

**Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. Pp. 572. £43.50. ISBN 0801881978**

'The deep commotion / And turmoil in me, I would speak / Its name, find words for this emotion' (Goethe, *Faust*) provides Pfau with his opening quotation, suggestive of the study's focus on the analysis and description of feeling in British and German Romantic literature. Seeking to find a mode of analysis to 'trace the evolution of romantic interiority,' Pfau joins the renaissance of literary criticism addressed to the status of emotions by reading them as a kind of 'attunement' of the self, directing the way we think and act. Following Heidegger, Pfau suggests that the evidential quality of such attunement or 'moods' (we can physically see the kind of mood someone is in) is revealed, or 'awakened,' by the specific emotional aesthetic employed by romantic texts. Emotion, argues Pfau, is the very 'climate of history' during the Romantic era, constituting as it does an experience of longing for its own closure and meaning. While such a conception of emotion as a 'searching for its own cause' might be considered transcendent of history, Pfau insists that it materializes for the Romantics as three specific moods - paranoia, trauma and melancholy. These moods, Pfau argues, are both rooted in literary form and also become literary form, creating an aesthetic which serves to work out how individuals and communities are in and alienated from their 'experiential, historical reality' (Heidegger's *Dasein*, or 'being-in-the-world'). Significantly, Pfau rejects the Abramsian expressive hypothesis of emotion for one of embodiment: the moods he describes are embedded in people, history and politics rather than effused by them. Paranoia, for example, which dominates the period 1789-1800, marks both the after-effects produced by the treason trials of 1794, as it frames texts like Burke's *Reflections*, Paine's *Rights of Man*, Wollstonecraft's 1792 *Vindication* and Blake's early prophecies, all preoccupied, Pfau writes, with the 'all-encompassing anxiety of the modern.' Part I, 'Anxious Inspiration: Radical Knowledge in Godwin and Some Contemporaries' and 'Paranoia Historicized: The Dialectics of Treason and Political Representation in 1790s London,' thus explores

the paranoid experience of the 'real' as one comprising of a state of constant distrust, individuals regarding reality as nothing more than ideology and conspiracy theory.

Pfau's section on trauma ('Traumatic History and Lyric Awakenings, 1800-1815' and '*Phantasie: The Postmodernity of Romantic Lyricism and Political Conservatism*') suggests that the unprecedented political, legal, and cultural change crossing the turn of the century forced the individual away from his or her feelings of paranoia into a position of paralysis or trauma. In a reading of Wordsworth's 'Michael' (compromised only by a confusing use of double-negatives), Pfau argues that the 'obsessive orderliness' characteristic of pastoral life in elegiac ballads like 'Michael' or 'The Brothers' functions 'as a symptom of romantic trauma.' Michael's insistence that he is affectively immune from change results in the delayed trauma with which the poem ends: for Pfau, Wordsworth intimates that relating to the world through feelings alone comes 'at the expense of any preparedness for historical change and contingency.' All feeling or mood is thus historically determined not because it can be reified or translated into something else, but because it acquires its meaning through its value for specific people in specific places. Hence Coleridge's invocation of traumatic sorrow in 'Dejection,' where 'A grief without a pang' has no 'outlet' or 'relief' because there is no historical awareness of where or how it might signify. 'Serialization, Eros, and Melancholy in the Early Keats' and 'Melancholy into Ressentiment: Aesthetic and Social Provocation in Heine's *Buch der Lieder* (1827)' close the book with a reading of melancholy, not as a literary theme, but as a descriptor of literariness itself. Pfau describes the hybridic qualities of Keats and Heine, who employ dialect features and references from Cockney and German-Jewish culture respectively as a mark of a culture exhausted by itself, generic and rhetorical techniques now seemingly formulaic and near obsolete. Steering clear of those historicist readings of the period, where literature is either mined for, or repackaged as, politics, Pfau suggests that melancholic romantic texts capture a kind of 'emotive awareness' that allows us to hear the text's voice, 'a more reliable mode of access to history than the garden-variety methods of associative or contextual rumination.' Literature

can recover what 'so-called history' cannot, Pfau remarks, inviting us to embrace the precise feel and sound of texts 'at a time when university administrators frequently hijack the language of interdisciplinarity as a rationale for undermining the institutional autonomy of traditional departments and downsizing faculty and associated costs.' A timely study for a field now weary of new historicism's flawed mantra that texts signify only through the ideologies they unknowingly unveil.

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**Simon Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. 259. £50. ISBN 0198187580**

When wars break out there are some inevitable consequences. Patriotism is suddenly required. Stores are requisitioned; men mustered. Ports close. Flights are cancelled. It is the cancellation of one particular flight - the flight from history - that is at the centre of Simon Bainbridge's impressive study of war poetry in the Romantic period. The idea that Romantic poetry flees history to find asylum (or something like it) in the imagination has long held an unreasonable sway over the Romantic period and Bainbridge is not the first to dispute it; what he does superbly, however, is to explain the precise nature of the engagements between poetry and the pressures of contemporary events. To do this, he examines the poetry of war, focusing on Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey and Charlotte Smith.

Bainbridge offers some smart reading of poems such as Smith's *The Emigrants* and Coleridge's 'Fears in Solitude'. During the 1790s, a still radical Coleridge worried about the acquisition of false and presumptive expertise on the part of citizens who felt themselves involved in conflict, when, in reality they lived in complacent, if ambiguous, seclusion from the horrors of war. By making these complaints, Coleridge did not usher the imagination into a protective bower, but

rather insisted on its active participation. Poetry was to stand out against the degradation of language and culture, a decline revealed best by Pitt's wartime speeches. The issue was not therefore flight, but the achievement of distance. Wordsworth, by contrast, felt that their poetry could, and indeed should be transformed by war. Both poets moved away from the poetry of sentimental seclusion (poetry of the kind he thought embodied by Thomas Gray's 'Sonnet on the Death of Richard West'). Later in his career Coleridge was to concur, writing as did Southey, poetry intended to rouse the martial spirit of the nation as it faced the threat posed by French invasion.

There is much at stake in this description of these poets and their role in Britain's wartime culture. Bainbridge is keen to explore how verse was re-masculinised during the war, encouraged to move from the contemplation of private grief to the analysis of public calamity. Poetry was also expected to offer a lead in these crises; to inspire and to lead public sentiment. It is in this respect that gender played a crucial and multiple role. Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth would also eventually embrace the martial spirit, as would, still more insistently, Sir Walter Scott. Although the idea of re-masculinisation derives from some of Gary Kelly's work, Bainbridge gives it a much needed precision and subtlety. He begins this work with detailed readings of Charlotte Smith, which by modifying the work of both Jacqueline Labbe and Stuart Curran, explore how images of female sensibility or maternal sympathy reach outwards in ways that redirect poetry away from the imploded visions which characterized popular works of the 1780s. The ability of poetry to draw in the horrors of war, rather than to repel them, is also central to Bainbridge's reading of Felicia Hemans. Without ever fully abandoning sensibility and still insisting on the vital place of feminine influence, Hemans manipulates gender categories and perspectives on war so as to debate codes of male behaviour, lamenting equally the effeminate and the boorish. Hemans also connected the position of women to the martial spirit, a presence she makes both questioning and assertive. In stark contrast to the thoughtful explorations of Hemans and Smith, Scott made much of his role as a wartime bard, championing ancient valour as a way of inspiring the present. In his final chapter Bainbridge

turns to Byron and considers how *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold* mediate the experience of war in ways that question the heroic and chivalric codes celebrated by Scott.

*British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* adds to an already impressive body of work on the cultural significance of war in the Romantic period. In his introduction Bainbridge acknowledges the contributions made to this field by Gillian Russell's *The Theatres of War* (1995) and Philip Shaw's *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (2002) as well as comparable work by Richard Cronin, Diego Saglia and Mary Favret. The comparison with Shaw is, however, the most intriguing. *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* is a more tightly focused and more theoretically explicit study than Bainbridge's new book. In many ways, it has those strengths and those weaknesses. Shaw is prepared to engage with a more eclectic range of critical methodologies and moves in places towards something approaching a psychopathology of battle and battle damage. His subjects are more fractured; his readings more edgy. *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* largely eschews the hermeneutic and theoretical drive of Shaw's work; and occasionally the reader is left thinking that the argument might have been pushed a little further, that a risk could have been taken with advantage and possibly insight. But to stress this too much would be to miss the central achievement of what is a very fine book. Throughout, Bainbridge provides a clear sense of the broad sweep of poetry as it engages and is engaged by the force of war. Poetry never flies from history in this study, but stands instead on the field of battle, sometimes to celebrate war and often to lament its consequences. However, it is by devoting much of his discussion to the work of Byron, Hemans and Scott – the most admired and most widely read poets of the age – and by examining them so carefully and so well, Bainbridge captures Romantic poetry at its most dynamic and at its most forcibly engaged by the dominant concerns of the age.

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**Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 221. £45. ISBN 0521846757**

Andrew Stauffer's fascinating study makes the case that 'Romanticism was shaped by its struggle with anger.' He begins by arguing, orthodoxly enough, that the Romantics needed to reject the Juvenalian predilection for anger displayed by their Augustan predecessors in order to cultivate their own aesthetic of sympathy. He ends more challengingly by pointing out how much Romantic poetry circles around 'rage', uneasily aware that the same word may signify either violent anger or the inspired enthusiasm proper to the poet. In one of the book's epigraphs Blake's just man rages in the wild, and in its conclusion the heroines of Hemans's 'The Wife of Asdrubal' and 'The Indian City' surrender to a murderous, vengeful fury unnervingly akin to a state of poetic inspiration. Coleridge's piously regretful admission, 'It is most true: we are all Children of Wrath,' comes, by the time Stauffer is done, to seem not so much a statement of the general human condition as a remark with particular relevance to himself and his fellow poets.

Stauffer begins, as do so many students of the period, with the French Revolution, or rather with the debate that the Revolution instigated in Britain. But he reads that debate as a contest between Burke and his opponents as to which of them might properly claim to be motivated, like Juvenal, by virtuous indignation, and which should be seen as succumbing, like Seneca's angry man, to ignoble, dehumanising wrath. For Burke wrath is the defining character of the Revolutionaries, and especially that mob of women who conducted the French royal family from Versailles to Paris to the accompaniment of their 'horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies,' and it was a wrath that prompted his indignation. But Burke's opponents were rendered indignant by what they represented as the uncontrolled rage that had prompted Burke's own performance. Indignation was a high virtue, wrath a deadly sin, but, as Coleridge noted when he described indignation as 'the handsome brother of Anger

and Hatred,' they might share a family resemblance. As Stauffer records, it was a contest which Burke, assisted by September massacres, by Terror, and by the outbreak of war between Britain and France, won decisively. He successfully co-opted indignation for the anti-Jacobin cause, and the results were far-reaching.

Stauffer traces to Burke's victory the change in medical practice which came to regard inflammation not as a symptom, the body's reaction to attack by disease, but as a disease in itself, to be treated by the letting of blood. For Stauffer, the 'analogies between bodies natural and politick' may be, as Burke claimed, 'specious', but they remain operative. He traces the repercussions of the debate in the law, too. The new willingness to accept that the gravity of an offence was lessened by the degree of provocation to which the offender was subjected assumed, Stauffer argues, that anger was an emotion that invaded, as Napoleon and his crazed French countrymen threatened to do, from outside, depriving the individual of his autonomy.

In the bulk of his book Stauffer traces the consequences of Burke's victory for those such as Godwin, Burke, Coleridge and Wordsworth that he discomfited, and for those later writers, such as the Shelleys and Byron, who thought of themselves as the inheritors of 1790s radicalism. Wordsworth, whose poetry is characterised by an 'almost-complete lack of anger,' provides Stauffer with 'the absent center' of his book. But the negotiations with anger of others, in particular Blake, Shelley and Byron, were more complex and more ambivalent. Blake involves himself in the paradoxical attempt to 'escape from anger's bonds by way of wrath's energies.' Shelley stages in poem after poem a dramatic performance that Stauffer entitles the 'Masque of Anger' in which he 'negates his poetry's angry outbursts but only after they have cleared the air.' In his reading of Shelley and Byron Stauffer flirts with suggesting that a Romanticism founded on sympathy from the first, projects as its own shadow a Romanticism founded in anger and hatred. 'What is most like thee?', Shelley asks in 'To a Sky-Lark,' and makes his poem from his attempts to answer the question. The succession of similes here, as in *Epipsychidion*, a succession that ends only when the poet's energy is exhausted, identifies Shelley's addressee as the object of an infinite desire, but the same

technique may serve to identify objects of a hatred scarcely less infinite. Sidmouth and Castlereagh are

two vultures sick for battle  
 Two scorpions under one wet stone,  
 Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,  
 Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,  
 Two vipers tangled into one.

Byron, the poet of the period most given to hatred, writes in furious versified outbursts such as 'A Sketch from Private Life' a poetry that is a 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' in a manner quite other than Wordsworth envisaged, just as in his savage denunciation of Caroline Lamb, 'Remember thee', he transforms Wordsworthian memory. Memory for Wordsworth offers such abundant recompense because it has the power to transform even the most painful experience, whereas for Byron memory works to fix immutably his desire for revenge. Wordsworthian memory renews, it is spring-like, but Byron speaks of 'Winters of Memory' rolling over the soul of his Giaour.

Shelley offers as the primary embodiment of 'the power divine / Of mighty poetry', the song sung by Orpheus when he returns from the Underworld without Eurydice, sits down on 'a lonely seat of unhewn stone', and raises 'to Heaven a sound of angry song.' Stauffer makes that song audible once more in the poetry of the Romantic period. It is a fine achievement.

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**James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, eds., *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 291. £48. ISBN 0521839017**

In their introduction, 'Engaging the Eidometropolis', James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin refer to Thomas Girton's panoramic painting London exhibited in 1802. The city-scape is both importantly represented in, and crucial locus for, Romantic period creativity, and this volume emphasises these facets in a way that has not before been undertaken. The excitement of the editors in their long introduction is tangible as they survey Romantic scene-painting, organic conceptions of Romantic culture and the altogether more haphazard growth of the city (most especially London) during the period. Chandler and Gilmartin are setting the scene for crucial collisions of high and low culture, reality and aesthetic conception, politics and art and their contributors on these themes do not disappoint with a welter of re-reading of canonical authors and with new perspectives on various material and imaginative moments in the formation of the Romantic metropolis.

Section One is very good, but, taken as a whole, too thin to do justice to the weighty rhetoric of 'Metropolis, Nation and Empire'. Ian Duncan re-examines the notorious visit to Edinburgh by George IV in 1822, stage-managed by Walter Scott. The aesthetic amplitude Duncan reads being lent to Edinburgh by Scott's activities emerges as a much less crass exercise than has been previously realised. Scott's fictive Edinburgh is seen as one of the great Romantic acts of urban remaking, and it is timely that this version sits in a volume with more obvious Romantic metropolitan contenders such as London and Venice. Jon Klancher examines the confused hub of cosmopolitan definition that was London from the 1790s to the 1820s and the chaos in scene and public sphere he discerns makes for problematic self-definition among Romantic artists. Klancher's finely-detailed piece usefully causes one to pause in the face of various recent (post-Modern) accounts of the unalloyed Romantic freedom enjoyed in the face of the vast metropolis.

John Barrell in his 'London and the London Corresponding Society' begins the second section of the collection and provides a survey of the distribution of the LCS in the capital taking into account patterns of enfranchisement and the structure of local government, reaching the conclusion that 'a large part of the alarm created by the LCS was that it could appear at once as a replica of the monstrous character of London, and as a democratic criticism of and challenge to

it'. As ever, Barrell's historicist approach (even when he is being admittedly tentative) and his ability to access aspects of the contemporary popular imagination are exemplary. We are made aware yet again in this essay that no-one has done more in recent years to bring alive the cultural psychology of the 1790s. Similarly, Saree Makdisi highlights Blake's relationship to 1790s radicalism, much more sharply defined in a collection such as this rather than in his excellent *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* where the same reading is provided but at much greater leisure. He reads Blake as somewhat resistant to Lockean notions of the self and to Paineite rationalism, which did so much to underwrite the radical worldview; 'the sheer excessive intensity of Blake's verbal and visual work in the 1790s prophecies must be recognized as a gesture in which politics and aesthetics have been merged' and here we find 'the enormous gulf between Blake and the mainstream radical movement'. For Blake, definitions of the self, of freedom, of the imagination even, are matters of much greater philosophical complexity than anything the LCS could take on board and in highlighting Blake's difference from the dominant ideas of the LCS even as he inhabits the same environment, Makdisi sketches 'Blake's metropolitan radicalism' with a quite brilliant awareness of nuance that, like all the best Blake criticism, sees Blake both part product of his age and unique presence in it.

I am not entirely sure that the third essay, Frances Ferguson's 'Envy Rising' fits the rubric of the section she shares with Barrell and Makdisi, 'Urban Radicalism and Reform'. Ferguson's treatment of envy has a pertinence more to social relationship than to objects. Her involvement here of the writings of Hume, Coleridge, Bentham and Dickens makes for a rich, well-written piece, which has suggestive things to say about schools and mass society, but it has essentially appeared already in *ELH*.

Part three of the book, 'Metropolitan Spectacle', sees Anne Bermingham write a useful account of how Rudolph Ackermann's idea of the place of art in 'Romantic' London 'has disappeared', while Hazlitt's rather rarefied views of the same, in particular linking taste to genius, have prevailed. Iain McCalman's writing on 'Mystagogues of Revolution' provides a sparkling account of Alessandro di

Cagliostro in London during 1786-87 to essay the origins of what he calls 'Rogue Romanticism'. Alchemy, exorcism, freemasonry and orientalism are all brought into the mix as McCalman highlights a crucial hinge-point between decadent Enlightenment sensibility and the rise of the Romantic era. As with Bermingham and McCalman, Simon During in rounding out this section of the book, brings into sharp focus a part of Romantic period under-felt that does not normally take centre-stage; in this case the theatre of the Lyceum on the Strand. As a crucial site of Romantic 'show business', the Lyceum allowed new technologies such as the telegraph to be exhibited, and was a place where 'acts of little or no cultural value [could] attach themselves to "higher" cultural forms'.

The fourth part of this collection, 'The New Poetics of Urban Publicity', sees Peter J. Manning essaying the lecturing of Hazlitt and Coleridge and the urban and periodical spaces through which the 'Romantic image' was promulgated. Frustratingly short, Manning's at times brilliant investigation would need the length of a book to adequately accommodate the lines of connection he is tracing. Anne Janowitz's 'The Artifactual Sublime: Making London Poetry' provides a nice (though again all too short) reading of two sublime 'pathways' through Romantic poetry in the urban setting. Her sketching of the 'alienated self of modern spaces' and of 'an urban poetic of brilliance [of representation]' is very deftly traced from Wordsworth and Blake into the Victorian period usefully drawing in 'later' Romantics such as James (B.V.) Thomson, John Davidson and Richard Le Gallienne who still lack proper appreciation. Celeste Langan's 'Venice' navigates interesting channels through the Italian city-state a propos, unsurprisingly of Byron, with regard to the relationship of sovereignty and aesthetic power. Byron's displacement from his own nation and Venice's own trammelled, mythic past combine to create in his mind a curious metropolitanism that is actually deeply personal so that later 'Ruskin is still trying to remove the Byronic signature from [Venice's] surface'.

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**Amanda Gilroy, ed., *Green and Pleasant Land: English Culture and the Romantic Countryside*. Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, Volume VIII. Leuven: Peeters, 2004. Pp. 201. €45. ISBN 9042914386**

Since Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* (1991) announced a colour-coded paradigm shift in Romantic Studies – from red to green – numerous important critics have contributed to building an ecocritical understanding of the period. The growing body of environmentally-oriented criticism has created innovative new readings of canonical texts and allowed for the reevaluation of previously marginalized ones. What makes this well-rounded collection distinctive is that although it is focussed upon images of England and English artists, it has a global scope and emphasis, including American and European perspectives on the cultural stereotypes shorthanded in the phrase, 'Green and Pleasant Land'.

That oft-quoted tagline from Blake, and the poem from which it is taken, is the subject of one of the most interesting essays in the collection, C. C. Barfoot's 'Blake's England and the Restoration of Jerusalem. Too Late for Green and Pleasant Idylls?' The chapter provides an historical account of the uses and abuses of those famous lines from *Milton*. While it will surprise no one that the lines are taken out of context, Barfoot offers a fascinating account of the range of ways in which they have been misunderstood and misappropriated. The essay contrasts the poem's political deployment in the twentieth century with Blake's own complex political and spiritual beliefs.

Nicholas Roe's essay, 'Green Unpleasant Land' further plays upon Blake's lines to discuss how modern responses to the Foot and Mouth epidemic in 2001 were in part shaped by the legacy of Romantic perceptions of landscape, and, in particular, how the crisis 'has uncovered the extent to which consumer industries like tourism and agriculture are entwined with a Romantic idea of England'. Several other essays refer to the Foot and Mouth crisis as a modern touchstone against which to compare ideas of nature and rurality in the past. However, Roe's is the

most topical and offers the most potent critique of the grip that picturesque aesthetics continues to exert on the public's imagination.

The picturesque is further interrogated in Donna Landry's 'Ruined Cottages: The Contradictory Legacy of the Picturesque for England's Green and Pleasant Land'. The essay stands rightfully as a keynote for the entire collection. Landry adopts a provocative and contrarian view that, despite all of the well-documented ideological damage it has done, the picturesque aesthetic might not be the root of all evil. Juxtaposing her capacious knowledge of the history of rural issues with a close reading of the Wordsworth poem cited in the title, Landry sets a high standard for the other essays to follow, exposing the political and cultural complexities of greenness and pleasantness. Because a book on Romantic ideas of nature and the countryside cannot discuss the picturesque without also discussing the sublime, this collection obliges with Kiene Brillenburg Wurth's essay, a solid discussion of Kant's influence on Coleridge.

While the volume begins with essays on more predictable poets and topics, it does not limit itself to canonical writers. Thanks to the growing dominance of ecocritical approaches, John Clare has begun to transcend his status as a 'minor poet'. Clare's ecocentric representations of nature have made him more central to the modern critical discussion of literary images of the countryside. Simon K\_vesi's essay, 'John Clare's "I" and "Eye": Egotism and Ecologism' argues convincingly that Clare embodies Keats's negative capability better than any poet of the era. As a true 'cameleon poet', the absence of the 'egotistical sublime' in Clare's poetry enables him to anticipate modern deep ecology.

While the contributions of English Romantic poets to modern (mis)conceptions of rural life are to be expected in a book on the countryside, English novels, and particularly novels written by women, have typically received less consideration. Again, the collection is distinctive in covering a wider range of genres and authors, with two essays on Jane Austen (by Robert Clark and Robert Miles), one on Ann Radcliffe (by Jeanne Moskal), and another on how novels set in America portray and respond to images of the English countryside (by Wil M. Verhoeven). The collection also includes analyses of non-literary texts, such as

equitation manuals for women (the subject of Amanda Gilroy's contribution) and the visual arts, with Wessel Krul's essay on the French reception of Constable, and his subsequent influence on nineteenth-century French landscape painting.

Several of the essays, including the two devoted to Austen and the concluding contribution from Gerald Maclean on Byron's *Don Juan*, focus on how rural scenery and the English countryside may be less than fully present in the text. In keeping with the more international scope of the collection as a whole, Maclean argues that through Byron's cosmopolitanism, it becomes evident that Englishness is more about being *from* a place rather than simply inhabiting it. Maclean's essay and others, then, aim to show how pastoral scenery has always been disappearing, and disappearing in ways that are not always solely the result of enclosure or industrialization.

The overall excellence of this collection is unfortunately marred by very poor copyediting, with misspellings and typographical and other errors abounding.

Although the Foot and Mouth crisis which was the point of departure for many of the essays is now becoming a distant memory, larger, more dire environmental catastrophes loom before us, most notably the very real threat of global climate change. In the face of such impending catastrophes, academic essays on literature and culture may seem frivolous. However, by posing questions about the powerful cultural forces which still shape our expectations of how nature should be or should look, these essays collectively and productively historicize potentially hazardous assumptions about the environment.

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**Jennifer Wallace, *Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination*. London: Duckworth, 2004. Pp. 220. £14.99. ISBN 0715632787**

Objects have many lives. Things are made, used, broken, lost, found... and translated. Under the threat of loss and forgetfulness some things become 'artifacts,' become enriched with the value of age and association with a bygone time and place. In the gap between then and now, they become both more and less than what they were, become traces of what came before, signs of what is absent. These things dug out of the ground or found hidden away in an attic corner haunt us. Archaeology inevitably begins in mystery and in the pleasant or disturbing sensations of handling that which has survived, perhaps faded, mutilated, estranged, and faint. Archaeology is, then, necessarily an emotional activity. So, too, archaeological knowledge emerges out of a complex social negotiation of meaning for what is both there and not there, what is real and tangible, but absent, ephemeral, ghostly.

This is archaeology's fundamental and inescapable problem and attraction: how do we listen to these faint voices of the past and understand and make sense of the mystery attending things? And, perhaps more importantly, why do we bother? This is the subject of Jennifer Wallace's *Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination*. Wallace considers archaeology as a creative event, and is interested in the means, motives, and desires with which archaeologists play around with old things, interpretive encounters that must also delve into the strata of human and cultural consciousness in the making of material history. Hers is a study of the paradox of archaeological thinking: the power to create knowledge out of fragments and the fragility of this project within what Wallace identifies as the 'archaeological imagination'. Leaving its own imprints on human thought, the archaeological imagination itself has, she contends, a history, a history to which she as an amateur archaeologist and literary scholar has herself become linked through her own encounters with the material past and archaeological sites she has variously worked in, visited, and read about.

*Digging the Dirt* is an ambulatory, contemplative, and sensitive account of the archaeological imagination as it plays upon and is haunted by certain key sites, lost worlds, and deep time. The globe-trotting author offers an odd yet satisfying blend of literary allusion and autobiography, wherein old-fashioned narrative history

meets literary criticism and contemporary archaeological theory, which is itself following the linguistic turn in the social sciences by looking to the metaphors of seeing and writing about artifacts and excavation. Of crucial interest to the author is the long-standing but rarely acknowledged history of our subjective epistemological and ontological engagement with which amateurs and professionals alike contemplate the material past. Wallace presents the reader with a history of antiquarian thought dispersed through and expressed within popular literary culture, which emerges in the key semiotic playground of the archaeological imagination. Overlaying archaeological practice, desire, and the poetics and politics of sedimented time, she thus looks at 18<sup>th</sup>-century barrow digging translated through Wordsworth's longing primitivism and the material morbidity of the Graveyard School, Pompeii through Freud's model of psychological digging, Troy through Aryan theory, Jerusalem through Victorian desires for a Protestant homeland and pedigree, bog-men through Seamus Heaney's ethnological verse, and, lastly, 'Ground Zero' as an archaeological site that Wallace and others interpret as a vast reification of the horrors of postmodernity itself. Overlaying this all is the author's own stamp, her own history of sensations within the history of sensations she charts: this book reads like a travel diary as much as a miscellany of other time-traveling archophiles.

Wallace thus offers an insightful foray into archaeological subjectivity, a blending of archaeological practice with the poetics of depth. In a light, accessible way, she helps to give a language to the feelings many of us have in our own appreciation or encounters with the material past and in famous sites of past action that have been etched into our cultural memory. The value of the book is its own collecting impulse, the range of allusion and illustration of humankind's obsession with lost and buried things, a reflection of our own sense of losing ground as we move through time, as we progress (or want to believe in progress) materially, culturally, morally. Ground Zero is a fitting coda to her book. A modern plague pit, a mass grave-site, a hole in the earth, it represents the logical culmination of the archaeological processes she charts: processes that end up with startled and curious people staring into a trench looking for answers.

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**James Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature 1783-1834*.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 256. £56. ISBN 0199262977**

James Treadwell's study of 'autobiographical writing' in the Romantic period rejects formalist and generic approaches to its subject, offering instead a study of the ways in which 'certain published documents' were 'perceived to be "autobiographical"' and of 'how that perception came about, and what it meant, in the literary environment of Britain' in the period. What the study aims at, in other words, is a history of the birth, development and impact of a literary concept.

The book is divided into three sections. 'Prescription' deals with 'the idea of autobiography as it made its way into the literary environment'. 'Prescription/Practice' describes 'the relations between the conditions in which "autobiography" emerged and the published texts which present themselves as autobiographies'. 'Practice' explores some of the ways in which autobiographies themselves represent 'autobiography's situation' and considers 'what sort of readings might be involved when we interpret a given document as an autobiography'.

Section 1 has chapters on 'The Rise of "Autobiography"', 'The Case of Rousseau' and 'Autobiography and the Literary Public Sphere'. The focus here is on 'the anxieties, confusions, and missed expectations exposed by the literary sphere's encounters with particular texts'. Central is the reviewers' debate over what autobiography is for (pleasure or instruction?), about (universals or unique individuals?) and the challenge posed by actual autobiographies, especially Rousseau's. Prescription, Treadwell persuasively argues, was born out of objections to autobiographical practices, but 'What exactly did people object to?'

According to this study, objections were essentially to do with 'decorum', or, more plainly, good 'manners'.

Section II includes chapters on 'Autobiography and Publication' and *Biographia Literaria* and addresses the ways in which 'the texts of Romantic-period autobiography are pressured and shaped by the conditions of their literary public sphere'. For Treadwell, in fact, these texts are more than 'pressured' and 'shaped' by the literary sphere. Having laid out that sphere's prescriptions for autobiography in the book's first section, Treadwell now moves to his central argument about autobiographical texts themselves, an argument that seeks to shift 'attention away from subjectivity as the key term in Romantic autobiographical writing' and 'replac[e] it with textuality'. Autobiographical writing of the period, Treadwell suggests, is the direct product of the contemporary critical debate about autobiographies as publications. According to Treadwell, we should not read Romantic autobiography (if indeed we still do) as 'texts of the self, of privacy, consciousness, or inwardness', but as 'discourses on textuality, on publication, interaction, and legibility'. In negotiating a public platform, voice and value for themselves, autobiographies become about precisely such negotiations, and not about selves or personal histories. Autobiography of the Romantic period 'tends to make its own processes more prominent than the narratives it contains'.

*Biographia Literaria* 'marks the extreme point of this tendency'.

Section III supports and advances this central argument with chapters on 'Autobiographical Transactions' (discussing a range of texts including *The Life of Mrs Gooch*, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland*, Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* and De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*), 'Childe Harold canto III' and 'Elia'. The first of these chapters begins by discussing 'the autobiographical transaction' through which 'each text tries to establish its purpose as a publication and to position itself in relation to readers'. It ends by arguing that the 'inwardness' of Romantic autobiography is an 'effect produced at the point where writing exceeds the negotiated transactions of autobiographical publication': a 'rhetorical presence' is

created by the text at this point that ‘cannot be included among those transactions’ and so ‘takes on the appearance of what we would now call the autobiographical “self”’. *Childe Harold* III is read as ‘vividly’ showing ‘how all the aspects of autobiography that seem to be to do with pure self-expression – inwardness, sincerity, authenticity, selfhood, expressiveness – are forms of a transaction with the public sphere’. In Charles Lamb’s *Elia* essays, Treadwell argues, ‘*Elia*’s only visible purpose is to be *Elia*, to conjure his personality out of his mannered writing’ and ‘to that extent’ is ‘founded on the kind of interaction between the public and the moment of publication which Romantic-period autobiographical writing so often brings into play’.

Treadwell’s insistence on ‘transactions between autobiographical writing and the sphere where it is named and circulated’ can be reductive and is sometimes repetitive. Nevertheless, he clearly and usefully demonstrates the very wide-spread ‘internaliz[ation]’ of ‘the surrounding discourse’ by autobiographical texts that are highly ‘self-conscious about their place in the literary public sphere’. He also brings into sharp focus the textuality and literariness of some of the best-known autobiographical figures of Romantic literature.

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**Kathryn Sutherland, *Jane Austen’s Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 387. £50. ISBN 0199258724**

In what looks set to become a standard critical work in contemporary Austen studies, Sutherland focuses on the ‘textual lives’ of the author, that is the multiple discursive and visual incarnations capable of affording us an insight into how ‘Austen’ – her life, her image, her writings, and ultimately her myth – has come down to us. This is a book about the search for origins and the reconstruction of mutations, and with agile and accessible prose it charts the various ways in which

different versions of 'Austen' have been pieced together and transmitted by succeeding generations of readers and critics. In the process, it looks at how these 'Austens' respond to the pressures inherent in each cultural phase including, but not necessarily privileging, our own.

Moreover, as Sutherland makes clear from the outset, the book is also a study of textual criticism, which, with its constitutive attention to textual development, transmission and reconstruction, provides the bases for the many interpretative forays in her volume. Rejecting any rigidly positivistic approach, the author's aim is also that of instilling a good dose of 'textual scepticism and broadmindedness' in her readers. As a result, the problems at the heart of textual criticism are constantly addressed throughout the book, and specifically in the section 'Textual Identities: Part 2' which is a condensed history of this discipline in the twentieth century.

A generous and comprehensive treatment of a broad array of Austen-related issues, Sutherland's volume presents an articulated structure organized in four main areas: the 'making of England's Jane', dealing with the progressive canonization of the novelist from James Austen-Leigh's memoirs through Rudyard Kipling's 'The Janeites' to R. W. Chapman's critical edition (chapter 1); the biographical text of Austen and its gradual accretion (chapter 2); an examination of the extant manuscripts that leads to an attempt at deducing Austen's method of composition, its peculiarities and developmental features (chapter 3); a first section on 'Textual Identities' broadly concerned with the myth that print (especially when sanctioned by scholarly editorial approval) is the final proof of the reliability of an author's textual incarnation (chapter 4); an indispensable discussion on printing methods and the forms of Austen's punctuation, especially in relation to the two editions of *Mansfield Park* (chapter 5); and finally a second section on 'Textual Identities' containing a brief history of textual criticism in the twentieth century and an examination of film adaptations from Austen's novels as yet another of her seemingly inexhaustible textual reincarnations.

Through its multiple strategies the book seeks to account for Austen as a unique figure in English-language literature because 'both popular and canonical,

accessible and complexly inaccessible, fixed and certain, yet wonderfully amenable to shifts of sensibility and cultural assumptions'. To this end, the author focuses repeatedly on the elements of continuity between different stages in the evolution of Austen's 'text', a continuity that is very much in place in spite of the gaps in reception and interpretation that crucial interventions such as D. W. Harding's essay on Austen's 'Regulated Hatred' has taught us to expect. Thus, Austen's style is an anticipation of modernism (Sutherland talks explicitly of 'the modernist import of her technical innovations'); the 'Austenolatry' identified by Leslie Stephen in 1876 is an anticipation of the emergence of the 'Janeite' in Kipling's homonymous short story of 1924; or, more recently, a meaningful connection links the archery scene between Elizabeth (Greer Garson) and Darcy (Laurence Olivier) in the 1940 MGM *Pride and Prejudice* with the similar scene between Emma (Gwyneth Paltrow) and Mr Knightley (Jeremy Northam) in the 1996 Miramax *Emma*.

If Sutherland's study follows these and countless other components in the making of Austen, it does however have its centre of gravity in the subtle and hitherto untried study of the origins and development of R.W. Chapman's Clarendon Press edition of *The Novels of Jane Austen* of 1923. Based on late Victorian and early twentieth-century editions and critical commentaries, the work undertaken by Chapman and his fellow editors resulted in the official and reliable 'text' of Austen for much of the twentieth century. It was the first scholarly edition of any English novelist, and Chapman and his team, who were primarily classical philologists, applied to her the same methods usually employed to reconstruct ancient Greek texts – hence the arcane-sounding (and possibly off-putting) reference to Aeschylus in Sutherland's subtitle. The volume provides a careful and fascinating reconstruction of the personal, ideological, and scholarly contexts from which the edition arose, and then moves on to an evaluation of the overall significance of the Chapman edition in the light of 1920s culture and the premium put on the canon at that time. In doing so, Sutherland also throws some essential light on its impact on later developments of Austen's 'textual lives', on how and to

what end our culture has constructed, invented, reworked, and felt the need to possess Austen for the last two hundred years.

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**Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 250. £48. ISBN 052150606**

Over the past twenty years or so scholars have been concerned with the position of eighteenth-century women writers in literary and cultural history. Female authors' texts have been recovered and re-evaluated in studies such as Jane Spencer's *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (1986), Janet Todd's *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (1989), and Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989). Betty A. Schellenberg acknowledges the seminal work that has gone before her, but challenges two persistent notions. One is the model of the separate spheres gender economy that sees women as strictly within the private domestic sphere. This model denies the possibility of women having followed professional literary careers. Therefore, if these women wrote, this was either 'by definition transgressive' and subversive, or absolutely submissive and therefore a 'full retreat into bourgeois domesticity'. The other notion Schellenberg disputes is the 'sandwich model' of the long eighteenth century, which notes a short period of feminism flourishing at the beginning of the century in the writing of authors such as Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley, and sees feminism reinstalled at the end of the century through writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft. In between these endpoints, the 'sandwich model' assumes an eclipse of feminism.

Through individual case studies of five mid-eighteenth-century authors – Frances Sheridan, Frances Brooke, Sarah Scott, Sarah Fielding, and Charlotte Lennox – Schellenberg shows the various ways in which women participated in the literary and even political public spheres. Frances Sheridan, for example, in her 1761 novel *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, makes use of John Home's hugely popular drama *Douglas* to parallel female private virtue and male public virtue, thereby asserting that heroic virtue transcends both sex and sphere. Rather than literary influence consisting of male mentorship of women writers, and Sheridan being 'one of Richardson's daughters', Schellenberg sees authorial relations as much more dynamic: she uses contemporary letters to show that Sheridan (as well as Sarah Fielding and Charlotte Lennox) was herself 'the sought-after literary figure rather than at the periphery of someone else's circle'. Frances Brooke has been seen by literary historians as typifying the 'Modest Muse', but Schellenberg sees Brooke as using her fiction to participate in political debates. Instead of merely classifying Brooke's novels as sentimental, readers should be alert to their commentary on public affairs, such as the discussions of the newly acquired colony of Quebec in *The History of Emily Montague* or the debate about the ideals of civic virtue in her tragedies *Virginia* and *The Siege of Sinope*. Further to her fictional texts, Brooke's letters show that she self-confidently presents herself as a professional writer, as an economic agent who can offer her publisher authorial expertise.

In the light of these women writers' professional self-assertion, Schellenberg warns against generalisation: comparing eighteenth-century women writers and their texts reveals wide variations. Sarah Scott's works and attitude for example differ from Brooke's kind of professionalism. Scott subordinated her authorial activities to her private identity, using the disembodied medium of print to obscure her participation in the republic of letters: neither her own name nor that of a constructed identity appear on her publications, so that she participates in the literary world in a disembodied and fragmentary way, which prevents the construction of a coherent author. She lets others deal with contractual business for her, which again differs from Brooke's attitude. Schellenberg contends that

'making such differences visible thus serves as a corrective both to oversimplified dichotomies and to a tendency to use single texts or authors as representative of entire generations of publishing history'. The variety of women's ways of participating in the republic of letters means no single interpretative frame is sufficient to assess women authors' role in eighteenth-century literary history.

The last two chapters of the study are concerned with later writers' attitudes to these mid-eighteenth-century authors. The image of them as domestic and therefore unimportant that persisted for so long was partly created by later eighteenth-century writers such as Frances Burney: according to Schellenberg, Burney deliberately wrote herself into a male literary tradition, and therefore contributed to Siskin's 'Great Forgetting'.

*The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* discusses gender in the context of studying the relative importance of a range of factors that influence these women writers. Schellenberg thus raises the question of how important a factor gender is for the literary activity of these writers, and concludes that they 'might have had something besides, or beyond, [their] own gender position in mind'. We should therefore be 'prepared to let go of gender as our fundamental interpretive category', since gender is not the only or even necessarily the main determinant of agency in literary history.

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**Magnus Ankarsjö, *William Blake and Gender*. Jefferson NC and London: McFarland, 2006. Pp. 210. £22.95. ISBN 0786423412**

Blake's writing about sex provokes passionate responses, especially from self-declared 'fanatics and lovers of Blake' like Magnus Ankarsjö, whose book has all the virtues and the vices of any lover's discourse. Its arguments are bold and insistent, and Ankarsjö returns, repeatedly, to his core beliefs with all the urgency

of cupid's dart. These are: that Blake has a 'message' for 'mankind' which is 'utterly positive', that Blake proposes 'sexuality as the salvation of mankind' [read heterosexuality?] and that his epics present 'a gender utopia with a vision of complete equality between the sexes'. This state is reached, he argues, through the 'increased gender interactivity' of numerous pairs of male and female characters, whose 'main urge' in the fallen world is 'to search for their spiritual and corporeal counterparts'. Once these couples are reconciled, and working together, apocalypse can ensue, after which 'male-female togetherness', 'eternal harmonious togetherness' reigns.

The book is lucidly structured to advance this case. Chapter One explains the meanings of his key terms (utopia and apocalypse rather more fully than gender). The bulk of the work then charts the nuances of Ankarsjö's sexual dynamic in chapters simply entitled 'The Gender Utopia of *The Four Zoas ...of Milton ...of Jerusalem*'. Since his over-riding interest is in Blake's figures as characters, as beings with firm symbolic and metaphorical connections with male and female humans, Blake's zoas and emanations along with Ololon&Milton and Jerusalem&Albion appear primarily in this light, in a detailed series of themed subsections, 'Enitharmon: Blake's Eve', 'Vala: Active Negative Character', 'Jerusalem: Universal Female Character', 'Albion: Universal Male Character' and so on. Since only the broad canvas of Blake's epics can provide the room required for the couples' dialectical antics these are prized above all, with Blake's earlier works regarded as 'mere fragmentary sketches', 'unfinished forerunners'.

Ankarsjö's intensity is a great virtue in the context of Blake Studies, where male sexual speculators have hidden behind academic dispassion, but it becomes somewhat divisive when turned on critical rivals. Most unhelpful is his extremely hasty trot through the writings of feminist critics, the scope of whose work is not represented and whose arguments are distortingly condensed. It is not true that 'the bulk of critical impressions of Blake's female is negative', whilst the claim that Blake's description of 'female sexuality' is '[s]till almost unrecognised' is a fiction. Passion of course lies behind all this, as his tone reveals: 'Anne Mellor and Alicia Ostriker must of course be allowed to see Blake's female characters as negative

and, astonishingly, to believe the poet himself to be a sexist, but really, on what grounds?' Leaving aside the corruption of Ostriker's position, an equally passionate riposte might include comments like these: that female activity, Ankarsjö's benchmark, is not in itself liberating (hookers and drudges rarely slouch); that an androgynous state of being in which the female ceases to exist whilst 'men' miraculously survive, wouldn't immediately strike many women as utopian; and that celebration of the willing and sacrificial feminine charms of 'the most positive' characters Oothoon, Ololon and Jerusalem is nothing new. To his credit Ankarsjö does acknowledge the influence of 'the patriarchal legacy' on Blake and also the paradoxical place of women in 'Blake's Radical Culture' but fascinating hints (about Mary Hays for example) are sadly not pursued. Ultimately his interest is in Blake as a sexual prophet, whose heirs are Jacques Derrida, Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan. In this company Blake becomes an all too familiar figure, one who can sort out Judith Butler's *Gender Troubles*. Blake is a man 'two centuries ahead of some contemporary feminist critics' and their 'rather insignificant' linguistic experiments.

It is a shame such dogmatism creeps in, because Ankarsjö is too fine a Blakean not to acknowledge that Blake is actually much less sure and straight than his model allows, evidenced by his frank admission that the 'most uncertain feature' of Blake's utopia 'is the sexual/emotional life in this world', which is, of course, precisely why feminists have valued him so highly: Blake wrestled relentlessly with those foundational binary myths in which woman is always the ditsy or malign junior partner and spent a lifetime agonising over what womens' freedom might mean for the sexual freedoms of men. Such sexually experimental labour required a strikingly heterogenous cast-list (as Ankarsjö's welcome comments about hermaphrodites and androgyny reveal). It also involved a startling variety of sexual couplings, which leads to the crux of the matter: namely that despite Ankarsjö's enthusiasm for the literal and symbolic potential of male-female intimacy ('Togetherness' as the nineteen index entries term it) *William Blake and Gender* seems able to share only one verse example of 'glorious sexual intercourse between man and woman', and even here [*Milton* pl. 28] the 'hallowed center' is gendered male and the 'crested Cock' terrifies. Recent queer and body

scholarship (e.g. Hobson 2000, Connolly 2002) says much about those things Ankarsjö shuns and though he opts not to engage with these authors, or the implications of their work, his book is haunted by the transgressive, complicating, possibilities they reveal.

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**Nicholas M. Williams, ed., *Palgrave Advances in William Blake Studies*.  
Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006. Pp. 283. £16.99. ISBN 1403916004**

‘As a Man is So he Sees’, Blake advised the Reverend Trusler in 1799. There is a bewildering number of ways of seeing Blake. To the little reader lost in the forests of monographs and articles, this collection proffers a guiding hand through the dark Blakean thickets, with a mission to ‘survey, question and push the boundaries of the discipline’, chart out future directions, and reflect the light given by recent literary theory.

In a useful introduction, Williams identifies key concepts and notes tensions between advocates of a Blakean ‘system’ and those favouring a less cohesive vision of the painter-poet’s output. Williams begins with Coleridge’s assertion that Blake was an ‘ana-calyptic’ rather than ‘apo-calyptic’ poet, concealing rather than revealing. Indeterminacy and open-endedness in Blake’s works are recurrent themes, with ambiguities and contradictions forming the spaces inhabited by numerous critical species.

The majority of essays fulfil the series’ remit. Those by Helen Bruder and Andrew Lincoln are especially impressive. Bruder charts the impact of feminist criticism on Blake studies. She makes a heartening defence of Blake against simplistic charges of straightforward and consistent misogyny, introducing more sophisticated approaches. With careful and illuminating readings of key texts, she deftly points out critically neglected areas and new directions. Bruder’s essay is

distinguished by acute and impassioned urgency, noting a widening fissure in feminist literary theory between approaches which favour the valorisation of essential feminine difference and more fluid approaches to gender. Bruder convincingly shows how the former approach risks oversimplifying a complex writer like Blake.

Andrew Lincoln sets forth on the most heavily-trodden path in recent Blake criticism, comprehensively signposting the routes along which critics have tracked the author to radical metropolitan milieux. He notes various interpretative models such approaches generate, from Bronowski and Erdman's readings of mythical figures as allegories of public personae to recent work on how Blake's texts share features with – but are also at a tangent to – radical discourse. Lincoln thoughtfully argues that many of these studies neglect Blake's significance for the contemporary reader and often lose sight of his narrative art amidst historical minutiae or grand concepts.

The collection is filled with other impressive essays. John Jones lucidly summarises work on Blake's production methods, arguing that the medium itself, as much as its content, critiques an increasingly mechanised society. Peter Otto provides a stimulating overview of debates on the nature of Blake's composite art. A clash between Hagstrum and Mitchell spurs him to argue for the precedence of mutuality and struggle in Blake's ontology rather than Romantic notions of the imagination's power to unite dualities. Angela Esterhammer mines gems from linguistic studies of Blake which have interesting and often overlooked results. The work she summarises provides fascinating quantifiable linguistic evidence for arguments that Blake privileges relationship and ongoing processes. A helpful introduction to psychoanalytic literary criticism from Freudian to Lacanian approaches and beyond is provided by David Punter, who summarises their application to Blake's mythology. Punter charts a sound course between counter-productive debate over Blake's sanity and readings of texts as prefigurations of psychoanalytic theories.

Saree Makdisi examines arguments for Blake's place within a plebeian and communist tradition rather than that of mainstream 1790s radicalism. Aply mapping

out work in this area, he carefully distinguishes a heterogeneous and decentred communist tradition from the authoritative connotations of the twentieth century. As for Otto, there is a focus upon Blake's emphasis on mutual and relational practices. Makdisi's sophisticated conceptual analysis perhaps bears out Lincoln's caveat on recent neglect of Blake's narrative, but is impressive nonetheless.

Edward Larrissy impressively examines Blake's paradoxical good fortune among modernists and postmodernists alike. Noting Lyotard's theory that modernism and postmodernism are inheritors of the Romantic Sublime, Larrissy examines the ways postmodern critics have made much of Blake's indeterminate texts and interest in language as a determinant of reality.

A helpful overview of criticism focusing on Blake's intense engagement with the operation of signs, indeterminacy, and play, and the activity of the reader is delivered by Nelson Hilton. Aside from some poor image reproductions, Hilton's essay makes rather bold claims for the uniqueness of Blake's ludic textuality. Though distinct in the company of mainstream Romantic writers, this says more about canonicity than about Blake; popular, radical, and women writers all played freely with verbal and visual signs.

Two essays disappoint. Stephen Prickett and Christopher Strathman summarise critical engagements with Blake's conception of the Bible, relating him to Alexander Geddes and developments in late eighteenth-century Biblical scholarship. Blake's intimacy and transformational approach to scriptural imagery in his poetry and designs, however, do not receive thorough discussion, despite commentators from across the critical spectrum noting distinctive Biblical usage and adaptation.

'Blake and Science Studies', by Mark Lussier, suffers from a decision to examine science conceptually rather than through its disciplines, largely ignoring important critical work on Blake's contact with a range of sciences (botany, anatomy, astronomy, chemical processes). Despite interesting parallels with new physics, it is hard to shake off the sense that the scientific focus is little more than a metaphorical mirror with which to reflect rather than really illuminate Blake's work.

The collection is a fine departure point for those newly venturing into Blake criticism, providing authoritative and clear guides to most of the major debates. Inevitably for such a volume, there are some gaps. Historicist and social approaches to Blake are well-covered, but tend to be subsumed into specific areas such as radicalism and religion, with approaches like Adlard's work on Blake and folklore missing from the mix. Also, though they receive comment in several of the chapters, critical engagements with Blake's heavy investment in myth should surely merit their own section.

Despite these caveats, there is much to recommend this lucid and wide-ranging volume, particularly for graduate students and teachers who might otherwise burn dimly in the dark forests of Blakean criticism.

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**Mark Sandy, *Poetics of Self and Form in Keats and Shelley: Nietzschean Subjectivity and Genre*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. 142. £45. ISBN 07547635791**

Mark Sandy's compelling book is a comparative analysis of the works of Shelley and Keats 'from a Nietzschean perspective'. Sandy sketches Shelley and Keats's broad affinities (a word repeatedly used) with Nietzschean concepts: the displacement of metaphysics by aesthetics, the aestheticisation of the self and the world through a continual process of self-creation, the tragic affirmation of Life as Dionysian exuberance (embodied in Nietzsche's figure of the *\_bermensch*). In addition, Sandy draws on and complements recent studies of Romantic readership, particularly the work of Lucy Newlyn, by showing how the two philosopher-poets and the poet-philosopher defer hermeneutic authority to future readers in a final act of self-revision. Sandy's method is to conduct close readings within generic modes used by the two poets – prose, romance, lyric, elegy, and fragment – sometimes

selecting provocative quotations from Nietzsche as touchstones, but often allowing the dialogues between the proto-Nietzschean writings of Shelley and Keats to speak for and among themselves.

Sandy also situates Nietzsche at the philosophical and critical centre of Romantic studies. Nietzsche's critique of idealism, as Tillotama Rajan has shown in *Dark Interpreter*, reduplicates the fractures, doubts, and hedgings present in many Romantic position statements, poems and fragments. Nietzsche's avowed 'anti-Romanticism' (Chapter 1), in Sandy's study, thus comes to embody many of the unresolved and unresolvable tensions in Romantic aesthetics and sensibility identified by post-structuralists and new historicists alike (for an example of this that Sandy's does not cite, recall Jerome McGann's paradoxical claim in *The Romantic Ideology* that 'artistic success' in Romantic poetry accompanies moments when its most cherished ideals are undermined). While acknowledging the centrality of a Romantic critical vocabulary derived from these lines of Nietzschean influence, Sandy positions his own readings-based 'intellectual history' beyond the logocentrism of deconstructive and new historicist criticism, represented by Paul De Man and McGann respectively. *Poetics of Self and Form* looks instead to a new wave of criticism, represented by Susan Wolfson and Rajan, that 'is sensitive to current re-negotiations between textual and contextual criticism', although Sandy moves beyond Rajan's emphasis on the *Birth of Tragedy*, arguing for the relevance of Nietzsche's 'changing sense of the Dionysian category' to our understanding of Keats, Shelley, and Romanticism itself.

The readings chapters begin with Keats's and Shelley's own poetic statements in the letters and *Defence* respectively. The poets share with Nietzsche a 'metaphorical – or fictional – interpretation of reality', and, accordingly, an opposition to 'Enlightenment faith in a rigid metaphysics of absolute categories and values'. Shelley's poet legislator and Keats's negatively capable poet each locate self-creation and revision within a Nietzschean emphasis on 'open' history or 'becoming', and thus 'celebrate ... [the] indistinct borders between the territories of objective and subjective truth claims'. Chapter 3 ('Tragic Romance') pairs *Alastor* with *Endymion* and *The Witch of Atlas* with *Lamia* in order to demonstrate how the

poems chime with Nietzsche's emphasis on 'the Dionysian tragedy of waking reality' over 'the Apollonian idealised dream mode' of romance. The Keatsian and Shelleyan lyrical mode, likewise, transforms tragic vision into creative freedom, inseparable in Nietzsche's 'Dionysian understanding of reality'. In Chapter 5 ('Posthumous Meditations'), Sandy moves away from strict generic pairings to consider Shelley's *Adonais* alongside Keats's *The Eve of St. Mark*, identifying them as 'autotelic literary structures', 'which tragically enact an awareness of themselves as fictional defence against reality'. The final chapter on fragments draws on Derrida's notion of 'borderlines' to emphasise 'the fictive nature of all critical reading'. The fragmentary nature of the *Hyperion* poems and *The Triumph of Life* underscore the necessity for readers to take responsibility for fiction-creation as well as interpretation, involving readers in the very aesthetic acts that replicate the authors' own Nietzschean self-revisions. In Sandy's metaphor, future readers must give their 'countersignatures' to the Keatsian or Shelleyan autograph.

While the last two chapters orient this book towards literary reputation and future readers, the book as a whole polarises the problem of literary and literary-critical history. To my mind, what Sandy calls Keats's and Shelley's 'anti-Enlightenment stance' presumes a too rigid demarcation of intellectual history into Enlightenment and post-Kantian categories; it is telling the David Hume, perhaps the most influential philosopher behind Shelley's thinking and the one who blurs Enlightenment boundaries, is nowhere mentioned in this study. Sandy might also have clarified precisely how his study 'negotiates' between textual and contextual approaches to Romantic period literature, so that his readers might better appreciate how Nietzsche might remain pertinent to Romantic Studies. But the great strengths of this book are in its refreshingly new readings of canonical texts using a critical approach that happily takes into its ken lesser known works; its sensitivity to form, genre and to the beauties of the poetry under examination; and its admirable versatility in considering these alongside perennially pertinent questions about subjectivity, history and language.

*Benjamin Colbert*

**Rob Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*. London: Routledge, 2005. Pp. 302. £14. ISBN 0415349168**

This is a valuable book that ought to be read by anyone in the humanities working on notions of the creative. At the same time, as a kind of compendium, it is not a book to be read from cover to cover. Pope reaffirms the centrality of the topic of creativity, evaded or even derided in much recent literary theory, and offers a comprehensive account of the history, genealogy, science and cultural politics of given accounts of creativity.

The scope of Pope's project and the diffusive and pervasive nature of concepts of the creative renders this book almost a cousin of Bill Bryson's effective popular science book *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. It must needs form a general survey of the current state of cultural and literary theory, but also embrace genetics, the nature of life, systems theory, and theories of chaos and complexity, and various theories of the nature and origin of the universe.

This centrifugal study just about holds itself together as it takes the reader through huge areas: a history of the notion of the creative, creation myths, evolution, vitalism, the concepts of invention, inspiration and originality, notions of individual or collective authorship, the appropriation of the language of 'creativity' by commodity capitalism, the distinction between the sane and the mad, human creation and divine, notions of the conscious and unconscious, creation and re-creation/revision, issues of gender and creativity, distinctions of artistic and scientific creativity, of notions of high ('creative') and ('mere') popular art, genius, influence, intertextuality and so on.

Pope's usual method of presentation is to take in a diversity of possible understandings of 'creativity' or related terms or issues, giving brief critical accounts and reviews of other books, with full attention to the kinds of intellectual and cultural stakes involved. In the chapter, 'Creating Definitions theoretically' this

leads to a posing of the book's own flexible definition of creativity, one reflecting the current arguments in the humanities: 'Creativity is extra/ordinary, original and fitting, ful-filling, in(ter)ventive, co-operative, un/conscious, fe<>male, re ... creation'.

There is an impressive coverage and incorporation of numerous stances here: creativity is accentuated to be both normal (we all have it) and extraordinary, as affirming a perpetual openness to change and identity, in gender and elsewhere, always non-individualistic and open to the 'other'... and so on. This understanding, however, comes dangerously close to being a predictable result of the general ethical tone – on most issues – of the progressive humanities at present, a product perhaps of the book's attempt to accommodate all the stances it surveys into its own 'radical' democratic, pluralistic meta-stance. This may be apparent in the presentation of Pope's working creative definition of creativity, given above, with its brackets, elisions and open, non-exclusive alternatives ('un/conscious', 'fe<>male', etc.).

The book offers itself as creative in being readable in either a linear way or in modes more reminiscent of hypertext. I found the experience of reading it from cover to cover slightly frustrating, due to the way the issue must perpetually digress into small potted accounts of so many different related fields and issues. The evident impossibility of sustaining equal depth of expertise over what is essentially the whole of human cultural and intellectual life appears in a tendency to unneeded digressions (do we need a brief section on Wallace and Gromit in relation to some of the connotations of 'creature'?) or the occasional slip (the observation that the term 'monster' rarely appears in Mary's Shelley's novel, only its film versions, is followed by an ascription to the novel of a 'Baron Frankenstein'). The book's equation of the current model of the origin of the Universe with other creation myths is surely glib, evading any real engagement with the nature of scientific method in favour of the truism that all forms of knowledge involve 'metaphor'.

Pope's use of the pedagogic over-to-you ruse of addressing the reader, often to make a point about the open-ended nature of the issues, can seem evasive. Given the association of this mode of address with numerous introductions-to-

theory the result can be inappropriately teacherly in tone. This is felt perhaps in the final section, 'Transforming Cultures' which invites the reader to engage in the 'ongoing activity' of 'transforming' culture through a chapter that consists entirely of passages from other texts that are about creativity or which instantiate it in numerous different fields. Perhaps the effect is finally to endorse Pope's surmise, in an earlier chapter, that 'it remains a moot point whether creativity is anything at all. Perhaps it would be better to open with "*creativities are...*" and recognise straight away the potential multiplicity of what is only a notionally singular term'.

Perhaps the overall effect of this impressive but over-stretched book is an endorsement of that early caveat. However, the book will provide valuable service to numerous readers as an intellectual workout on the diversity of its field. It is also a rich source of further references.

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**Eric Burns, *Infamous Scribblers: the Founding Fathers and the Beginnings of American Journalism*. New York: Public Affairs, 2006. Pp. 468. US\$27.50. ISBN 158648334X**

The author of this attractively produced volume is the host of Fox News Watch and a former NBC news correspondent. He writes accordingly. In fragments, soundbites, and with little regard to explication: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of journalism' —worst in that it confused hyperbole with fact, scatology with analysis, inflated peccadillos into crimes, encouraged violence and so forth. 'Yet they did it all, these best of people, all of it and more, time and again over the course of many decades, an incendiary press somehow becoming the basis of a humane and enduring society'. The unexamined premises are fairly typical: were they the 'best of people'? Is the United States such a society? If so, in what sense

might its basis be any sort of press? Nor is the focus of the work as clear as it might be. It tends to tell three rather different stories.

The first story is concerned with scurrilous journalists and their organs—James Franklin’s *New England Courant*, Rivington’s *New York Gazetteer*, Isaiah Thomas’s *Massachusetts Spy*, and so forth. Chapter 3 is about James Franklin libelling Increase Mather over his support for inoculation. Chapter 5 tells how Zenger’s *New York Weekly Journal* brought Governor Colby into disrepute and inspired Andrew Hamilton to mount a legal defence of Zenger that changed the law of libel. Chapter 8 indicts Sam Adams (the cousin of President Adams) for using the *Boston Gazette* to foment mob violence against Lt Governor Hutchinson, and inventing atrocities by British soldiers. This depiction of ‘journalism as brute force’ raises the issue of whether the duties of patriotic consciousness-raising necessarily include forging letters and telling lies. This is political ‘spin’ of an order that would bring a blush to the cheeks of the *Sun* or the *Mail*. Bound up with these tales of infamous scribbling, but on grounds of chronology rather than infamy or scribbling, are other matters: Chapter 4 treats Ben Franklin’s apprenticeship to his brother—charmingly told—and Chapter 6 is about legitimate resistance to the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts.

The second story is more integrated. It shows how journalism in the so-called ‘Passionate Decade’ of constitution-mongering advanced or undermined such figures as Washington, Jay, Hamilton, Burr and Jefferson, especially in the conduct of Alexander Hamilton’s *Gazette of the United States* and Jefferson’s rival organ the *National Gazette*. Much of the latter part of the book is really about the disintegration of the triumvirate of President Washington and his two Secretaries of State, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, as the latter two used covert journalism to snipe at each other’s sexual irregularities and Jefferson’s mouthpiece maligned Hamilton for quite imaginary financial turpitude. The third story—underlying the second—really has to do with another kind of journalism altogether, if it be journalism at all, namely such constitutional works as John Dickinson’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, Paine’s *Common Sense*, and the *Federalist Papers* of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison.

The book rides these three horses without much attempt to harness them. It offers racy and well told gossip but the kind of discussion that would make this a richer exploration of a fascinating theme is largely missing. One is left to guess what political values underlie the conduct of the various protagonists, or indeed what the issues really were in some of the grander debates. And stories two and three might have been integrated more successfully. Unfortunately the author feels it is enough to label these figures 'Federalist' or 'republican' or 'Jacobin' without enlarging on the substantive issues that divided them, or how it came about that Jeffersonian republicanism evolved into Jacksonian democracy and Federalism into republicanism, or why American politics split over such an arcane matter as centralism versus states' rights.

Presentationally, too, Burns's book is somewhat journalistic. Quotations (but not other debts, if such there be) are in fact referenced but there are no endnote indicators to tell you so. To source a quotation on page 7 you go to page 413, where one of five (unnumbered) endnotes tells you that such and such was quoted from Chernow, and thence to the (extensive) bibliography which informs you on page 444 that a biography of Alexander Hamilton is being cited. Keeping one finger in each of three places is tiresome. It also makes it hard to form any impression of which authorities Burns has relied on most for his sense of particular figures or historical moments.

*Richard Gravil*  
*Humanities-Ebooks*

***Fragments of Union: Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing***  
**by Susan Manning. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. 339. £64. ISBN**  
**0333760255**

The recent media backlash against the young Scottish tennis player Andy Murray's comment that he would support any team but England in the world cup only serves

to illustrate continued divisions between Scotland and England. Despite sharing a monarch since 1603, and in the case of Scotland having political union since 1707, the English speaking peoples are not always united, and as Susan Manning demonstrates in her impressive *Fragments of Union* these divisions can be found in Scottish and American writing from the Enlightenment to the Civil War. In this wide-ranging and compelling book Manning argues that American syntactical constructions, and, structures of thinking, are forged with those of the Enlightenment Scots whose ideas went on to dominate American education well into the nineteenth century. Nevertheless this book is not a follow-up to previous scholarship on the importance of the Scottish Enlightenment to American politics and culture. Instead this is about the literary implications of the Enlightenment, or more particularly this is a book about conjunctions; it is concerned with the glue that combines old and new ideas.

*Fragments of Union* seems both Scottish and American in that it is both dour (at times) and panoramic in scope. Manning examines relationships, forms of union, the subsequent loss of what existed before and the new states of integration and non-integration that follow. There is sometimes a mournful quality as Manning examines fragments of the past that had to die to allow something new to grow. Manning argues that 'Scottish-American versions of fragmentation and union make peculiarly intimate structural and expressive connections between mind and language. Political and personal, psychological and grammatical versions of union and fragmentation resonate mutually in the texture of this writing in a way that is hard to match in English literature'. I'm not so sure about this as that outcome seems to be a feature of most conflicts that divide nations. Milton for example, in *Areopagitica*, written during the English Revolution, wrote that he and 'the sad friends of truth' will attempt to gather together truth which had been shattered 'into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd [...] to the four winds'. Similarly, in the aftermath of Culloden, MacPherson attempted to assemble the fragments of a shattered culture before the memory died out. And as one contemporary critic, which Manning cites but does not elaborate on, states: *Ossian* itself is 'an Epic poem to emulate Milton'. However Manning distances herself from this position by arguing

that the Scottish literary preoccupation with union and fragmentation is not simply a product of its empirical era but that the 'alliance of the political, the social and the personal [...] remains active in Scottish and American fiction' but 'not in English Literature'. Secondly there is self-consciousness about language use in both that 'gave a particular urgency to Scottish and American attention to the syntactic and grammatical dimensions of union and fragmentation'.

Interestingly Manning touches on the differences between Highland and Lowland Scots and likens them to the distinctions between the new and Native Americans. The Highlander as an uncultured barbarian was a necessary belief for those who sought to eradicate that culture in what amounted almost to genocide in the aftermath of Culloden with its subsequent killings and clearances – an experience that would of course be repeated in America. Manning goes on to highlight how Hume, Reid, Boswell, Macpherson, Beattie and other 'North Britons' sought to eradicate Scotticisms (Scots specific words and syntactical indications of pre-union Scotland) from at least the surface of their written and spoken voice. Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, looked forward to a time when there would be a distinctive American dialect and Americanisms: 'The new circumstances under which we are placed, call for new words, new phrases, and for the transfer of old words to new objects. An American dialect will therefore be formed [...] as a Scotch and Irish are already formed'. Again something is lost, but something new is formed. Change is necessary; as Adam Phillips puts it there is 'no future in repetition'.

Manning ends by reading Whitman, James and Emerson – voices of reconciliation, union and self-sufficiency. It is here that Manning finds an American 'syntax of space' whose stylistics derive from Scottish-American structures of thought. However endings are rarely final. As Manning states in her conclusion: 'union / fragmentation tension pervades the forms of Modernism. But these would be stories for another book.'

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**Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 225. £35.99. ISBN 019516967**

'Walter Scott has fallen out of currency.' Thus Caroline McCracken-Flesher opens the last chapter of her challenging monograph on Scott and the influence of his prose in the formation of ideas of Scottish nationhood. Ironically, Scott is indeed viewed with increasing suspicion by students wary of long works with high proportions of Scots English or tushery, but with increasing interest by scholars interested in the nuancing of narration. This is a book for the latter audience. McCracken-Flesher gives welcome critical time to Scott's Cinderella novels, especially some of the late romances. The link between her texts is the fertility they offer for an analysis combining post-colonialist perspectives with nation theory and, most importantly, developing a model of currency based on the economic post-structuralism of J-J Goux. The author hopes to wear her theory lightly; the reader who is not fully convinced that 'nothing exists save performance' may not agree that she has done so. However, the dense, subtle argument is worth pursuing and rewards a second reading.

As well as offering focused studies of selected novels, this book discusses Scott's high-profile engagement with the economics of Scottish banking in his Malachi Malagrowther letters protesting against the withdrawal of Scottish bank notes, and with royal politics in master-minding George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822. The latter has often acted as the focus for Scottish rejection of its bogus tartantry which becomes symptomatic of a rejection of Scott himself as responsible for defining Scotland by a damaging relegation of it to the past. Certainly Scott himself became an index of value, though it would be interesting to know more about how far this was generally dependent on the identification of Scott as the author of the Waverley novels, an open secret for some almost as far back as *Waverley* itself and certainly assumed by many in 1822, although Scott did not

formally abandon anonymity until 1827, as a result of his financial disasters the previous year. McCracken-Flesher gives a positive twist to Scott's influence by insisting that George was an unstable example of British monarchy as sign, needing a Scotland figured as a site of ancient homeland and stable, civil, clanship, in a mutually validating play of signs. Without endorsing Scott's constructional choices, it is therefore possible to deny that Scott's manoeuvres necessarily end with privileging England over Scotland, and to see him as opening up a consciousness of the free play of signs which allows Scotland the possibility of repeated and continuous redefinition. Scott was well aware of the fictiveness of his figuring, yet convinced of its at least temporary value. This standpoint can be connected to Scott's increasingly complex playfulness in the design of his narrative frameworks, and his sense of himself as literal capital in the apparatus for *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *The Betrothed*.

At the end of his life, with its series of five strokes, the Author of Waverley and Scott are unequivocally identified. Scott becomes sucked into the published commodity of the novels, a commodity which is both increasingly necessary to stem the tide of debt and increasingly costly in personal terms to produce. The new Edinburgh editions demonstrate (as Kurt Gamerschlag originally showed) how those involved in the literary product Walter Scott (his son-in-law Lockhart and his publishers) increasingly sought clandestine roles in the production of this commodity, ignoring Scott's initial protests at criticism, rewriting his texts without his knowledge, and repressing what they saw as an inappropriate degree of production on his part. McCracken-Flesher summarizes and tellingly theorizes this process as the basis for the culmination of her book.

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**Julian Meldon D'Arcy, *Subversive Scott: The Waverley Novels and Scottish Nationalism*. Reykjavík: The Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign**

**Languages and University of Iceland Press, 2005. Pp. 294. £25. ISBN 9979546662**

*Subversive Scott* will not please all Walter Scott critics or, indeed, everyone concerned with Scottish Literature. To be fair, Julian Meldon D'Arcy lays no claim to universal popularity. Rather, he establishes an unequivocally pro-nationalist position from which to challenge much Scott criticism of the last half-century. He names many critics with whom he disagrees, referring to some several times and enunciating what he finds problematic in their readings of the Waverley novels. A further group of wavering critics is identified, insofar as they challenge the absolutism of the former category but ultimately assent to their main perspectives. Against these, D'Arcy sets a much smaller group of critics, also identified, that have given readings of Scott's 'dissonant discourses' along similar lines to his own. The lines of demarcation between these groups are clearly drawn in *Subversive Scott*. This is a book that has no truck with nostalgia for the 'fifty years since' (to use an adapted Scott-ism) David Daiches and Duncan Forbes respectively published their seminal, mid-twentieth century essays 'Scott's Achievement as a Novelist', (1951) and 'The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott' (1953).

The 'Daichean paradigm,' as D'Arcy refers to it, interprets the resultant tension as a sympathetic reconciliation of sentiment, or even mourning, for Scotland's past with the rationalisation that Scotland's future lies with the British Union and the Hanoverian monarchy. Scott as a novelist and a man, consequently, emerges as pro-union and pro-empire, subject to Scotland's retaining its cultural identity and at least an equal partnership with England. For this school of thought, the Waverley novels' romantic evocations of Jacobitism, the Covenanters and Scottish Borderers become fictional monuments and prompts for ongoing cultural re-memory, inscribing a deep respect for unique Scottish cultures long after their inevitable demise. There is probably no need to say more in the current review about such readings of Scott, for which his journals, letters, poetry and non-fiction prose lend a considerable degree of support. *Subversive Scott* offers new approaches to the discreet, dialogic nature of the Waverley narratives, arguing that

there were, and are, essentially two kinds of reader for Scott's novels. The "literary competent" *British reader* is English, or 'anglicised Scottish.' He or she responds to the novels' plots in ways theorized by, amongst others, Mikhail Bakhtin, Eric Rabkin, Wolfgang Iser, Steven Cohan, Linda Shires, Jonathan Culler and Peter Rabinowitz. Asserting that readers experience a text through expected, or 'perceived bits' (Rabkin) and through predetermined genre recognition (Rabinowitz), D'Arcy argues that 'British readers' are effectively 'correlative' 'procontextual' 'narratees.' Carried away by the plot, an identifiable historical context and an ending that assumes pro-union motives, their lack of a privileged cultural understanding prevents them from recognizing the active, subversive 'dissonance' that, all the while, undermines the apparent message of the novel. The failure is not deemed their fault, because it is culturally determined. The other kind of reader forms the real focus of D'Arcy's attention: he or she is designated 'a "textually competent" *Scottish reader*,' and has the intense cultural understanding (of language, gesture and manner) to see a lively, 'anti-contextual' and 'dissonant' discourse that remains antagonistic towards the apparent outcome of the story. The literary content and the text are consequently reconsidered as existing in a novel tussle of historical adventure romance and ongoing political subterfuge. *Subversive Scott* maintains that the two levels of discourse are ultimately not reconciled, and that the Scottish reader identifies with a notably anti-English counter-narrative.

The chapters of D'Arcy's book consider in turn each of the Waverley novels, which are defined for the purposes of the book as 'Scott's novels dealing with post-1688 Scotland'. His criticism is at its best when it interrogates the text of the novels, exposing ambiguities and startlingly disconcerting instances of counter-hegemonic activity that operate through the use of Scots language, Gaelic and the instances of customary exchange. There are fascinating exemplary instances involving characters that are longstanding favourites of Scott critics, with new interpretations that work against the grain.

It is a pity that D'Arcy so repeatedly felt the need to raise Daiches and other critics as models needing to be discredited. Having stated his position at the

outset, he could instead have concentrated positively on giving us more tantalizingly thoughtful readings of the novels. For example, I would love to have read more on the references to Native Americans in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, and on the different representational roles of India in *Guy Mannering* and the *Chronicles of Canongate*. Elsewhere, the shading of the Covenanters in *The Tale of Old Mortality* into a coded sublimation of Jacobite resistance to English domination is a bold critical move that is not entirely convincing.

Scott criticism thrives on lively debate and *Subversive Scott* will help to ensure that critical apathy does not edge its way onto the scene. Nationalists, Scottish cultural or otherwise, and those concerned with other aspects of Scott's work will need to read this impassioned book and make up their own minds as to how they interpret the discreet dissonances of the Waverley novels.

*Susan Oliver*

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**Susan Oliver, *Scott, Byron and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter*.**

**Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2005. Pp. 241. \_55. ISBN 1403994749**

The borderlands in this book are sites of contestation where old ideas of nationhood gave way to a new notion of Britishness which helped to sustain a period of massive imperial expansion. The borders in question are those 'debateable lands' separating and uniting England and Scotland, the 'Highland margins' separating lowland from highland Scots, and the borders of Europe that Byron crossed on his travels, which separated the 'barbarous' Muslim East from the 'civilised' Christian West. The borders of Scotland and the borders of the Near East have more in common than might at first appear, since they are yoked together by imagery. Scott compares highland peaks seen from a distance to minarets, while Byron compares the Suliote warriors of Albania to highland clansmen.

Susan Oliver effectively draws intertextual connections between the two poets, for example when she suggests that Byron's personification of the Convention of Cintra as a dwarfish demon is indebted to Scott's portrayal of the evil dwarf Gilpin Horner in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Bringing to bear an admirable amount of supporting reading, Oliver also places the works of Scott and Byron into less familiar literary contexts. In Chapter One, on *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, she compares Scott's versions of folk ballads with those of previous antiquarian ballad collectors Thomas Percy and Joseph Ritson. Percy shared Scott's Toryism, but implied English superiority in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Scott re-appropriated the ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens' from Percy and installed it in a Scottish context. Ritson's radicalism was intolerable to Scott and, in a meticulous reading of 'Johnie Armstrang's Goodnight', Oliver shows how Scott reclaimed this ballad for a Tory political outlook. Through a detailed analysis of Scott's revisions to the third edition of the *Minstrelsy*, she also shows the influence of stadialist historiography on his practice as an editor and redactor.

These attitudes similarly informed Scott's narrative poetry, which is the subject of Chapter Two. While he remained fascinated by Scotland's clan-feudal past, a stadialist view of history and a Tory view of politics combined to impel Scott to represent the clansman as stuck in a pre-civilised era. In the face of civilising forces, they either melt away into the landscape or rely on outside influences to harness their rough-hewn valour in the service of modernity. For Scott, then, the 'debateable lands' are a space in which a unified, imperial Britain might be imagined, 'a centralized, contemporary focus for modern British national identity and vigour in time of war'.

After expressing a youthful interest in Scottish borders in poems such as 'Lachin y Gair', Byron turned his attention to borders further afield. Comparing Byron's account of Spain in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto One with those of Scott, Southey and others, Oliver shows in Chapter Three how he rejects 'picturesque protocol' in order to critique Spenserian or gothic approaches to Spain that mobilise chivalric imagery to provide a justification for British foreign policy. Comparing Byron's account of Albania in Canto Two with those of Hobhouse and

other contemporary travel writers, Oliver shows how he rejects the conventions of orientalist travelogues in order to represent a heterogeneous Islamic world that resists Western tendencies to view the East as monolithic, barbarous and benighted.

Chapter Four considers Byron's *Eastern Tales* as recurrently and trenchantly concerned with the difficulties of crossing from one culture to another. It is tempting to see Byron's tales – as Edward Said does – as continuing the orientalist project of appropriating the East culturally in order to dominate it more effectively politically. Oliver argues, however, that Byron's concern with the ways in which experiences in the East can disrupt the westerner's sense of selfhood should give us pause. '[T]he influence exerted *by* eastern experience counterbalances Byron's desire to appropriate it,' she argues, and thus 'transgresses the one-sided occidental hegemony posited by [...] Saidian orientalism'. Lara's dark past follows him back from the East into the supposedly safe and civilised West, leading ultimately to his death and Kaled's descent into madness. It is not until the late tale *The Island*, Oliver argues, that Byron attempts to represent a cross-cultural encounter that does not end in exploitation, appropriation or disaster.

This well-balanced book shows Scott and Byron engaging with borders and borderlands in equally sophisticated but opposed ways. Scott characteristically represented borders – internal or external – as strongholds of British identity, whereas Byron tended to use borders to mount critiques of imperial assumptions and to champion individual freedoms. In our contemporary era of Scottish devolution and European expansion, the borders that Oliver discusses remain zones of political and cultural contention, making this book, for all its sensitivity to historical contexts, thoroughly topical.

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**John Clubbe, *Byron, Sully, and the Power of Portraiture*. Aldershot and**

**Burlington: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. 343. £50. ISBN 0754638146**

John Clubbe's agenda, from first rapturous sentence to 'concluding peroration', is to contend for Thomas Sully's portrait of Byron as the definitive, the best. Sully's *Byron* (held in a private collection and paradoxically not available to public view) is gorgeously communicated on the dustcover and frontispiece. Unknown for decades, this image hit Clubbe with the force of visionary access: 'I was struck as if by a flaming arrow', he writes in his first sentence, of his first view (4 April 1999), the ignition of several years' burning research on the portraitist and its multiply illuminating contexts.

The most famous portraits of 'Byron' are Thomas Phillips's Albanian-drag Grand-tourist poseur (1813-1814), and one to which Sully's imagination is indebted, Richard Westhall's theatrical profile of the young lord (1813), fresh from the overnight fame of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the observed of all observers. Thomas Sully may be best known in England for his over-the-shoulder glancing young Queen Victoria, one year into her reign, ascending to the throne that she seems determined to possess; and known in the U. S. for Washington, not crossing the Delaware, but already in New Jersey, on the verge of the decisive battle of Trenton.

So, what about the meeting of these two geniuses? – or, rather, non-meeting, since not only did Byron never sit to Sully, but never even met him. Sully's *Byron*, painted between 1826 and 1828, is a pure work of strong imagination, modeled on Westhall's profile (chin on right hand, open neckware, casually jewel-clasped, the gaze out of the frame into some space unavailable to us), but enriched with color, and less aloof than Westhall's Hamlet-Byron, as if he might turn and look at us if we addressed him, rather than oblivious to our notice. Clubbe is not bothered by the lack of a live encounter in Sully's inspiration, but he does channel the anxiety of influence in repeated degradings (clubbing, even) of the one-hit-wonder portraitists for which Byron actually sat: Westhall is merely an elegant, even effeminate mannerist, Phillips a stiff (or sometimes flaccid) academician.

Sully's *Byron* is the romance that frames, infuses, and sustains Clubbe's adventure. It is no exaggeration to say that he has amassed a brief encyclopedia around his subject, a wealth of information that constitutes a seminar on the history of

portraiture, on American history and its interaction with portrait styles and culture in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, on Sully's life, fortunes, and milieu, on his American subjects, on Byron's other portraitists, on Byron's reception in the U.S., on the influence of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* on portrait practice. Operating on two intimately related levels – the register of his life of scholarship on Byron and portraiture, and the register of a fan, or fan-clubbe of Sully's interpretation of Byron – Clubbe combines his passionate advocacy of this portrait with scrupulous scholarship, archival research, and wide adventurous reading. Every page of *Byron, Sully, and the Power of Portraiture* bristles with information and reports that accumulate into a detailed network of forces, influences, analogues, and consequences. Although some threads may seem overspun on conjecture (*may have, perhaps, probably, possibly, presumably* is a recurrent rhetoric of speculation), there are also lovely inset gems: the readings of Thomas Lawrence's *John Philip Kemble as Coriolanus*, Sully's *Washington's Passage of the Delaware* and *The Marquis de Lafayette* are finely turned critical ekphrases, no less astute in analysis than sympathetic in insight.

For all the admiration that Clubbe's daunting work deserves, he sometimes seems overtaken by his romance. So eager is he, for instance, to advocate Sully's *Byron*, that he repeatedly trashes Westhall's and Phillips's famous Byrons ('Westhall's portrait sucks up energy; Sully's radiates it'), missing the intrigue of kinships and affinities. The claim that Byron's 'essence' is caught by Sully, compared to the posturings of other Byrons, dodges the whole business of Byron's self-consciously stylized presence, always in character of one kind or another. Clubbe deems Sully's *Byron* 'authentic essence', but (Oscar Wilde might remark), this may be the best act of all. Clubbe gleefully camps his enthusiasm for his subject, as if to channel the spirit of the age ('And that shoulder!'... 'And that throat!'), but sometimes he is so carried away that he doesn't hear the sound of his own rhetoric: 'Portraiture and the theater had long linked arms'; 'Byron's mouth returns us to contested terrain'; 'Sully gave his *Byron* a handsome nose... Noses have riveted the human imagination for centuries'. I caught (just) a couple of errors Clubbe will want to correct before the next printing: Keats said, 'Lord Byron cuts a figure' (not 'cut'); the reference to Rollins's *Letters* should be 2:67 (not 2:27 [264n110]). Even with these minor flaws, Clubbe's multifaceted account of

Sully's arresting image of the arresting poet is a treasure for all who care about Byron and portraiture.

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**Stuart Curran, Gen. Ed., *The Works of Charlotte Smith*. Vol. 1: *Manon L'Escaut: or, The Fatal Attachment* (1786) and *The Romance of Real Life* (1787), ed. Michael Gamer with assistance from Karla M. Taylor. Vol. 2: *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788), ed. Judith Stanton. Vol. 3: *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake* (1789), ed. Stuart Curran. Volume 4: *Celestina* (1791), ed. Kristina Straub. Vol. 5: *Desmond. A Novel* (1792), ed. Stuart Curran. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005. £450. ISBN 185196789 3**

At first glance it is surprising that the Pickering and Chatto edition of *The Works of Charlotte Smith* does not begin with her poetry: the 1784 *Elegiac Sonnets* were her first publication and made her name, and in later life it was for her poems that she herself hoped to be remembered. Stuart Curran presumably felt that his own excellent 1993 *Poems of Charlotte Smith* gave them enough editorial attention to be going on with, while her fiction, though most of the novels have appeared in good separate editions, has never been collected together. The first five volumes of this collection, well edited, introduced and annotated (though with an irritating sprinkling of minor errors), are warmly to be welcomed. They show the seriousness of Smith's artistic achievement in a series of novels that she produced rapidly, out of financial need, against a background of demanding family circumstances.

These volumes take us from the French translations to *Desmond*, from the mid 1780s to the heady days between the fall of the Bastille and the Terror, and on a developing quest to radicalize the popular novel. Smith's first original novel, *Emmeline*, recalls Burney's recent *Cecilia*, with its orphan heroine finding her way in the social world, its gallery of satirical portraits, and its assured, ironic narrative voice. Smith also drew on Rousseauistic sensibility, and sent her heroine to Lake

Geneva as if to underscore the debt. To read *Emmeline* in sequence after *Manon L'Escaut* and *The Romance of Real Life* is to be reminded of what Curran, in his General Introduction, calls Smith's 'other French model', the unrefined passions embraced by Prevost's Des Grieux and laconically revealed in the lawsuits recorded by Gayot de Pitavil. These passions and their issue in adulteries, murders, multiple forms of persecution, are for Smith emphatically the stuff of 'real life', not just of 'romance'. She strikes at the more conservatively-minded novelists and critics who would confine real life, for impressionable young readers, to a fantasy of uneventful domesticity. Anticipating the English Jacobins' concern for 'things as they are', she insists on the reality of legal, ecclesiastical, and parental despotism: when the heroine of 'The Married Nun' finally has her vows declared null it is a decision that 'every friend to the rights of humanity must hear with pleasure', but the volume as a whole makes it clear that the law cannot be depended on for such verdicts.

If Smith selects her cases for *The Romance of Real Life*, as Michael Garner argues, to express sympathy with women suffering from legal injustices (also, no doubt, to provide more profitable copy than would have been afforded by ecclesiastical and property disputes), when translating Prevost she adapts her material to encourage the reader's sympathy with the young man. Her Des Grieux exhibits more moral scruples and more remorse than Prevost's, and is more unequivocally Manon's victim. From this first experiment in representing a male voice, Smith developed an exploration of male experience unusual in women novelists of her time. Sir Edward Newenden in *Ethelinde*, and Willoughby in *Celestina*, on occasion take over from the heroine as narrative focus, while in *Desmond*, and in the later novels *The Old Manor House* and *The Young Philosopher*, the hero's point of view is more extensively portrayed.

This is not to say that, like Des Grieux, these men are morally to be preferred to the women they love. Manon, irresistibly adorable yet hopelessly fickle, is very much a male fantasy, and Smith puts no women like her into her original fiction. *Emmeline* reworks Prevost by concentrating on the effects of being on the receiving end of the kind of headlong passion felt by Des Grieux, from the

point of view of an innocent heroine of sensibility and sense. Frederic Delamere falls for Emmeline at first sight and hounds her relentlessly till she feels she has no choice but to agree to an engagement. She prefers a hero on a very different, and English, model, though again a model Smith reworks. Godolphin is a Grandison made more attractive by being fallible, who learns from the heroine to subordinate the masculine honour that would dictate a duel with his sister's seducer to the brotherly affection that promotes a reconciliation.

Emmeline herself has all the heroinely perfection that Austen was to mock in the opening of *Northanger Abbey*; it was in her secondary heroines that Smith undertook more original portraits. The harassed wife and exemplary mother Mrs Stafford, as Smith's contemporaries immediately noticed, was an idealised version of the author herself, and allowed her to complain about her appalling marriage; Lady Adelina, who escapes her husband and is controversially allowed to survive and perhaps marry her adulterous lover, seems a wish-fulfilling projection. The long-suffering wife returns in Mrs Elphinstone of *Celestina*, and moves into the heroine's role in *Desmond*, where Smith – this time revising another English antecedent, Frances Sheridan's *Sidney Bidulph* – allows her, without compromise to her even excessive sense of honour and duty, to love the hero and have the prospect of marrying him after her husband's convenient death.

With the publication of Smith's first novels, romantic scenery takes on a major role within English fiction. Wales and France for Emmeline, the English Lakes for Ethelinde (who discovers the delights of retiring to Grasmere some years before Wordsworth), Devon and Scotland for *Celestina*, provide a combination of the sublime and beautiful to reflect and express their emotional states. *Celestina*, as Kristina Straub points out, goes one further than previous heroines by becoming a Romantic poet herself, periodically turning away from her own marriage plot to seek alternative fulfilment in aesthetic experience. But conventional plot and sublime experience come together in the novels, where the moment of solitary apprehension of natural wonders leads to revelation, not of transcendent

spirit or the unity of being, but of family truths that allow the heroines to achieve their rightful social identity and/or romantic destiny. Emmeline, separated from her companions on the road between Marseille and Toulon, enters a narrow pass:

In the narrowest part of it, where she saw only steep crags and the sky, which, their bending tops hardly admitted, she was stopped by a transparent stream, which, bursting suddenly with some violence out of the rock, is received into a small reservoir of stone and then carried away in stone channels to a village at some distance.

By this sacred stream sits the old French peasant who, it turns out, holds the key to knowledge of Emmeline's status as legitimate heiress. A more developed version of the same revelatory technique occurs in *Celestina*, where Willoughby, wandering in the Pyrenees, loses his guide, his bearings, and for a time his sight, as 'immense volumes of white vapour were poured like a sea between him and the neighbouring precipices'. The trapped hero is freed by a storm:

After some tremendous bursts [of thunder], which appeared to shake the mountains to their foundations, accompanied by blue and vivid lightning, a violent wind arose, and dispersing the foggy clouds, drove them, with the storm generated in their bosom, to the country beneath

As the air clears Willoughby makes his way to a shepherd's cottage where he will learn the truth of *Celestina's* birth, meaning that he can marry her without fear of incest.

Metaphorically, Willoughby's thunderstorm is the French Revolution. Smith's earlier novels contain hits at despotic government in state or church, social snobbery, and misused paternal authority. In *Celestina*, published in 1791, the Revolution offers liberation from these wrongs. It frees the heroine's long-lost connections from prison and convent, and so provides the truth that sets her free to marry. The Revolution is even more important to *Desmond*, published the following

year. Copious in its references to Milton, Filmer, Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Burke, and Paine, the novel is unashamedly a political argument. Adopting an epistolary method that enables the more inflammatory views to be attributed to the characters rather than the author, Smith nevertheless makes her democratic sympathies abundantly evident. Burkean opponents of revolution are given ridiculous manners and weak arguments. Desmond is uniformly enthusiastic for reform, his older, wearier friend Bethel only marginally less so, and Geraldine defends the bread riots and sees 'the hand of justice' in the deaths, however pitiable, caused by 'popular tumult'. Her unheroinely bloody-mindedness hints at her unacknowledged wish for the death of her own tyrant. Intertwining the personal and political, Smith liberates her heroine from matrimonial despotism in the middle of Revolutionary France. While Geraldine herself must remain pure, there is a kind of displaced sexual liberation in Desmond's affair with another married woman, Josephine de Boisbelle. Sadly, Josephine's is the one significant voice in the novel that we do not hear. She writes no letters, and melts away at the end leaving her daughter by Desmond to be brought up by Geraldine: an indication of the limits of Smith's ability to bring sexual revolution to the popular novel.

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