

## *Editors' Column*

Welcome to the thirty-sixth number of the *BARS Bulletin and Review*. This is my first as editor, as I have recently taken over the role from Susan Oliver. She and I have worked together on this issue and therefore it should be considered as a co-edited production. I would like to thank Sue for helping me with the transition and for all her hard work on previous issues. I hope that I will be able to live up to the high standards set by her and previous editors.

I write this at the end of a British general election campaign in which, despite the candidates' best efforts, the spectre of severe public sector cuts has loomed large. As a result of the global economic crisis, universities across the world have been subject to increasing economic pressures, and this seems likely to get worse. As Sue noted in a previous editorial, the importance of collegiality during this difficult period cannot be overemphasised. Organisations like BARS have an important role to play in fostering this collegiality and in enabling our discipline to flourish in difficult times.

In Britain, humanities academics are still coming to terms with the news that the upcoming Research Excellence Framework, which will govern the amount of research funding available to departments, will include assessments of 'impact' as a significant portion of its evaluations. Whatever one thinks of the ideological assumptions behind the impact agenda, or the practical problems associated with judging impact, it is clear that, at a time of economic retrenchment, we need to do as much as possible in the humanities to articulate the value of our activities. It is vital that we publicise those long-standing aspects of our work that demonstrate public engagement, emphasise the high levels of public interest in our subject, and celebrate the cultural benefits our work provides for the larger community. Therefore I hope that future numbers of the *Bulletin* will include a column in which

members can share examples of how their research into the Romantic period has had an impact beyond academia. This issue was recently discussed in a meeting of the BARS Executive and one of the ideas mooted was that BARS should encourage and promote lectures designed to disseminate research in the period to non-academic audiences. Dr Nicola Watson has agreed to act as the BARS Public Engagement Officer and anyone interested in getting involved with this aspect of the Association's work is invited to email her (n.j.watson@open.ac.uk).

The continued strength and diversity of Romantic studies was apparent at last year's BARS biennial international conference at Roehampton University. Our thanks are due to Ian Haywood and his colleagues for all the hard work they put into organising it. The conference also marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BARS, which was celebrated at a highly convivial conference dinner. The 12<sup>th</sup> BARS biennial conference will take place in 2011 at the University of Glasgow.

This issue of the *Bulletin and Review* contains the usual notices and calls for papers, as well as conference reports and 23 pages of book reviews. Conference organisers are encouraged to send calls for papers and reports for inclusion in future bulletins. Similarly, members publishing books are encouraged to check that their presses send review copies to Simon Kövesi, our reviews editor. The *Bulletin* depends on the enthusiasm and efforts of BARS members, so I would very much like to hear from anyone with ideas for material that might be included, or on how the *Bulletin* might be improved. You can email me at d.higgins@leeds.ac.uk

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a pleasant and productive summer.

*David Higgins*  
Co-Editor

# Notices

## BARS WEBSITE

[www.bars.ac.uk](http://www.bars.ac.uk)

By the time that this issue of the *Bulletin and Review* is published, the BARS website will have a new editor, Padmini Ray Murray of the University of Stirling. The design of the website will be further upgraded and developments are planned over the next few months.

Anyone wanting to place advertisements, or with other requests regarding the website should contact Padmini, either by email ([padmini.raymurray@stir.ac.uk](mailto:padmini.raymurray@stir.ac.uk)) or by post at the University of Stirling.

## BARS 2011 CONFERENCE

The 2011 BARS Conference will take place at the University of Glasgow. The theme will be *Enlightenment, Romanticism, Nation*. As usual, there will be international keynote speakers. Various social events are being planned, in addition to sessions. Further details will be published during the coming months.

## BARS-EUROPE LINKS

### *Romantic Localities*

*Romantic Localities*, the first joint conference of the British Association for Romantic Studies and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Englische Romantik E.V., was held in 2008. The result is a forthcoming essay collection, *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place*, edited by Christoph Bode and Jacqueline Labbe (Pickering & Chatto, 2010). It explores the ways in which Romantic-period writers of varying nationalities responded to languages, landscapes

– both geographical and metaphorical – and literatures. The contributors examine versions of ‘home’ and ‘abroad’, as well as issues of ‘now’ and ‘the past’. The concentration on locality is underpinned by explorations of mobility, mutability, sincerity and the real.

## BARS MAILBASE

As a BARS member, you are entitled to receive the electronic BARS mailbase. This advertises calls for papers, events, resources and publications relevant to Romantic Studies via email to over 350 members. If you would like to join, or post a message on the mailbase, please contact Neil Ramsey, the co-ordinator, by email ([neil.ramsey@anu.edu.au](mailto:neil.ramsey@anu.edu.au)) with your full name and email address. Information about the mailbase, along with copies of archived messages, can be found on the mailbase website: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/bars.html>

## BARS MEMBERSHIP

BARS currently has more than 420 members. One of the advantages of the expansion in our membership is that information can be more widely circulated. Members can ask for notices to be placed on the mailbase, on the website, and in the *Bulletin*. The website has a page dedicated to new books published by members, and you should let the editor know if you would like your recent work to be listed. Similarly, if you are editing a collection of essays or a special issue of a journal, or working on a collaborative project, we can usually place notices calling for contributions on the website as well as in the *Bulletin*.

The annual subscription for BARS membership is £15 (waged) and £5 (unwaged/postgraduate). Members receive copies of the *BARS Bulletin and Review* twice a year and can join the electronic mailbase. Membership is necessary for attendance at BARS international conferences. For a

membership form, please contact the BARS administrator, Louise Booth at: admin@bars.ac.uk.

Thanks to all BARS members who have paid their membership fees for 2010. If you pay by cheque, the date you have paid up to is shown on the address label of the envelope in which your *BARS Bulletin and Review* arrived.

It is now possible to check whether your subs are up-to-date on the bars.ac.uk website. PayPal has been set up from the BARS website in the 'How to Join' section and is easy to use. The charge for using this method of payment has been included in the cost of membership, so, for those using PayPal, membership is £16 (waged) or £6 (unwaged/postgraduate).

## **BARS DAY CONFERENCES**

BARS day conferences, in almost every case, are organised through the host institution. BARS assists by advertising conferences, advising on the format, and giving early warnings of any likely clashes with other planned events in our files. Part of the point of BARS is to act as a supportive system nationally, and its involvement in planning would partly be to help ensure that conferences are as evenly distributed across regions as possible in the course of any one year. BARS cannot underwrite day conferences, but it can make a financial contribution of up to £100 to help the organising department with costs.

Individuals or groups who would like to run a day conference are invited to contact Dr Angela Wright (a.h.wright@sheffield.ac.uk). There will be no maximum number, but, in the event of possible overcrowding or clashes, BARS will assist by liaising between conferences distributed across the year, or across regions. BARS will actively solicit proposals. Proposals are also invited for interdisciplinary conferences.

## **STEPHEN COPLEY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS**

Postgraduates working in the area of Romantic Studies are invited to apply for a Stephen Copley Postgraduate Research Award. The BARS Executive Committee has established the awards in order to support postgraduate research. They are intended to help fund expenses incurred through travel to libraries, archives, etc. necessary to the student's research, up to a maximum of £300. Application for the awards is competitive, and cannot be made retrospectively. Applicants should be members of BARS (to join, see above). The names of recipients will be announced in the *BARS Bulletin and Review*, and successful applicants will be asked to submit a short report to the BARS Executive Committee and to acknowledge BARS in their thesis and/or any publication arising from the research trip.

Congratulations to recent recipients of the bursary: Brian Haman (Warwick); Matthew Sangster (Royal Holloway); Rebecca Domke (Glasgow); Susan Valladeres (Oxford); Harold Guizar (York); Terence Shih (Durham); Christina Davidson (Southampton); Bo-Yuan Huang (Warwick); Leanne Stokoe (Newcastle); Christina Dennis (University College Falmouth); Helen Stark (Newcastle).

The deadline for the next round of awards is 30 June 2010. Applications by email or surface mail are equally acceptable, although email is preferred.

Please send the following information in support of your application:

1. Name, institutional affiliation, etc.
2. Details of your PhD project, including the stage your research is at.
3. Details of the research to be undertaken for which you need support, and its relation to your PhD.
4. *Detailed* costing of proposed research trip.
5. Details of current funding (AHRC award, etc.).

6. Details of any other financial support for which you have applied in support of the trip. 7. Name of supervisor/referee (with email address) to whom application can be made for a supporting reference.

The maximum award is £300. Successful applicants must be members of BARS and are asked to present a short report of the research undertaken (c.500 words) to the BARS Executive Committee.

Applications should be sent to:

Prof. Jacqueline Labbe, Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK; j.m.labbe@warwick.ac.uk

## JOURNALS

### *The Byron Journal*

*The Byron Journal* is the world's leading refereed journal on the life, work and world of Lord Byron. It is published twice annually by Liverpool University Press for the Byron Society. The journal publishes scholarly articles and notes on all aspects of Byron's writings and life, and on related topics, and includes news of significant events and conferences in the Byron year. The journal also reviews all major works on the poet and prides itself on the speed with which new books are reviewed.

Send essays to the Academic Editor, Dr Alan Rawes, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester, Lime Grove Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL (alan.rawes@manchester.ac.uk).

Books for review should be sent to the Reviews Editor, Professor Philip Shaw, Department of English, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH.

For subscription details, please contact Sarah Preece, Marston Book Services Ltd, PO Box

269, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4YN, Tel: 01235 465 537 (subscriptions@marston.co.uk).

### *John Clare Society Journal*

The annual *John Clare Society Journal* welcomes submissions of critical essays, review essays, notes and queries on John Clare and a wide range of related topics. The *JCSJ* is fully and anonymously refereed, listed on *ERIH*, indexed on the *MLA Bibliography*, and is available worldwide in hardcopy and electronic formats (via Gale and ProQuest, for example).

Essays should be presented according to the MHRA style guide, written in accessible English, and ideally between 5 and 6,000 words long. The editor is happy to respond to any queries potential authors might have: Simon Kovesi, Editor, *John Clare Society Journal*, Dept English, Oxford Brookes University, OX3 0BP (skovesi@brookes.ac.uk). Further details about the *JCSJ*: [www.johnclare.info](http://www.johnclare.info)

### *European Romantic Review*

The *European Romantic Review* publishes innovative scholarship on the literature and culture of Europe, Great Britain and the Americas during the period 1760-1840. Topics range from the scientific and psychological interests of German and English authors through to the political and social reverberations of the French Revolution and the philosophical and ecological implications of Anglo-American nature writing. Selected papers from the annual conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism appear in one of the five issues published each year.

Book reviews commissioned for four of the five annual issues represent a cross section of concerns in Romantic-era Studies and call attention to important new titles and editions from major university and academic presses. Book reviews are distinguished by their depth of

analysis, acquainting readers with the substance and significance of current criticism and scholarship in the field.

In general, essays submitted should be between 8,000 and 12,000 words long or approximately 22 to 33 double-spaced pages typed with a Times New Roman 12-point font. Please send the manuscript as an attachment in MS Word to [euroromrev@earthlink.net](mailto:euroromrev@earthlink.net). One of the co-editors will acknowledge receipt and communicate with the author about the review process. Authors who are unable to e-mail may send an inquiry by post to Diane Long Hoeveler, Department of English, P.O. Box 1881, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA.

Inquiries about book reviews may be addressed to Benjamin Colbert, History and Governance Research Institute, University of Wolverhampton, Millennium City Building, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1LY, UK, or to [B.Colbert@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:B.Colbert@wlv.ac.uk)

Further information can be found on the *European Romantic Review* homepage ([www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10509585](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10509585)).

### ***The Hazlitt Review***

*The Hazlitt Review* is a new international peer-reviewed journal, and the first to be entirely devoted to Hazlitt studies. The *Review* aims to promote and maintain Hazlitt's standing in the academy and to a wider readership, providing a forum for new writing by established scholars as well as essays by more recent entrants.

Submissions of 4000-7000 words and shorter reviews should follow the MHRA style. The editorial Board is pleased to consider less formal items from Hazlitt's lay readership. Please e-mail [u.natarajan@gold.ac.uk](mailto:u.natarajan@gold.ac.uk) or post proposals to Uttara Natarajan, c/o Department of English & Comparative Literature, Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW.

Subscriptions, include membership of the Hazlitt Society and are £10 (individual); £15 (corporate). Overseas subscriptions: \$24 (individual) or \$35 (corporate). Cheques or

postal orders made payable to the Hazlitt Society should be sent to Helen Hodgson, *The Guardian*, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU.

The editor is Uttara Natarajan, and assistant editors are Helen Hodgson and Michael McNay. Further Details are available at *The Hazlitt Review* website:

[www.hwa.to/hazlitt/TheHazlittReview.htm](http://www.hwa.to/hazlitt/TheHazlittReview.htm)

### ***Keats-Shelley Journal***

The *Keats-Shelley Journal* is published (in print form: ISSN 0453-4387) annually by the Keats-Shelley Association of America. It contains articles on John Keats, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, and their circles of mutual influence and context--as well as news and notes, book reviews, and a current bibliography.

Articles intended for publication should be prepared according to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and sent (with SASE) to Jeanne Moskal, Editor, Department of English, Box 3520, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 27599-3520; submissions may also be sent by email attachment to [keats\\_shelley@yahoo.com](mailto:keats_shelley@yahoo.com).

The *Keats-Shelley Journal* considers for review editions of and books about Keats, Byron, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, and their contemporaries (particularly those belonging to their circle), as well as general studies in English Romantic literature and culture relevant to the second generation poets. Please send a review copy to A. A. Markley, Book Review Editor, *Keats-Shelley Journal*, Department of English, Penn State University, Delaware County, 25 Yearsley Mill Road, Media, PA, 19063-5596. Address inquiries or information about new and forthcoming books to the above address or to [aam2@de.psu.edu](mailto:aam2@de.psu.edu).

## ***Keats-Shelley Review***

*The Keats-Shelley Review* is the journal of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, and a long-established review of major literary and cultural significance, embracing Romanticism, English literature and Anglo-Italian relations. Its unique and diverse scope includes Association news, prize-winning essays and contemporary poetry alongside peer-reviewed scholarly contributions, notes, and reviews. *The Keats-Shelley Review* is also the official journal of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, which celebrates its centenary in 2009. The editor is Professor Nicholas Roe, of the School of English, University of St Andrews, KY16 9AR, email: nhr@st-andrews.ac.uk. Friends of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association receive *The Keats-Shelley Review* as part of their annual membership benefits. For information on other benefits and how to join visit the *KSMA* website at [www.keats-shelley.co.uk](http://www.keats-shelley.co.uk).

## ***Peer English***

*Peer English* is a new refereed annual literary journal published by the Department of English at the University of Leicester. Full information about the journal, including subscription details, is available on the journal's website: [www.le.ac.uk/engassoc/publications/peerenglish.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/engassoc/publications/peerenglish.html). Our aim is to provide a forum for exciting and high-quality work by early career researchers. The editors especially welcome submissions, therefore, from lecturers, assistant or associate professors, senior graduate students, post-doctoral researchers or teachers.

While the editors would be very interested in seeing essays on Romantic topics, their approach is open and inclusive. Work that considers any literary period, and deploys the whole range of critical strategies used in the discipline today is encouraged, from traditional close readings to historically grounded scholarship, from cutting-edge theory to interdisciplinary analyses.

The editors invite scholarly essays (2,000-5,000 words), reviews of or review essays on recent publications, short articles on research or pedagogical-related themes, thought and opinion pieces. All typescripts should be double-spaced, MLA referenced, sent on disk, saved as a Word document and accompanied by two hard copies of the text. Please send all material to the Editor, Chris Louttit, Department of English, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH (cjj11@le.ac.uk). A full style sheet is available by email and should be requested before submitting final copy.

## ***Romanticism***

*Romanticism* provides a forum for the flourishing diversity of Romantic studies today. Focusing on the period 1750-1850, it publishes critical, historical, textual and bibliographical essays prepared to the highest scholarly standards, reflecting the full range of current methodological and critical debate. With an extensive reviews section, *Romanticism*, constitutes a vital international arena for scholarly debate in this liveliest field of literary studies. Visit the homepage of *Romanticism* ([www.eup.ed.ac.uk/journals/Romanticism/](http://www.eup.ed.ac.uk/journals/Romanticism/)) for full details about subscribing and contributing.

## ***Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net***

The Editors welcome contributions to *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* at the following addresses: Michael Eberle-Sinatra, (Editor, *Romanticism*), *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, Département d'études anglaises, Université de Montréal, PO Box 6128, Station Centre-ville, Montréal, Quebec H3C 3J7, Canada. Dino Felluga, at Purdue University, is Editor for *Victorianism*. The journal operates a peer review system. Essays and notes submitted to the journal should be in typescript, and 5,000-8,000 words in length (including notes). The script should be double-spaced throughout, and

must follow the MLA style sheet. Please supply a stamped, addressed envelope or international mail coupons if you wish your typescript to be returned. Contributions are welcome from both established scholars and graduate students. Please send any enquiries or suggestions about *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* to Michael Eberle-Sinatra at the address above.

### ***Romantic Pedagogy Commons***

*Romantic Pedagogy Commons* ([www.rc.umd.edu/pedagogies/commons/index.html](http://www.rc.umd.edu/pedagogies/commons/index.html)) is an electronic journal dedicated to teaching Romanticism and Romanticist issues.

For more information, please contact Professor Miriam L. Wallace ([mwallace@ncf.edu](mailto:mwallace@ncf.edu)) or Professor Patricia A. Matthew ([matthewp@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:matthewp@mail.montclair.edu)).

### ***Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840***

*Romantic Textualities* is a fully peer-reviewed academic journal and appears twice a year. The journal carries three types of publication.

1. Articles. Articles we would be most interested in publishing include those addressing Romantic literary studies with an especial slant on book history, textual and bibliographical studies, the literary marketplace and the publishing world and so forth. Please send articles (5,000-8,000 words) to the Editor ([mandal@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:mandal@cardiff.ac.uk)).
2. Reports. We also supply reports on ongoing research, in the form of author studies, snapshots of research, bibliographical checklists and so on. This material is not peer-reviewed, but provides a useful platform for scholars to disseminate information about their collaborative or individual research projects. Reports should be sent to the Editor.
3. Reviews. The journal carries reviews of recent publications relating to Romantic literary studies. In the first instance, publishers of suitable texts or potential contributors should

contact the Reviews Editor ([KillickPT@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:KillickPT@cardiff.ac.uk)).

All essays supplied for prospective publication will be seriously considered, undergoing a process of assessment by members of the Advisory Board: Peter Garside (Chair, Edinburgh), Jane Aaron (Glamorgan), Stephen Behrendt (Nebraska), Emma Clery (Southampton), Benjamin Colbert (Wolverhampton), Ed. Copeland (Pomona College), Caroline Franklin (Swansea), Isobel Grundy (Alberta), David Hewitt (Aberdeen), Gillian Hughes (Stirling), Claire Lamont (Newcastle), Robert Miles (Stirling), Rainer Schoewerling (Paderborn), Christopher Skelton-Foord (Durham), Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford).

The latest issue of *Romantic Textualities* is available online ([www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext](http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext)).

### ***The Wordsworth Circle***

We invite you to subscribe to *The Wordsworth Circle*, a quarterly interdisciplinary learned journal founded in 1970 to create a sense of community among critics and scholars of British, European and American Romanticism. Subscription includes membership of the Wordsworth-Coleridge Association, which meets annually during the MLA convention.

The idea of Romanticism in *TWC* is as extensive and eclectic as the scholars whose work we encounter. We publish and review works in all areas of British, European and American culture, including the poetry, drama, novels, art, music, philosophy, theology, architecture, linguistics, history of science and the social sciences, intellectual history, cultural studies, literary theory and the performing arts.

Our rates are kept within the budget of students – or within the budget of academics who may want to contribute a subscription to a student: \$25 (£20) for one year, \$40 (£30) for two years, \$60 (£45) for three years.

For more information please contact Marilyn Gaul at The Editorial Institute at Boston University, 143 Bay State Road #202 Boston, Ma. 02215, USA, Phone: 617-353-6631 Fax. 617-353-6917 E-mail: [Editinst@bu.edu](mailto:Editinst@bu.edu)

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

### Ashgate Series in Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Studies

Series Editors: Kevin Hutchings and Julia M. Wright

The editors invite English language studies focusing on any area of the period ca. 1750–1900, including (but not limited to) innovative works spanning transatlantic Romantic and Victorian contexts. Manuscripts focusing on European, African, US American, Canadian, Caribbean, Central and South American, and Native or Indigenous literature, art, and culture are welcome. We will consider proposals for monographs, collaborative books, and edited collections.

For more information, including a list of prospectus materials, please contact the commissioning editor for the series: Ann Donahue.

### Comprehensive Textual Edition of the Works of Robert Burns

Oxford University Press is to produce a ten-volume edition of the Works of Robert Burns edited from the University of Glasgow. Gerry Carruthers, head of Scottish Literature at Glasgow, will be the general editor, and three of the early volumes will be edited by Nigel Leask (Prose Works), Kirsteen McCue (Songs for George Thomson) and Murray Pittock (Songs for the Scottish Musical Museum).

The Edition will be supported by a distinguished international editorial advisory board including Stephen Gill, Jerome McGann and Ross Roy. For further information see: [www.glasgow.ac.uk/robertburnsstudies](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/robertburnsstudies) and [www.gla.ac.uk/departments/scottishliterature/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/scottishliterature/)

### *The Modern Language Review and The Yearbook of English Studies*

Submission of research articles on topics in any literary period are welcomed by the editors, especially those concerned with “the long nineteenth century.” Essays will be considered for either of the above periodicals. For details of house style and other requirements see: [www.mhra.org.uk/publications/journals/mlr.html](http://www.mhra.org.uk/publications/journals/mlr.html) (*Modern Language Review*) and [www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Journals/yes.html](http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Journals/yes.html) (*Yearbook in English Studies*).

The editors also welcome proposals for future themed volumes.

All enquiries should be directed to Dr Allyna E. Ward by email: [A.E.Ward@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:A.E.Ward@ncl.ac.uk)

### Recent addition to Oxford Journals: *English*

*English* is an internationally known journal of literary criticism, published on behalf of The English Association. Each issue contains essays on major works of English literature or on topics of general literary interest, aimed at readers within universities and colleges and presented in a lively and engaging style. There is a substantial review section, in which reviewers have space to situate a book within the context of recent developments in its field, and present a detailed argument. *English* is unusual among academic journals in publishing original poetry. This policy embodies the view that the critical and creative functions, often so widely separated in the teaching of English, can co-exist and cross-fertilise each other.

For further information, please refer to the website: ([www.english.oxfordjournals.org/](http://www.english.oxfordjournals.org/)).

## **Special issue of *Women's Writing: Romantic Women Writers and the Fictions of History***

In Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818), her naive but ingenuous heroine Catherine Moreland notoriously pronounces that 'real solemn history 'either vex[es] or wear[ies]' her: 'the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all'. Nonetheless, the eighteenth-century saw a rapid expansion in the forms of historical discourse, including a new emphasis on histories about and by women, and an invigoration of fictionalised forms of history. In particular, the period of the post-French Revolution debate and Napoleonic Wars saw a growth in the importance of the historical novel (as noted by Robert D. Hume), a generic development in which Romantic women writers played a crucial role. Yet this role often goes unacknowledged, in part because critics of the historical novel, following Georg Lukács, have traditionally taken Sir Walter Scott's masculinist novel of historical progress as the seminal instance of the form. Although more recent work by Katie Trumpener and Richard Maxwell indicates a willingness to reassess Scott's part in the genre's development, the contribution of Romantic women writers to the form has yet to be extensively explored. Capitalising on this renewed interest in the origins and development of the historical novel, this special issue aims to fill the critical lacuna.

Topics should address an extended Romantic period (c. 1773-1832) and may include but are not limited to:

- Post-revolutionary feminism and the historical novel
- The cross-channel circulation of historical fiction
- Formulations of history in the Romantic letter
- Women historical novelists and the development of nation
- Romantic women historians and the fictions of history
- History and the Romantic drama and poetry

- Romantic children's literature and the role of fictionalized history
- The role of history and the novel of ideas
- Romantic women constructing literary histories

Please submit an abstract of 200 words by 31<sup>st</sup> March, and then papers between 4,000-7000 words for consideration to Dr Fiona Price, University of Chichester, F.Price@chi.ac.uk by 1st December 2010.

(Contributors should follow the journal's house style details of which are to be found on the *Women's Writing* web site [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/0999082.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/0999082.asp)) This is the new MLA. Do note that instead of footnotes, we use endnotes with NO bibliography. All bibliographical information is included in the endnotes. For example, we require place of publication, publisher and date of publication in brackets after a book is cited for the first time.

## **WEBSITES**

A comprehensive list of websites can be found on the BARS website, under BARS resources.

### ***The Letters of Robert Bloomfield***

Edited by Tim Fulford and Lynda Pratt;  
Associate Editor John Goodridge.

This edition builds upon new scholarship on Romantic rural poet Robert Bloomfield, collecting all his extant letters plus a selection of those written to him by literary correspondents, with the hope that by presenting a properly edited and annotated collected letters we might enable the poet to be a significant figure for all those studying early nineteenth-century literature and culture.

[www.rc.umd.edu/editions/bloomfield\\_letters/](http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/bloomfield_letters/)

## **Robert Southey's *Collected Letters***

General Editors: Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford, and Ian Packer.

Editors: Carol Bolton and W. E. Speck.

Robert Southey was one of the best-known, controversial and innovative writers in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. Based upon extensive new archival research, this *Collected* edition makes available for the first time all his surviving letters, freshly edited, annotated and introduced. Part One, edited by Lynda Pratt, covers 1791-1797, turbulent years which saw the forging of Southey's career and reputation, his involvement in radical politics, and the beginning of his friendships with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

[www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters/](http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/)

## ***Romantic Circles***

*Romantic Circles* invites you to visit its website ([www.rc.umd.edu](http://www.rc.umd.edu)). The website includes: a Pedagogies section, the *Romantic Circles* Blog, a Bibliographies section, an Electronic Editions section, *Romantic Circles* Praxis, *Romantic Circles* Reviews and the Villa Diodati MOO.

## **SOCIETIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

### **Blake Society**

The Blake Society was founded in 1985 at St James's Church, Piccadilly, to honour and celebrate William Blake – engraver, poet, painter and prophet. It aims to attract everyone with an interest in Blake. The Society provides a focus for the study and appreciation of Blake in the London he knew. We publish a journal once a year. If you would like to join the Society, please write to the Membership Secretary, The

Blake Society, St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL ([secretary@blakesociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@blakesociety.org.uk)). Please make cheques payable to 'The Blake Society' for the sum of £10 (or £5 unwaged). For more information about the society, please visit our website ([www.blakesociety.org.uk](http://www.blakesociety.org.uk)).

### **Byron Society**

Details of the London Byron Society can be obtained from Maureen O'Connor, 'Bay Trees', 35 Blackbrook Road, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 5DQ or the Byron Society website ([www.byronsociety.com](http://www.byronsociety.com)). The London Byron Society is the original Byron society and parent of many offspring, including the Newstead Abbey Byron Society ([whitelady@whitelady.co.uk](mailto:whitelady@whitelady.co.uk)) and the International Byron Society ([internationalbyronsociety.org](http://internationalbyronsociety.org)), which organises a large, international annual conference (for full details, please see the website).

### **John Clare Society**

The John Clare Society has a large, active, academic and non-academic membership. It holds an annual festival in Helpston, academic conferences, educational initiatives, a range of public events, and publishes an annual scholarly journal, quarterly newsletters and occasional editions and essay collections. Anyone interested in Clare is very welcome to join the society: ([www.johnclare.org.uk/](http://www.johnclare.org.uk/)) or write to Sue Holgate, Membership Secretary, John Clare Society, 9 The Chase, Ely, Cambs CB6 3DR..

### **James Hogg Society**

The James Hogg Society exists to encourage the study of the life, writings and world of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd (1770-1835). In return for an annual subscription (currently £20, or £10 for students, retired people, etc.)

members receive the annual journal *Studies in Hogg and his World*. Events include a conference held at two-yearly intervals, and members are entitled to a 25% discount on the hardback volumes of the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of the *Collected Works of James Hogg* published by Edinburgh University Press, as well as to purchase the Society's own occasional publications at a reduced price. To join the Society please contact the Treasurer, Wendy Hunter (W.A.Hunter@sheffield.ac.uk). Offers of material for, and enquires about, *Studies in Hogg and his World* should be addressed to the Editor, Gill Hughes (gillhh@lineone.net).

### **Keats-Shelley Association of America**

The Keats-Shelley Association of America supports a range of activities related to Romanticism, including conferences and awards, and members receive notices of special events and opportunities. Students are given a low rate with a verifying letter from an instructor. Advanced categories of support are also available for established scholars and others who wish to contribute to the Association. For a full list of membership-dues categories and their dollar amounts write to Robert A. Hartley, Secretary, KSAA, Room 226, The New York Public Library, 476 Fifth Avenue, NY 10018-2788, USA (robert.hartley@us.pwcglobal.com) or go to the Association's website ([www.rc.umd.edu/ksaa/info/htm](http://www.rc.umd.edu/ksaa/info/htm)).

### **Keats-Shelley Memorial Association**

The Association was formed in 1903, with the support of King Edward VII, King Vittorio Emanuele III and President 'Teddy' Roosevelt. Apart from maintaining the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome, the Association is responsible for the upkeep of the graves of Keats and Shelley in the non-Catholic Cemetery at Testaccio.

In Italy, we run a continuous outreach programme for schools and other interested

groups as well as individual tourists. In England, we work to promote the awareness of Romantic poetry.

We publish an annual review of scholarship and new writing on the Romantics. We organise and sponsor various literary awards, readings and other events, which are also supported by the Friends of the Association.

For further information about our activities and about membership, please contact David Leigh-Hunt, Hon. Secretary, KSMA Registered Office, 1 Satchwell Walk, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4QE, Fax: 01926 335133, or visit our website ([www.keats-shelley.co.uk](http://www.keats-shelley.co.uk)).

### **Charles Lamb Society**

The objects of the Charles Lamb Society are: to advance and publish studies of the life, works and times of Charles Lamb and his circle; to form and preserve for the public a collection of Eliana.

As a member of the Charles Lamb Society, you receive the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*. Enquiries as to membership should be directed to Professor Duncan Wu, Department of English, Box 571131, New North 306, Washington, DC20057-1131, USA (duncan.wu@virgin.net).

### **North American Society for the Study of Romanticism**

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism should contact Peter Melville, NASSR Secretary Treasurer, Department of English, 2A48, The University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2E9 Canada (nassr@uwo.ca).

Announcements for the NASSR newsletter should be sent to the same address. The NASSR website (<http://publish.uwo.ca/~nassr>) contains full information about NASSR conferences, a membership form, the NASSR-L FAQ and other details about the society.

## **International Society for Travel Writing**

This society was founded in 2001 to promote the practice and study of travel writing across disciplines and across historical periods. Now about 500 strong, we welcome practising travel writers as well as scholars from literary studies, history, anthropology and other disciplines. The organisation sponsors a biennial conference and a monthly email newsletter comprised of calls for papers, notices of recent publications and profiles of library and electronic archives with substantial holdings in travel materials. To join the organisation and to receive the newsletter, *The Snapshot Traveller*, contact Donald Ross (rossj001@umn.edu), our Executive Secretary.

## **Women's Studies Group: 1558-1837**

The Women's Studies Group: 1558-1837 is a small, informal multi-disciplinary group formed to promote women's studies in the early modern period and the long eighteenth century. The group meets in the Senate House of the University of London roughly every other month and meetings feature two speakers. The papers are followed by supportive and informal discussion. Members and non-members, men and women, are invited to give papers. For further information please visit our website: ([www.womensstudiesgroup.org.uk](http://www.womensstudiesgroup.org.uk)).

## **The Wordsworth Trust**

The Wordsworth Trust is an independent charity established as a living memorial to the life and poetry of William Wordsworth and his contemporaries. Founded in 1891, the Trust holds and conserves one of the world's great literary and art collections including more than ninety per cent of Wordsworth's manuscripts and pictures by famous artists including J. M. W. Turner, John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, Joseph Wright of Derby and Edward Lear.

Highlights of the collection include: William Wordsworth's poetry notebooks, containing drafts for many of his greatest poems; *Lyrical Ballads* (1798); first editions of the works of other leading Romantic writers including Lord Byron, John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley; the manuscript of Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal* (1802) describing the daffodils on the shores of Ullswater, which inspired her brother's famous poem, 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'; the only surviving manuscript of Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, published in 1821; a rare three-volume first edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, published anonymously in 1818 and written when Mary was just 18 years old; *Ullswater*, by Turner (c.1835); *Helvellyn*, by Constable (1806); major oil paintings, watercolours and drawings by the most famous British artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The permanent display in the Wordsworth Museum illustrates the story of the poet's life with manuscripts, books and pictures. A programme of changing special exhibitions explores different Romantic themes. The Trust's website ([www.wordsworth.org.uk](http://www.wordsworth.org.uk)) contains descriptions of the collections, a searchable database and details of the changing programme of events the Trust provides throughout the year.

Research visits to the Jerwood Centre can be made by appointment, and are open to all those who have a research interest. Situated only a few yards from Dove Cottage, the building provides modern, high quality facilities for research, conservation and for academic talks and visits, as well as storing some of the 60,000 manuscripts, books, paintings, drawings and prints when they are not in display in the Wordsworth Museum. The Rotunda of the Jerwood Centre at The Wordsworth Trust is a purpose-built space for workshops, seminars and intimate readings.

For more information, please contact Ann Pease, Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere LA22 9SH, Tel: 015394 63512 ([a.pease@wordsworth.org.uk](mailto:a.pease@wordsworth.org.uk)) or visit the Trust's website ([www.wordsworth.org.uk](http://www.wordsworth.org.uk)).

# Conference Report

## **‘Lives in Relation’, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009, University of Lincoln**

Organisers: Dr Rebecca Styler and Dr Amy Culley

In what ways can life writing be considered a relational genre? How do auto/biographies, diaries, letters and portraits represent interpersonal as well as personal experience? In shaping the account of a life, what role is played by the relationships between subject and family, peers, intellectual ancestors, political movements, intellectual discourses, and even with the biographer him/herself? What records of collective life do we have, which might challenge the individualistic tendency that has prevailed in traditional approaches to auto/biography?

These are some of the questions addressed at the ‘Lives in Relation’ conference held at the University of Lincoln on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009, which benefited from the receipt of a grant from the Midlands Romantics Seminar. The idea for the conference grew out of discussions on the uses of life writing which took place in the interdisciplinary ‘Nineteenth-Century Research Group’ at Lincoln, and in response to the burgeoning interest in life writing in its many and various forms. The choice of theme was informed by the organisers’ sense of a shift away from the traditional emphasis on the autonomous individual who stands out of his or her milieu, and the desire instead to address the tensions between personal expression and representative selfhood, individualism and social being, private histories and collective memories. Lives were considered ‘in relation’ in order to explore the communal function of self-

representations, the impact of group affiliation on personal identity, and life writing’s status as a social practice.

The conference was not specific to a particular period or genre, and subjects ranged from Roman to contemporary, and included written and visual modes, although, as might be expected, there was a clustering of material around the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. The conference was opened by Professor Valerie Sanders (Dept English, University of Hull), a prominent figure in Victorian studies, whose paper ‘Public Pressures/Private Grievs: Victorian Fathers in Relation’ set the key note for the day. Considering how men in public life confided to private journals their deep feelings of loss after the death of a child, Valerie raised fascinating questions about the tensions between masculinity and emotion, and self-expression and propriety, as well as considering the therapeutic/didactic functions of the journal form itself. The afternoon plenary session by Professor June Hannam (Dept History, University of the West of England), entitled “‘Oh for a Wife’: Reframing the Life of Ellen Wilkinson, MP”, considered the career of one of the first women representatives in Parliament in relation to her (sometimes conflicting) identification with labour and feminist politics, as well as her struggles with the male-oriented culture of the House of Commons. Both speakers gave a thought to our present moment’s relationship with these past examples, by showing some very similar tensions in contemporary political lives.

In the twenty-seven papers given by delegates in parallel panel sessions, the long nineteenth-century was well represented, in terms of male and female Romantic writers of biography, Victorian representations of Romantic poets’ lives, and auto/biographical work featuring Charles Dickens and Margaret Oliphant. Panels were organised around concepts, rather than periods, disciplines or themes, so that the ways were prioritised in which lives were presented or understood. These relational aspects of life representation included ‘Inscriptions of Friendship’, ‘Collective Memories’, ‘Lives in

Community’, ‘Representative Lives’, ‘Biographical Identification’, ‘Competing Life Narratives’ and ‘Fiction and Autobiographical Selves’. The result was some unexpected combinations – Barak Obama shared a platform with Agatha Christie, Roman sculpture with the Dissenting minister Philip Doddridge – but the result was lively discussions that provided delegates with much food for thought, whatever their discipline or specialism. The programme was enhanced by the opportunity to attend two creative presentations in the lunch break which connected to the conference theme, a reading by Dr Jonathan Taylor of De Montfort University from his book *Take Me Home: Parkinson’s, My Father, Myself*, and, from the University of Lincoln, Marcella Forster’s award-winning short film *Daddy’s Girl*.

Grants provided generously by the British Association of Victorian Studies, the Royal Historical Society, and the Midlands Romantic Seminar were enormously beneficial, in terms of enabling us to keep the delegate fee attractively affordable and to offer awards to three of our postgraduate speakers.

## *Early Career and Postgraduate Column*

*Daniel Cook, the current Early Career and Postgraduate Representative for BARS, is now a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at the University of Bristol. He is joined by Matthew Sangster, the new Postgraduate Representative and a PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London.*

It is a great delight to welcome Matthew Sangster to the executive committee of BARS as the new Postgraduate Representative and co-author of this column. He is a doctoral candidate at Royal Holloway working on a thesis on different types of success and failure in Romantic-period literary lives. He is currently also working at the British Library on a comprehensive catalogue of the archive of the Royal Literary Fund. In fact, Matthew has already taken an active role in the postgraduate community of the society, as co-organiser of *Romantic Biographies: Writing Lives and Afterlives, c.1770-1835*, the seventh BARS Early Career and Postgraduate Conference, which took place at Keele on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2009.

The title and Call for Papers for the conference were designed to encourage a wide range of possible approaches to Romantic-period lives in order to allow as many scholars as possible the opportunity to present their research whilst still providing a core issue around which discussions could focus. We were fortunate in that we were able to secure generous backing, both logistical and financial, from Keele and from the BARS Executive, as well as donations in exchange for distributing flyers from Wiley-Blackwell, Routledge, Pickering & Chatto, Oxford University Press and Edinburgh University Press. The conference was held in Keele's new Claus

Moser Research Centre, which proved to be a comfortable and well-equipped venue for our biographical peregrinations. The centre's staff, principally Nat Golden and Louise Cunningham, and a number of members of the English Faculty, namely David Amigoni, Ian Bell, Iain Vaughan and Anna Barton, were exceptionally helpful not only on the day itself but in the months leading up to it. Amber Regis, a graduate student in Victorian literature at Keele, deserves special mention for her efforts as our third co-organiser, and we benefited greatly from her ideas, advice and unstinting enthusiasm for the project.

We were pleased to have a good response to the Call for Papers and the proposals submitted for the conference provided an interesting snapshot of the work being done by PhD and early career researchers in the field of Romantic Studies (and beyond) across the UK (and beyond). We were gratified that respondents took advantage of the inclusive rubric and submitted papers which spanned a wide chronological range, offering detailed examinations of life writing from as early as the 1760s and as late as the 1840s. Reading over the proposals, it was surprising how few of them addressed the most obvious and enduringly canonical writers. There were two papers pitched involving Wordsworth, but nothing was submitted which concentrated on Byron, Percy Shelley, Keats or Austen, and Coleridge and Blake were only touched on obliquely (the latter in a fascinating paper detailing new research into Catherine Blake's continuing printing work after her husband's death). Instead, the submitted papers reflected the broadening scope of Romantic Studies today, presenting absorbing research on topics including cartographers and cartography, sex lives, sociability, spiritual autobiography, bookselling, Methodism and the Della Cruscans. Many papers displayed an interest in reception and misrepresentation – these included papers on the Queen Caroline affair, depictions of Mary Robinson, Elizabeth Gaskell's relationship with Charlotte Brontë and the memoirs that William Godwin and Amelia Opie wrote of the lives of their spouses. Other papers highlighted the burgeoning interest in life writing in the period and engaged with thinkers

including Boswell, Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Lamb and De Quincey to examine the diverse approaches that writers took to considering and interpreting the complex business of existence. This breadth of material made the organisation of the panels somewhat complicated, although in the end we were largely able to place together papers which resonated interestingly with each other. It made for a fascinating conference, suffice it to say, and one which reflected the many innovative directions in which new research is stretching the discipline.

On the day we had sixteen papers in three blocks of parallel panel sessions. In addition to the panels, we scheduled three roundtables and a plenary lecture. The roundtables were designed to allow our delegates to discuss the different ways in which we as Romanticists work, opening with talks and concluding with question and answer sessions. In the morning the Archival Research roundtable featured a talk by Rachel Foss, Curator of Modern Literary Manuscripts at the British Library, on the BL's resources, including details of a collection of recently acquired letters by Thomas De Quincey's daughters, and an account by Kerri Andrews (Nottingham Trent) of her discovery of a previously unknown letter from Ann Yearsley to Hannah More and this letter's implications for future scholarship. In the afternoon our second roundtable was a thought-provoking session on approaches to teaching Romanticism, which moved from a wide-ranging consideration by the chair Sharon Ruston (Salford) of the various syllabi used to teach the period (using information from the 2006 BARS survey, available on the society website) through a series of thoughts from David Higgins (Leeds) on different ways to approach Romanticism and associated vexed topics, to an in-depth account from Iain Vaughan of his first full semester teaching the period at Keele. The themes of the conference were expertly wrapped up by our plenary speaker, David Amigoni, Professor of Victorian Literature at Keele, whose paper on the ways in which Thomas Carlyle employed, responded to and reacted against Coleridge in figuring his own life was a fine conclusion to our considerations of the difficulties and

advantages of reducing whole existences to brief strings of words. The final special session, on publishing, featured Susan Oliver (Salford) and Philippa Joseph of Wiley-Blackwell, who both provided expert guidance on avenues and techniques for publishing and disseminating research. This was a particularly involved session, as one might expect, and ended like the others with lively and incisive questions from our delegates.

Throughout the conference we were pleased that a friendly and convivial atmosphere dominated (we had taken the precaution of providing significant quantities of coffee and biscuits). Keele has superb conferencing facilities and the hot buffet lunch was delicious. Despite the length of the program, after we wrapped up many delegates joined us for a well-deserved retreat to the comforts of the Sneyd Arms. Just as the taxis whisked away a handful of our delegates to catch the last train, the karaoke night began. Unfortunately – or fortunately, perhaps – no one who remained dared to take the opportunity to bust out their musical stylings...

Feedback from conference delegates has been very positive, and we as organisers greatly enjoyed the opportunity to hear so many fascinating papers and meet so many lovely people. We would like to take the opportunity to thank again our invited speakers, the BARS committee, Keele, the delegates, and everyone else who helped us. We are keen to build on the success of this conference with the next one and would be grateful to anyone who has ideas for that event or who would like to help out with future early career and postgraduate events. Don't forget to visit the BARS website for information about other conferences and on the various types of assistance available to help organise and fund colloquia.

Further information on the Romantic Biographies conference can still be found on the conference website:

<http://sites.google.com/site/romanticbiographies/>. If you fancy a challenge, you can also use the site to test your Romantic VIP recognition skills using the portraits from our poster.

# Events

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

### *Romanticism and Responsibility: Concepts, Debates and Actions in Europe and its Colonies 1770s-1830s*

**3-4 September 2010, University of  
Cyprus**

Confirmed Speakers: Pamela Clemit, Paul Hamilton, Cora Kaplan, Laurence Lockridge, Nicholas Roe

Art exhibition and poetry reading by Marcia Scanlon

This conference seeks to explore and interrogate the ways in which Romanticism was a universal call to responsibility, in itself revolutionary. The sense (and senses) of responsibility impelled one to action and gave value and significance to action. Action itself took many different forms and was expressed not only through the physical dynamics of movements and mobilisations but equally through writing, such as, but not limited to, poetry, fiction and journalism, and the arts (especially music and painting). Debates and actions posed the question of individual responsibility towards oneself, individual others, the community, but also the collective responsibility of a community, nation, sex or race, and either individual or collective responsibility towards more abstract notions, such as the nation and history, or non-human others, such as animals, nature and the environment in general.

Suggested list of topics (not exhaustive):

- ethics and responsibility
- the individual as responsible agent;
- education and judgment;
- response-ability and the ethics of responsiveness;
- the other, compassion and cosmopolitanism;
- the transformation of self and world;
- literature, the arts and civic responsibility;
- politics of Romantic travel;
- responsibility and freedom;
- cosmopolitan idealism and responsibility;
- theory and practice of responsibility in individual Romantics;
- the responsibility of the community;
- truth as responsibility;
- the responsibility of taking sides in the debate:
- revolution versus social order;
- vindications and indictments;
- the responsibility to criticise;
- the responsibility to and of women, children, the colonised, labourers and the enslaved;
- who is responsible for violence / is violence responsible?;
- responsibility and arbitrary power;
- the power of responsibility and responsibility as empowerment;
- the limits of responsibility.

Proposals for both individual papers and panels are welcome. Please send an abstract of 200 words to [evyvarsa@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:evyvarsa@ucy.ac.cy) by 31 May 2010.

### *Digital Romanticisms*

### **Conference at Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo, May 22-23 2010**

The starting-point for the conference is discussion of the changes in the definition and rationale of romantic studies that have occurred due to recent technological innovations. The electronic archive is now in many respects an indispensable tool for researchers in the period;

it has transformed, and arguably displaced, traditional methods of investigation and protocols of evidence. This paradigm shift not only has clear and immediate relevance to contemporary modes of reception and criteria of debate at all levels, but has also served retrospectively to reconfigure its object of study. How can romantic studies accommodate such issues as reproducibility, transfer, ownership, access, and dissemination; how might renewed emphasis on the material determinants of information exchange alter both local and general narratives of the period?

With the co-operation of JAER, BARS, NASSR, the British Academy, the British Council, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism, Faculty of Arts and Letters, University of Tokyo.

### ***England's Missing Critic: Tenth Hazlitt Day School***

**5 June 2010**

This year marks a decade since the founding of the Hazlitt Day-School by Uttara Natarajan, Tom Paulin and Duncan Wu in 2001. This is a particularly special occasion, and the organizers hope to welcome back a large number of our regular attendees, as well as new participants. The Day-School provides a rare opportunity for Hazlittians to meet each other and to exchange ideas.

There are usually two plenary speakers, and four lecturers who deliver shorter papers. Although a good deal is included in the course of the day, the pace is comparatively relaxed: the fee includes morning coffee, lunch, and afternoon tea, all of which provide an opportunity for those attending the day school to discuss their shared interest in Hazlitt. Past speakers have included Jonathan Bate, Simon Bainbridge, David Bromwich, Jon Cook, Gregory Dart, A.C. Grayling, Tim Milnes,

Seamus Perry, Uttara Natarajan, Tom Paulin, and John Whale.

This year, the organizers will host a wine reception to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day-School.

The plenary lecturers are John Whale, author of *Imagination Under Pressure, 1789-1832* (2000) and *John Keats* (2004), and Uttara Natarajan, editor of *The Hazlitt Review* and author of *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense* (1998). Shorter papers and readings will be delivered by Stephen Burley, Ian Patel, Tom Paulin, and Marcus Tomalin.

**When & where:** The Old Hall, Hertford College, Oxford - Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

**Registration details:** £30 full, £20 concessions (retired and students). Includes lunch, tea and coffee, and a wine reception.

### ***Money/Myths (32nd Annual Conference of the Nineteenth Century Studies Association)***

**March 3-6, 2011 at Arizona State University, Tempe & Phoenix, Arizona**

How was money understood in the nineteenth century? in its global context? by laborers? How did the ideation of money evolve around and through art, music, race, nation, and empire? How did the stories told about money influence people and practices? What role do myths play in comprehending money? How were relations between people mediated by narratives of money? relations between nations?

This theme would invite papers and panel proposals concerning any aspect of money/myth during the long nineteenth century, including, but not limited to the "myths" or "realities" of trade, debt, industry and investment, economics, money-lending, poverty, consumer culture, class relations, race relations and their economic implications, gender politics, masculinity and femininity as shaped by/of money, sexual politics, sexuality and the law, aesthetics, art and

art collecting, theater and performance politics, religion and wealth, social service programs, education, travel, entertainment, sporting, financing and producing wealth through science, international connections and compacts, public/private divide, differential health care, class mobility, marriage, widowhood, inheritance, prostitution, child rearing, infanticide, property politics, movements motivated by money (Chartism, socialism, communism, trades unions, reform), immigration, empire, war, and slavery. Equally welcome are paper and panel proposals concerning the processes of creating mythic structures around money including governmental campaigns, the publishing industry, legal processes, military campaigns, advertising, propaganda, and novelizations.

Abstracts (250 words) for 20 minute papers, author's name and paper title in heading, with one page c.v. by September 15, 2010: Marlene Tromp, Program Chair, Denison University: [nscs@denison.edu](mailto:nscs@denison.edu)

Presenters will be notified by December 15, 2010.

Graduate students whose proposals are accepted can at that point submit a full-length version of the paper to compete for a travel grant to help cover transportation and lodging expenses. Registration and accommodation information available November 15, 2010 at [www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/nscs/index.html](http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/nscs/index.html)

Keynote Speaker: Mary Poovey, Samuel Rudin University Professor of the Humanities, Institute for the History of the Production of Knowledge and Department of English, New York University.

## Reviews

### Reviews Editor's Note:

*Somehow I commissioned two reviews of the collection of essays Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic. This occurred entirely by accident, not by design, and I apologise to readers and reviewers alike. Because our reviewers give so much of their time and expertise to the BARS Bulletin & Review free of charge, and because this was entirely my own fault, I feel it would be unfair not to publish both.*  
Simon Kövesi

**Angela Esterhammer, *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750-1850.* Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. 269. £50. ISBN 9780521897099**

In 1824, the *London Magazine* wrote of Byron: 'He was an *English Improvisatore*, and when we say this, we do not mean that he was a mere stringer of musical sentences; but such an *Improvisatore* as an Englishman might and an Italian could not be.' Byron had himself located his poetic practice in relation to the improvisational in *Don Juan*:

Of this I'm sure at least, there's no  
servility  
In mine irregularity of chime,  
Which rings what's uppermost of new or  
hoary,  
Just as I feel the 'Improvisatore'.

But what was an *improvisatore*, and what meanings did this figure carry for contemporaries? The *improvisatore* (and *improvisatrice*) specialised in extemporising

poetry in public in response to subjects requested by their audience, and the practice was most celebrated in Italy, where it was an unmissable feature of the Grand Tour for foreigners. Esterhammer's wide-ranging study surveys the ways in which English, German, French and Russian romantic culture responded to the figure of the improvisator, both in the shape of actual celebrities – Anna Louisa Karsch, Teresa Bandettini, Corilla, Rosa Taddei, Tommaso Sgricci, and Maximilian Langenschwarz amongst them – and as an abstraction. While at first glance, improvisation would seem marginal or exceptional, Esterhammer argues that attending to the ways in which the improvisatore and improvisational performance were both experienced and represented shines new light on romantic ideas of genius, of spontaneity, of orality, of femininity, and of national identity. Chapters pursue the experience of improvisational performance by northern Europeans as a foreign, 'southern' genre; the perception of the improvisatore as a modern Homer...; the convergence of the stage improviser with the Romantic notion of natural genius; the intensified focus on embodiment and spectacle that this hybrid figure evokes [especially for women writers]; and the representation of the improvisatore and improvisatrice in fictional and non-fictional prose as... at odds with social, gender, class, and economic systems.

Esterhammer's focus effectively allows her to take a core sample through European romantic culture, bringing readings of all sorts of neglected texts and genres to bear on more familiar material, and proposing new centres of cultural gravity, reasserting, for example, Ellen Moers' early identification of the importance of de Staël's *Corinne*. Amplifying and articulating earlier scholarship on improvisation, she assembles here an impressive range of writers too rarely brought into conjunction: *inter alia*, Goethe, de Staël, Byron, Samuel Rogers, Sismondi, Goethe, Tieck, Andersen, Karl Philip Moritz, Letitia Landon, Felicia Hemans, Hoffmann, John Galt, Julius von Voss, Sydney Owenson, George Sand, Odoyevsky, Pushkin, and many others. The book as a whole makes an

eloquent appeal for modifying the still dominant conception of the romantic solitary poetic genius by revaluing this other poetic discourse: 'blatantly phonocentric, celebrating bodily presence, engaged with an audience and with being in the moment, the discourse of improvisation needs to be recognised as a prominent, performative, social dimension of Romantic poetics.'

Such a proposition locates this study as part of the ongoing project of cultural studies to revise the concept of the romantic through exhuming 'unromantic' aspects of the period. Given that the entire book demonstrates that for poets of the romantic period, male and female, with the possible exception of Byron, the poetic practice of the improvisatore was profoundly problematic (construed as mercenary, sensationalist, pandering to a live audience, oral, and spectacularly embodied, rather than non-commercial, private, written, and mostly for posterity), and that for fiction writers the improvisatore was equally treacherous, figured as a perpetual self-reinventor undermining the stability of society, one may well wonder whether romanticism itself valued this rival poetics; but the book certainly demonstrates that romantic ideology was forged in antithesis to such a poetics.

The strategy of reconstellating romantic period culture around an interest in the improvisatore produces a number of effects. One is that the book itself has a slightly disconcerting tendency to the improvisational and occasional itself. This is partly because the many meanings that the figure of the improvisatore generated are tricky to separate and control: as Esterhammer notes, 'the discourse of improvisation ...is one in which various interrelated sets of associations accrue to the poetic improviser across different genres and successive generations. Indeed, the improviser is a figure of potentiality, to be written, re-written, and written on by audiences and readerships.' But it is also because the book has been built in large part of discrete essays, and because it suffers from moments where the writing seems to have strayed to the furthest possible length of its subject and perhaps beyond, as in the chapter on 'the improvisational

worlds of Carnival and commedia'. It occasionally suffers, too, from its desire to be comprehensive, becoming nervously diffuse and encyclopaedic in the last chapter, 'Virtuosi, vaudevillians, mystics, madmen, and rhetoricians'. Nor do the periodic appeals to Bourdieu and other theorists of postmodern social identity as improvisational seem very helpful in anchoring what is essentially an historical study of the formation of romantic identity and culture.

But these are relatively minor cavils. The book is a masterclass in combining an enormous amount of disparate material in a nuanced and subtle fashion. It is rare to find a book which ranges across genres so nimbly – biography, travel literature, manuals of rhetoric, antiquarian scholarship, poetry, the novel, and the romantic novella – and which delivers such a sophisticated set of close readings *en route*. It is also rare to find a scholar equally at home in the English, French, German and Russian traditions. (It is only very occasionally that this erudite and thorough book misses a trick – it seemed a shame, for instance, that Sydney Owenson's performances in London society as the 'wild Irish girl' complete with harp weren't there to support the reading of *The Novice of Saint Dominick*.) Taken as a whole, the book is a timely and powerful reminder of the desirability of studying the production of romantic aesthetics and national identity within a romantic culture conceived as pan-European and transnational. Its reconception of the romantic period as a romantic century is equally boundary-breaking and provocative in the textual juxtapositions it allows. This book should be of general interest to scholars of the romantic period, but of especial import to those concerned with the emergence of the idea of romantic poetic genius, the development of national concepts of literature, the impact of mass print culture, and romantic audiences.

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**Jeffrey C. Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry: The Fancy in British Romanticism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. 301. £40. ISBN 1403965137**

Jeffrey C. Robinson's *Unfettering Poetry: The Fancy in British Romanticism* offers a passionate manifesto against the privileging of conservative Imagination over radical Fancy. Robinson argues, *pace* Coleridge, that 'the most exciting, indeed, the most characteristic, poetry of the turbulent and reformist Romantic period shows the influence of the Fancy rather than of the Imagination.' He lists two goals for his book: 'first to open up to view the nature and manifestations of a poetics of the Fancy in the British Romantic period, and, second (following upon the first) to encourage a reading practice of Romantic poetry sensitive to the features of the poetics of the Fancy.' In terms of the latter goal, the book must be judged a success. I have some reservations about the success of the first goal, however. Ultimately, even though questions can be raised about Robinson's conception of the Fancy, the book models an engaging reading practice; his readings of collections and anthologies such as Leigh Hunt's *Foliage* and William Hazlitt's *Select British Poets*, of the work of important women poets of the period such as Mary Robinson and Felicia Hemans, and of such hyper-canonical poems as Wordsworth's 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' and Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' demonstrate the impact which modes of reading alert to the Fancy can have on our understanding of the poetry of the Romantic period.

Robinson generally sees what he calls 'the Fancy' as an organized and coherent program of poetic stances, strategies and structures, always using the upper-case 'F' and the definite article to refer to what he variously calls the 'poetic faculty' or the 'poetic principle' of 'the Fancy.' This is a program without an identifiable manifesto: Robinson admits that none of the writers he is concerned with 'commits himself to the word "fancy,"' but argues that despite the lack of any programmatic defence of 'the Fancy' dating from the Romantic period, 'the attributes

of the Fancy produce more or less universal agreement.' In keeping with a poetics dedicated to, in Robinson's words, 'unleashed proliferation and multiplicity,' the attributes Robinson associates with the Fancy are wide-ranging. They include variety, excess, unpredictability, playfulness, whimsicality, physicality, juxtaposition, parataxis, metonymy, cheerfulness, 'excessively long blank-verse paragraphs,' 'half-rhymes,' 'seemingly endless rhymed tetrameter couplets' and loss of focus on the lyric subject in favour of the teeming worlds of the referent.

The book's subtle and cheerful readings of hyper-canonical poems and fanciful poets demonstrate in action the merits of Robinson's second stated goal for the book, encouraging a reading practice sensitive to the Fancy. In effect this book can be read as part of Robinson's larger project, also embodied in his work on *Poems for the Millennium, Volume Three* which he co-edited with Pierre Joris. Like that anthology, *Unfettering Poetry* reads the work of the Romantic period with an eye towards seeking precursors for certain modes of twentieth and twenty-first century experimental poetics. Not all readers will agree that this is the most important framework for engaging with the poetry of this period, and some may well find it actively troubling as a particularly teleological form of presentism. Nevertheless, Robinson is able to offer vital readings of a wide range of poetries from the period, effectively demonstrating links and connections between quite disparate poems.

Some scholars of the period, however, will have some reservations about the foundational opposition upon which these readings rest. The coherence Robinson finds in 'the Fancy,' is largely assured by its opposition to the poetry of the Imagination. Robinson himself is keenly aware of the problem. He comments on the 'absurdity of the distinction on the level of poetry itself; it is only in terms of ideological issues of social power and aggrandizement that the distinction has meaning' but the weight of a number of his comments on the Imagination would suggest otherwise. More subtle theorists of the discourse of Imagination may find

Robinson's linking of Imagination 'with conservation, stability, and consolation' at best reductive and at worst sincerely wrong-headed. As Foucault would have observed, simply reversing a hierarchical binarism does little to destabilize its foundations, and Robinson is at such pains to rescue, reclaim, and champion the Fancy that at times he overstates the extent to which it was (or is) clearly distinct from conceptions of the Imagination.

Despite these caveats, Robinson offers engaging and nuanced readings of canonical poems through the lens of the Fancy. In a real strength of the work, he also demonstrates the value of reading poems in sequences and anthologies and collections; he is attentive to the ways in which meaning arises from the sequence and positioning of individual poems as much as it does from the individual poems themselves. While the macro-level argument presents some problems, the book offers congeries of radiant insights and will be of interest to students of Romantic poetics in general and of Mary Robinson, Leigh Hunt, Felicia Hemans, and William Hazlitt in particular – as well as to those curious about opportunities to read hyper-canonical poems such as 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' and 'Ode to A Nightingale' with vital new forms of attention.

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**Margaret Russett, *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity, 1760-1845*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 258. £50. ISBN 9780521850780**

What distinguishes a real person? In *Fictions and Fakes*, Margaret Russett takes the contemporary critical interest in literary forgery and plagiarism as her starting point in considering the emergence of specifically 'Romantic' notions of identity, subjectivity, and

personality. The premise of the study is that it was not simply duplicitous texts that brought forth new concepts of the self, but that the stories surrounding them – the very narratives of forgery (to coin a phrase) – are themselves instrumental in this process. As Russett has it, 'how factitious discoveries and counterfeit beings helped to define the frontiers of literary discourse during the period in which "literature" assumed its modern disciplinary meaning' and 'how fictions of textual creation articulate with the construction of Romantic subjectivity'. Questions of identity – or rather the production and reproduction of identities – therefore entails treating authenticity as an effect rather than a cause, as 'a function of cultural transmission'.

What this investigation into the birth of modern subjectivity means in practice is discussions of Thomas Chatterton, 'Christabel' and 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel', the Maid of Buttermere, the 'Princess Caraboo' affair, John Clare's identification with Byron, and a concluding piece on the part played by Walter Scott and James Hogg in generating pseudonyms in periodical writing.

Some of this material is necessarily familiar and well-mined, but there is also some enticing new stuff here. In the case of Chatterton, for example, Russett presents a Žižekian psychoanalytic reading, arguing that a conflation of the writer's literary inheritance with the individual creates the 'primal scene' of his creation, 'so that the origins of a tradition also supply a prehistory of the subject'. What is important is the author's *assumption* of literary character: for Russett, this is reflexive – 'the aftermath as origin'. This allows Russett to present a genealogical account of Chatterton's Rowley forgeries as a succession of inheritances from symbolic fathers to symbolic sons, in which the church of St Mary Redcliffe (mischievously described in 'Craishes Heraldry' as 'the Chirche of oure Ladye of the Redde Clefte') is the only significant feminine figure. Russett's evaluation of Chatterton is subtle – she does not, for instance, regard him as a 'major poet' (her emphasis), but as a pioneering '*Romanticizer*' of literary history.

Changing tack, Russett then turns to a fascinating examination of the relationship between ‘Christabel’ and ‘The Lay of the Last Minstrel’ as a way of introducing shifting patterns of authorship and ‘original composition’, and the attendant problems of plagiarism and literary ownership. Is it possible to plagiarize a *voice*; what are the implications of a text-based definition of authorship and copyright protection for oral traditions? Russett makes a convincing argument for equating the ‘personality’ of Romantic authorship with metre, and there are some tantalising remarks on the recitation of unpublished verse (Scott, notably, memorized ‘Christabel’ – could one identify the implications for the Romantic subject of ‘learning by heart’, as Derrida does in ‘Che cos’è la poesia?’)

Before returning to the ‘Christabel’/‘Lay’ nexus in her final chapter, Russett then addresses three impersonators: John Hatfield (who as Alexander Augustus Hope seduced the Maid of Buttermere), ‘Princess Caraboo’ (an exotic in the tradition of George Psalmanazar), and John Clare, who while incarcerated in an asylum periodically claimed to be Lord Byron. It is, however, an uneasy alliance, and could perhaps have been more effective by using the language of masks and performance rather than impersonation and imposture, as John Goodridge argues in an essay on Clare and the masks of Chatterton, unaccountably absent from the discussion here. And interestingly, despite Russett denying that Chatterton was impersonator *per se* because he did not dramatize his forged persona, he certainly did *perform* his work in the way he behaved and, indeed, acted with his Bristol patrons.

Russett concludes with a return to Scott, and describes the fashion for hoaxing that helped to forge Scottish literary culture, as well as Scott’s own literary identity – which is presented as elaborately beset by doubles and semi-doubles. The word ‘hoax’, Russett claims, appeared rather conveniently c.1800 in order to distinguish criminal from literary deception – previously the word ‘imposture’ had been used – and so helped clear up the problematic relationship between fictions and lies that

characterized novels and histories in the eighteenth century.

Despite an unfortunate predilection for the anachronistic cliché (‘The first edition of the new *Blackwood’s* was calculated to shock and awe’; Scott is described as ‘the CEO of Waverley Incorporated’), Russett’s book will be read as an important contribution to the ongoing re-evaluation of what Susan Stewart has described as the ‘crimes of writing’. It is also an invitation for further work. A search on *ECCO*, for example, reveals that the word ‘hoax’ actually appears in a play published in 1772 (attributed to Henry Fielding, so possibly even earlier) as well as coterie verse of the 1780s, suggesting that it may have been a hunting halloo (‘Hoax him there!’) and/or school slang (‘how you hoax us, if we blunder’); in these contexts, the word means to tease. The personality of such words is perhaps as teasing as that of the Romantic subject.

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**Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. 316. £53. ISBN 9780521861137**

*Writing Against Revolution* can be regarded as a kind of sequel or companion to Kevin Gilmartin’s first book, *Print Politics* (1996). Where that book used the tools of literary analysis to probe the discursive strategies and achievements of the radical press in the Romantic period, the new book offers a countervailing excursion into anti-Jacobin print culture. The five substantial chapters are organised chronologically but they also move in ascending order up the hierarchy of literary and cultural genres: chapters 1 and 2 look at the ways in which John Reeve’s ‘Association’ and Hannah More’s Cheap Repository tried to wrest

the common reader away from the seductions and (as they saw it) delusions of Paine and the radical press; chapters 3 and 4 cover the Tory periodicals and the anti-Jacobin novel; and the concluding chapter 5 reassesses the conservative ‘solutions’ proffered by Southey and Coleridge.

As Gilmartin notes correctly, our definitions and perceptions of Romanticism have been dominated by a bias towards radical or liberal authors: with the exception of Burke (who is omitted from the study on the justifiable grounds of scholarly overload), it is only relatively recently that writers who actively opposed the British reform movement have been given serious attention by scholars of Romanticism. Chief among these is probably Hannah More, whose reputation has been transformed by both feminist scholars (Anne Mellor, Mitzi Myers, Kathryn Sutherland) and historians of popular politics (notably Mark Philp). But if More is now seen as a major player in the development of a literate and politically aware (if regulated) reading public, Gilmartin’s approach to More neatly sidesteps the claims and counter-claims about More’s radicalism by focussing on the literary qualities of the tracts as the principal means to uncover her cultural politics. Specifically, Gilmartin highlights the reflexive quality of More’s narratives, their ability to provide a ‘dense fictional representation of her own public enterprise’ through a realistically humble ‘cultural geography’ of villages and cottages. It is this ‘compelling’ fictional strategy which, Gilmartin argues, made the Cheap Repository such effective propaganda: the material process of serial production was imaginatively transformed into a self-sustaining imagined rural community in which charitable rewards and punishments were dispensed with unceasing regularity to both plebeian and middle-class readers. Put another way, More’s genius was to cede just enough imaginative ground to the common reader by coating her fantasies of moral reform with the generic pleasures of feminocentric soap opera – everyday settings, life-changing dramas, the promise of more to come in the next episode.

The analysis of the Cheap Repository is the book’s most illuminating demonstration of

Gilmartin’s methodology which identifies the central problem for conservative writers as being hoisted with their own petard: using the printed word to argue for restrictions on freedom of expression, being forced to deploy the ‘contaminated’ resources of the novel, and needing to represent the enemy and its causes in order to demonise them. The solution to this problem was to remodel both literature and culture so that the readerly pleasures offered by the enemies of the State – a mixture of sensational exposure of corruption, transgression of social, political and religious norms, and enlightened rational analysis – could all be diverted and contained within ‘loyal’ narratives of contentment or steady reform. But as Gilmartin’s detailed analyses of texts shows only too clearly, such ‘enterprising and productive’ aims often relied on primitive scare tactics, endless conspiracy theories and an unresolved ambiguity about the intellectual capabilities of the common reader: as William Paley argued in *Reasons for Contentment* (1792), the humble reader could be a ‘reflecting husbandman’ not a simpleton John Bull, but only if he kept his ‘imagination at home’. Conservative writing also frequently lost its credibility as literary ‘surveillance’ when it called for direct government action (despite his liberal programmes for universal education and cheap banking, the post-war Southey wanted radicals transported), and Gilmartin comes close to admitting that his authors were fixated on the very vision of catastrophic revolution and conspiracy which they officially opposed (a tendency that re-emerges in the Victorian novel).

The strengths of this book are the detailed and persuasive readings of liminal texts; the reassessment of Coleridge and Southey’s sublime visions of national culture is perhaps less original (Gilmartin acknowledges a debt to Raymond Williams’s *Culture and Society*), and there is a calculated risk in presenting the book’s two most *bona fide* Romantic writers as the culmination and termination of anti-Jacobin writing. Though this chronology dovetails neatly with the close of the Romantic period, the ‘war of the unstamped’ had already commenced when the Reform Bill was finally passed in 1832:

throughout the 1830s and 1840s, anti-Jacobin or counterrevolutionary ‘expression’ was endlessly recycled by both conservative and liberal opponents of the radical press. In the end, all such ‘expression’ was a tribute to the radical culture which forced it into existence.

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**Michael Charlesworth, *Landscape and Vision in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. Pp. 186. £55. ISBN 9780754656647**

Michael Charlesworth’s study of nineteenth-century perceptions of landscape is an unusual contribution to the field. Although its title seems to promise a comprehensive – one might say panoramic – sweep of the subject, the book is nothing of the kind. Instead, it is, as Charlesworth takes pains to point out in the preface, ‘selective rather than encyclopedic’, in its subject matter: the usual suspects, Wordsworth and Turner, Mallarmé and Monet, jostle alongside less known writers and artists, such as the architect Thomas Sandby and the ‘paranormal’ investigator and writer Sir George Brewster. The result is a curious, thoroughly readable, informative and knowledgeable account of varying ways of seeing in a very long nineteenth century – 1745-1900.

The best way to describe and do justice to this book is not to summarise all of it; indeed, its idiosyncrasy of range and subject renders such an approach near impossible. A quick glance through each chapter topic – panoramas; ghosts and visions; representations of evolution; imagination and impressionism; depictions of Venus, both in France and its colonies – might give us a sense of the scale of the ground covered but would not convey Charlesworth’s agility in guiding us through it. And this is the book’s especial appeal. Thus, a description of just one chapter and its place in the book, rather than a précis of the book in its entirety, captures better its nature and style.

Having ranged over panoramic entertainments in Chapter 1, apparitions and optical illusions in Chapter 2, then depictions of geological time in Chapter 3, Charlesworth acknowledges in Chapter 4, ‘Reverie and Imagination’, that ‘the issue of subjectivity is an important one in an enquiry into visual culture of the nineteenth century’. With this, we are treated to analyses of, in turn, Rousseau’s tomb in Ermenonville, Baudelaire’s nightmarish *Tableaux Parisiens*, Wordsworth’s ‘Resolution and Independence’, before we return to muse on – appropriately enough – Rousseauvian accounts of reverie. Charlesworth’s point, which only becomes apparent at the end of the chapter, is that the concept of reverie moves through the course of the nineteenth century from a Romantic belief in its power to invoke oneness with God and the universe in an experience of solitude or solitary encounter with another, to a modernist insistence, as in Baudelaire and on to Eliot, that an understanding of the human condition is only available through alienation and isolation. Charlesworth’s analyses, while seemingly random, are oddly persuasive and compelling, presenting as they do a kind of lineage of thought and ideology, an account of intertextuality and influence in action, across nations and centuries. Chapter 4, with its *entrée* into Francophone literature, thenceforth provides the springboard for analyses in subsequent chapters of almost exclusively French subject matter, from the Venuses of Baudelaire, Watteau, Manet and others, to the Tahitian exoticism and eroticism of Hodges and Gauguin.

The effect of Charlesworth’s analysis by thought association is more than a little dizzying, and it is therefore a risky methodological and critical mode. As he explains it, ‘this book is built up out of a number of intersections. For my purposes, an “intersection” is a space where two activities draw close to each other’. Such a mode requires of its reader a certain faith, as it navigates apparently far distant co-ordinates only to reveal, by each chapter’s end, a convincing map of the terrain. It is perhaps a little let down by being presented as a monograph, which suggests a traditional format

complete with hypothesis and argument, and which promises conventional signposts when, indeed, there aren't any. The book is best viewed and appreciated as a collection of essays, even of musings, and the boldness of Charlesworth's style could have been matched by boldness in marketing. This would better prepare the reader and guard against any sense of surprise and – in my case, I confess – initial irritation at the first sensations of disorientation. It might have saved Charlesworth the trouble, too, of providing a somewhat apologetic preface, in which we are told, for example, that 'much has been left out'. However, it may be that in a text that deals so effectively with visual perception, Charlesworth has chosen to experiment metatextually with critical perception, leaving it to the reader to adjust his or her vision accordingly.

It is worth adding too that the book is appropriately, handsomely illustrated, sometimes with the author's own photographs, all reproduced with enough quality and detail to carry its many and varied critiques.

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**Bridget Keegan, *British Labouring-Class Nature Poetry, 1730-1837*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Pp. 232. £50. ISBN 9780230536968**

As part of the team responsible for the magnificent Pickering and Chatto *Eighteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets* volumes, Bridget Keegan is highly qualified to offer us the survey of British labouring-class nature poetry promised by her book's title. As her introduction reveals, Keegan intends to expand knowledge of political and aesthetic aspects of the labouring-class literary tradition, and of the history of nature writing in Britain, and to push the boundaries of environmental literary criticism. Reading the book, it is evident how these themes are inseparable in Keegan's analysis, and though they are all huge areas of

study, and at times it feels as if the book is almost trying to do too much, it is difficult to see where any lines might have been drawn. Chapters are structured around particular natural environments, and we are shown how the work of the labouring-class poets who write about them repeatedly reflects a sense of participation in, rather than mastery over, the natural world. Whilst the focus of Keegan's attention is turned on neglected literary works, her work functions as and builds on a valuable appraisal of a wide range of recent, relevant critical material, and *British Labouring-Class Nature Poetry* is so very useful partly because it functions as a survey of the critical, historical and socio-economic fields (it is thus a shame that we are not provided with a bibliography). The reader is led down a range of tempting pathways, and multiple questions are raised which reach out well beyond the confines of the book's covers. In this sense, the book is an act of great scholarly generosity, which will have many students and academics reaching for the 'Elsie' project volumes for further exploration.

Keegan declares that her interest in labouring-class poetry originates in her work on John Clare; she also points out that it is recent work of textual recovery which makes her scholarship possible. These points together raise a pressing question (never fully taken up) regarding the aesthetic merit, rather than the historical value, of the neglected material under discussion. To some extent, this question is answered in a quotation from Michael Branch as early as page five: Keegan's book is to be about the 'engagement of other perspectives', and it undoubtedly remains fascinating as well as significant that shared themes and preoccupations are so readily discernable in the work of this wide range of poets. However, the very last paragraph of the book confirms a persistent sense that many of these poets fell into obscurity because, in aesthetic terms, they are not actually very good. Some closer attention to the poems *as poems*, which might address this point, would be welcome. It might also help to justify Keegan's sometimes rather tenuous claims, regarding the alleged subversive strategy of writers who often seem straightforwardly to

be imitating their predecessors and contemporaries.

Another, more explicit question raised by the book relates to the idea of what ecocriticism actually is, and what it should do. Keegan's first chapter summarizes recent, significant critical contributions to this debate; though these contributions differ from and in places contradict one another, Keegan finds that Bloomfield's *Farmer's Boy* fits into them all, a conclusion which begs further questions regarding the category. I'm not sure that by the end of the book we are any closer to an exact definition of ecocriticism, but that remains a problem with the label rather than with Keegan's analysis: again, one of the book's strengths lies in the questions it provokes rather than the answers it offers.

Each of the book's six chapters addresses its theme through close attention to one or two (usually better-known) poets, including Bloomfield, Chatterton and Clare; it then briefly surveys other writers whose works cast significant light on similar themes. In chapter one, for example, the careful attention paid to Bloomfield is followed up with brief glances at members of the 'school of Bloomfield'. Keegan's stated aim to expand knowledge of the range and depth of labouring-class poetry is laudable, and it begs a question as to why this balance (which tends to lend a sense of imbalance) has been chosen: is Bloomfield just *better*? Once more, the subject of aesthetic value raises its head. Keegan's deep and extensive knowledge of a much wider cast of characters is never in doubt, but occasionally this brief analysis of little-known individuals, combined with the inevitably limited number of figures who appear, leaves Keegan's bigger conclusions feeling a little under-nourished. Chapter 2, for instance, closes with an assertion regarding a shift in attitude towards the ways in which labouring-class poets assert their right to claim privileged views of nature over the course of the eighteenth century. Such a general claim seems rather great given the number of poets introduced in the chapter compared to the far greater number Keegan has previously shown us to be standing behind them. The fascinating

discussion of Anne Wilson's *Teisa* (another poem of dubious poetic merit) in Chapter 4 offers the reader a satisfaction often denied by other sections, perhaps because a poem which traces the course of a river lends itself to a linear analysis which feels 'finished' in a way that discussion of, say, a prospect poem rarely can. Often, however, conclusions seem troubled by the brevity with which writers can be discussed. Again, this is a problem due merely to the huge ambition of the work. From Keegan's early highlighting of the semantic ambiguity of the word 'nature', it is clear that there will be many cans of worms opened which can't be fully decanted, given the constraints of space. Almost every one of these meticulous chapters could surely be expanded into a book-length study. The scope of Keegan's book thus yields both its greatest pleasures and its disappointments, but either way, it is a hugely valuable contribution to its various fields.

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**Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, Ernst W. Veen, Henk van Os, Jeroen Stumpel, Boris Asvarishch, Maria Shlikevich and Mikhail Dedinkin, Caspar David Friedrich and the German Romantic Landscape. Lund Humphries, 2009. Pp. 128. £19.99. ISBN 9781848220171**

The catalogue *Caspar David Friedrich & the German Romantic Landscape*, which accompanied the eponymous exhibition at the Hermitage Amsterdam (September 2008 - January 2009), is a compact collection of five essays, sumptuous colour reproductions, and concise bibliography of works in English, German, and Russian that attempts to contextualize Friedrich's landscape paintings within their historical milieu. To this end, substantial treatment is given to two of Friedrich's lesser known contemporaries, Carl von Kugelgen (1772-1832) and Carl Fohr (1795-1818), the former a peripatetic German artist

who eventually settled in St. Petersburg largely due to the generous patronage of tsars Paul I and Alexander I, and the latter a technically-gifted young artist with great promise who met an untimely death at twenty-two whilst swimming in the Tiber. The Hermitage's Friedrich collection, nine paintings and six drawings in total, is the largest collection of his work outside of Germany, and the fascinating history of the collection provides the curatorial *terra firma* for the exhibition and catalogue.

Henk van Os's essay sketches broadly both the outlines of Friedrich's oeuvre and its reception history. Additionally, he references contemporaries of Friedrich such as the Nazarene Joseph Anton Koch (1768-1839) and Friedrich's pupil Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869) in order to contextualize Friedrich's work. In his essay 'The Romanticism of Casper David Friedrich' Jeroen Stumpel notes three notable aspects in Friedrich's work: God, nature, and love of the German landscape all of which, he argues, enabled Friedrich to possess 'an unrivalled skill in breathing life into a painted landscape'. In one of his well-known comments, Friedrich offered the following advice to painters: 'close your bodily eye so that you may see your picture first with the spiritual eye. Then bring to the light of day that which you have seen in the darkness so that it may react upon others from the outside inwards'. Steeped in Romantic aesthetics, writers such as Friedrich von Hardenberg expressed a similar need to romanticize not only external but also internal reality. For example, in his sixteenth *Blütenstaub-Fragment* he writes: 'We dream of journeys across the universe. Isn't the universe within us?'. Friedrich's landscapes are evocative, indeed transformative, yet, as Stumpel rightly observes, cannot instruct but always suggest.

Boris Asvarishch's fascinating essay 'Caspar David Friedrich in Russia' explores, among other things, the relationship between Friedrich and the Russian royal family. In 1820 a visit to Friedrich's studio by Grand Duke Nicolas (from 1825 Emperor Nicolas I of Russia) and his wife Grand Duchess Alexandra Fyodorovna (*née* Princess Charlotte of Prussia, daughter of Friedrich Wilhelm III) resulted in the sale of two

paintings (*On a Sailing Boat* and *Night in Harbour*). The noted poet Vasily Zhukovsky (1783-1852) first met Friedrich in 1821, and Zhukovsky would become both a lifelong friend and intermediary between the painter and the Russian nobility. Indeed, as Asvarishch demonstrates, it was Zhukovsky's privileged relationship with the Russian royal family that provided the vital connection and source of revenue for Friedrich at the end of his career.

The remaining two essays of the collection shed light on two rather obscure German landscape painters of the early nineteenth century and their association with St. Petersburg. After sundry sojourns in cities as diverse as Rome and Riga, Carl von Kügelgen and his brother Gerhard set off for St. Petersburg in the winter of 1798, and the two were elected full members of the Imperial Academy of Arts in the following year. Although Gerhard would leave St. Petersburg, Carl would become a prolific artist whose precisely-rendered compositions of the Crimea, among other works, captured 'the two central loci of Russian Romanticism: the North... and the mysterious Orient'. In the concluding essay, Mikhail Dedinkin traces the history of the Hermitage's collection of Carl Fohr's works, all of which are presented publicly for the first time. Despite the interesting provenance of the collection, Dedinkin perhaps overstates the significance of the budding artistic prodigy in relation to Romantic art. For example, he writes that 'any selection of masterpieces of German Romantic art must immediately allot Fohr's work their rightful place among the leaders of the trend'. Yet he neglects stylistic and taxonomic nuances. Fohr's art—much indebted to Koch—was revivalist in the tradition of the Nazarenes. In addition, there is no mention of Fohr's relationship with periodization (*Frühromantik*, *Hochromantik*, and *Spätromantik*).

Unfortunately, the volume is not without its imperfections. Stumpel's essay contains numerous lengthy quotations but lacks scholarly references. The volume is limited to the works within the Hermitage's collection, and so a key romantic painter such as Philipp Otto Runge (1777-1810) is omitted from the discussion of

German landscape painting. The slender essays on Friedrich's landscapes cover little new ground. Nevertheless, the volume excels in charting Friedrich's relationship with his Russian patrons. Additionally, the precociousness of Fohr's works will be a pleasant discovery for both novice and initiate alike.

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**Timothy Morton, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Shelley*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 219. Pb.: £16.99. ISBN 9780521533430**

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Shelley is the last of the canonical 'Big Six' Romantic poets to be given a volume of his own in the Cambridge Companion series. If this suggests that the case for this most controversial and divisive of poets still needs to keep being made, Timothy Morton's collection of essays stands as impressive evidence. Far from the 'chatter about Shelley' that the historian Edward Freeman, speaking in 1887, feared literary study would become, the hallmark of this volume is a truly Shelleyan sense of intellectual commitment and far-reaching enquiry. The authors never content themselves with offering overviews of topics, but instead join in dialogue across the volume to address modern preoccupations ranging from language and meaning to literature and ecology. The drawback of this ambition will be, for some readers, that it is pitched at a higher level than many other volumes in the series.

The first section, 'Lives and Afterlives', offers a biographical sketch and an overview of Shelley's reception. The rest of the volume is then divided between 'Works', featuring chapters organised on a loose generic basis, and 'Ideas, Beliefs, and Affiliations', with chapters on 'Language and Form', 'Literature and Philosophy' and 'Nature and Culture'. As these titles imply, the chapters are deliberately fluid, overlapping, inflecting each other and espousing

a strong sense of shared enterprise. Several of the most impressive essays also show their subject in dialogue with others. So, Karen Weisman's most compelling close readings in 'The Lyricist' are of the sonnet 'To Wordsworth' and the great elegy for Keats. Jeffrey N. Cox's powerful revisionary account of 'The Dramatist' argues against the old line on Shelley's lack of interest in the theatre of his day and posits instead that an absorption of the 'encyclopaedic array of theatrical types' on the Romantic stage was essential to his experimental dramatic writing. And, in 'The Translator', perhaps the outstanding essay in the volume, Jeffrey C. Robinson ranges across verse translations of Greek poetry, Dante and Goethe, opening up much that students might otherwise be unable to access and presenting the act of translation as integral to Shelley's poetic praxis.

In the same section, William Keach's chapter on 'The Political Poet' demonstrates some of the strengths and weaknesses of the collection as a whole. Keach teases out of *Prometheus Unbound* a sceptical idealism, testing the limits of political change and caught between gradualist and revolutionary ideas of progress, as in Asia's image of the 'sun-awakened avalanche'

whose mass,  
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered  
there  
Flake after flake: in Heaven-defying  
minds  
As thought by thought is piled, till some  
great truth  
Is loosened, and the nations echo round  
Shaken by their roots: as do the  
mountains now.

However, the title grates: this would serve very well as a *Prometheus Unbound* chapter, but under the heading of 'The Political Poet' seems almost deliberately provocative. Keach is resolutely ahistorical, wilfully disregarding the Shelley who was determined to play a role in the radical politics of the Regency decade, read Cobbett's *Political Register* even during his Italian exile and wrote *The Mask of Anarchy*

after Peterloo. Here, as elsewhere, too much is abstracted, as though the authors were in thrall to Hazlitt's judgment, quoted by Keach, that Shelley had 'no earth-bound feelings, no rooted prejudices ... nothing that belongs to the mighty trunk and hard husk of nature and habit'. This might be true of a tendency in Shelley – certainly in Shelley criticism – and says much about Hazlitt, but is at best only half-true. 'Julian and Maddalo' shows Shelley's awareness of this trait in himself, presented in relation to Byronic cynicism. To Richard Holmes, it is 'the first of his masterworks, one of the four best long poems he ever wrote', but strangely passes almost without mention in this volume. The poem is an astonishing product of Shelley's creative friendship with Byron, which, like his similarly fraught and productive relationships with Mary Shelley and William Godwin, is given very little space here.

Other reservations concern Morton's slightly ungenerous wielding of the editorial prerogative, which leaves him as the author of three out of the eleven sections, including the introduction, the history of Shelley's reception and the final chapter (which is also the longest). All but two of the chapters are by scholars in North America and the volume savours strongly of Shelley in the wake of the Yale School – surely Morton could have let one of his own sections go in aid of a more representative sample? Morton observes that Shelley's reception in America 'has been generally happier' than in Britain and this volume shows Shelley after the Yale School and Paul De Man's 'Shelley Disfigured', where a reading of *The Triumph of Life* must be as hard, brilliant and occasionally opaque as, well, *The Triumph of Life*. So, for Jerrold E. Hogle ('Language and Form'), the 'more disruptive, decentred, highly metaphorical style' of that poem is emphatically an advance on the younger poet's habit of 'prioritizing "things" over thoughts and thoughts over words'. This points to modern divisions to rival the infamous nineteenth-century rift between beautiful and radical Shelleys, and critics who have read Shelley in the light of feminism, nineteenth-century science or Romantic Orientalism are not well represented here. Neither is the diverse

tradition of writers such as Holmes, Paul Foot and, most recently, Ann Wroe, who have cut across radical and aesthetic Shelleys to situate their work somewhere between the academic and the popular – an appropriately Shelleyan place to be. There is much here to stimulate students, but those reading Shelley for the first time should also be pointed towards the alternative critical and biographical traditions that are not given much space in this volume.

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**Michael O'Neill and Mark Sandy, eds,**  
***Romanticism: Critical Concepts in***  
***Literary and Cultural Studies*. 4 vols.**  
**London and New York: Routledge,**  
**2006. Pp. 1,592. £750.**  
**ISBN 9780415247221**

Books, theses, and articles continue to parade the term 'Romanticism' on their title pages, or at least surreptitiously, beneath the covers and often in scare quotes. In the most recent scholarship the older and somewhat anachronistic term has been largely displaced by 'the Romantic Period'. This is of course another type of Romanticism, along with 'Perverted Romanticism', a term coined by Richard Sha in his investigation into medical science and aesthetics in the period. More continue to appear: Transatlantic Romanticism, Romantic Occultism, Electrical Romanticism, and the like. Amidst the endless plurality of cognates and subcategories, Michael O'Neill and Mark Sandy's four volume collection of major and lesser known essays published over a near century-long span, from 1909 to 2003, is indispensable. The 63 essays unfold before us a treasure trove of knowledge and thought-provoking questions, answers, and further questions. And the concisely written volume and section introductions help to orientate the reader around a number of persistent debates as well as to map out the very best exemplars of traditional and new areas of research.

Volume I (Definitions and Romantic Form) begins with the great question – What is Romanticism? – and moves on to map a range of literary forms and genres in the period, including influential reflections on approaches to formalist criticism. In the second volume (Romanticism and History) we have sections on contextualism and historicisms, orientalism and post-colonialism, and science. This is a wonderfully compendious volume, moving from Marilyn Butler’s well-known piece on *Caleb Williams* to the closing essays on ecocriticism. Appropriately enough volume III (Romanticism and the Margins) has the most wide-ranging sections, including a strong if necessarily selective sample of criticisms on women’s writing, a number of impressive pieces grouped under ‘Minor’ Romantics, and a final section devoted to deconstruction, reader response, and ontology. This latter section is strikingly short considering that it covers methodologies that many would acknowledge as being amongst the most influential in modern Romantic studies. But, it is important to note, deconstructive and reader-response criticisms are dispersed throughout the collection, thereby dramatising the editors’ attempts to point out the complex interconnectivities and discontinuities between the very best of Romantic scholarship. The final volume (Romanticism, Belief, and Philosophy) explicitly addresses mythopoeia and theophany amongst other topics. This volume includes a number of well-known essays that explore the connections between Romanticism and modern literary and cultural theory, including notable accounts of Abrams, Cavell, and psychoanalysis.

O’Neill and Sandy have ordered their materials in the right way in arranging the essays thematically rather than chronologically – rupturing teleologies in order to emphasise continuity and debate within intellectual communities. At the same time, with the highly useful chronological table in volume I and in their introductions, the editors give a sense of the historiography of twentieth-century Romantic criticism even without locating its origins securely. The editors begin not with the triumvirate of Wellek, Lovejoy, and Frye, nor with Bloom, Hartman, and McGann, all of

whom are well represented here, but rather with Arthur Bradley’s ‘Shelley’s View of Poetry’. This essay from the *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909) has proved highly useful not only to Shelleyans but also to political theorists and neoplatonists alike, though less so to literary historians interested in locating Romanticism as a cultural movement. By displacing the traditional focus the editors deftly demonstrate the relevance of these essays today, not as manifestoes but as interventions in ongoing debates. Yet, for all of the revisionism of this book it maintains an overwhelming interest in radical culture. Needless to say, this is largely because much of the best work on Romanticism over the past century has held such an interest and so, inevitably, recent work on Romantic-period conservatism is overlooked.

Similarly the dominant focus on the canonical poets, especially Keats, Shelley and Coleridge, owes much to the historical developments of Romantic studies in the twentieth century. Consequently figures of great interest today, such as Walter Scott, Robinson, and Mary Shelley, are relegated to Volume III, Part 7: ‘Minor’ Romantics, prose, and drama. Such anomalism – especially in the case of the bestselling novelist Scott – becomes a great strength of the collection as the editors astutely use the texts in this volume to demonstrate ‘how complex the question of ‘marginality’ is, both in the Romantic period and in Romantic studies’. In particular, for the editors, ‘critical negotiations with the marginal aspects of Romanticism have centred on the historical rediscovery of women writers of the era, and have questioned the male-dominated canon of Romantic literature’. But this is not to suggest that marginality inculcates insularity. On the contrary, the editors offer an admirable and altogether successful way of thinking about how productive late twentieth-century Romantic scholarship can still be:

Initially, the feminist shaping of Romantic boundaries sought to redress the gender imbalance in Romantic studies. But its emphasis on a better historical conception of the period also shifted critical attention on to supposedly 'minor' Romantic writers (for example, John Clare, George Crabbe, and Leigh Hunt), previously overlooked literary genres, and a host of little known or neglected works (for instance, Mary Shelley's *The Fields of Fancy*, Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*, and George Crabbe's *The Borough*).

For all of its comprehensiveness the editors of these volumes are clear that they have provided a selection dictated by and catered towards current trends and professional and even pedagogical interests, as reflected by the most recent publications and undergraduate syllabi. However, the vast majority of these essays can be found in JSTOR and elsewhere, particularly the older pieces, and so the price is somewhat off-putting. It is certainly beyond the means of advanced undergraduates and postgraduates, many of whom would benefit the most from these indispensable volumes. Nevertheless, *Romanticism* will become a library staple in an age of increasing digitisation. Its value lies not only in bringing together authoritative discussions of the formation and discrimination of Romanticism but also in the very best of Romantic studies over the past century more broadly. Far from being an anthology of outdated scholarship, this is a highly thought-provoking and provocative collection that deserves renewed attention in an age of Lovejoyan pluralities.

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**Bernard Beatty, Tony Howe and Charles E. Robinson, eds, *Liberty and Poetic Licence: New Essays on Byron*. Liverpool University Press, 2008. Pp. 336. £65. ISBN 9780853235897**

This volume is appropriately titled: *Liberty and Poetic Licence: New Essays on Byron* gestures towards a new direction in Byron scholarship. In a very Byronic move, the sense in which this volume is 'making it new' begins 'with the beginning' when Beatty clearly outlines the potential of thematic studies of Byron to incorporate a vast range of scholarship and varying critical approaches. The topic of 'Liberty' and 'Poetic Licence' is markedly apt; not only because it speaks to our current intellectual climate, as demonstrated by the recent *Taking Liberties* exhibition at the British Library, but because, as Beatty rightly asserts, 'Byron is the poet of liberty'.

The consistent attention given to the central theme by each essay means that the volume achieves its first aim of working as a whole. The light-handedness of the editorial panel should also be noted: Charles E. Robinson has held back from contributing an essay and Beatty's illuminating introduction is of modest length. The editors prudently indicate that the collection is intended as the start of a wide topic and one that will undoubtedly be taken up by scholars in the future.

The collection pays attention to the better known titles in Byron's *oeuvre* - *Childe Harold* is here, as is *Don Juan* - but also reminds us of the importance of lesser known material such as the overlooked *juvenilia* and some of the later works; *The Island* in particular receives an uncharacteristically large share of attention in several essays. This approach to the primary material is echoed in the volume's evident engagement with previous scholarship: that references to Jerome McGann come a close second to references to Byron himself, does not limit the sense in which the volume is pushing critical scholarship in new directions. Contributors also demonstrate an engagement with more radical scholarship, such as Judith

Butler and Camille Paglia. That the contributors offer new readings of the texts is equally true of both well-established names and relative newcomers, notable in two differing readings of Byron's *Cain*: whilst Joan Blythe ('Byron, Milton, and Doctrines of Christian Liberty') opens up possibilities for new readings of the figure of Abel, both theological and literary, Ralph O'Connor ('Byron's Afterlife and the Emancipation of Geology') reads the poem as containing 'a coherent scientific agenda' which, he argues, contributed to the use of geology as a weapon against the church.

The most heartening strength of the volume is that the subject matter enables the co-existence of attention to Byron's poetry and his life. The limits of autobiographical criticism are noted by Jonathon Shears ('Aesthetic Dialectic in *Sardanapalus*') who rightly indicates that this approach leaves textual questions unanswered for many years. Shears is supported by fellow contributor Tom Mole ('The Regime of Visibility and the Possibility of Resistance') who illustrates the dangers of over-emphasizing the connection between biographical conjecture and poetic production which can lead to the marginalization of texts such as *The Bride of Abydos*, the unfair neglect of which Mole's essay begins to rectify. Timothy Webb's 'Byron and The Politics of Publication' exemplifies the potency of selective and informative biographical examples; the essay serves as both an effective coda and also an illuminating piece in its own right.

The weaker essays in the collection adhere to the precedent of placing Byron's life above his work which leads to conjectures of questionable value. Whether or not, for example, Byron fancied Napoleon, as considered by John Clubbe ('Byron, Napoleon, and Imaginative Freedom') and Jonathan Gross ('Byron and Staël on Liberty'), provides limited benefit to an approach to the poetry. Whilst biographical contexts should not be overlooked, Michael O'Neill's close attention to the brilliance of the poetry itself ('Freedom and Fatality in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Cantos III and IV') causes us to ask why this sort of approach is so often denied Byron's work? Such neglect is arguably

why the merits of Byron's poetry are so often called into question: there is not enough of this type of essay in Byron studies though, as this volume demonstrates, it's something that a thematic approach encourages. Tony Howe ('Byron, Johnson, and the Bowles Controversy') and Gavin Hopps ('Byron and Grammatical Freedom') demonstrate the possibilities in historically informed close-readings of Byron's poetry. The former challenges the categorisation of Byron's work as either Augustan or Romantic, freeing modern criticism from long-held assumptions and providing a nuanced expansion of the argument to stanzas from *Don Juan's* 'Dedication'. Hopps traces some very important parallels between Byron's tendency for grammatical errors and his major influences; there is an implicit suggestion that in sharing such 'errors' with Spenser, Shakespeare and Pope, Byron could be keeping worse company. Hopps engages with a wider Romantic concern for the subject; in 'On Grammar', John Clare argues persuasively that a writer, if not able to attain excellence in composition by the possession of 'an enlightened and liberal mind' then 'the niceties of intricate Lectures on grammar with its utmost perfection will not attain it for him'.

The collection is also striking in the level of attention it gives to the subject of influence which in itself poses questions regarding the extent of Byron's creative liberty or independence. The usual suspects are present (Shelley, Shakespeare and Pope) alongside less familiar candidates; notably, Howe considers the influence of Samuel Johnson and Stauffer contends for a new source for the Haidée Cantos of *Don Juan*.

My biggest reservation about this collection is a distinct lack of female scholars. Fourteen of the sixteen contributors are male and, though it is heartening to see Kernberger and Blythe numbering among the more senior contributors to the volume, it is odd that more senior female Byron scholars are not included. What is more concerning is the complete lack of any lesser-known female Byronists. I would very much doubt that this is merely an oversight on the part of such a competent panel of editors. If, then,

this is reflective of a general dearth then sadly this augurs very ill for the future of Byron studies.

It would be unfair, however, to end on such a critical note. The volume achieves what it has set out to do – and more – by inviting a reconsideration of how we approach Byron. This invitation is not only extended by the volume as a whole but backed up by each individual essay which calls for further contribution and extended dialogue. The most notable achievement of the collection is the way in which it simultaneously builds upon past scholarship whilst offering a platform for future Byron scholarship.

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**Carl Thompson, ed., *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives*. Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2007. Pp. 226. Pb.: £9.99. ISBN 9781842331293**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 1805, the *Earl of Abergavenny* sank in eleven fathoms off the coast of Portland. The ship was captained by William Wordsworth's brother, John, who drowned along with two-thirds of his crew, 266 souls in all, in what was one of the worst wrecks ever to take place in British waters. At least nine separate accounts of the wreck were produced which diverged markedly in style and tone, though all were rooted in the account of one survivor, Thomas Gilpin. There has been a good deal written about the anguished uncertainty felt by William and Dorothy as they tried to reconstitute an acceptable memory of their brother from these fragments. However, Carl Thompson's superbly approachable new anthology of shipwreck narratives offers an essential obverse to this more familiar approach: a glimpse of the powerful array of conflicting desires and conventions that yielded this clutter of discordant approaches. Thompson hopes to 'demonstrate both the range and resonance of shipwreck literature in the Romantic period'. In his ample introduction, Thompson underlines the participation of shipwreck narrative in

various literary forms: 'moral "improving" literature', 'sensationalistic horror literature', 'reportage', 'spiritual autobiography', 'travel-writing', and 'proto-ethnography'. Thompson unpicks a fascinating quality of these narratives which strained to formulate simultaneously a model for individual heroism and 'a more generalised sense of crisis in the period' and, in doing so, could shiver a life like John Wordsworth's into a muddle of distressingly unrecognizable fragments.

*Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives* is set apart from previous collections such as Groscott's *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Eras* (Chatham, 1997), or Huntress's *Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, 1586-1860* (Iowa, 1974) by its selectivity. Whereas Groscott has his sights set on comprehensiveness and offers lists and short accounts of 'some 1500 ships, vessels of many nations, naval and mercantile' taken from the same period covered by *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives*, Thompson limits himself to nine individual narratives. These are chosen with an eye to variety, however, in an effort 'to strike a balance between including on the one hand what one might regard as the major shipwreck accounts of the period [...]; and on the other hand a range of more obscure or ephemeral material, broadsides, pamphlets, magazine pieces and the like'. This is a particularly strong approach to this narrative form insofar as it not only appreciates the significance of particular accounts to more familiar works such as *Don Juan*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, but also attempts to produce something like the atmosphere in which any individual narrative would have been read. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, there were, on average, five or six wrecks every day. Oddly, therefore, reading *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives* over a couple of days is to experience the wrecks it chronicles in something like real time. Taken together, Thompson's selections, which include broadsides and their illustrations in facsimile among longer accounts, simulate in a small way the sort of saturation that these narratives achieved around the turn of the

nineteenth century. As J. G. Dalyell, one of the first British compilers of shipwreck narratives puts it, in Britain ‘every individual is either immediately or remotely connected with maritime affairs, and the casualties necessarily attendant on sea-faring pursuits’.

Thompson stresses that what power these stories possessed derived from an amplitude achieved through their repetition in various forms – magazines, newspapers, book-length accounts. Thompson does offer suggestions for additional reading and lists other contemporary accounts of each wreck. Yet, given the significance Thompson attaches to this strategy of contextualization, a more critical set of endnotes would be welcome. *Don Juan*, for instance, satirises the account of the *Abergavenny*. Yet this significant point of intertextuality is left unremarked. Moreover, in the case of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, variants between versions of the narrative had an immense bearing on Wordsworth’s state of mind, to the extent that the poet himself amended by hand the copy he had at Dove cottage. According to E. L. McAdam Jr., the inconsistencies in the renderings of his brother’s death caused Wordsworth to become so ‘emotionally unstrung that the event became a turning point in his career’. The fault may lie with the publisher, however, for the textual apparatus in general is unsatisfactory: there are no page headings, making it difficult to find individual narratives and the notes associated with them, and there is at least one printing error where pages have become reversed, leaving the reader feeling that the book was produced with less care than it deserves.

These quibbles aside, *Romantic-Era Shipwreck Narratives* offers tales, gripping in their own right, but which also form a fascinating and adroitly theorized context for many canonical works.

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**Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. 292. £56. ISBN 0199232792**

**David Duff and Catherine Jones, eds, *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Press, 2007. Pp. 294. £49.50. ISBN 9780838756188**

When the Young Ireland intellectual Thomas Davis was considering Irish cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century he contrasted the efforts of eighteenth-century patriots to restore a parliament to Ireland to the work of writers, antiquarians, and musicians whose work in establishing and transmitting Irish culture resulted in (albeit at times unwittingly) fostering a sense of political independence. According to Davis, these later cultural nationalists ‘saw in Scotland a perfect model’ of a national literature (*‘Ballad Poetry of Ireland’*, 1846). Scotland was a model for Irish thinkers throughout much of the Romantic period, although influence was by no means unidirectional – Sir Walter Scott was clear about his fiction’s indebtedness to Maria Edgeworth, for instance. The 1780s and 1790s saw increased cross-fertilisation of political ideas and aesthetic goals, and after the Irish Act of Union in 1801, the Scottish experience of 1707 was held as model and standard of incorporation into the United Kingdom.

The prominence of Irish and Scottish relations in the Romantic period has increasingly become a focus of scholarly research, and the archipelagic context of Romanticism has enriched studies of literary and cultural formations in the period. As yet, though, Irish and Scottish variations on Romanticism have yet to take rightful place on library bookshelves, and so these two volumes must be welcomed as potential initiators of further debate about the fate of Romanticism in Ireland and Scotland (or indeed, the fate of Ireland and Scotland in Romanticism).

Murray Pittock’s erudite yet occasionally frustrating book argues for ‘the persistence [and]

development of a separate public sphere in Scotland and Ireland', something that unites it with Duff and Jones' collection. The exclusion of Scottish and Irish writers from narratives of Romanticism (particularly Robert Burns) is something that Pittock rightly challenges. Burns's disappearance from twentieth-century accounts of Romanticism's 'visionary company' leads to perhaps the finest chapter in *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*. Pittock's account of Burns's 'literature of combat' could be equally applied to his own critical project - the book is at its best when offering combative defences of traditionally marginalised writers. Pittock is particularly strong on the role eighteenth-century Scots poetry had in pre-figuring themes that would follow in the Romantic period. Essays on Allan Ramsay and Robert Ferguson especially are useful additions to discussions of poetry in the period, and offer a corrective to Anglocentric narratives of the late-eighteenth century revolution in poetics. It might be argued that Pittock is less comfortable with Irish writers, and the book does give over most of its space to Scottish prefiguring and variation of Romanticism. Sydney Owenson and Thomas Moore in particular get comparatively short shrift, while Maria Edgeworth is read predominantly within the context of Adam Smith. While the latter is an important facet of her work, the overall sense is that there is a fundamental imbalance between the Irish and Scottish romanticism of the book's title. However, that is perhaps a minor quibble - Pittock makes more than enough gestures towards Irish literature (although as with all such studies, Irish language material is largely absent) to ensure this book will be a stimulating read for Irish Studies scholars.

While Pittock argues forcefully for distinctive Irish and Scottish versions of Romanticism, his attempts to link them sometimes lead to certain lexical contortions - neologisms at times seem to overcome his argument (one page alone introduces us to 'altermentality,' 'anglopetal,' 'anglofugal,' and 'Fratrionism'). While it might be the case that pioneering work requires a new vocabulary, the accretion of such terms in such a short space of time clutters an already (and in

some respects, unnecessarily) thematically dense introduction. Perhaps the most uncomfortable phrase is 'Fratrionism,' a term Pittock uses to describe the sense of personal conflict felt by the disjunction between national filiations and state affiliation, and the effect that this had on Scottish and Irish participation within the larger horizon of the British empire. This is a fascinating subject, and one that Pittock is right to highlight as a global dimension of Irish and Scottish cultural self-definition in the period. It is a shame then that he chooses such a heavily-gendered term - conjoining fraternity and patriotism runs the risk of homogenising Irish and Scottish colonial encounters into a male homosocial discourse. Pittock argues that 'the term is mostly applied to writers and public servants in the empire, so tends to be male', thereby performing a massive act of occlusion (and failing to take note of central roles played by women in travel-writing, missionary work, and other forms of colonial encounter and definition). A far more fruitful project might involve analysing how writers like Sydney Owenson or Susan Ferrier positioned their work within an overt language of patriotism and imperialism, and how male writers incorporated or occluded such powerfully gendered projects of national and imperial definition.

Duff and Jones' volume is the result of a seminal 2002 conference held in the University of Aberdeen. While conference proceedings are, by their nature, very often mixed bags lacking an overall narrative, it is to the credit of editors and contributors that this is such a rich volume for the student of Romanticism. The title boldly proclaims *the Romantic Aesthetic*, a daring use of the definite article. As the editors point out in their succinct and cogent introduction, the zeitgeist of the Romantic period was 'intrinsically and obsessively comparative', thus suggesting that Irish/Scottish comparative studies by their nature 'enter into Romanticism's own characteristic form of historical self-consciousness'. The heterogeneity of the articles, therefore, can be legitimately seen as reflective of Romanticism's own polyvalent nature, and through their heterogeneity bringing into clearer focus not just 'the' Romantic aesthetic, but the

ideological formations that structure such an aesthetic.

To the general reader some of the essays might appear to be on irredeemably arcane subject matter – even specialists in Romanticism might find themselves lost when confronting essays on Anne Grant, Prince Hohenloe, and an anonymous pamphlet, *The Shade of Wallace* (covered in essays by Kenneth McNeil, Claire Connolly, and Nancy Moore Goslee respectively). It is to the authors' credit though that such material acts as a way in to discussing weightier themes concerned with gender and travel, popular culture, and the role of print media in the provincial public sphere. Obscure texts here are not a refuge from challenging intellectual material, but stepping stones towards issues that are at the heart of much current discussion of the problematic cultural politics at play in Britain and Ireland in the Romantic period.

Kevin Barry and Fiona Stafford offer more canonical readings of Romantic literature, with Barry's essay examining the role of paper money in the formulation of a Romantic poetics, offering an interesting reading of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' as not so much an interesting psychological experiment as a witty Burkean critique of the phantasmic nature of modern currency. Barry's essay is perhaps the least 'Irish' or 'Scottish' in the collection, and yet perhaps ironically given the project's aims, the one most concerned with delineating a 'Romantic aesthetic'. Stafford's essay on Wordsworth's Scottish excursion of 1803 examines the 'expectation of visionariness' that the poet felt even before he reached Scotland, and the importance of William Wallace, James Macpherson's Ossian poetry, and, especially, Robert Burns to his subsequent writing, with Stafford arguing that 'the trip had renewed Wordsworth's faith in visionary possibility by revealing the importance of people living in places at once traditional and extraordinary'. Perhaps it could be argued that Cumberland had offered the same experience, and indeed Wordsworth seems to find such a confluence nearly everywhere he travels (with the exception of London). By focusing on the prior example of

Scottish authors, however, Stafford manages to give some credence to the importance she places on Scotland to Wordsworth's imaginative development.

Stafford manages to avoid the danger that Romanticists have when dealing with Scotland and Ireland of retreading Celtic twilight clichés and it is to the credit of the volume that such unconscious reiterations of a ('the') Romantic ideology are circumvented by all of the contributors. Timothy Webb's witty essay explodes such a danger from the off by surveying contemporary stereotypes of the impulsive Irish and mechanical Scots in English writers like Keats and Hazlitt. Other standout essays include Jane Moore on Thomas Moore's satires (a neglected aspect of a neglected poets' work), Catherine Jones on Sir Walter Scott and David Wilkie, and Cliona Ó Gallchoir on Ossianism in Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl*. The book ends with a characteristically erudite and humane essay by Ian Duncan which demonstrates why connecting Ireland and Scotland can have a beneficial effect on addressing current concerns in academic studies of Romantic period cultural productions. A reading of Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui* and Christian Isobel Johnstone's *Elizabeth de Bruce*, Duncan's essay demonstrates that the national tale was not simply a genre providing a unidirectional flow of information or discourse from the Celtic periphery to the English core, but could instead provide a site for comparison and disputation between Ireland, Scotland, and the other peripheral areas of the newly United Kingdom. Edgeworth and Johnstone may have been involved in providing a 'consoling fiction crafted upon psychic layers of trauma and oblivion', but it is to both of these volumes' credit that they open a discursive space for critical engagement with a dynamic site of Romantic cultural activity.

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**Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English Writing in Seventeenth-Century Ireland*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 308. £50.  
ISBN 9780521843027**

**David Duff and Catherine Jones, eds, *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Press, 2007. Pp. 294. £49.50.  
ISBN 9780838756188**

**Susan B. Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Owenson*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009.  
Pp. 220. £55. ISBN 9780754662037**

In his 'Of History and Romance' (1797) William Godwin reflects on the writing and understanding of history. On the one hand, he argues, history can be written 'entirely in terms of abstraction', focusing on 'the progress and varieties of civilisation'. On the other hand, the conjectural history in the form of romance traces a history of the mind of the nation. The eighteenth-century canon of abstract, conjectural and philosophical histories documents the period's occupation with the problematic idea of 'Britishness' and 'the mind of the British nation'. 'Britishness' was not something intrinsic to eighteenth-century sensibilities. Rather it was superimposed onto English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish identities.

Since the 1970s with J. G. A. Pocock's project of a 'new British history' that struggled with the contexts of identity formation in the Atlantic archipelago, the idea of the British Isles, the nascent British Empire and the 'Celtic Fringe' has been rethought in various ways. Postcolonial criticism with its variant Comparative colonialism looked into the relationships between the different British colonies and the 'motherland'. As Ina Ferris has shown in her study *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (2002), the idea of 'Union' differed significantly from other colonial

structures. The paradoxical economy of the civic Union between Britain, Ireland and Scotland is characterized by a discord between English cultural imperialism, Celtic primitivism and Celtic self-representation. Homi Bhaba identifies this ambivalence as colonial mimicry; 'almost the same, but not quite', domestic-yet-different. What collections such as Alan Rawes and Gerard Carruther's *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (2003) and Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington's *Romanticism's Debatable Lands* (2007) have shown is the fruitful cross-fertilization between the peripheries which in many ways remapped the cultural geography of the Atlantic archipelago.

The insecurities around national and cultural identities stem, certainly in the case of Ireland, from centuries preceding the Act of Union. Anglo-Norman and Old English self-fashioning and the essential insecurity of Irish Protestant identity that has emerged historically in Ireland since the Reformation gave rise to a particular ambivalence in Irish colonial identity and discourse. The conflict is not simply binary (between the Irish and the English, between Catholics and Protestants) but between the Old English, the new English, the Catholic Irish, between soldiers and settlers.

Specifically Anglo-Irish and Irish identity formation in the seventeenth century is the topic of Deana Rankin's book *Between Spenser and Swift: English Writing in Seventeenth-Century Ireland* (2005). Rankin seeks to map the history of English writing in Ireland between, as the title promises, Spenser and Swift. Rankin does not only focus on Anglo-Irish literature of the period but includes an impressive and well-researched variety of texts and performances by Irish Catholics and Old English, all in English. What emerges from her book is the wide and changing range of texts that are difficult to pin down in their emblematic 'betweenness'. Thus, when Rankin summarizes that the 'voice of the English-language writer in Ireland has shifted over the course of the seventeenth century from colonial policy-maker to colonial nationalist', her research and her texts do not document this as clearly and definitely. Indeed, the two pillars of Rankin's study, Spenser and Swift, are

(famously) not consistent at all in their attitude towards Ireland. Nonetheless, the strengths of Rankin's work are considerable: a fascinating body of hitherto unknown primary texts, a wide purview and a detailed discussion of individual texts that provide a significant step towards our understanding of the Irish and English colonial tie.

What Rankin left out of the story is the contribution of Irish language texts to the experience of the Irish Catholics. Seathrún Céitinn's prose work and the *Annála Ríochta Éireann* (*Annals of the Four Masters*) provide important glimpses into, what Godwin would call, the history of the early modern Irish mind. The new politicized Gaelic poetry in the seventeenth century promoted the cause of the Irish dispossessed and the Irish Catholics organised in *Confederate Ireland* between 1641-49. After 1693, D. Ó Bruadair, A. Ó Rathaille, E. Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin, and B. Merriman and the Irish *aísling* tradition in the eighteenth century lamented the aspirations of a landed class in reduced circumstances but also provided utopian visions of a post- or pre-colonial Ireland.

The political potential of Early Modern Irish was ignored by the Romantic Celtic revival and derided by writers such as Hazlitt and Maturin as a merely 'gaudy and ornate' language symbolic of the lesser Irish character (Timothy Webb, in Duff and Jones). Scottish instead was seen by some as a language of reason and clarity. The Romantic Celtic revival thus identified Irish (and Scottish) cultures and literatures as uniquely Irish and Scottish, at the same time, distinguished it as a variant 'Other' from the modern, civil British nation.

In this vein, the 12 thought-provoking essays in *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, edited by David Duff and Catherine Jones confirm that Scotland and Scottishness, Ireland and Irishness assumed different and distinct meanings in different contexts. The collection therefore is a necessary and 'comprehensive remapping of the cultural geography of British and Irish, or "archipelagic" Romanticism'. The essays carefully query the notion of a hegemonic Celtic 'Other', indeed of a hegemonic idea of 'Celtic', and explore various kinds of cross-

fertilising cultural dialogue between Ireland and Scotland. The volume moves beyond the familiar discussion of the national tale and the bardic song (Hamish Mathison) to travelogues (Kenneth McNeil) and a fascinating analysis of Irish and Scottish as a cultural metaphor (Timothy Webb). Remarkably relevant is Kevin Barry's chapter on the impact of the Bank Restriction Period (1793 to 1815) on Romantic writing. The promissory nature of paper money was the food for a range of literary texts that engaged with an often nationalistic distrust in the unstable nature of paper as a measure of value, and the ephemerality of national identity. The Royal Bank of Scotland, for instance, originated in the Equivalent Society, set up shortly after the Act of Union of 1707, to compensate shareholders for their losses in the Darien Scheme. The Company of Scotland, established as an independent trading company, thus undermined Scotland's financial sovereignty in the long run with its unsuccessful speculations. The printing of Scottish banknotes during the Bank Restriction Period was a feeble attempt to reclaim some of this independence. 'The Age of Paper' was satirized by Thomas Love Peacock in his *Paper Money Lyrics* (1825-26) as nothing else than a society based on the 'undeliverable promise': the hopeless promise of cultural and political sovereignty.

Clíona Ó Gallchoir's careful and convincing essay on Ossianism and *The Wild Irish Girl* and Susan B. Egenolf's *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Owenson* recognize the political discourse that is reinserted into Anglo-Irish literature of the time. Momentous events such as the 1798 Irish Rebellion and the Act of Union infiltrate the novels by Owenson and Edgeworth as narratives of rebellion and uprisings. Juxtaposed to these narrative strands are the editorial and cultural glosses that celebrate Irish culture. Whilst the catalogue of ancient Irish achievements, ranging from literature, music, language and mythology and government of land and people (all glossed with long footnotes and evidence) are somewhat nostalgic 'folklore', it also uncovers an Ireland of different histories. History and national identity 'are constructed by interpretation', concludes

Egenolf, 'and these three authors, in employing the gloss, draw readers' attention to this construction that is far from fixed and final'. In her analysis of Hamilton, Egenolf also confirms what Timothy Webb in Duff and Jones suggests that the Romantic Celtic Revival and the Oriental Renaissance run alongside British colonial discourses. What all three books reviewed here show is that the seventeenth-century and Romantic 'literary scene in Britain remained stubbornly factional, a literary system constituted and energized by its internal differences' (Duff and Jones).

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**Felicity James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth: Reading Friendship in the 1790s*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Pp. 265. £50. ISBN 9780230545243**

Taking the idea of friendship as her point of departure, Felicity James describes Charles Lamb's role in the formulation of British Romanticism in the revolutionary decade. Friendship is for James the crucial indicator of a wider cultural complex encompassing Burkean conservatism, Godwinian political rationalism and various aesthetic debates among some of the most renowned poets of the age.

Where Coleridge and Wordsworth are often depicted among friends in 'the small embowered space' at Nether Stowey, Lamb's presence in this often-imagined community is here shown to be complex, fascinating, and crucially constitutive of the great poetry that emerges out of that space. Lamb leaves Nether Stowey reeling, self-conscious about his own behaviour, unable to deracinate himself psychologically from the community, and eager to read the poetic products of the friendships formed in it. He is particularly hungry for Wordsworth's 'Lines Left Upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree' because, as he says 'it will recall to me the tones of all of your voices.' Lamb's desire to hear again the embowered voices of his fellow poets, James

suggests, 'gives us an image of the Nether Stowey household as a place of discussion and shared reading, a collaborative space of mutual creation.' This seems an echo of James's avowed manifesto:

Although this book is about how friendship was read by (and in regard to) Lamb and his circle in the period, it is also about the importance of reading in these friendships. These were friendships forged through shared reading and mutual criticism, expressed through poems dedicated to one another in dialogue with each other's work.

However harmonious this image might seem, James uses Lamb's problematic relationship to the others depicted in it to illuminate the fascinating and often creative divergences and disjunctures that cannot be written out of the history of this most collaborative strand of Romanticism. For all his enthusiasm, Lamb was 'silent and awkward' in the company of Wordsworth and friends, finding it hard to speak just as Coleridge (famously) found it hard to listen. James argues that Lamb's diffidence shows how Nether Stowey 'may not... have been an entirely harmonious reading community.'

It is much to James's credit that she never tries to smooth over or delete the disjunctures she describes. James's theme is friendship in all its stilted intimacy, its public demonstration, its private messiness or even tragedy. She adroitly draws out from the seemingly trivial to the more widely significant, to render a nascent Romanticism in which much is at stake in both friendship and antipathy:

A domestic quarrel amongst friends might have much larger ideological implications. An allusion to a friend's poem can open into a fierce political and literary dialogue, where attitudes to friendship, reading and writing, and society, are simultaneously negotiated. I want to restore our sense of why that friendly pairing of Lamb and Lloyd – and their apparently innocuous verse of friendship – might have been viewed as dangerous by the *Anti-Jacobin*.

In her last sentence James is referring to the Gillray illustration adorning the cover of the book, (originally featured in the final edition of *The Anti-Jacobin* in 1798) slightly depicting Lamb and his poetic collaborator Charles Lloyd as a frog and a toad, sitting obediently near the mouth of a 'cornucopia of ignorance' spewing some of the most famous poetry of the day. As James suggests, Lamb might seem to modern readers a surprising inclusion in this overtly political illustration, partly because his collection *Blank Verse* has been read as an apolitical celebration of the domestic affections, and partly because he has in recent decades been written off as someone for whom 'gustatory sensory pleasures' are more important than the social tumult of the 1790s. How can Lamb, perhaps now more famous now as someone 'who turns away from political threat to admire a tea-cup' and 'Apparently more interested in roast pig than Peterloo' share illustration-space with some of the most incendiary literary libertarians of the decade?

James wishes to halt the abrogation of Lamb's political or social significance which originated with 1930s literary critics such as Denys Thompson and Cyril Connolly. Both avoided unpacking the peculiar significance of Lamb's conspicuous consumption and his predilection for the domestic at this most unsettled time in the political life of the country. Lamb's gluttonous proclivities, surely deserving of attention precisely *because* of what they might be shutting out, have for decades been used to relegate his importance to the grand narrative of

Romantic collaboration. With James's book, we might now begin to recognize at least how these proclivities allowed Lamb to forge friendships of lasting significance not only to him, but to the cultural history of the country.

*Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth* is a great achievement. It is a paean to the profitable complexity of friendship in a time when talk among friends could potentially result in charges of sedition, or in the mass-production of verse with which we are still familiar.

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**Duncan Wu, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. 400. £25. ISBN 9780199549580**

**Duncan Wu, ed., *New Writings of William Hazlitt*. 2 vols. Pp. 1,144. Oxford University Press, 2007. £132. ISBN 9780199207060**

The time is right for a biography which can properly represent the new version of Hazlitt which has developed over the last ten years or so. Hazlitt has a committed, loyal, and enthusiastic following and he is emerging, more than ever, as a figure who embodies and illustrates many of the current pressing issues with which cultural critics of the Romantic period are engaged: print culture, celebrity, metropolitan identities, creative communities of feeling and of ideas. Alongside Stanley Jones, A. C. Grayling, Tom Paulin, and Jon Cook, Duncan Wu has already added much to the store of Hazlitt studies over recent years and these two works confirm the significance of his scholarly contribution. His biography offers new insight into Hazlitt's early American connections, particularly the role his father played in East Coast dissenting circles in the mid 1780s. There is also fascinating material on his links with intellectual coteries in Liverpool and Manchester, including a longstanding connection with the printer John

M'Creery; his inheritance from the culture of dissent through his father and Hackney College; and a detailed examination of his complex entanglements with numerous editors and publishers. The two large, handsomely produced, volumes of *New Writings of William Hazlitt* add substantially to the canon, containing as they do 205 new attributions of various strengths, mainly drawn from his work for *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Times*, and *The Atlas*. At the heart of the new material are reviews of Wordsworth and Coleridge and leading actors Kean, Jordan, and Kemble, as well as articles on the trials of publisher William Hone.

Wu's biography sets itself an admirable task in attempting a justification of Hazlitt's independent free-thinking and an impossible one in claiming that its subject is 'the first modern man'. It is, of course, not easy to substantiate such a claim and even if one were to accept the premise about 'modernity' there are more obvious contenders for such a title: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance. Most of us might accept that Hazlitt embodies or illustrates certain aspects of print and popular culture, that he raises questions about the nature of literary celebrity, that he is one of a new breed of writers for whom the identity of the 'man-of-letters' is particularly problematic; but we might not see this as peculiar to him. Byron, Leigh Hunt, Tom Paine, and a host of others might have an equal claim. Undeterred by the rights of other contenders, Wu's aim is to 'confirm Hazlitt's stature as philosopher, journalist, and artist, while recognising the relation he bears to us as the first modern man'. To this end, he claims that Hazlitt is 'the father of modern literary criticism' and also that he 'took political sketch-writing to a new level, invented sports commentary as we know it, and created the essay form as practised by Clive James, Gore Vidal, and Michael Foot'. Naming these last three at least goes some way to moderate the extravagance of Wu's compulsive overstating of the case, but his championing of Hazlitt is premised on a familiar, but, one had thought, now superannuated version of Romanticism. In order to bolster his subject's unique literary and historical standing he calls on the power of this

old ideological and historical marker in order to make his case. Not only is 'Romanticism ... where the modern age begins' with Hazlitt as 'its most articulate spokesman', but, according to Wu, '[w]e are the inheritors of the Romantic sensibility: its values and aspirations remain compelling, like some dream remembered from childhood'. Strange circular things are being done here in the name of history; and they get stranger when Wu moves further into the territory of popular biography by taking the liberty of dramatising his material. Take this slice of intellectual life in 1798:

When justice was done to the cheese,  
Wordsworth went to the window.  
'How beautifully the sun sets on that  
yellow bank!', he said. This was the  
kind of observation by which he  
would change the culture. 'With  
what eyes these poets see nature,'  
thought Hazlitt. The natural world  
was not yet understood to be a living  
thing; that insight was bequeathed to  
us by the Romantics.

Unabashed that this complete dismissal of the eighteenth century is soon followed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Hazlitt championing Thomson as a poet of nature, Wu proceeds with his cause: defending Hazlitt's honesty and political integrity to the teeth with the unwavering certainty that '[n]o writer was more reviled, and none were less deserving of it'.

The foreword, entitled 'The Road to Nether Stowey' establishes the basis for the whole book. Here, Wu takes us back to Hazlitt's first meeting with Coleridge in January 1798 which is so vividly recorded in his famous essay 'On My First Acquaintance with Poets'. In this encounter we have the recipe, according to Wu, for understanding the nature of Hazlitt's life as a writer: enthusiasm for the spirit of revolution and disappointment at its failure, difficult relationships with other authors, and the problem of making a living from literary journalism. As a result of this basis, Wu's championing of Hazlitt is forced to articulate a formidable catalogue of negativity. With

depressing regularity we find Hazlitt not just struggling to survive financially, but frequently causing offence among his contemporaries – and not just among his obvious political opponents. Even his most intimate acquaintances (and some of his most genial and accommodating friends, if we include the Lambs) are eventually provoked into hostility by his failure to negotiate the boundaries between print and personal loyalty. Wu is, rather like Hazlitt himself, unswerving in his loyalty to the cause, but even he is forced to admit that his subject's regard for the usual workings of human nature could be a little naïve at times. Even so, it is not until his rather shabby treatment of Godwin late in his career that Wu admits that Hazlitt might be significantly at fault.

Assiduous and vehement in Hazlitt's defence, Wu sees him as the embodiment of his dissenting background and as one of the very few who remained consistently committed to the cause of liberty. What he doesn't deal with sufficiently are the grounds or the desirability of that consistency. Hazlitt's famous advocacy of Napoleon was shared, of course, by other notable literary figures including Byron and Lamb, but the complexities of subscribing, even if indirectly, to a militaristic empire at war with one's own (albeit severely repressive) country are not really entered into here; while changing one's mind about France and revolution in the face of events such as the Terror and the rise of Bonaparte is given relatively short shrift as a result of Wu's concentration on Hazlitt's particular version of steadfastness. As a consequence, most other writers of the period with whom Hazlitt comes into contact are dismissed in the most summary and often derogatory way. Wilson and Lockhart, we're told, 'possessed the kind of cleverness that coexists with sadism and arrogance, qualities they possessed in spades'; while Bentham is simply 'a devious man' with 'a calloused sensibility'. But Wu's main targets are Wordsworth and Coleridge and he lays into them with some relish. 'Southey', he informs us 'was almost completely lacking in side – something possessed by Wordsworth and Coleridge in industrial quantities'. While Wordsworth 'loath[ed]' Hazlitt, Coleridge

'undermine[d]' him 'out of spite'. Coleridge is also later described as a 'drug-addled Judas' and a 'hopelessly deluded man'. In these attacks, Wu reveals something of his own values, of course. His rather disdainful aside that, '[l]ike many left-leaning intellectuals, Wordsworth had something of the totalitarian about him' is at one with his version of Hazlitt who, he declares, 'was no "radical", at least in any sense his contemporaries would have understood; he was, rather, an independent freethinker, intolerant of cant, hypocrisy, and lies'.

Just as Wu's own intolerance betrays his political leanings, so his attack on John Scott – the editor of the *London Magazine* killed in a duel in 1821 – exposes another serious difficulty with his biography of Hazlitt: its handling of sexual politics. Wu's castigation of Scott isn't quite what one would hope for from a critic who has to negotiate the sensitive terrain of *Liber Amoris* and the infamous Keswick episode: 'Despite being married to one of the most beautiful women of the time, Caroline Colnaghi, Scott was a notorious wife-beater.' Not a sentence to dwell on, I think.

Wu's approach to Hazlitt's various notorious sexual escapades, including his idolisation of Sally Baugh and Sarah Walker, his infamous escape from a lynch-mob in Keswick, and his frequent dealings with prostitutes, is to defend his forthrightness and his candour and to make a virtue out of his lack of hypocrisy. Indeed, Wu concludes his treatment of the *Liber Amoris* episode in Hazlitt's life with the view that '[h]is crime was honesty, and in that he was more ahead of his time than in any other respect'. He also attempts to justify the infatuations on aesthetic grounds: 'What was it that made him lose his head over women? The answer lies in the very quality that made him an artist'. With some point, he argues that we should not judge Hazlitt only according to our contemporary ethical standards, but against the mores of his own time. Unfortunately, such a defence flounders when it ignores the complaints of Hazlitt's wife Sarah and their friends about his habit of inviting prostitutes to his rooms in the presence of his young son; or, for that matter, the lynch-mob from Keswick who objected to a

young woman being ‘spanked’ because she refused to gratify a stranger’s lust.

For Wu, accusations of Hazlitt’s ‘sexual harassment’ are simply a testimony to ‘the stupidity of modern literary criticism’ which ‘fail[s] to recognize the anachronism inherent in the application of twenty-first-century American values to the English lower middle class in early-nineteenth-century London’. In Wu’s eyes, Hazlitt is the ‘first modern man’ by virtue of his achievements, but he is suddenly a determinedly historical figure when it comes to his sexual failings.

Despite these significant shortcomings, *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* adds substantially to our understanding of the intellectual milieu and the material complexities and practicalities of his life as a journalist. Instead of moving out into the more dangerously liberating realm of popular biography, however, Wu would have done well to stay within reach of his more rigorous, contained, and circumspect scholarly instincts, all of which are in evidence in the splendid two volumes of *New Writings*. Had he done so, it might have been better for Hazlitt. Overstating his case and denigrating those of others does not necessarily best serve his cause.

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