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**Ian Reid, *Wordsworth and the Formation of English Studies.*  
Aldershot and Burlington, VT:  
Ashgate, 2004. Pp. 268. £45. ISBN  
0754635937.**

Ian Reid sets out to place Wordsworth at the centre of the development of English Literature as a scholarly discipline from the nineteenth century through to the 1970s, at which point, he suggests, 'English Literature began to lose its sense of disciplinary identity' (1). He argues that the hegemony of a Wordsworthian perception of Romanticism shapes the formation of English as an academic discipline. The first three chapters focus on curriculum developments following the merger of University College London and King's College London in 1836. Two chapters then trace the development of English Literature teaching at Melbourne University, and two chapters do the same for Cornell University. Reid's project is not a study of the general influence of Wordsworth on British, Australian and American culture; he argues that a Wordsworthian model challenged an Oxbridge educational establishment which, when not hostile to English as an academic discipline, certainly found little room for the perversities of Romantic-period poets in its canon.

Reid examines an already well-established list of nineteenth-century English Wordsworthians, and their

engagement with literature as in some sense a form of instruction. He then proceeds to show that these scholars were applying what they understood as Wordsworthian educational principles and ideals to the process of defining and framing a model for degree-level instruction in English Literature. The evidence is skilfully deployed, and, in consequence, figures whom one might normally expect to think of as founding fathers (not least Arnold) increasingly emerge as secondary in stature to the poet of *Lyrical Ballads*, the 'Immortality' Ode, *The Prelude* and, most importantly, *The Excursion*. The case is strengthened by the use of unpublished material that reveals the inner workings of all three institutions in question. In what should come as something of a wake-up call to all of us involved in any way in teaching and research, Reid has tracked down student lecture notes as well as correspondence, and (most chilling of all) has dug into the archives for past examination questions. This evidence provides the basis of some important revisionary aspects of Reid's thesis, including a consideration of how 'Romanticism' has variously been defined in recent years. In the course of a perceptive critique of McGann's *The Romantic Ideology*, Reid looks with renewed interest at Raymond Williams's work, suggesting that *Culture and Society* remains an important book. He also draws attention to the more recent work of Gary Kelly (specifically his essay in *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*).

This book should leave even the most sceptical reader with the impression that, as the syllabuses evolve, and the pedagogy is hammered out, Wordsworth is indeed everywhere. This is reinforced by an impressive piece of intertextual detective work. Reid is able to show that textual borrowing by Shelley in *Alastor* from Book I of *The Excursion* leads us back to Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Short Residence in Sweden* (147-50). There is not room to

summarise Reid's exposition, which includes demonstrating how other critics have uncovered parts of this trail, but failed to recognise thematic issues made manifest when the whole pattern is revealed. This is used to illustrate the way in which nineteenth-century scholars (in London, Melbourne and Cornell) chose *The Excursion* to inform their model of Romanticism, and to emphasise the dominance within that model of a Wordsworthian didactic educational emphasis (rather than what was on offer from Wollstonecraft or Shelley).

Reid cannot, however, have it all Wordsworth's way. There are moments in his account of Melbourne and Cornell in particular when it could be argued that the centrality of a Wordsworthian Romanticism to the evolution of English Literature is less successfully proven. This does not detract from what is undoubtedly an important book, which confronts the interface between the scholar's sense of the subject and the part played in forming that subject by the combined activities of educationalists, critics, theoreticians, politicians and 'history'. Reid asserts that this is an invitation to develop an ongoing debate about the direction of English studies since the 1970s. Having plundered, to excellent effect, exam questions from the English, Australian and American past to illustrate his thesis, in the closing pages of the book I find embedded a question from Reid himself. In context, this is designed to prompt further discussion, not to close the argument down (I do hope none of my students are reading this): 'the study of English proceeds "not in entire forgetfulness" (to apply a phrase from Wordsworth's "Immortality" Ode out of context) but with vestigially Romantic elements still embedded in it' (216). Discuss.

John Williams

**Richard Marggraf Turley, *Keats's Boyish Imagination*. London: Routledge, 2004. Pp. 158. £55. ISBN 0415288827.**

It is difficult not to warm to a critic who is able to argue, not without conviction, that 'one of the best commentaries' on Keats's 'To Autumn' is a 1980s TV advertisement for Mr Kipling's apple pies. In quoting the ode, Marggraf Turley argues, the advertisement 'penetrates, almost certainly without realising it is doing so, the poem's veiled comments on Keats's allegorical life' (39). It is, of course, an exceedingly unconvincing point – as Marggraf Turley might concede, were he pressed – but it makes a good joke, anyway. And the example of Marggraf Turley's use of Mr Kipling's allegedly 'exceedingly good' cakes effectively illustrates one of this book's primary provocations: in arguing for an appreciation of Keats's subversively 'boyish' poetics, his 'strategic infantilism' (4), Marggraf Turley explores and indeed enacts the possibilities of a subversively adolescent or indeed 'boyish' criticism. As he says, his desire is the archetypically boyish one of wanting to put the cat among the (critical) pigeons (ix).

In this respect, *Keats's Boyish Imagination* places itself firmly within an eminent critical tradition in which Keats's 'dissident' poetics of vulgarity (John Bayley), embarrassment (Christopher Ricks) or 'great badness'/'bad greatness' (Marjorie Levinson) itself enacts a certain vulgarity, embarrassment or 'great badness': there's nothing more vulgar, really, than Bayley's interest in Keats's vulgarity, nothing more embarrassing than Ricks's socially awkward revelations of Keatsian embarrassment, and often nothing more

brilliantly bad than Levinson's linguistically and conceptually disturbing post-Marxist insights into Keats's 'life of allegory'. Marggraf Turley is no exception to this law of Keats criticism: in a kind of critical exuberance that wilfully exposes him to the potential scepticism of the more serious, responsible, sombre, mature critic of Keats, his book, like Keats's poetry, embraces the 'space between' boyhood and manhood – or, in Marggraf Turley's case, the space between critical frippery and more 'adult' critical sobriety. In doing so, Marggraf Turley productively challenges not only our sense of Keats's poetry – of what we might learn from it and how we might judge it – but also our sense of critical decorum. We can forgive him his Kipling cakes, in other words, because of the way that he helps us to see Keats with new, 'boyish' eyes.

In five brisk, quirkily perceptive chapters ('quirky' is Marggraf Turley's own self-description), the book examines: images of feet in Keats as fetishistic displacements of sexual longing; the 'theme' of maturation and immaturity in, especially, 'To Autumn'; Keats's difficulty in finding a 'mature' or 'manly' voice (which Marggraf Turley wittily links to 'puberphonia', the condition of an adolescent boy's breaking voice); Keats's 'naughty' challenges to the serious 'sublime' of the landscape aesthetics of Burke and Wordsworth; Keats's schoolboyish penchant for scurrility and, in particular, obscenity (his somewhat *jejune* deployment of rude words in letters and poems).

There is, of course, a fundamental and perhaps unavoidable paradox at work in this reading of Keats, one that Marggraf Turley articulates when he comments that his reading brings the poet's 'challenge to middle-class values, bourgeois ideology, abusive power, exploitative labour exchange, the strictures of rigidly defined gender roles, dominant representations of masculinity, and the pernicious influence

of polite aesthetics/aesthetic pleasure – opposition enacted through attention to puerility, gauche displays of petulance, callowness – finally into clear light' (7).

The difficulty is that such an account of an oppositional poetics and poetic practice cannot avoid making it sound precisely like the kind of serious, ethically sombre, politically engaged writing that is supposedly being challenged or subverted. Indeed, the more effectively Marggraf Turley is able to describe Keats's boyish opposition to establishment politics and aesthetics the more 'mature' his version of Keats seems to become. And in a sense this paradox is fundamental to the book's methodology. Examining images of feet in Keats's poetry, for example, might seem to be a trivial or juvenile approach to the poetry, 'frivolous', as Marggraf Turley himself concedes, 'preposterous even' (12). So in order to make feet a convincing topic for critical study, Marggraf Turley uses Freud's intellectually serious discussion of fetishism to link Keats's images of feet with the poet's anxieties over the 'phallic mother' and over his sense of his own masculinity. The more convincing Marggraf Turley is on this point, the less convincing we might think he is on the larger question of Keats's boyish aesthetics. If Keats's 'boyish' poetry has serious, mature or adult consequences then it is no longer, or no longer entirely, boyish (puerile, gauche, petulant, callow).

Still, *Keats's Boyish Imagination* is a worthy successor to an important if edgy tradition of Keats criticism and one for which there is perhaps no higher praise than to say that it allows us to read Keats, to reread him, in ways that seem new but that also, once we've seen it, once we've seen what Marggraf Turley is getting at, seem to be just what we might have been thinking about Keats all along: the book, in short, in boyish shorthand, is cool.

Andrew Bennett  
University of Bristol

**David Vallins, ed., *Coleridge's Writings, Vol. 5: On the Sublime*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003. Pp. 197. £50. ISBN 0333972503.**

The recent return to philosophical respectability of the sublime has led to the recovery of one of the most pervasive discourses in Romantic-period writing, now no longer an embarrassment to modern critical minds. Nearly every writer of note, from Kant to Fanny Burney, had something to say about the sublime, and everyone, from Werther to Don Juan experienced it. It was nothing less than a structuring force of feeling throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It's no surprise that Coleridge, too, should have a great deal to say about the sublime and this new book, skillfully edited by David Vallins, brings together relevant texts culled from a vast *oeuvre*, which includes the letters, notebooks and the now complete Princeton edition of the *Collected Works*. The material is divided coherently into five thematic sections (early writings, landscape, literature, psychology and religion), each introduced by a lively, pointed essay by Vallins. But the net result is that of a miscellany – and this is entirely felicitous. One passes from landscape description ('the most fantastic Mountains ... as fantastic, as if Nature had *laughed* herself into the convulsion') to religious reflection ('the noble Being within me, the Veiled Immortal, will rebuke my Grief') in a single bound. Scholars who want Coleridge in context will consult the Princeton edition; those who want quick access to key texts and those who simply want good reading, as well as those impatient of Coleridgean beating-around-the-bush, will come here instead and be amply rewarded. In this

way, this volume, like the series of which it is a worthy member, marks the return of a lightly edited, reader-friendly Coleridge, such as the one presented to an earlier generation in Roberta Brinkley's *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century* (1955) or Kathleen Coburn's *Inquiring Spirit* (1951).

But did Coleridge have anything new to say about the sublime? Perhaps not by way of theory: the Kantian origin of his useful distinction between the beautiful and the sublime (in beauty you recognise 'the relation of parts to the whole', in the sublime 'you neither see the wholeness nor the parts') is proverbial. What is remarkable in the case of Coleridge is the extent to which the sublime structured his own thinking. This is immediately clear in his extraordinary power of landscape description, the most accessible section in this book. This, for instance, is from the account of climbing Scafell in 1802:

the sight of the Craggs above me on each side, & the impetuous Clouds just over them, posting so luridly & so rapidly northward, overawed me – I lay in a state of almost prophetic Trance & Delight – & blessed God aloud, for the powers of Reason & the Will, which remaining no Danger can overpower us!

Perhaps a bit too self-consciously Kantian, but the point is clear. The sublime for Coleridge was not just an aesthetic mode, but an existential one. He thought and felt *through* the sublime. In the end, then, it's a question not of what Coleridge did for the sublime, but what the sublime did for him. The value of this book is that it makes this case clearly and persuasively.

Vallins detects two ways this sublimity exerts this structuring function. First, in Coleridge's notion of ascent, by which the individual, possessed of the 'philosophic imagination', sees through the sham certainties of materiality to contemplate, so far as Reason allows, divine truths. And

secondly, in his notion of perpetual striving, since, after all, those divine truths are only ever uncertainly discerned and ultimately can only be accepted on faith. Coleridge emerges from this analysis as a devout Doctor Faustus. There is plenty of evidence for this reading ('No object of Sense is sublime in itself; but only as far as *I make it* a symbol of some Idea' – my italics), and even for Vallins's further contention that Coleridge was consistently anti-materialist throughout his life.

But if the Coleridgean sublime is so uncompromisingly hierarchical, doesn't that confirm the New Historicist critique that his thought is both puritanical (in its denigration of materiality) and elitist (in its privileging of philosophic insight)? Vallins admits both points, but argues that the characteristically Coleridgean desire to be free from limitation is not *necessarily* only for the few and that his writing about the sublime was throughout his career an attempt to communicate its liberating effects. To this we could add that, for Coleridge, the experience of the sublime did not always lead to empowerment. Often, so far from culminating in recognition of self-mastery (*pace* Kant and Burke), it would end in self-annihilation: 'On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and with awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me [...] and the only sensible impression left is, "that I am nothing!"'. The inability to overcome such vulnerability is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Coleridgean sublime, and its most compelling.

Michael John Kooy  
University of Warwick

**Gurion Taussig, *Coleridge and the Idea of Friendship, 1789-1804*.  
Newark and London: University  
of Delaware Press and Associated**

**University Presses, 2002. Pp. 376.  
\$65. ISBN 0874137411.**

Eschewing the psychobiography of Geoffrey Yarlott, Thomas McFarland and Molly Lefebure, Gurion Taussig explores the idea that 'Coleridge's personal experiences of friendship are shaped by a wider cultural preoccupation with friendship evident during the 1780s and 1790s' (16). After presenting an impressively detailed and convincing sketch of this wider cultural preoccupation, Taussig explores, in turn, the friendships Coleridge had with Poole, Southey, Thelwall, Lamb, Lloyd and Wordsworth.

Coleridge's friendship with Poole soon becomes an intricate web of subtly shifting, constantly renegotiated gender-roles that are most clearly seen in the Miltonic images of marriage and embowerment that find their way into Coleridge's prose and verse. Southey, meanwhile, gets two chapters: one in which he is a key player in an anti-Godwinian Pantisocracy, designed as a kind of solar energy source for universal, philanthropic benevolence; and another in which he is cast as an increasingly reluctant partner in Coleridge's not unrelated quest for a classless liberalism (inspired by Paine) in which 'man [...] is naturally the friend of man'.

In later chapters, Coleridge recruits Thelwall as an antagonistic friend with whom he might constantly argue so as to realise a Blakean ideal of 'oppositional friendship' (177); and he finds, in Charles Lamb and Lloyd, friends that help him reflect upon the nature of divine love, as it is conceived by the Unitarian church. Taussig's study comes to a head with his look at the 'godlike' Wordsworth (245), who, compromised by Humean notions of the autonomous self and Burkean notions

of the sublime, finally makes the impossibility of friendship clear to Coleridge.

Taussig offers a strange but often seductively crystalline version of Coleridge and his friends. Stripped of the worldly, material trappings of biography, real-life people become, in his book, complexly intricate vessels for ideas and abstractions. But they also become rather icily skeletal for those of us who know them. Gone is the huge amount of hurt, anger and betrayal that Coleridge left in his wake: Taussig doesn't, for example, leave room for Southey being angry with Coleridge for 'besot[ting] himself with opium, or with spirits, till [...] half reduced to idiotcy'; nor does he entertain the possibility that Coleridge's friendship with Poole waned simply because Poole became Mrs Coleridge's friend instead (to such an extent that she told him about the death of her one year-old son, Berkeley, long before she told her husband).

Of course, rather than wanting to provide an introduction to the Coleridge circle, Taussig aims his book squarely at a readership of hardcore Romanticists who are as familiar as he is himself with the work of Kelvin Everest, Nigel Leask, Nicola Trott and other scholars. But I wonder, though, whether amongst the remains of Coleridge's life – his life-story rather than his psychobiography – Taussig might have found material that could complicate even further the interplay between Coleridge's lived experiences and his ideas. While I am fully convinced that Taussig is right to find a hotly debated, eighteenth-century discourse of friendship underpinning Coleridge's early poems and letters, I am left wondering whether this discourse truly provided the driving impetus for his friendships, or whether Coleridge perhaps half-knowingly used it as an intellectual gloss to conceal – or

rationalise – the disruptive vacillations and indecision that always so chequered his character. This, no doubt, will be a question for future critics and biographers alike to mull over.

As well as providing much welcome food for thought for Romantic scholars, Taussig also begins to offer a major corrective to those working on the anthropology of friendship. Taking their cues from the likes of Anthony Giddens and Marcel Mauss, ethnographers in this emerging field of research often begin by assuming that a fairly straightforward and uncontested, post-Enlightenment notion of friendship operates in the West, one that can be conveniently contrasted with the quite different notions of friendship found in, say, the Greek village of Ambéli. Taussig explodes this myth of a fixed and singular notion of friendship and, reading him, anthropologists clambering for a more uneven and nuanced history of Western thought will find it of no small interest (to take just one example) that, even while Hume was still very much a contemporary, the *Universal Magazine* (1793) set about refuting his ideas by looking to the Slavonian friendship rituals of the Morlacchi people in Dalmatia.

*Dennis Low  
University of Hull*

**Claudia L. Johnson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pb. Pp. 284. £15.99. ISBN 0521789524.**

This is a valuable addition to Wollstonecraft studies, which will also be of interest to scholars of sensibility, since

– as Cora Kaplan points out in the essay which concludes the volume – Wollstonecraft’s preoccupation with the meaning and value of affect continues to provoke debate and stimulate questions.

Claudia L. Johnson begins the volume by pointing out the difficulty in categorising Wollstonecraft: novelist, educationalist, political theorist, historian, memoirist and feminist, individual works by her combine all these interests and modes of intellection, often simultaneously. Wollstonecraft’s constant transgression of boundaries and complication of binary divisions is a recurring theme in many of the essays. Janet Todd, for instance, shows how Wollstonecraft’s passionate self-scrutiny and drive to communicate, manifested in her personal letters, also informs her political writings, which may be seen as ‘public letters in angry reaction to men she considered both powerful and wrong-headed’, especially Burke and Rousseau. Similarly, Alan Richardson persuasively shows how Wollstonecraft’s *Original Stories* may be read as both progressive and productive of a ‘closely controlled rational autonomy’, restricting children’s emotional and imaginative responses along constrained and adult-determined lines; but goes on to read her fragmentary *Lessons* for very small children as emphasising and enabling the child’s autonomy and independence. Chris Jones continues this investigation of the meaning of feeling for Wollstonecraft, showing how her understanding of political and social progress was always linked for her with the development of right feeling: he offers a vigorous account of Wollstonecraft’s notion of ‘active citizenship’, which, he argues, she linked with a natural economy of sensibility, one which would replace the corrupt and poisonous social feelings destructive of progress. Tom Furniss’s chapter extends this survey of Wollstonecraft’s political thinking, arguing that her *Historical and*

*Moral View of the French Revolution*, relatively critically neglected, should be seen as her best work. Mitzi Myers’s chapter on Wollstonecraft’s literary reviews advances this idea, showing how the reviews ‘both discuss and stylistically enact a poetics of change, an attempt to unite an aesthetic of spontaneity and affect with a morality of reason’, a union of ‘imaginative excursus and rational inquiry’, which Myers identifies as characteristic of the ‘feminist mind’ Wollstonecraft is constructing. Even when Wollstonecraft is reviewing ‘bland fodder’, Myers argues, she is ‘nourish[ing] her own political aesthetics’: thus, ‘her strictures on submissive female reading postures slide easily into a broader cultural analysis of female submission’.

Barbara Taylor’s chapter again raises these questions of the valuation to be placed on feeling, examining Wollstonecraft’s links with Rational Dissent figures and ideas, and exploring the religious roots of what some critics of Wollstonecraft have attacked as her sexual puritanism. She saw erotic attachments, Taylor shows, primarily as ‘modes of psycho-ethical relating – to oneself as well as to others – with transcendent significance’. Taylor argues that Wollstonecraft was most preoccupied, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, with the impact of female sexual desire on women’s moral destiny and ethical self-image, so that relationships with God and with one’s own immortal soul had to be ranked above sexual gratification. On the other hand, the idealising attachment to others in sexual love was for Wollstonecraft a shadowing forth of the human attachment to God and the Good, and could not be dismissed as unimportant. This is an illuminating chapter, and one that – along with several others in the volume – critically reappraises Godwin’s influential, strongly gendered presentation of Wollstonecraft’s

ideas about sexuality, feeling, rationality and religion in his *Memoirs*.

Susan J. Wolfson's chapter complements Myers's, showing how Wollstonecraft reads and is read by poets, while Anne K. Mellor's chapter places Wollstonecraft in the context of contemporary women writers. Wolfson begins by looking at Wollstonecraft's political critique of the condition of women as a method of reading, a querying of conventional or 'naturalised' terms or names (linking this to similar projects by Wordsworth, Coleridge and Blake), and gives an excellent account of Wollstonecraft's pioneering feminist reading of Milton in the *Rights of Woman*. Claudia L. Johnson's chapter on Wollstonecraft's novels is a thoughtful and persuasive account of Wollstonecraft's fictional treatments of romantic love and same-sex attachment (themes amplified by Andrew Elfenbein in his chapter on Wollstonecraft and the sexuality of genius), complementing Wolfson's and Myers's: Johnson analyses the marriage plots of *Mary* and *Maria*, and argues that Wollstonecraft subverts romance, presenting it both as 'a sort of conspiracy that seduces and traps women, and as a literary structure that can mis-describe and mis-shape their desires in the novels women read'. Mary A. Favret offers a thought-provoking interpretation of Wollstonecraft's travel writing as connected to her interests in exploring emotion, furthering social progress and acknowledging the impact of forms of displacement on people's lives and ideas. Lastly, Cora Kaplan reviews the ways in which Wollstonecraft's reputation as a thinker and as a woman has been constructed over the last two centuries, and focuses the questions many of these essays ask: 'Was the erotic and affective imagination, gendered or universal, a blessing or a curse for women? Was it indispensable to radical consciousness [...] or was it something that should be

jettisoned or retrained? [...] could a brave new world reconstruct its unconscious, as well as its conscious wishes?'. These questions are still with us and have become central to many considerations of Romantic-period writing.

Susan Manly  
University of St Andrews

**James Hogg, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, ed. by Douglas Mack. Stirling/South Carolina Edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002. Pb. Pp. 288. £8.99. ISBN 0748663169.**

*The Shepherd's Calendar* was written as a series of tales by James Hogg for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* between 1819 and 1829. From tragedies that attest to the hardships of contemporary rural life, to seemingly older tales of diabolical possessions and witchcraft, each article reveals Hogg's mastery of narrative. The facility with which he moves between a shepherd's humble prayer and more philosophical passages about dreaming is breathtaking. In 'Storms', for example, the first article of the series that Hogg published in *Blackwood's*, the young narrator-shepherd sets off for a literary society with 'a flaming bombastical essay in my pocket, and my tongue trained to many wise and profound remarks'. Here, as elsewhere in his work, Hogg cannot resist a wry nod towards the Edinburgh literary and social circles from which he was excluded. The young narrator is prevented from attending his literary circle by the threat of a storm which evokes premonitions about the fate of his sheep: 'I stood still and contemplated the day, and the more closely I examined it, the more I was impressed by the belief that some mischief was brewing; so with a heavy heart, I turned on my heel, and made the best of

my way back the road I came; my elaborate essay, and all my wise observations, had come to nothing'. Hogg's narrator looks back indulgently upon his younger self's literary aspirations. It is superstition that is responsible for his pragmatic decision to turn back and tend his flock, and this coupling of superstition and pragmatism triumphs over the promised delights of the literary gathering. The tale, however, ends by privileging this deferred literary meeting, promising a full revelation of its transactions in a future issue.

Almost all of the articles in *The Shepherd's Calendar* retain Hogg's trademark tension between superstition and reason. As always, his work is self-conscious in this respect: in 'Storms' the narrator describes the atmospheric condition that confuses him as an 'optical delusion' 'like enchantment' which has been effected by 'evil spirits' by way of punishment. In 'Mary Burnet', the narrator acknowledges that 'the modern philosophic mind, may feel tainted by such antiquated breathings of superstition' as his tale will relate, only to question the relative merits of 'modern scepticism' over his own 'visions'. 'Smithy Cracks', published in 1827, also contains a homage to the Gothic genre which clearly influenced Hogg's work. The educated schoolmaster's rumour-mongering about the ghost of the murdered laird wandering abroad is reminiscent of Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778). The servants quit the house in fear as the rumour of the ghost spreads around the village. Unlike Reeve's earlier tale, though, this supernatural phenomenon is exhaustively rationalised and we learn that the old laird has survived the attempt on his life by his son-in-law. This revelation does not occur, however, before a sheriff has attempted to dismiss the servant's testimony as 'the ravings of a disturbed and heated imagination'. This dismissal places him in

the same context as the sceptically viewed editor in Hogg's earlier *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824).

In his introduction to the edition, Douglas Mack accurately describes these articles as a 'sophisticated subversion of some of the assumptions of Enlightenment Edinburgh'. So sophisticated are these subversions, indeed, that it becomes difficult to determine the exact moral and cultural import of the tales. The oral nature of the articles is always privileged, though, and the tales are as much about the process of story telling as they are about a particular anecdote. The act of collecting them here will serve to dispel the myth that Hogg only produced one significant work. These articles are complex, nuanced, humorous and very literary. Milton, Shakespeare and Burns's work are drawn upon, but these writers are engaged with and challenged.

Mack's introduction to this excellent edition also details how *The Shepherd's Calendar* was bowdlerised by nineteenth-century editors to remove some of its more 'indelicate' passages. This process was begun by Robert Hogg's collected edition of the tales in 1829, and serious attempts to retrieve the tales were only begun in the mid-twentieth century. The Stirling/South Carolina edition completes that task, with the paperback reprint ensuring the wider dissemination of this collection. The glossary of the Scots used, the chronology of Hogg's life and the detailed notes that accompany each tale make this an invaluable edition for both research and teaching.

Angela Wright  
University of Sheffield

**Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, eds, *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,**

**2003. Pp. 265. £40. ISBN  
052181085X.**

*English Romanticism and the Celtic World* is an edited collection of twelve essays, one of whose 'central concerns', the editors announce, is to intervene in the way "'four nations" British literary history in the last decade has brought with it new approaches to the "Celtic" idea in eighteenth-century and Romantic studies'. While broadly welcoming the four nations approach, the editors are concerned that it may carry with it 'a danger of losing sight of the extent to which Celticism was used as a tool in the construction and expansion of the post-1745 British state' (1). Averting this danger, the book 'frequently reveals [that], in the English writing of the Romantic period, the Celtic is simultaneously reinvented for, reappropriated by, and yet excluded from, the historical and political British present' (4). At the same time, however, the essays foreground and explore various kinds of 'cross-fertilising cultural dialogue [in the period] between Anglo and Celtic culture in which each culture looks to the other for revitalisation' (4). In addition, the editors claim that the volume reveals 'the crucial role played in English, Romantic-period constructions, cementings and problematisings of British identity by Scottish, Irish and Welsh writers' (5-6).

Several essays in the collection reread canonical Romantic poets in terms of their engagement with the Celtic world. One of the best of such essays is J. R. Watson's 'Wordsworth, North Wales and the Celtic Landscape', which attempts to understand Wordsworth's extended engagement with North Wales by correlating it with the poetic and touristic (self-)representation of Wales in the second half of the eighteenth century. Presumably, this is an example of cross-fertilising dialogue that attempts to include the Celtic within the British polity. Caroline Franklin, by contrast, traces the

way Southey's *Madoc* reappropriates and reworks Welsh national mythology in order to validate British evangelical colonialism. Arthur Bradley's 'Shelley, Ireland and Romantic Orientalism' argues that, in Shelley's early writings on Ireland, the recent examples of failed violent revolution in Ireland and the corresponding need to follow a gradualist path to reform is merely 'a local example of an international phenomenon' (118). Yet Shelley's dream of encouraging similar gradualist reform in Britain, Europe, South America and Asia is complicated by the way his writings both orientalise the Irish and represent Oriental peoples (in *Laon and Cythna* for example) as 'Celtic' (given to self-destructive passion and violence). If the 'world is always already Celtic' (129), then it is everywhere in need of Shelleyan reform. Yet it is difficult to correlate this intriguing argument with any of the volume's stated aims. Nor is it convincing to suggest that Shelley's analysis of the Irish situation was the paradigm for his recommendation of gradual reform for all peoples who are not politically mature enough for revolution – Shelley would have read just such an analysis of the French in his mother-in-law's *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*.

Of the essays that focus on Celtic self-representation, Malcolm Kelsall's '*Luttrell of Arran* and the Romantic Invention of Ireland' makes a powerful case for the importance and interest of Charles Lever's 1865 novel. Murray Pittock's 'Scott and the British tourist' shows how Scott sold Scotland to the English by repackaging Highland Celticism. Michael J. Franklin's 'Sir William Jones, the Celtic Revival and the Oriental Renaissance' convincingly suggests that Jones was an important precursor of Romantic Orientalism and that his pioneering translations of Middle Eastern and Sanskrit poetry need to be set alongside the simultaneous revival of bardic literature in Wales. If Celticism and

Orientalism came to seem analogous in Romantic eyes, Jones provided some substance for this in positing a common Indo-European root for Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, ‘the *Gothick* and the *Celtick* [...] and the old *Persian*’ (35). In ‘The critical response to Ossian’s Romantic bequest’, Dafydd R. Moore argues that the apparent marginalisation of Macpherson’s poetry within British Romanticism masks a deep but largely unacknowledged engagement with it. He also argues that Macpherson’s continued marginalisation in English Studies today is partly due to a tendency in ‘whig literary historiography to remove “Celtic primitivism” from the picture by retrospectively typing it as a blind alley temporarily taken’ (44). More specifically, it is the English who are to blame: ‘the condescension with which Macpherson is treated may be down to his reputation as a liar and cheat. What is worse, he is a Scottish liar and cheat, and this works doubly to exclude him from the grand parade of English literary historiography’ (50). Even Scottish critics have colluded with ‘English cultural imperialism’ in being ‘suspicious of, or antagonistic towards, Macpherson’ (51). More starkly still, Moore concludes by warning his readers about ‘the distancing, marginalising and excluding agenda of English cultural hegemony’ (53). What depresses me about Moore’s assertions here is not just the reiteration of the popular misconception that Scotland is a colonial victim of English imperialism, nor the suggestion that English scholars are incapable of treating Scottish literature with an even hand, but the curiously narrow view they reveal about the study of Anglophone literature in the modern world. Such narrowness is one of the real dangers of the ‘four nations’ (or, rather, two nations) approach to English Studies. The biennial international conferences staged by the British Association for Romantic Studies over the last ten years or so have demonstrated that the study of

Romanticism is not confined to or dominated by ‘English cultural hegemony’ but is pursued by scholars from all over the world. Within this worldwide community of scholars, the study of Romanticism, like most other branches of English Studies, is dominated by scholars working in North America. What Moore really needs to explain is why the North American reconfiguration of the map of literature in English has not done more to reinstate Macpherson.

One of the limitations of the present volume, indeed, is that only one of the essays is written by a scholar currently working outside the British Isles. A second problem is that the essays do not seem to be grouped according to any obvious rationale: they are neither chronologically arranged nor grouped according to the author, subject matter or country focused on. This is a pity in that potential dialogues between the essays are prevented from taking place. Another problem is the selection of essays. Why are there three essays on Byron (which sometimes go over the same ground and make the same point) but no essays on Burns or Moore? And why is there a concluding essay on ‘Contemporary Northern Irish poets and Romantic poetry’ but no equivalent essays on the contemporary poets of England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland? Perhaps more importantly, it’s not clear what is meant by ‘the Celtic world’ in this volume. At times, ‘Celtic’ clearly refers to the bardic, Celtic-speaking cultures of Scotland, Ireland and Wales. But at other moments it appears to include the peoples and cultures of Scotland, Ireland and Wales in general. It is only this more general sense that would appear to justify the inclusion of essays on Byron, Heaney and other Anglophone writers. Yet such an inclusive definition blurs the cultural specificity of the term ‘Celtic’ and implies that the peoples and

cultures of Scotland, Ireland and Wales in the eighteenth century were homogeneous rather than sites of struggle in which the Celtic and the non-Celtic were in uneasy dialogue with one another. Isn't this precisely what Scott's *Waverley* novels are all about?

*Tom Furniss*  
*University of Strathclyde*

**Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge  
University Press, 2002. Pp. 205.  
\$60.00. ISBN 052181460X.**

Much recent postcolonial criticism has dwelled on comparative colonialisms: examining the relations between varied colonies, outposts and territories governed by a single power. In particular, critics have traced literary and political discourses that implicitly and explicitly link those colonies uneasily tied to the metropole (Scotland, Ireland) with farther flung territories. This is not only a point of departure for critics like Saree Makdisi and Peter Womack; it was also a significant trope for Romantic writers. Thus the narrative poems in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* compare Ireland with Iran, and English colonial power with Turkish despotism. Ina Ferris's skilful book begins with an acknowledgement of this mode of comparative critique and then an explanation of her own particular critical stance, which examines the ambiguous attempts to incorporate Ireland as part of the civic state of Great Britain, rather than read it alongside concomitantly occurring imperial expansions. Ferris's nuanced distinction between types of colonialisms is best represented in her exploration of the singular dynamics around the meaning of 'Union' – a mode of social contract that is strained by its

incompleteness. If domestic space as social contract writ small has been a popular critical topic of late, Ferris's interrogation of the lopsided British-Irish Union reads the dynamics of the social contract when stretched beyond its 'natural' boundaries. Ferris's exegesis of the term 'Union' is tied to the twinned goal of her book, which is an examination of the genealogy of the historical tale in Ireland. In Ferris's analysis, the dialogic and interstitial nature of the historical tale (it, as she emphasizes, speaks 'to' instead of speaking 'of') is the result of the gap caused by the ambiguity over 'Union' and the creative discourse stimulated by this discursive uneasiness. Thus, while Ferris's first chapter focuses on travel narratives written by English citizens as attempts to come to terms with Ireland's political inclusion but cultural and social exclusion, the next four chapters are spent detailing the development and eventual radicalisation of the historical tale. Ultimately, in Ferris's reading, the hardening of political ideologies in the early 1820s and 1830s led to the unravelling of the historical tale, which was unable to cope with growing pressure to more explicitly politicise.

While Ferris stays rigorously focused on the idea of civic 'Union', and its implications of her study, her deliberate attention to Ireland's tenuous definition as domestic-yet-different rather than wholly Other actually illuminates an important step in the larger imperial process: the uneasy normalisation of the immediately Other in order to facilitate a more far-flung colonisation. The qualified, constantly redefined inclusion of Ireland and Scotland into the Union only paved the way for Britain's growing imperial ambitions, as the mass evictions of peasants in both countries forced the only recently colonised to quickly become colonisers themselves, either as imperial soldiers or settlers in colonial outposts. Ferris's decision to not explore the more

global implications of her own readings keeps the book taut and cohesive, but it sometimes runs the risk of creating the very sorts of binaries her argument seeks to complicate. She argues, for example, that the colonial discourse on Ireland was predicated less on the grand sublimity of an 'Other', and more on a domestic level of discomfort. This reading threatens to revert to an older critique of global imperialism as a wholly separate discourse from national history, ignoring the extent to which the imperial and domestic are imbricated. It also neglects the attempts made by radical Romantic authors to illustrate similarities between various colonialisms. Ferris devotes two chapters to Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) and her major works. Yet she makes no reference to Owenson's very popular *The Missionary*, a novel in which Portugal, Spain and India serve in part as allegorical representations of contemporary Anglo-Irish politics. This glaring omission from Morgan's *oeuvre* on Ferris's part makes her refusal to engage in a more global discourse seem forced and unnatural. In spite of this, the book is nonetheless a worthwhile read for critics interested in the world outside the rigorous confines of her study. Ferris's readings of literary tropes, though tied very closely to the particulars of Irish politics and history, make a useful distinction between tropologies of the metropole and the (contested) periphery. In her chapter on ruin writing and the creating of an Irish Gothic, for example, Ferris contrasts the 'calm decay' and timelessness that characterises Romantic authors' preoccupation with English ruins with the historicity and the related sense of active destruction haunting colonial ruins. Although Ferris only refers to Irish ruins, her analysis is equally useful to analyses of colonial antiquarianism at large. It is the book's wide-ranging applicability, almost in spite of itself, that is perhaps the

best testament to the value of its critical study.

*Padma Rangarajan*  
*University of California, Berkeley*

**Eric G. Wilson, *The Spiritual History of Ice: Romanticism, Science and the Imagination*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2003. Pp. 278. £30. ISBN 0312292996.**

Eric Wilson notes, in this engaging and accessible study of Romantic usages of the metaphor of ice, that the publication of criticism in his area increased somewhat at the turn of this century. Certainly, there seems to be a connection between ice and apocalypse, as millenarian fantasies of global change are situated less in a religious context and more in an environmental and ecological setting. A substantial number of historical studies of polar exploration and of the search for the Northwest Passage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been published over the last few years. Only a few of these have engaged with larger cultural representations, notably the work of Robert G. David, Francis Spufford and Stephen Pyne. It would seem that the time is now ripe for a larger cultural history of ice that takes in the literature, visual art, accounts of travel and exploration, scientific writing and politics. Wilson's study is not this ambitious, but it does serve as an interesting contribution to this growing body of criticism.

The parameters of Wilson's discussion are quite narrow. His conception of Romanticism encompasses a rather limited group of American and British Romantic writers whom he seems to regard as self-evidently the ones to discuss: mainly Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Blake, Coleridge,

Byron and Mary and Percy Shelley. There is no real attempt to defend this construction of a Transatlantic Romantic canon, though one suspects that what unites these writers in Wilson's mind is the ecological concern of much of their writing. Wilson also accepts, almost unquestioningly, the 'Romantic Ideology' of his writers and makes substantial use of Blake's fourfold typology of vision as a framework for his discussion. There's very little attempt to go beyond this conceptual framework and little that is unfamiliar in this book. Wilson discusses at length the canonical writings about ice: Byron's *Manfred*, Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and, of course, Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. He does not venture much beyond this narrow literary canon to discuss works such as Eleanor Anne Porden's 'The Arctic Explorers' or the many accounts of polar exploration in the period; Cook and Phipps are mentioned as context but Parry never makes the index. Oddly, some of the more obvious instances of Wilson's subject are skated over very swiftly; Wordsworth is mentioned only once on page 84 in a fairly cursory glance at the alpine scenes of Book Six of the *Prelude*, Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight' is not discussed and the Polar frame of Shelley's *Frankenstein* receives no extended discussion, despite the fact that it must surely be one of the key Romantic writings about the exploration and science of the Geographic and Magnetic Poles.

Wilson divides his study into three major sections: 'Crystals', 'Glaciers' and 'The Poles'. The first of these sections contains much fascinating contextual material about the history of the science of crystallography that goes beyond the remit of 'the spiritual history of ice': ice is composed of crystals, but not all crystalline structures are composed of frozen water. Tracking this history through magic, alchemy, Swedenborgian

mysticism and Romantic Science, Wilson then provides some detailed readings of works by Thoreau and Emerson and their interests in the microcosm of crystalline structures. Wilson is on surer Romantic ground in his second section on Glaciers. This presents us with an excellent summary of the history of geological thought about the earth's formation and the contested role of glaciers in this process, as well as the growing obsession with mountains and the Alps. This leads to an extended close reading of Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' tracking the implications of his subject's understanding of Zoroastrianism and his mediation of theories of free will and necessity. This is followed by some rather perfunctory readings of the alpine passages of *Frankenstein* and *Manfred*. Wilson's conclusion about these texts combines his interest in Romantic philosophy, ecological awareness and hermetic magic; discussing Victor Frankenstein and *Manfred* he concludes that: 'Could they only see the glacier as a living mind of which their own thoughts form an integral part, they would again thaw, and find in the revolving crystal a thousand flames, or a portal to the staff of life itself, the central pole, the *axis mundi*, the omphalos, the caduceus – the esoteric Antarctic' (138).

Wilson's final section on 'The Poles' is, in many ways, his most interesting. He discusses the history of polar imaginings, differentiating between those of the north and south poles. This serves as prelude to the discussion of the main texts, Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' and Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Wilson presents a fairly traditional reading of Coleridge's poem arguing that the albatross functions as 'an uncoloured cipher of the forces that threaten the supremacy of man, a pasteboard mask behind which may be a nameless malignancy, or worse, nothing at all' (171). The Mariner, like Frankenstein, exemplifies Blake's 'Urizenic desire' to

create order and hierarchy: 'Hence Blake's holarchical hermeneutic restores Urizenic machines to vigorous manifolds' (187). More problematically, Wilson reads Coleridge's later ideas (for instance his *Theory of Life* [1816]) back into this poem of 1798, which will itself undergo extensive revision. His reading of *Pym* is more adventurous and innovative, critiquing Gnostic interpretations of the text and arguing for an alchemical meaning of the tale in which the narrative moves through the key stages of the alchemical process. Certainly, in these three essays on matters relating to ice, crystals, poles and glaciers, Wilson weaves an interesting and insightful narrative out of the works of poets, essayists, magi, philosophers and scientists and one which will provide the general reader with much evocative and intriguing material.

Peter J. Kitson  
University of Dundee

**Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. 478. £37. ISBN 0198187203.**

In this wide-ranging study, Wood returns to questions he raised in his *Blind Memory* (2000) about the relationship between pornography and representations of slavery. While *Blind Memory* was more clearly a work of art criticism, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* focuses for the most part on literary and political texts written between 1780 and 1850, although an important chapter examines William Blake and Francesco Bartolozzi's illustrations for John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a five years' expedition against the revolted negroes of Surinam in Guiana*, somewhat incongruously contrasted with the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe.

Readers interested in the literature of slavery and abolition will find much to engage their attention. Wood's readings take in polemical writing, journalism, essays, poetry and novels, while the authors considered range from those clearly interested in slavery, such as Stedman and John Newton, to those whose interest in slavery has only been clearly established by recent scholarship, such as Austen, Wordsworth and Charlotte Brontë. Taken separately, most of Wood's treatments of these authors are engaging, intriguing, revealing and frequently highly original. But somehow the book as a whole doesn't quite come together. Indeed, it is difficult to find anywhere a clear statement of the book's general thesis: the nearest I could find was his argument, on page 103, that 'the spectacle of extreme physical suffering is the ultimate test for the capacities of the sentimental imagination, but also shades very easily into pornographic fantasy'. In this, and throughout the book, Wood seems to be arguing that the type of imagination required to enjoy a pornographic image is similar to that required to enjoy a sentimental novel and that, accordingly, the ability to respond to pornography is a type of sensibility, albeit possibly a diseased sensibility. The mechanism by which readers of sentimental literature, or viewers of (specifically, sado-masochistic) pornography, engage with their chosen material is 'empathy'. This is a problem in the book. Wood never really explains what he understands by this complex term, nor does he discuss how it differs from 'sympathy' – the term, theorised by David Hume and Adam Smith among others, which the authors Wood discusses would have used to interpret the aesthetic and personal responses that he explores. This difficulty is repeated with other key words and phrases, and there is an unexplained fuzziness of terminology. Wood uses words like 'erotic' and 'pornographic' in a

variety of ways without really pinning them down, although some attempt is made to define the latter. At times, he insists that images are 'highly erotic'. Often, the images seem rather less than erotic, that is, tending to promote sexual desire, although their sexual symbolism is clear. In another example, he claims that part of Stedman's writing is 'straightforward bondage fantasy'. It may well be, if bondage fantasy can be straightforward, but one of the problems with this book is that it takes for granted a familiarity with the details of sado-masochistic pornography that few of its readers will have. I suspect, too, that few of the authors Wood discusses would themselves have had more than a passing acquaintance with sado-masochistic pornography and while the extent to which they might have done is an important question, it is not addressed in this book.

These are serious problems, but not as serious as the problem that arises when contrasting modern sado-masochistic pornography and practice, for the most part entered into willingly by free people, with representations of enslaved people for whom submission, bondage and torture were not matters of choice. At best, Wood's comparisons can seem anachronistic; at worst, they might strike some as being offensive. Many readers will find this aspect of the book a strong reason to reject its central arguments. However, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* does serve an important function, and it would be a mistake to discount it because its subject matter is difficult. By suggesting that the sado-masochistic approach is part of a spectrum of affective responses to slavery that can include both the benevolistic and the pornographic, Wood complicates our understanding of pre- and post-Romantic sensibility in useful and challenging ways. More importantly, he is right to insist that 'it is a fact that the black body remains a significant absence within the new cultural

history of pornography' (91). This is undeniable, and Wood's book provides an important corrective.

Indeed, this is an important book, but it is less clear whether it is a good book. It raises important questions, it makes new connections, it is polemical and challenging and it deliberately stirs up trouble. But it is also a rather chaotic book, a book that doesn't define its key terms and, more importantly, its key arguments, and a book that seems, somehow, unsure of its audience. Wood's writing style can often infuriate: he is both bashful and explicit; apologetic and unashamed, and this uncertainty makes *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* a less coherent read than it otherwise might be.

Brycchan Carey  
Kingston University

**Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. 320. £53. ISBN 0198187572.**

In *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation*, Jon Mee continues an investigation into the porous worlds of literature, politics and religion begun in *Dangerous Enthusiasm* (1992). His aim, from a broadly historicist perspective, is to put some of the fear back into a word that has come down to us with a largely positive spin; to show that for much of the Romantic period 'enthusiasm' was associated with a loss of control (over the self, over others) that made it the 'monstrous alter ego of eighteenth-century civility'. The first part of the book is a general forensic study of the nature of the beast; the second part looks more specifically at how enthusiasm is negotiated in the writings of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Barbauld and Blake.

The first two chapters trace attitudes towards enthusiasm in the works of, amongst others, Locke, Shaftesbury, Dennis and Burke. Several key points emerge, explored further in the later sections on individual authors. First and foremost is the deep-rooted association of enthusiasm with the spectre of the Civil War and its attendant religious frenzy. Mee shows how this fear continues to infect attitudes to Dissent in general, and Methodism in particular, and is especially evident in responses to popular manifestations of religious fervour – the ‘poison prophetic’ spread by characters such as Richard Brothers, the Paddington Prophet, arrested and confined to an asylum by Pitt’s nervous government in 1795. And there was a contemporary spectre too, as the violence of the French Revolution seemed to confirm the ‘lessons’ of 1688 by showing that zeal for reform could collapse all too easily into mere blood-lust (with the added twist that the enthusiasm of rationalist irreligion now revealed itself to be every bit as destructive as its spiritual counterpart). Mee teases out a variety of instructive ironies and ‘strange accommodations’ within the radical movement, showing for example how Priestley, Hardy and other mainstream dissenting radicals drew on versions of a prophetic/eschatological discourse more commonly associated with the likes of Brothers or Joanna Southcott; or how the cold zeal of rational enlightenment and the emotional transports of dissent shared common ground in opposing the institutional structures of the clerisy. Above all, he shows just how anxious various radical groups and individuals became about manoeuvring a respectable space between themselves and the ragged edges of enthusiasm, constantly at pains to

‘distinguish between informing the people and inflaming them’.

The second half of the book explores literature as a site where enthusiasm is both desired and feared: where text is both regulated social and sociable compact and a ‘space for unfettered feeling’, for self and sensibility. The book maintains its densely referential texture as each author is put into dialogue with other writers: Coleridge wrangles with Godwin, Barbauld warms to Priestley, Wordsworth ponders Shaftesbury, and Blake, with all guns blazing, takes on the Hunt brothers. At times Mee loses patience with those who, trapped by their class, politics or religion, failed to embrace the possibilities that enthusiasm is taken to represent – those who retreated to the security of institutions (Coleridge) or were simply too anxious to let themselves go (Wordsworth). But his criticism is alert to the way writers changed their positions over the course of their lives and offers a dynamic sliding scale of their responses. On this scale, as on many others, Blake emerges unique and triumphant. The final chapter opens with his ringing declaration: ‘Meer Enthusiasm is the All In All!’ (a scribbled retort to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who in 1769 had warned would-be painters that ‘mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way’). Mee’s perception of Blake as someone constantly seeking ‘an outside to the discourse of regulation, a perspective from Eternity’ ties in neatly with the position recently argued by Saree Makdisi, who sets a similarly ‘unselfed’ Blake against a self-regulating liberal hegemony with an ideological investment in the notion of individual rights. Mee’s own enthusiasm for Blake is gratifyingly manifest here, and the claim that his ‘purpose has not been to present him as a hero’ can be taken with a pinch of salt.

In short, the book makes a convincing argument that some of the most 'Romantic' writers of the period were deeply exercised by the problem of self-regulation; they were disturbed, to steal Mee's best (and recurrent) joke, by the thought of enthusiasm as 'transport without a return ticket'. His sliding-scale methodology does valuable service in breaking up certain ingrained structural oppositions of critical thought, pulling apart different strands of discourse to show just what a tangle of positions and ideologies was available. Most of all, the book is alive to the life of language itself, to the competing uses of a single word at any given moment, as well as to its historical freight. It will be a brave critic who uses the word 'enthusiasm' after this without some very careful preparatory footwork.

*Mary-Ann Constantine*  
*Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic*  
*Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth*

**John Beer, *Romantic Consciousness: Blake to Mary Shelley*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2003. Pp. 209. £45. ISBN 1403903247.**

Following on from such studies as *Coleridge the Visionary* and *Wordsworth and the Human Heart*, John Beer attempts an exploration of the Romantic concept of consciousness or, more accurately, of the Romantics' perception of something above or beyond simple rational consciousness. This 'something' is more than what is now casually referred to as the 'subconscious', for while Freud would come to conceive of the everyday consciousness as primary and the deeper unconscious as secondary, Coleridge, in his discussion of primary and secondary imaginations, designated

the realm of normal perception as secondary and, conversely, that of the unconscious as primary. More than this, this Coleridgean concept of the unconscious – which Beer, after Coleridge, labels 'Being' – is not just a deeper consciousness, for it crucially provides a mystical connection both with a divine consciousness and with the consciousnesses of others.

This Coleridgean concept of 'Being' is central to Beer's study. After an introduction to the vexed relationship between consciousness and Being in Chapter One, Chapter Two only briefly explores Blakean notions of consciousness. It is really in Chapter Three, then, that the ground for analysis is laid, as Coleridge's association of Being with effusiveness, light and energy is here seen to open up possibilities for currents of connection between individual Beings. It is at the same time distinguished from the underlying premise of Wordsworth's poetry of an essentially stable 'under-soul' at the core of human experience, which provides a link with a semi-divine nature in ultimately unknowable ways. Where the Wordsworthian conceptualisation allowed the poet a sense of security and, eventually, religious and social orthodoxy, Beer seems to suggest that Coleridge's thinking on the matter never quite settled, recurring not only in his own later metaphysical ruminations but emerging in the work of the second generation of Romantics.

Beer argues strenuously for Coleridge's influence on later writers. Chapter Four shows how Keats writes the primary consciousness as a potential pathway to an elusive Beauty as Truth. In Chapter Five, we see how the Wordsworthian and Coleridgean emphases combine in De Quincey's work to imply the existence of a subliminal sympathy between nature and the human heart, accessed through poetic reverie, near-death experience or opium-induced vision. Chapter Six attempts a

foray into the world of the Cambridge Apostles, demonstrating how Coleridge's ideas on Being made their way into the lives and work of Arthur Hallam and, to a lesser extent, Tennyson, although an increasing Victorian rationalism would see the Apostles' concerns shift eventually from 'Being' to 'reality'.

Chapter Seven concerns Shelley and Byron, whose ideas on Being and consciousness, Beers argues both curiously and convincingly, replayed those of Coleridge and Wordsworth respectively. Beer puts it thus: 'As in the case of Coleridge and Wordsworth, an outgoing personality was pitted against a self-confirming character' (161). However, whereas the earlier Romantics had been concerned with how questions of Being played themselves out in life, these questions were never asked explicitly by Shelley and Byron. Beer suggests that Byron conceived of Being primarily in terms of a profound dissatisfaction with the limitations placed on the spirit's potential by weak and imperfect flesh, an unhappiness that manifested itself, perversely, in an over-reliance on physical experience and thence in a tremendous egoism. Meanwhile, Shelley, like Coleridge, wrestled with metaphysics and science, as a means to discovering an empathy between his inner Being and those of others, as well as the existence of an all-encompassing wisdom, whether emblematised by Mont Blanc or by the west wind.

Finally, Chapter Eight provides a coda to the concept of Being in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which, according to Beer, recaptures the reverential attitude to life and God that exists in the earlier Romantics' discussions of Being and consciousness. The story of Frankenstein's monster insists that questions of love and affection be centred in any discussion of Being. Yet, Mary Shelley refuses to define Being itself, offering the same ambiguities on the matter as those found in

Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' and 'Kubla Khan'.

In these final two chapters, we are made most aware of the difficulties inherent in exploring such an intangible and elusive concept as consciousness; as Beer himself warns early on in his book, the 'investigation of such processes suffers [...] from the fact that they are not totally accessible to analysis' (7). Neither Byron nor Shelley, and certainly not Mary Shelley, engages head-on with the problem of consciousness, and Beer is forced to make some big assumptions – albeit consistently intelligent ones – about how questions of Being resonate in both their work and their lives. Indeed, this is true even where the meaning of consciousness is grappled with more directly, for example, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, since their statements on the subject are riddled with contradictions, ambiguities and evasions. Nonetheless, Beer produces a lucid analysis of a complex concept, and if the subject is not to be easily pinned down, at least this treatment of it is always highly readable.

*Adeline Johns-Putra*  
*University of Exeter*

**John Strachan, gen. ed., *British Satire, 1785-1840*. 5 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003. Vol. 1: Nicholas Mason, ed., *Collected Satires I: Shorter Satires*, pp. 313. Vol. 2: David Walker, ed., *Collected Satires II: Extracts from Longer Satires*, pp. 310. Vol. 3: Benjamin Colbert, ed., *Collected Satires III: Complete Longer Satires*, pp. 463. Vol. 4: John Strachan, ed., *Gifford and the Della Crusicans*, pp. 384. Vol. 5: Jane Moore, ed., *The Satires of***

**Thomas Moore, pp. 555. £450.  
ISBN 185196729X.**

Two definitions, both from Horace Smith's 'Specimens of a Patent Pocket Dictionary', first printed in the *New Monthly Magazine* between October 1824 and January 1825: 'Press. – The steam-engine of moral power, which, directed by the spirit of the age, will eventually crush imposture, superstition, and tyranny'; 'Satire. – Attacking the vices and follies of others instead of reforming our own'. The two definitions, which, taken together, serve neatly to outline the range of material covered by Pickering & Chatto's new five-volume collection of *British Satire, 1785-1840*, serve also to highlight the irony that attends on this period of satirical writing: a sense that the method of its production and distribution, the printing press, might in these years have had more force and more novelty of impact than its genre. The half-century or so of writing covered in this collection are years in which satire is a printed, public phenomenon that the work of Marcus Wood, Gary Dyer and Steven E. Jones has brought back into critical focus. Yet the dispersal of satirical writing across the print culture of the Romantic period has not always made for easy study: the work of John Strachan and his co-editors is often at its strongest when it brings together material that has only before been variously and disparately available in periodicals, pamphlets and engraved prints.

The most wide-ranging of the volumes from this angle is the first, Nicholas Mason's gathering of 'Shorter Satires'; this, on purely sizeist principles, is followed by David Walker's edited selection of 'Extracts from Longer Satires' and Benjamin Colbert's 'Complete Longer Satires', the only volume to reprint texts in facsimile rather than newly reset. Mason, in the first volume, offers selections from thirty-nine

writers from Burns to Dickens, among that group both male and female satirists, writers from divergent political positions and a fair scattering of politically expedient 'Anons'. It is good to see the more familiar names here put up against their less familiar contemporaries, among whom Horace Smith, as Mason's typically helpful note observes, is emblematic in being 'rarely read today', having been 'in the first quarter of the nineteenth century [...] among the most popular comedic writers in Britain'. When, as here, *British Satire* allows us to recover not only a mode of writing but a densely historicised set of relations between authors and their understanding public, it serves a valuable function; if too expensive as an anthology to teach from, the collection will often prompt scholars to follow back the anthologised texts into their original contexts. In this, it is especially valuable that the explanatory notes to each volume, although brief, concisely serve to point up the range of contemporary and literary reference with which the texts engage; those by David Walker in volume two, given the difficult task of annotating a body of texts by Mathias, Polwhele, Barrett, Mant, Byron, Daniel and Love Peacock that are themselves heavily (and ironically) self-annotating, are especially helpful.

The longer satires edited in facsimile by Colbert in volume III here also serve a useful function, giving the reader a sight of how the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century satirical page looked and worked as an expressive form. To see John Wolcot's *The Lousiad* presented across the four volumes of *The Works of Peter Pindar, Esqr.*, or to see the printed text of Hone and Cruikshank's *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* engaging with Cruikshank's engravings and their epigraphs, is to recognise the variety of bibliographic forms in which satire of the period was printed and circulated. It is a shame, though, that the quality of the

slightly pixelated facsimile will give a reader without access to the original editions such an unfavourable estimation of typography across the period; the bibliographer in me wishes, too, that the running-head and direction lines had not been suppressed in the otherwise page-for-page facsimiles. But the presence of this facsimile volume among the reset volumes nicely varies the kinds of text, and kinds of reading, that the edition supports: it is better to have it than not.

John Strachan edits the satires of and on William Gifford, together with an anthology of the Della Cruscan verse that formed his target, in volume IV. Strachan richly contextualises the rather slim body of Gifford's Juvenalian satires: although only 87 of its 384 pages are needed to reprint *The Baviad*, *The Mæviad* and three shorter pieces, the volume includes not only a generous sampling of the Della Cruscan writing Gifford sought to satirise, but texts of the two major responses to Gifford by his political opponents, Leigh Hunt's *Ultra-Crepidarius* and William Hazlitt's *A Letter to William Gifford, Esq.*. Strachan's 'Biographical Dictionary' nicely captures not only the way in which Gifford's texts address themselves to a local, describable set of satirical targets, but the way, too, in which their meanings create a likeminded community of readers, usually alert to his allusions and adaptations. Usually alert, but not always: it is a shame for Hunt that his gag in *Ultra-Crepidarius*, 'poor Juvenal, "Thou art translated"', does not have its source in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* identified (3.1.113), for it is central to Gifford's work, as Hunt recognised, that the 'translation' of Juvenal's satirical mode and targets to his present day concerns is recognised. But this slip is the exception, rather than the rule.

Implicitly paired with Gifford are the satires of Thomas Moore, on this basis (as Jane Moore notes) no longer simply 'the poet of the *Irish Melodies*, ... the author

of the *National Airs* or the biographer of Byron'. The contrast of Tory and Whig between the two volumes works wonderfully well: it demonstrates the availability of the satiric mode to writers of both political complexions, as well as intimating that it is in their joint inheritance of the pointed heroic couplet that both writers depart stylistically from common ground. Moore's volume, already large before it was swelled by the general index to the collection, presents a very different writer from the insular Gifford: not so much a writer only of Popean pamphlets, but a poet who moved between periodicals and different aspects of the press across his career, and one whose particular sensitivities are helpfully addressed within a collection of *British* satire. This volume, too, makes possible a reading of Moore that would previously have required much searching out of far-flung texts.

Smith's 'Specimens' demonstrate a low if perhaps conventional opinion of critics and reviews ('*Critic*. – One who is incapable of writing books himself, and therefore contents himself with condemning those of others'; '*Review*. – A work that overlooks the publications it professes to look over, and judges of books by their authors, not of authors by their books'). It is the measure of the valuable work of Strachan and his co-editors that it need fear neither.

Tom Lockwood  
University of Leeds

**Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pb. Pp. 327. £16.99. ISBN 0521794668.**

**Andrew Smith and William Hughes, eds, *Empire and the***

***Gothic: The Politics of Genre.***  
**Basingstoke and New York:**  
**Palgrave, 2003. Pp. 248. £47.50.**  
**ISBN 0333984056.**

**Anna Powell, *Psychoanalysis and***  
***Sovereignty in Popular Vampire***  
***Fiction.* Lampeter, Ceredigion,**  
**Lewiston, New York and**  
**Queenston, Ontario: Edwin**  
**Mellen Press, 2003. Pp. 296.**  
**£74.95. ISBN 0773468315.**

In the wake of the iconoclastic attack on Gothic Criticism by Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall in *A Companion to the Gothic* (2000), edited by David Punter, the relationship of the critic to the Gothic is now open to a new scrutiny. Their argument that 'Gothic Criticism now functions as a "Gothic" form of discourse in its own right, compelled to reproduce what it fails to understand' (221) suggests that it is locked in an infernal self-perpetuating *danse macabre*. Has Gothic Criticism, such as that contained within this *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, become more self-conscious or did anyone take any notice of these two executioners chopping off the red shoes of the new breed of Gothicism?

The sub-title of Steven Bruhm's useful essay on contemporary Gothic, 'why we need it', could well be the rationale for the present volume. Jerrold E. Hogle has produced a first-class collection of essays garnered from thirteen pre-eminent scholars, starting with E. J. Clery's authoritative account of the genesis of Gothic fiction, from the 1760s to the 1780s, and finishing with Fred Botting's intriguing 'Aftergothic: consumption, machines and black holes'.

Robert Miles, with characteristic acumen, charts the surge of Gothic writing

during the 1790s, taking account of William Hazlitt's argument that it proliferated more as a reaction to the crumbling of older structures rather than to 'the necessary fruits of the revolutionary tremors felt by the whole of Europe' (43, quoting Marquis de Sade). Michael Gamer side-steps the French Revolution in his survey of how Romantic writers transform and ultimately legitimise and elevate elements of the Gothic, while Terry Hale delectably delves into the French and German origins of the Gothic, pointing out that the French Revolution served to allow English and German literature to develop free of 'Francophone interference' (64). The imposition of one culture on another is fundamental to David Punter's account of Scottish and Irish Gothic, showcasing Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* (1816) and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), where he focuses upon monument and ruin as signposts for the uncanny. Colonisation, represented through zombification, is the subject of Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's essay on Caribbean literature. As the living dead, the zombie is trapped in the interstices of two worlds, much like the half-human other or abhuman described by Kelly Hurley, who attributes its *fin de siècle* proliferation to the instability innovated by Darwinian science. More disturbing is her vision of the spread of abhumanity to potentially claim all human subjects within its tentacled grasp. Monstrosity in various guises abounds in Jeffrey N. Cox's invaluable 'Gothic Theatre' and Misha Kavka's important exploration of 'The Gothic on Screen'. Kavka considers the monster films of the 1930s and 1940s, that were followed by a wave of Female Gothic films, with their stylistic resemblances to *film noir*. Alison Milbank also looks at women, only this time through the lens of Victorian Gothic, where she refreshingly reads Queen Victoria against the Radcliffian Gothic heroine.

The only discernable gap in the volume is an essay specifically on Female Gothic, the presence of which, though roundly acknowledged, is somewhat buried in Hogle's introduction. Greater visibility for this sub-genre could also have tied in with the discussions of otherness and cultural anxiety in Gothic Criticism which, though challenged by Baldick and Mighall, nevertheless saturate this volume. For example, Eric Savoy concludes, in the Bloomian inversion at the end of his essay on 'The Rise of American Gothic', that the enduring appeal of the Gothic in the United States is a 'haunting *influence of anxiety*' (187). Gothic is apparently a dumping ground for displacing undesirable or anxiety-ridden otherness such as the 'fugitive self' that lies at the heart of the American psyche, which Savoy aligns in status with the abject. Bruhm, however, sees our need to displace anxiety through the Gothic as not merely to defray the terrors of death, but to reaffirm the need for life. Botting goes further by taking us to the brink of the void within and without, which the Gothic is unable to blot out. Are there darker places than death, beyond the event horizon of a black hole or even the 'subjective hollow [that] corresponds to another empty space, a dark no-place pulsing with pixels' (293)? Within digital worlds, Botting projects a future as ruined as the past, which reminds us of how, in *Alien Resurrection*, the computerised replica is more human than the human. A vision of the present that would take Botting's pessimistic view to an alienation more alienating than *Alien* is the chilling and virtually mathematical certainty that we are already living in a simulation (<http://www.simulation-argument.com/>).

A simulation of another sort is the Enlightenment notion of nationhood, sustained by a collective delusion of unity. For, as Andrew Teverson argues in his essay on Salman Rushdie in *Empire and the Gothic*, edited by Andrew Smith and

William Hughes, the Gothic can invoke a nightmarish disruption of this dream of totality by calling out to those forces that were silenced or unheard during the construction of the nation. As David Punter points out: 'The Terror, then, seen from one aspect is a terror of being sealed in; of being locked into a version of history that one knows to be a lie, of being unable to utter – or perhaps even remember – the words that might set it right' (200).

Smith and Hughes amply demonstrate this polyphonic return of the repressed in their highly recommended collection of thirteen essays. These are divided into those dealing with Gothic writings produced from within a colonialist context such as *Vathek* (1786), *Melmoth the Wanderer*, *Frankenstein* (1818), *Dracula* (1897), *Ayesha* (1888-1927) and *Jane Eyre* (1847) and 'others' written out of a postcolonial context by writers such as Salman Rushdie, J. M. Coetzee, Arundhati Roy and J. G. Farrell. These postcolonial authors, to varying degrees, have employed the Gothic in order to represent otherness in regard to terror. Sometimes the Gothic seems to strain against the postcolonial marriage arranged in this volume, as in Dominic Head's essay on J. M. Coetzee, for whom the Gothic presence is slight.

The book begins with William Beckford's Oriental novel *Vathek*, which Massimiliano Demata examines in relation to Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, pointing out that Beckford, as the son of a sugar plantation owner, was born to a colonial position, whereas Maturin, as a Protestant clergyman in an Ireland dominated by England, had the perspective of both coloniser and colonised. Within Demata's critique of Orientalism, the altericity of the colonies provide both writers with a rhetoric of horror that they have mapped on to the Gothic. For example, in *Melmoth*, transgressive sexual liaison is described as

no more revolting to the Superior of a monastic order than ‘the horrible loves of the baboons and the Hottentot women, at the Cape of Good Hope; or those still more loathsome unions between the serpents of South America and their human victims’ (25-6). Slavery informs the superficial identity of Charlotte Dacre’s eponymous Moorish villain in *Zofloya*, whose publication in 1806, as noted by Kim Ian Michasiw, coincided with Parliamentary and national debate over the abolition of England’s participation in the slave trade. Michasiw indicates how Dacre made a distinction between the emotive figure of the ‘dying negro’ of abolitionist discourse and the powerful proud and dignified Moor, who are represented respectively in two of her poems: ‘The Poor Negro Sadi’ and ‘Moorish Combat’. According to Michasiw, *Zofloya* constituted a corrective to the representation of the negro slave as victim, even though Dacrean Gothic excess reveals him to have been Satan in disguise.

As Carol Margaret Davison alleges in her ground-breaking chapter, ‘Burning Down the Master’s (Prison-)House’, slavery is the crime that haunts Thornfield Hall in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Bertha Rochester, who has been ‘transported’ from the colonies into the upper-class marriage market, burns down her master’s house in the aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade. Davison argues against the idea posited by some critics that *Jane Eyre* represents a conflict between Empire Gothic and Female Gothic. These are two of the boundaries traversed by Mariaconcetta Costantini in her essay on Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s *Heat and Dust* (1975), set in post-independent India, which offers a revisionist view of colonial India contained within a counter-narrative concerning the elopement of the narrator’s step-grandmother with an Indian Prince in 1923. The modern heroine, who retraces her steps, writes

herself out of the script of Gothic heroine through female emancipation.

Neil Cornwell, in an illuminating essay on the Afro-Finnish theme in Russian Gothic, includes a variation on this familial literary inspiration. Alexander Pushkin’s novel *The Blackamoor of Peter the Great* (1837) was inspired by the life of his own great-grandfather, an Ethiopian captured by the Turks and sent as a gift to Peter the Great as a wild negro. In Vladimir Odoevsky’s Gothic inflected prose fiction *The Salamander* (1841), the alien other who is also given the protection of Peter the Great is a Finn whose country was ‘acquired’ by Russia. The invasion script is pertinent to William Hughes’s innovative essay on *Dracula* and the post-colonial. He argues that Dracula’s mission to colonise the West is an imperative since it is here that he has anachronistically been created as an embodiment of post-colonial guilt. Hughes shows how Dracula’s propensity for invasion forms part of the myths of colonial discourse in relation to the imagery of the predatory fox and tiger.

Helen Stoddart, in ‘Horror, Circus and Orientalism’, points out that performing wild animals were exhibited to circus audiences as the trophies of imperial expansion. She was drawn to the connection between the circus and the Gothic through the fortuitous discovery of a Marvel Comics pop-up book, *Ringmaster and His Circus of Crime*. This link has been corralled by many a travelling show since, not least by the currently touring Circus of Horrors orchestrated by that impresario of evil, Dr Haze. Stoddart compares the circus ring with the hypnotic gaze, which she aligns with the sinister and controlling gaze that is inflected by the Gothic. In the specular moment is where Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak measures the extent of Mary Shelley’s emancipatory vision in *Frankenstein*, when the monster is given the right to refuse ‘the withholding of the

master's returned gaze' in the refusal of 'an *apartheid* of speculation' (62). Spivak argues that Shelley's perception of the master-subject diad locks on to a colonial version of cultural identity, which denies the subaltern a history.

Andrew Smith shows how H. Rider Haggard transcends the limitations of both colonialism and post-colonialism through death, which reconfigures the body beyond racial, national and imperial boundaries. Through this analysis, Smith demonstrates how the discourses of psychoanalysis or post-colonialism as mediators of loss may be transcended by embracing a teleology relating to the end of desire. He keys this far-reaching discussion into Haggard's exploration of the metaphysics of life beyond Empire in his four Ayesha novels: *She* (1888), *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905), *She and Allan* (1921) and *Wisdom's Daughter* (1927). For J. G. Farrell, whose 'Empire Trilogy' is the subject of Victor Sage's essay, there is a propulsion towards death from within the entropic and illusory nature of imperial culture. This is reflected in Farrell's sense of his own writing 'as a struggle to resurrect life in the corpse of language' (180). While writing *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), the second of the trilogy, Farrell laments: 'Although I've written some forty pages, to me they are difficult to distinguish from forty corpses stretched beside my typewriter. Life is not in them. I waste hours massaging their hearts and holding mirrors over their mouths' (180).

The Gothic concerns itself from time to time with the resuscitation of the dead. In his discerning essay on the ghosts and ruins of Empire in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), David Punter appropriately introduces the figure of the Black Sahib as a dead ghost. Since colonialism and post-colonialism form a history of loss (as well as of gain), it is appropriate that among the ghosts that proliferate throughout this novel are those

of lost objects. Loss is endemic to narrative, which, as Punter indicates, is inevitably incomplete. Even Roy's eponymous invisible 'hero' is the god of loss. But to compensate, within narration itself, as in Empire building and 'the ongoing performance of national identity' (209), there is an almost conspiratorial pretence of wholeness. As Teverson comments, the repression of difference will not make it disappear but instead 'resentment is left to incubate in darkness, until it returns in monstrous, grotesque and violent forms' (215). The post-colonial project articulates the rhetoric of loss or the remembered wounds of loss. In *Empire and the Gothic*, Smith and Hughes admirably demonstrate how the Gothic, so often preoccupied with *lacunae*, is an art form capable of capturing that remembering.

Another way of negotiating lack is presented by Anna Powell in *Psychoanalysis and Sovereignty in Popular Vampire Fictions*. As she explains, one resort is that proffered by Jacques Lacan, who regards *jouissance* as a temporary escape from the lack endemic within the human condition. Freud, however, viewed sexual pleasure as a means of reconnecting with the Plenitude once provided by the maternal body. In her chapter called 'The Perverse Fantastic', Powell demonstrates how fantasies of perverse sexuality have been deployed through the Gothic in order to simulate Plenitude. For example, in Coleridge's poem *Christabel*, the succubus-like surrogate mother, Geraldine, vampirically preys on Christabel. Geraldine reveals herself to be a lamia in her transformation into a giant snake, which may be seen as a representation of the phallic mother. Powell suggests that Coleridge uses the phallic model in order to turn lesbianism into heterosexual sex. The poem appears to have been a forerunner to Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, in relation to which

Powell explores the psychoanalytical notion of the uncanny orgasm. Her primary concern is with the uncanny expressions of eroticism within vampire literature. She argues also that vampires embody the concept of the Sublime. Powell sees, in Edmund Burke's particular articulation of this Romantic aesthetic, a secularised form of the sacred for transforming horror into libidinal satisfaction. For Powell, the development of vampire literature is bound up with Sade's concept of transgressive sovereignty, which enables individuals to determine their own truth beyond social responsibility. This is a piercing theoretical analysis of the way in which fantasy can engage with the dynamic of Lack and Plenitude. These are concepts that also apply to the availability and distribution of books. Hopefully one day this hardback book, which is prohibitively expensive, will, along with *Empire and The Gothic*, join *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* in the paperback market for a wider Gothic and Romantic readership to enjoy.

Marie Mulvey-Roberts  
University of the West of England

**Reply to Alan Nicholson's review of Tristanne Connolly, *William Blake and the Body*, in *BARS Bulletin & Review* 24 (Sept. 2003), 18-19**

I would like to respond to Alan Nicholson's review of *William Blake and the Body*. I am concerned that his quarrels may not arise so much from my work specifically as from an objection to historicism, a restrictive gendering of methodology and a view of Blake studies as unfairly exclusive.

Nicholson emphasises my knowledge of previous Blake scholarship, and observes that my 'acknowledgements read rather like a current who's who of Blake studies'. Why these should be negative criticisms puzzles me. Similarly, why would conscientious citation be 'hardly helped' by a new historicist approach? I would expect these two kinds of rigour in research to complement each other. By using historicism, I do not mean to insist upon its supremacy, nor exact it from others. I had hoped this would be clear in the eclecticism of my study, which the reviewer notices.

Listing the major Blake critics I am in with, Nicholson doesn't mention those who are perhaps less in the mainstream but at least as influential on my work, such as Steve Clark, Helen Bruder and Christopher Hobson. This may be because they do gender criticism, and Clark and Hobson especially deal in constructions of masculinity. In noting my arguments, the reviewer omits those relating to this topic. He rightly says I find the female to be subsumed in Blake's eternity, but does not mention that this subsumption underpins a creative male homoeroticism at the end of *Jerusalem*. He commends my search for evidence of Catherine Blake having suffered failed pregnancies, but omits the more substantial part of the discussion:

Blake's working through these losses in his poetry and designs. I'm afraid my consideration of a man's response to such a 'feminine' experience as miscarriage, and my examination of male homosexuality, are the real problems. Nicholson claims that I am 'afraid of upsetting daddy'. I am not sure whether he is analysing my book or myself at this point, but apparently I and my writing are as feminine as the patriarchy could want ('Barely daring to breathe or Achoo'). Yet, from his comment on my acknowledgements, it seems I'm one of the boys. Could 'not feminist enough' mean 'not feminine enough' – that I should cut myself off from male scholars, their works and methods, stick to examining women's issues from a woman's point of view, and not peer into male subjects? On still another hand, Nicholson is disappointed that I don't 'disagree with very much'. It is odd that while I am too attached to the male Blake establishment, I should be encouraged to take an adversarial stance against my predecessors – shed the feminine 'authorial anxiety' Nicholson detects and don instead Harold Bloom's excessively masculine, and excessively Blake establishment, anxiety of influence. Opposition may be true friendship, but disagreement is not the only mode of scholarship, no more than historicism is.

Perhaps the reviewer's desire to 'hear [my] voice' causes confusion. Where Nicholson feels he has heard it, in my discussion of Reuben, he seems to have misheard: Blake's only male emanation is not Reuben but Shiloh. More importantly, the book is about Blake, not me, and Nicholson may be assuming I endorse what I present as Blake's view as I see it. In calling Blakeans a 'cult of magi', and comparing *Jerusalem* to the strait gate of salvation, I am being sarcastic. I find the audacity of such claims amusing and regret they could be mistaken for my own. I do find indications that Blake desired a

spiritually elite audience. But this doesn't mean I want Blake's audience to be elite, and it certainly doesn't mean that either Blake or I demand his work be read only by, or with the tools of, the 'dogmatic' and 'predominantly male' Blake studies 'establishment'.

Nicholson's review shows his command of Blake's oeuvre and the wide field of Blake criticism. Although he criticises the Blake cult ostensibly from outside, he is thoroughly initiated in its mysteries. I think this shows, not that no one is safe from being sucked into its satanic mills, but rather that Blake studies is not completely closed. I applaud Nicholson's desire to question authority, but venture that not everyone questions in the same way. I hope that our mutual respect will be a sign that multiple methodologies can coexist peacefully and productively.

*Tristanne Connolly*  
*St Jerome's University, Canada*