration, in David Worrall's scrupulous uncovering of the millennial press in late-eighteenth-century Spitalfields and in Gary Harrison's investigation of the imaginary apocalypses of Romantic and contemporary ecological discourses.

This is a book of rich pickings, which precludes easy synthesis. A number of chapters, however, deserve special mention. In 'Cowper's Ends', Adam Rounce builds on work by Vincent Newey, to offer a critically sophisticated and, in the end, thoroughly convincing account of Cowper's ambivalent relationship with Miltonic revelation. Peter J. Kitson is similarly concerned with the influence of Milton, providing valuable insights into Coleridge's 'Unitarian Sublime'. For his brief though piquant interpretation of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', John Beer draws unlikely sustenance from Coleridge's epigram 'To Mr Pye'. The resulting shock of mild surprise is present too in Nicholas Roe's creative essay on the domesticating of the millennium in the ill-fated Pantisocracy scheme of 1794-95. To be convinced of Southey's importance as a major poet, and not merely as a contextual 'player', is one of the many delights of this elegant and ultimately moving study. That Tim Fulford should present an equally convincing assault on Southey's post-revolutionary reputation, founded on the orientalist core of *Thalaba* is no less a pleasure. Southey's unconscious fascination with the image of the body of the exotic woman places him in uncomfortable proximity with both the followers of Southcott and the moral laxities of the unredeemed east. In a characteristically thought-provoking chapter, Anne K. Mellor examines the problematic status of female prophecy, offering new readings of Mary Anne Browne, Mary Shelley and Joanna Southcott, while Philip W. Martin writes persuasively and with blessed wit on Byron and Moore's fascination with the sexual desires of angels.

In a book of sustained and consistent pleasures, the remaining three chapters on Blake come as something of a disappointment. G. E. Bentley's cataloguing of Blake's 'Visionary Heads' performs a valuable function, but one that stops short of the high level interpretative work performed elsewhere. Martin Butlin's reading of the relations between word and image Blake's Laocoön print is similarly impressive at the bibliographical level but fails to connect fully with the millenarian implications of this extraordinary work. Regrettably, the final chapter on the Blake Archive is (for me) too preoccupied with technical detail to build on the deft suggestiveness of its opening premise. That Blake would have perceived in the discourse of computing an echo of his own millenarianism is a notion that the authors of this piece seem reluctant to run with. These quibbles aside, *Romantic Millenarianism* is that rare thing: a collective volume that engages and stimulates at a consistently satisfyingly intellectual level whilst persuading the reader throughout of the vital importance of its topic.

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**Gavin Edwards, (ed.), *Watkin Tench, Letters From Revolutionary France*.
Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001. Pp. xxxvi+186. Hb £20, pb £9.99. ISBN
0 7807083 1691 3.**

These letters tell of the author's imprisonment from November, 1794 to May, 1795 after his ship was captured by a superior French force. Confined at first on shipboard in Brest and later detained in easier circumstances at Quimper, he describes the effects of the fall of Robespierre and the Jacobins in this outlying region. Gavin Edwards sets the *Letters* in the context of his previous publications and the immediate circumstances of the Revolution and suggests that although they were obviously written for publication some might have made their way to England during the

hostilities. Tench revised them before publication, probably adding many of the literary quotations which mark him as a man of letters, known as the chronicler of the Botany Bay settlement, and possibly heightening subjective passages of Gothic foreboding which exploit the illusion of immediate composition. Like the *Letters* of Helen Maria Williams, which he probably knew, they contain prominent elements of self-presentation, observation and intervention and the form privileges immediate response and speculation over general consistency of viewpoint.

Tench writes, Gavin Edwards observes, 'as a British officer and gentleman of Anglican and liberal Whig persuasion' (p. xxxiii), sharing English 'classical' republican sympathies, but his responses depart from a stereotype. Tench is unusual at this date in affirming his support for the earlier phase of the Revolution, though vigorous in condemning its degeneration. His English contempt for the superficial, slovenly, corrupt, and inefficient French pretenders to republicanism is flagrant enough, but what stands out is his disgust at their impoliteness. Mary Wollstonecraft, whose review is reprinted as an appendix, thought him too severe on democratic manners but appreciated his derogatory portrait of a *sans-culotte* commissary. This 'indecent blockhead' had an impudent and 'brutal' manner of 'thrusting himself' familiarly into the conversation of ladies, wearing his cockaded hat and with his hands 'stuck in his breeches, *not* his pockets' (p. 65). A protégé of the Williams Wynne family of Wrexham, Tench has patrician notions which mingle with a thoroughly professional commitment both as a major of marines and historian. Professionally he is appalled by the lack of cleanliness and order on the French ships, but he questions Admiralty policy which allowed them success in disrupting British coastal trade and in protecting a vital fleet of supplies from America. French ships, unlike British, benefit from the application of scientific principles in their construction, and many of the new republican regulations compare favourably with British naval traditions. There are few problems of subordination, despite the more egalitarian and humane discipline. As a professional he disparages contemporary plans for extending militia and volunteer forces to repel a French invasion, not a view usually associated with republicanism. His condemnation of slavery, which Wollstonecraft highlights, aligns him with French policies. His most substantial complaints concern the treatment of British officers, though his depiction of Admiral Bligh heroically suffering the outrageous indignity of sitting on a trunk, eating salt herring laid on a piece of paper and dipping his spoon into the communal soup-bowl teeters on the comic.

Outrage rather than comedy is the reaction to the French society he meets on land where good breeding is reduced to menial situations or a fragile dependency on uncertain political authority. His descriptions of tyrannical republican officials are obtrusively annotated with their former low trades. His sympathies are fully with the Royalist *ci-devant* aristocrats he meets at gambling parties and he laments in Burkean fashion scenes of plundered mansions and the defacement of 'armorial bearings' on everything from tombs to spoons. Catholicism, in his earlier publication associated with tyranny and superstition, is here treated sympathetically as a contrast to the rampant atheism of the Jacobins. An effective tableau is made of a church given over to the manufacture of gunpowder in which the remains from the graveyard are used in the process.

The topicality of the *Letters* resides mostly in Tench's auguries of the new regime and prospects for peace. The officials replacing Jacobin oafs impress Tench with their gentlemanliness and courtesy, especially the representative whose slovenliness of dress now reminds Tench of the 'plainness, wisdom, and integrity' of burgomasters of the seventeenth century Dutch republic (p. 132). The representative

tells Tench that France will not submit to interference in its internal concerns, a message, Tench feels, directed at the English authorities and one which he supports. Tench had earlier recorded his difficulty in justifying British intervention, blaming Burke for precipitating the conflict. He foresees a stormy future for the French but now prays that peace will allow them to work out their own destiny.

This volume is splendidly edited with full notes and references to French archives and a wide range of modern studies which establish the naval, political, ideological and local contexts.

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