BARS BULLETIN & REVIEW no. 14

BRITISH
ASSOCIATION FOR
ROMANTIC
STUDIES

Susan J. Wolfson, Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. 344. £30 ($39.50). ISBN O 8047 2657 4. In Formal Charges Susan Wolfson has written one of the best and brightest books on Romantic poetry for many years. The tasks she sets herself are formidable; her achievement is undoubted. Formal Charges 'remaps New Criticism' (while retaining 'its commitment to close reading and its care for poetic form') in order to produce 'a contextualized formalist criticism' (p. 2). Wolfson narrates with great skill the unhappy story of the relations between formalism and Romanticism: on the one hand, New Criticism was troubled by Romanticism's 'inimical contextualism'; on the other hand, Romanticism has been identified by hostile critics as 'a progenitor of theoretical formalism' (p. 11). For Wolfson, Romantic poems are, to borrow a word she uses of Wordsworth, 'tuned' to a vigilant and uncomplacent awareness of themselves as 'a composition of forms' (p. 28). She points out how historicists such as Jerome McGann and Marjorie Levinson 'tend to limit accounts of poetic form to the organic, the unified, the achieved, the stable'. By contrast, she is fascinated by the way Romantic poems 'reflect on rather than conceal their constructedness' (p. 14). Wolfson does not eschew political or ideological considerations, as is shown by an excellent chapter on the way Shelley's poetic forms (in The Mask of Anarchy and the late poems to Jane Williams) are bound up with his social designs as a poet, his 'project of communicating with other minds' (p. 194). Here and elsewhere she is alert to biographical, gendered and contextual concerns. But she makes an eloquent 'case for the pleasures, intellectual and aesthetic, of attending to the complex charges of form in poetic writing' (p. 1). (The force here of 'charges' -- implying ethical obligation and expressive power -- was lost on the blurb-writer or the blurb's compositor: the dust-jacket's version prefers 'changes'.) If Wolfson's style can be slightly tortuous, she shows herself to be an adept reader. In the following sentence she argues that Byron's couplets in The Corsair convey an ideological point: 'By casting the hero in heroic couplets, Byron suggests that his power is less a mystery beyond discernment of "vulgar men" (1:200) than a mystification worked in the materials of an established formal inventory' (p. 147). Wolfson puts her enjoyment of word-play to good if slightly dogged effect here: 'hero' and 'heroic couplet' recover a full sense of their odd affinities, even as 'mystification' undoes the bogus glamour of 'mystery'. This chapter on Byron questions McGann's view that Romantic poets are trapped within the fantasy that they can 'escape or transcend a "corrupting appropriation" by social forms'. Wolfson suggests that The Corsair uses the 'materials of poetic form' to create in its readers the very '"self-conscious and critical" level of understanding' (p. 135) which McGann regards as superior and antithetical to the aesthetic. This suggestion is in accord with

the book's overall thesis about the uses of form in Romantic poetry. A discussion of Blake's Poetical Sketches sees the poet's 'formalist practices' as 'actions that call readers to a critical awareness of the work of form, not only in poetic but also in cognitive, social, and historical processes' (p. 32). Wolfson makes us look again at the line-endings and enjambments of Blake's blank-verse season poems, at the way, in the volume's songs, rhyming can betoken harmony or entrapment, and at the political implications of the forms deployed by the ballad 'Gwin, King of Norway' and other 'historical pieces', including King Edward the Third. Her ear for recurrent sound-patterns and their associated freight of meaning is especially acute. The following chapter takes issue with the standard reading of Coleridge as a proponent of organicism, engaged in what Paul de Man calls 'tenacious self-mystification' (quoted on p. 65). Wolfson finds in the poetry itself, and particularly in its uses of simile, 'a critical probing into the poetics of unity' (p. 66): 'If Coleridge's simile-making signifies anything', she writes, '. . . it is his contradictory reflections on language in general' (p. 69). For her, Coleridge outflanks deconstructive critique by investigating within his poems the workings of comparison. She describes how in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' 'versions of like and as if convey the falling away of certain reference' (p. 76); and she is impressively sharp about the different kinds of 'self-reflexiveness' (p. 83) to which Coleridge's similes bear witness. In the course of a fine reading of 'Constancy to an Ideal Object' Wolfson sees the poem's closing simile (of the 'enamoured rustic' not realizing that the shadow he worships is his own) as the vehicle of 'double consciousness' (p. 95). Occasionally Wolfson slights the imaginative potential of simile, preferring to study it as caught up in a dialectic of absence and presence. As a result she stays close to the critical idiom -- deconstruction -- which, ostensibly, she is qualifying. But this is among the most unreductive readings of Coleridge currently available. It is part of Wolfson's argument to underline the many possibilities (as well as responsibilities) of a formalist criticism, and in her chapter on Wordsworth she seeks to provide, through readings of different versions of the Drowned Man of Esthwaite Water passage in The Prelude, a criticism adequate to the fact of multiple revision. Her conclusion -- that 'Revision is . . . an endless opening of poetic form' (p. 132) -- emerges convincingly from her analyses. A chapter on Keats's last lyrics shows how the poetry's forms undermine the claims of form to create a privileged autonomy. The dash at the end of 'Bright Star', for instance, 'refuses a closure of form' to register 'the radical insecurities of experience' (p. 187). Throughout, Formal Charges sustains a remarkably attentive and persuasive sense of the alliances and tensions between 'form' and 'experience'.

Michael O'Neill University of Durham

Christopher Burdon, The Apocalypse in England: Revelation Unravelling, 1700-1834. Studies in Literature and Religion. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997. 251 pp. £42.50. ISBN 0 312 16542 0.

In the chapter that forms the centre of this richly informative book, David Burdon makes a crucial distinction between the dominant conceptions of prophetic time preceding and following the French Revolution. Three previous chapters have followed the hermenutics of the Book of Revelation from the seventeenth into the eighteenth centuries, beginning with Thomas Brightman

and Joseph Mede, then passing on to the more cautious views of Moses Lowman and Richard Hurd (the eschatology of the latter being perceptively linked to the 'Gothicism' of his literary taste). The importance of measurement and choronology in these earlier views, epitomized in Isaac Newton's Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended (1728), is rightly stressed. Other eighteenth-century tendencies were the internalization of apocalypse in the writings of William Law and its personalization in the sermons of John Wesley and the hymns of Charles Wesley. A different tack was taken by those who, like Robert Lowth, viewed Biblical texts in the light of contemporary historical scholarship, and this culminated in the writings of Herder, preparing the way for interpretations of Revelation as contemporary in its reference. In Chapter Four, 'Revelation and Revolution', Burdon shows that the moment of the French Revolution inaugurates a view of the prophetic moment not as chronos but as kairos: 'Biblical time and a fortiori apocalyptic time are not the ticking away of chronos but a succession of kairoi' (p. 91) -- not clock time but moments of the breaking-through of the divine. In some ways such a view had been prepared by millennialists like Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, who in their pre-Revolutionary writings followed David Hartley's Observations on Man (1749) in envisioning a gradual progress toward the Millennium, but it was the French Revolution that enabled an association of the apocalyptic kairos with the immediate transformation of society. The new view was conveyed in writings such as Price's 1789 Discourse on the Love of Our Country (which prompted Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France), Priestley's Fast Sermon of 1793 looking forward to 'the final happy state of the world', and the Baptist James Bicheno's Signs of the Times (1795). Thomas Paine, too, has a role in this narrative, for as the author remarks, while he 'does not recognise the Bible as revelation, he nevertheless uses millennialist language in a secularised form' (p. 126). Coleridge in his Unitarian phase is of course part of this new tradition. As Burdon well puts it, 'Coleridge's mythopoeia is both contrained and stimulated by his respect for the canon and his interest in biblical criticism' (p. 132). The constraint emerges more and more as Coleridge is forced by events to abandon his pro-Revolutionary millenarian expectations. Following Coleridge into his later career in Chapter Five, Burdon shows how the Book of Revelation remains a prime concern for his thought although not for his poetry. Coleridge, as the author argues, could not follow Wordsworth in displacing apocalypse to the inner self and so becoming the prime example of the Romantic poet for M. H. Abrams's Natural Supernaturalism. The reason for this lies partially in Coleridge's need for a redemptive religion, partially in his ongoing concern for the communal. His view of Revelation becomes both inconsistent and ambivalent: sometimes he wishes he could omit it from the canon; sometimes he feels almost empowered to be its interpreter. More comfortable with Revelation as a poem than as scripture, he plans to versify it or to supply his own poem in its place. Although of course he did neither, Revelation could lead to Notebook meditations like the one on 'the mystic dance' of the Blessed and 'the Ref[l]ection of the Light of the Lamb, which maketh the City of God resplendent . . . ' (p. 167). Yet magnificent as such a passage may be, one senses that with it Coleridge has reached, as this chapter's title puts it, 'the limits of interpretation'. For Shelley and for Blake, in contrast, the Book of Revelation remained a wellspring of poetry. Following the argument of Bryan

Shelley in Shelley and Scripture: The Interpreting Angel (Oxford, 1994), Burdon asserts that 'the whole of Prometheus Unbound can be seen as a rewriting of John's Apocalypse' (p. 175). Although not all the unveilings in Shelley necessarily refer to the root meaning of the word, apocalypse is indeed his master-theme. Yet Shelley and also Blake could not be called interpeters of the Book of Revelation -- each sees himself as a prophetic figure using the materials of past prophecy for his own mythopoesis. In the instance of Blake, a 'radical displacement' of apocalyptic imagery finds its ultimate expression in the deconstruction of John's image of God seated on his heavenly throne and worshipped there. Nevertheless, as Burdon argues, this too is in the very spirit of the Book of Revelation, a self-destabilizing text that was further destabilized by those who read it most sympathetically and most imaginatively.

Morton D. Paley University of California at Berkeley

Gary Dyer, British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. 263. £37.50. ISBN 0 521 56357 7. Satire has traditionally been given short shrift in Romantic studies. Even theoretically sophisticated and historically-informed scholarship, such as Jerome Christensen's recent book on Byron, still too often perpetuates the old-fashioned divide between Augustan and Romantic over satire. Christensen uses Foucault to suggest that satire belonged to a waning world of punishment rather than the emergent episteme of discipline. The problem with this suspiciously neat correlation of genre development on to more discursive shifts is that it simply accepts the accuracy of received literary history. One of the achievements of Gary Dyer's new study is that it demonstrates that the Romantic period remained a great age of satire, dominated at its outset by the mercurial voice of John Wolcot a.k.a. Peter Pindar and the Tory fulminations of William Gifford and T. J. Mathias. Gifford and Matthias played a crucial role in the policing of culture, in many ways continuing the Juvenalian work of Pope in The Dunciad, but satire was not simply about the enforcement of conservative cultural values. Although Wolcot himself was politically evasive and often suspicious of Paineite republicanism, satire had a crucial role to play on the radical side of the question as well. Kenneth Burke long ago suggested that satire flourishes in times of repression, 'when the artist is seeking simultaneously to take risks and escape punishment for his boldness' and the 1790s witnessed a renewal of self-consciousness about the role of censorship in determining satirical form, as the poem 'What makes a libel' (1793) from Daniel Isaac Eaton's Politics for the People suggests:

In Aesop's new made World of Wit Where Beasts could talk, and read, and write, And say and do as he thought fit; A certain Fellow thought himself abus'd, And represented by an Ass, And Aesop to the Judge accus'd That he defamed was. Friend, quoth the Judge, How do you know, Whether you are defam'd or no? How can you prove that he must mean You, rather than another Man? Sir quoth the Man, it needs must be, All Circumstances so agree, And all the Neighbours say 'tis Me. That's somewhat, quoth the Judge, indeed; But let this matter pass, Since 'twas not Aesop, 'tis agreed, But Application made the Ass.

Unfortnately Dyer does not discuss this poem (which was included in Michael Scrivener's Poetry and Reform: Periodical verse from the English Democratic Press 1792-1824 [1992]) and in general British Satire and the Politics of Style rather undervalues the thousands of satirical squibs which filled the pages of the press. Many of these were collected together by James Ridgway in his Spirit of the Public Journals series which ran from 1797 till well into the nineteenth century. The collections offer an invaluable guided tour of the ground on which most of the battles over what satire should be and do took place. My own favourite from the newspapers remains the scatologically bottom-splitting series which was collected together as the Admirable Satire on Death, Dissection, Funeral Procession of Mr. Pitt in which the Prime Minister dies of 'a violent diarrhoea'. Although he doesn't discuss this gloriously rambunctious text directly, the pamphlet is included in Dyer's very useful bibliography. The bibliography reveals just how much spade work went into the writing of this book and it is perhaps churlish to complain of omissions when so much that is traditionally ignored by Romantic criticism is brought to light. Dyer deals with this vast under-explored domain by dividing it into three regions, a division which includes the new-foundland of "Radical satire' alongside the more familiar territories of Juvenalian and Horatian satire. Dyer's argument is that because of contemporary political conflict the traditional division between Juvenalian and Horatian satire widened, each gathering new political connotations which forced reformist writers into a more 'intricately ironic' mode than either. Dyer's neo-Juvenalians, such as Gifford and Mathias, are mainly conservatives, defending unequivocally satire's right to attack deviants from the orthodoxy of Church and State. His Horatians are less political, but support the status quo by default. This division seemed convincing, although I suspect that Clio Rickman, quoted by Dyer, was not the only satirist to appeal to Juvenal as a republican hero. Even so it remains the category of 'Radical satire' which is the most contentious for me. The category is based on Bakhtin and seems effectively to be Menippean in its 'mixing of meters and genres'. Dyer suggests that this kind of formal innovation was forced on satirists by legal restrictions of which he gives a useful summary, but it would have been interesting to have traced something of this process through the battles of the 1790s in pamphlets, handbills, and the pages of the newspapers. Instead what we get is an account of 'Radical satire' through the Morgans' The Mohawks and Tom Moore's The Fudge Family in Paris. While we might judge these poems to be oppositionist or liberal in their tendency, calling them radical seemed rather to blur the distinction between formal innovation and different kinds of political commitment. Comparing them with something like the satire on Pitt mentioned above might have been instructive in this respect. Certainly Dyer's later claim in his admirable reading of Peacock that the satirical fascination with the body becomes specifically oral, displacing Swift's obsessive interest in the lower bodily functions, seems to mark a specific kind of division between more literary satire and cheap, popular versions of the genre. What Dyer's book does triumphantly demonstrate is that satire flourished in numerous different forms in the Romantic period. British Satire and the Politics of Style concludes with a fascinating account of the fading efflorescence into more comic and less confrontational literary tastes. Dyer claims that by 1830s the impulse to make poetry out of contemporary events

no longer produced satire but what he calls 'light verse'. Why did satire disappear as an independent genre? It was discouraged in particular, Dyer argues, by the ideology of the ever-growing middle-class Dissenting and Methodist culture well-illustrated by Jane Taylor's Essays in Rhyme, on Morals and Manners (1816). Taylor implies that 'personal' attack is irreligious and unmannerly. Satire, especially the Juvenalian satire identified with the elite, was gendered as a masculine genre which transgressed what Dyer calls the 'feminine' values of emergent bourgeois culture. Morals and manners, which satire had traditionally claimed to defend, were being defined in ways which deemed satire at once too lofty and too low. Thus Dyer's book has implications for the most fundamental kinds of change going on in Romantic culture. Satire was not simply the inert vestige of the dead literary culture of Augustanism. Even in its demise at the end of the Romantic period, it was at the very centre of the cultural conflict where it functioned not just as a weapon, but as an object to be attacked and defended in itself.

Jon Mee University College, Oxford

Mark Storey, Robert Southey. A Life. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xix + 405. £25. ISBN 0 19 811246 7.

Biographers of Southey face a difficult task. He is neither loved by the general poetry-reading public, nor the object of fascinated scholarly enquiry. No single work has survived in the canon. Worse, Southey's life contained few dramatic events or exciting adventures. Most of it was spent sitting in his library reading and writing. He was a veritable industry of reviews, political essays, histories, biographies and poems short and long. Forgotten now, many of these works were popular and influential in their day. Faced with the overwhelming size and sheer variety of Southey's literary activity, the biographer is faced with a choice. Does he or she try to describe Southey's writing life in exhaustive detail, or does he or she emphasize the main achievements, ignoring many of the multiple works but setting the most important in their context? Geoffrey Carnall chose the latter course, revealing Southey's trajectory and significance as a political commentator (in Robert Southey: The Development of a Conservative Mind). Mark Storey takes the former, compiling the most precise and comprehensive account to date of Southey's career in full. He provides a resume of Southey's activities so minute in its detail that at times it reads like an annotated chronology. The result is invaluable for scholars of Romanticism keen to end the critical neglect Southey has suffered, for Storey puts Southey's literary life in an order clear enough to show critics where to focus their attention. It is as a critic that Storey writes best. He is no Richard Holmes, following imaginatively in his subject's footsteps, approaching biography in the spirit of a novelist. As an interpreter of little-read works such as the Life of Nelson. and A Tale of Paraguay, however, he springs to life, giving judicious commentary that demonstrates how Southey's creative works displace, rather than resolve, the contradictions which afflict his political thought. Southey's contradictions turn out to be the most memorable theme of the biography. Storey frequently shows that Southey was quite capable of advocating contradictory political solutions to different correspondents in the course of a day. This tendency, he shows, sprang not from deliberate hypocrisy but from failures of judgement. Southey remained unconscious of the imprecisions and flaws in his reasoning

and was too oblivious to criticism to learn. By intellectual insensitivity he kept his considerable self-righteousness intact. It follows that satire was a more effective weapon against him than disputation, which only sent him further onto the offensive, increasing his reactionary and alarmist tendencies. By the end of the biography, one senses that Storey has become less sympathetic towards his subject the more he has become familiar with him. The final verdict is perceptive, but suggests there will be few future contenders to write Southey's literary life: 'Southey could switch from one occupation to another -- in fact he sometimes said he had to, and prided himself on the resultant regularity. But all that work, all that diligent collecting and collating of materials - whether for poems, reviews, articles, or historical surveys -- was no guarantee of concentration or even quality: on the contrary, the result was often a damaging diffuseness" (p. 347). One aspect of Southey's works is neglected in this otherwise magisterial account -- his activity and influence as a commentator on the indigenous cultures of the countries which Britain was colonizing. As a reviewer in the Quarterly Southey gave support to the missionaries in India and the South Pacific. The missionary societies were still in their infancy in the early years of the nineteenth century, and were mostly staffed by men from the lower classes. Southey gave them respectability with the moneyed and powerful readers of the Tory journal. The missionaries were later to acknowledge his help as having been critical in ensuring that they obtained popular support and official approval. Southey had, in effect, helped to shape the course of Victorian imperialism. The Life of Nelson did likewise. As Storey shows, the young princess Victoria told Southey of her admiration for this, his most popular, biography. The book went through thirteen editions by 1853 and was adopted as a schoolbook in the later Victorian period. In 1916 it was being reprinted with an introduction by the imperialist poet Sir Henry Newbolt, complete with illustrations of Nelson as a boy's own hero. It had become one of the principal texts by which the sons of the British were educated in duty and self-sacrifice. It was as a writer who established the ideology with which the Victorians built and maintained an empire that Southey had his most significant influence on literary -- and political -- history. That influence, touched on in this comprehensive biography, remains the most important area of the Romantic Ideology still to be explored.

Tim Fulford Nottingham Trent University

Rosemary Ashton, The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography. Blackwell Critical Biographies 9. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996. Pp.vii + 480. £30. ISBN 0 631 18746 4. Here is a new biography of Coleridge that is likely to become the standard life of the poet. Rosemary Ashton's The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography offers a comprehensive and judicious survey of the poet's life and writings. Woven into the fully-documented and well-wrought narrative of the life are critical readings of the major works -- both in verse and prose -- which are generally well-judged and often skillfully nuanced. Though her sources tend to be those already familiar to Coleridgeans, Professor Ashton's research has been painstaking, erudite and thorough. However, this weighty scholarship is not ill-digested; Ashton has succeeded in assimilating her material in a book which is admirably clear and well-written. This is the best full treatment of Coleridge's life that we have. Turning away from the psycho-biographical

tendency evident in the likes of Richard Holmes's Coleridge: Early Visions (1989), Ashton offers a portrait which eschews intuitive or speculative material. Indeed, she is self-effacing in a manner foreign to much modern biography. She has produced a generous account of Coleridge's work and personality to supersede E. K. Chambers's rather antipathetic Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Biographical Study (1938). However, though Ashton is charitable to Coleridge, she reserves judgment on the question of his achievement: 'Opinion was divided -- it still is -- over whether his achievement is . . . to be accounted a great one'. If 'greatness' is a valid criterion to invoke -- and Ashton thinks that it is -- then surely she might have climbed off the fence on the subject. To my mind Coleridge's achievement should be labelled 'great'; it is disappointing to note that we are denied the benefit of Ashton's rather more informed verdict. This is symptomatic of the book's tendency to leave the reader to make up his or her own mind about the poet's life and work. Though it is undeniable that Coleridge has suffered from more muddle-headed biographical speculation than most English poets, I would have liked to have seen more in the way of an overall argument here. The uncharitable reader might argue that Ashton's book, taken as a whole, offers a mass of little things rather than something one and indivisible. There are some faults in the volume. One might occasionally see the book's literary criticism as descriptive rather than analytical and there are occasional lapses of fact when the focus moves away from Coleridge and his circle (for instance, the Shelleys are said to be married by June 1816). Nonetheless, Ashton's book contains much to admire. She grounds her account of Coleridge's career in the context of its historical and philosophical milieu, writing well on the radicalism of the Bristol and Nether Stowey periods. Her demolition of Coleridge's later claim that his work of the mid-1790s showed not 'the least bias to . . . Jacobinism' is particularly convincing. As one might expect from a distinguished Victorianist, Ashton's examination of the influence of Coleridge on the generation after the poet is also acute. And most illuminating is her defence of dismissals of Coleridge as an unfulfilled genius who misspent the last three decades of his life in 'obscurity, mysticism and [an] unfortunate "Germanisation"'. Indeed, one of the strengths of her volume is its sympathetic treatment of Coleridge as a Germanophile and the high value placed on the later prose writings. Ashton, who is a noted Germanist, writes very well on Coleridge's debt to German philosophy and German Romantic criticism. Indeed, one might argue that this preoccupation with Kant and the Schlegels leads Ashton to pass over Coleridge's non-continental formative philosophical influences, Hartley and Berkeley most notably, a little too briskly. The book is aimed at the non-specialist reader of Coleridge rather than academic Coleridgeans and, judged on its own terms, it is highly successful and a model of judicious biographical method. The professional Coleridgean might object to the fact that it is not explicitly informed by recent influential studies of the poet or to its inattention to recent critical theory, but this is to ignore the book's attempt to retain an introductory function. However, there are moments in the volume where, even if we retain a sense of its purpose, it seems a little glib. For instance, this is Ashton on the west Somerset period:

Meanwhile Wordsworth and Coleridge carried on with their nocturnal and diurnal ramblings, and Wordsworth and Dorothy continued to shock and

puzzle local people with their relationship; in short, they devoted themselves to being what they were - Romantic poets.

Quite apart from this passage's anachronism (how can one devote oneself to filling the role of a 'Romantic poet' given that the job description, so to speak, dates from decades after the period in question?), it demonstrates Ashton's devotion to a traditional account of Romanticism which is seen as unproblematical and never seriously discussed. Again, on 'The Ancient Mariner', Ashton begs all kind of questions : 'The originality of Coleridge's poem can hardly be overstated . . . Anyone seeking to understand the idea of a "Romantic revolution" in poetry could do worse than start with 'The Ancient Mariner'. The book contains a number of such tendentious 'coffee-table book' style formulations. While Ashton is sensitive to the subtleties of German philosophy, on occasions she glosses over the complexities of English Romanticism. Nonetheless, I would recommend the book as a valuable 'life and works' treatment of the poet. Another noted nineteenth-century Germanist, Thomas Carlyle, writes that 'A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one'. Though Ashton reserves judgment on whether or not Coleridge's life was well-spent, her book ably matches the first part of Carlyle's sentence.

John Strachan University of Sunderland

Duncan Wu, ed., A Companion to Romanticism. Blackwell Companions to Literature & Culture Series. Vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. Pp. 549. £75 ($84.95). ISBN 0 631 19852 0. This large collection of short critical essays is designed to introduce students to key ideas, themes, and individual works, most of which are represented in Duncan Wu's Romanticism anthology. There are fifty-two essays, roughly of ten pages each, contributed by forty-six writers. The contributors are a mix of established and younger scholars, twenty-four of whom are based in British institutions. The collection is in four parts. The first deals with 'Contexts and Perspectives', what used to be known as 'background'; the second gives 'Readings' of twenty-three individual works; the third gives an account of six 'Genres and Modes'. The fourth, labelled 'Issues and Debates', largely deals with critical approaches and historical issues like slavery and ecology that have generated their own critical approaches to the literature. The editor obviously had difficulty in restricting his contributors to their allotted limits. His self-sacrifice is seen in the meagre six pages he allows his own attempt to rescue Lamb from the oblivion of critical condescension. Contributors negotiate their brief to provide a 'pedagogic tool' with varying commitments to modernity. Most essays review the latest critical approaches to a text or topic, a useful exercise but often prone to over-simplification and lack of organization. I found David Miall's attempt to summarise recent theories of the gothic in eight pages rather confusing. John Beer is more successful in his survey of the Frankenstein industry, offering well-illustrated discussion of elements which might have contributed to the 'gestation' of the novel's themes. He makes a virtue out of their unresolved suggestiveness. A few essays, obviously with a student readership in mind, confine themselves to sound, useful, but often lacklustre accounts of the texts with little critical bite or theoretical underpinning. Sympathetic interpretation, however, can be as enlightening as the corruscations of clashing theoretical perspectives. John Creaser reads Keats's

Odes with alert sensitivity to their poise between affirmation and desolation. Michael O'Neill gives a masterly introduction to the subtleties of Shelley's thought and guides students through the poetic and structural intricacies of Prometheus Unbound. Morton D. Paley similarly focuses on the detail of texts and of history to chart the major Romantics' involvement with apocalypse and millennium. Most of the general essays deal authoritatively with their field and evaluate various approaches. James Butler contributes a wide-ranging discussion of Romantic travel writing. Alan Richardson judiciously evaluates revisionary approaches to the issue of slavery, and Tony Pinkney usefully questions the congruency of modern and Romantic ecological thought. The 'background' essays are scholarly expositions of less volatile material which nevertheless point out emerging emphases. Nicola Trott is especially illuminating on the varieties of the Sublime, while Peter J. Kitson gives an admirably concise yet detailed account of the Romantics' various responses to the scientific, religious and philosophical legacy of the Enlightenment. The introduction talks of giving students 'the material with which to formulate their own answers', an object readily espoused by the majority of contributors who celebrate the diverse, the contingent, and the multi-vocal. They give less example or encouragement in furthering the other tentative ambition of the book to 'draw some of the threads together'. Dialogic approaches are the subject of Michael Sider's contribution and Graeme Stone's essay on parody and imitation maintains the Bakhtinian emphasis. There are very few examples of one approach or definition dominating an essay. A significant exception is Nelson Hilton's lively deconstructionist treatment of Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience. No images are allowed to enshrine undisputed values, since they can so readily be turned inside out. Seamus Perry's approach to Romantic Literary Criticism is typical in denying identity -- it 'doesn't really exist' -- but identifying recurring themes or 'common indecisions'. New historicism and feminism are hailed as fresh and invigorating methodologies in the introduction but few of the contributions bear this out. Susan Wolfson writes with careful discrimination on 'Gender' and a major section of her essay is headed 'Gender Trouble', detailing the contestation or 'negotiation' of gendered characteristics in the period. McGann's influence may be seen in the scrupulous attention to publication details throughout the volume and in studies of audience and reception, but few of his other themes are prominent. John Lucas gives the only hint of Marxist analysis in his thoroughly-engaged account of John Clare's losing battle with his publishers over political and linguistic decorum. David Simpson's essay on new historicism argues that new historicism's preoccupation with the pervasiveness of power could not (ever?) take root in the perennially contested terrain of Romantic history and theory. To credit McGann with establishing a straw man of monolithic Romanticism, however, is to neglect the immense prestige of M.H. Abrams whose formulations he attacked. Feminism's adoption of some post-structuralist approaches to attack the same formulations has similarly been rendered rather anachronistic. The construction of Romanticism, absorbing these approaches, has been a moving target. Organic form with its 'natural' hierarchies, the dominant, male, Romantic ego, and the imperial imagination have lost much of their potency. Jonathan Wordsworth, emphasizing the primacy of the primary imagination, sees the poetic imagination as participating in the creative power of the deity

and longing to 'lose, and find, all self in God'. His Wordsworth demonstrates his uncertainties in the multiple restructurings of his 'life' and finally attributes unifying power to an force beyond consciousness. The Germanic theory of organic form expounded by Anne Janowitz authorizes the fragment as a poetic form and canonizes incompletion and Romantic Irony. Douglas Wilson reviews psychological approaches in which Romanticism, like feminism, rejects Oedipal/phallic power and contests psychiatric authoritarianism. The 'Readings' (suggestions for classes?) include four novelists (Scott, Austen, Mary Shelley, Charlotte Smith), one dramatist (Joanna Baillie), five prose-writers (Burke, Dorothy Wordsworth, Lamb, De Quincey, Hazlitt), and eleven poets; in all, twelve men, nine women. The only surprise inclusion is Charlotte Smith's fragment 'Beachy Head', a poem not represented in Wu's anthology, and presumably included at the expense of other female poets such as Anna Barbauld who is mentioned in the introduction as a canon-breaker. Femininity itself figures strongly as a theme in the work of most female writers, usually in a context of rivalry with masculine authority. For John Anderson, Mary Tighe's Psyche adapts and subverts masculine epic conventions. Jacqueline Labbe claims that 'Beachy Head' develops a multi-vocal authority that challenges Wordsworth's hierarchy of perception by reinstating the eye as loving register of multitudinous particularity. Adam Roberts has reservations about the quality of writing in Landon and Hemans -- 'rather rubbishy', 'rather hackneyed' -- and concentrates on their representations of woman. Pamela Woof has no such problems with Dorothy Wordsworth's Journals and celebrates the distinctive qualities of her prose without too many combative contrasts with masculine modes. A collection with such canon-forming ambitions is going to attract criticism for its omissions. There is no extended treatment of Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Southey, Crabbe, Peacock, Edgeworth, Opie, Owenson, Cobbett, Owen, Hunt, to name a few that spring to mind. The focus is on the early period. Evangelicalism and the complex social and ideological realignments that followed Waterloo are hardly touched on. Nevertheless it is a collection which will no doubt have extensive use in any library. It provides a sound and up-to-date introduction to contexts, ideas, approaches, and texts, and frequently goes further than a mere introduction.

Chris Jones University of Wales, Bangor

Peter J. Kitson, ed., Coleridge, Keats and Shelley: Contemporary Critical Essays. New Casebooks. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996. Pp. ix + 241. Hb £37.50, Pb. £11.99. ISBN 0 333 60890 9; 0 333 60889 5. Peter J. Kitson's introduction greets the reader venturing into this New Casebook for the first time, and it is an apt place to begin this review. In fact, Kitson's essay is a good place for a student of Romantic studies to begin her or his background reading, and the teacher can look at it in order to refresh his or her concepts about criticism in the field. In his far-ranging essay, Kitson does more than situate the volume under discussion in contemporary Romantic studies. Rather, he fulfils the mission of the New Casebook series by reviewing the canon of traditional, comparative criticism, and then explains and often elucidates the streams of thought in current poststructuralist, historicist, and feminist evaluations of Romantic-era literature. The student perusing Kitson's essay will come away knowing that while there is a body of nineteenth-century works we can group chronologically as 'Romantic,' there is

also a body of critical works comprising a debate about both the parameters of the period -- an important critical concept -- and about the literature itself. Students of Romantic studies who are more experienced with the current project of 're-mapping Romanticism,' both in searching out critical approaches and in the inclusion of more writers, will note that Kitson is fair in his audit of skeptical attitudes to both traditional and newer critical stances. He points out the contested premises of such writers as M.H. Abrams, acknowledging Jerome J. McGann as the critic who argues that 'Romanticists have slavishly accepted the critical concepts and vocabulary of their subject'. On the other hand, Kitson points out the shortcomings of some of contemporary criticism's progenitors. He sums up the application of Jacques Lacan's stance in literary studies by calling attention to 'its tendency to develop readings of the poems which appear distant and unrelated to the actual subjects of the poetry'. The ten essays in this collection illustrate Kitson's exploration of current Romantic studies by offering the reader the poststructuralist, feminist, and historicist approaches he has outlined. Psychoanalysis, reader reception, and deconstruction make showings, as well. In another tool for the student new to Romanticism, besides his introduction, Kitson drafted abstracts of each article, placing them at each piece's end. A third mechanism for helping the student in his or her foray into Romantic studies is the list of 'Further Reading' Kitson compiled. The titles are arranged as 'Collections,' 'The Literary Context,' 'General Studies of Romanticism,' 'Women and Romanticism,' and then 'Studies of Individual Poets.' The treatments of Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley in this collection represent some of the seminal, shorter works of criticism from the last fourteen years, ranging from 1984 to 1994. Coleridge is viewed from three perspectives (those of Kathleen M. Wheeler, Susan Eilenberg, and Karen Swann); Keats from four (by Susan J. Wolfson, Nicholas Roe, A.W. Phinney, and Andrew Bennett); Shelley from three (by Frances Ferguson, Kelvin Everest, and William A. Ulmer). Keeping the student in mind once again, the essays show that while the foundations and definitions of Romantic literature and the efficacy of different critical approaches are constantly debated, the accepted representatives of academic Romanticism benefit from fresh critical attention. Pairing that observation with Kitson's lucid discussion of efforts to include women Romantic-era writers and deliberations of gendered writing in Romantic studies suggests many avenues to the student who is querying British literature for authorial subjects to study. For reasons of space Kitson has pared down and edited some essays (Eilenberg, Wolfson, Bennett). In the aforementioned comments at the end of the articles, he also gives one-line summaries of the material he cut, often sounding rightfully apologetic that he had to edit analyses for reasons of space. His comments urge the reader to delve into the essays more deeply, and hopefully, to search out the articles as they were originally printed in order to see the entire development of thoughts. This effect of the volume, which is to promote study into Romantic-era literature, provides me with an opportunity to urge teachers to acquire a copy of this book for their libraries. This collection enhances scholarship in Romantic studies. Through Kitson's selection of the essays and the New Casebook's effort to make these important works accessible in one volume, a work has been printed that everyone involved in the project of Romantic studies should access as a resource. Kitson's introduction is a fine

survey of criticism; the essays are some of the most intriguing perspectives of Romantic-era literature that have been published lately.

Glenn Dibert-Himes Sheffield Hallam University

Michael O'Neill, ed. Keats: Bicentenary Readings. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. Pp. 175. £35. ISBN 0 7486 0899 0. In a survey of recent Keats criticism in the bicentenary number of Romanticism, Greg Kucich pointed to a 'perceived slow-down' of such work in the 1990s. In part as a response to the 1995 anniversary, at least three full-length critical works, two biographies, various contributions to academic journals and now two major collections of essays have been published on the poet in the last three years, already making that judgement look a little premature. Keats: Bicentenary Readings, which includes an introduction and eight essays on Keats's poetry, life, letters and historical contexts, is the second of those two collections and marks what is, at least for the present, a flourishing of Keats criticism. Based on a series of lectures at the University of Durham arranged to mark the anniversary of Keats's birth in 1795, the book brings together a heterogeneous range of essays on topics such as Keats's education, his relationship with the 'New World', with popular culture, the visual arts and the poetics of letter writing. After Michael O'Neill's introduction, Nicholas Roe opens the book with a suggestive essay in which he argues that the limitations of Keats's 'cockney' education have been exaggerated, and goes on to indicate the significance for Keats's later poetry of his wide ranging 'oppositional' education at the dissenting academy of Enfield school. Like a number of other contributors to this book, Roe seeks to revise the tradition of Keats criticism which culminates in Marjorie Levinson's assessment by challenging the prejudices and preconceptions of 'cockney' Keats as under-educated and socially and culturally marginalized: instead, Roe seeks to gloss 'cockney' as a description of a thriving oppositional culture of 'those who are not content with authorised opinion, and who seek to foster a diversity of voices, opinions, viewpoints, orientation'. In the book's second essay, Fiona Robertson mounts a similarly revisionary analysis of Keats's sense of the culture, politics, economy and even poetics of the so-called 'New World' and allows it to direct new readings of the 'Chapman's Homer' sonnet and the less well-known 'What can I do to drive away / Remembrance from my eyes?'. Once again, Robertson is concerned to revise the view of Keats as marginalized or disenfranchized, in this case by exploring the poet's engagement with the rhetoric and discourses from which he is said to have been excluded in his poetic construction of America. David Pirie then takes up the popular traditions behind the Eve of St. Mark to demonstrate the diversity and complexity of Keats's response to those traditions in his poem of that name. The conventional view of the festival's connection with mortality is enriched in a discussion of alternative traditions more concerned with love, marriage and sexuality, and Pirie gives renewed interest to another neglected item in Keats's corpus. Both J.R. Watson and Michael O'Neill focus on what might be thought of as unmediated readings of Keats's poetry, Watson by writing on silence in Keats -- 'that which lies on the other side of language' -- and O'Neill by considering moments of poetic self-consciousness in his work: in both cases, intricate and intimate things are revealed about Keats's poetry in and through the trope of paradox. For Watson, Keats's development of a poetic 'voice' is itself constituted by a

struggle against a certain silence and a cultural and social silencing. For O'Neill, self-consciousness in Keats is balanced, or complicated, by a 'complicatedly unknowing element in [his] knowingness' as well as by 'a hauntingly conscious dimension to his work at its more raptly self-forgetful'. Gareth Reeves is concerned with the influence of Keats on twentieth-century American poetry and poetics, and discusses Keatsian qualities in the poetry of Wallace Stevens. Contrasting the 'American' reading of Keats in this century as a 'poet of consciousness' with the 'English' reading of the poet as unself-conscious, Reeves suggests ways in which this debate is also embedded within the poetry of Stevens. Martin Aske returns to the question of Keats and the visual arts, asking 'how does he look at what he sees?': concerned with letters, the contemporary discourse of art criticism, and even portraits rather than Keats's poetry, the essay illuminates the poet's ways of seeing and, finally, his ways of wanting to be seen. Timothy Webb ends the collection with a timely appeal for a renewed reading of Keats's letters, one which would treat them not just as source material for the poetry, but would amount to a poetics of the Keatsian epistle, reminding us that the letters are 'driven by their own literary and generic requirements even when they seem to be recording the facts of life with vivid and unstructured immediacy'. The strength of this collection lies in its variety and in the distinction with which the contributors explore the interstices of Keats criticism. The shock-waves of the critical ('new') historicism which Keats's poetry has encountered in the last twenty years are still being registered in a collection whose major critical debates centre on the historical specificity of the Keatsian. We do not get a new picture of Keats nor a coherent sense of where Keats criticism might be heading at the end of the twentieth century. That can wait, though, for 2095: for now we have a selection of carefully wrought explorations of Bicentenary Keats.

Andrew Bennett University of Bristol

Andrew Bowie, From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. Pp. 346. Hb ,45, pb ,14.99. ISBN 0 415 12762 9; 0 415 12763 7. Andrew J. Webber, The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. 379pp. ,45. ISBN 0 19 815904 8. The argument of Bowies valuable book is too dense to do justice to in a brief review. It has a double thrust. It involves, in part, a historical account in which Bowie traces the specific links which connect some of the most influential figures in twentieth-century aesthetics, such as Dilthey, Benjamin, Heidegger and Adorno, with the German Romantics. Fascinating and instructive as this is, it takes second place, however, to the Bowies main concern which is to demonstrate how the epistemological controversy unleashed by Kants Critiques involved from the outset crucial issues for the status and understanding of literature. All philosophys attempts to articulate a secure ground of knowledge had led inexorably to problems of regress: that is to say, on examination the ground turned out to be no ground at all. F. H. Jacobis attempt to escape the problem by arguing that the intelligibility of the world and the possibility of truth can never be established by philosophy but must always be posited a priori inaugurated the German Romantic philosophy of such better-known names as Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Schleiermacher for whom the truth of literature offered an alternative to propositional models

of truth which entailed linguistic correspondence with a ready made world. For the German Romantics philosophy becomes inescapably literary and literature inescapably philosophical. Bowie is able to show how the arguments conducted then prefigure in detail issues in contemporary literary theory and how the hermeneutic positions worked out by the Romantic philosophers might offer solutions to some of the dilemmas confronting both literary theory Bowie takes issue, for example, with deconstruction, and is highly critical of materialist attempts, à la Eagleton, to reduce literature to ideology and analytic or semantic philosophy. Indeed, the book is aimed primarily at precisely these two constituencies which have hitherto tended not to communicate: in one camp literary theorists and >continental= philosophers, and in the other philosophers in the analytical or semantic tradition. Bowie is aware of the gap which divides these disciplines and steps into it as a mediator convinced that both sides can come closer by learning from the precedent of Romantic philosophy. There is, of course, another divide: that between literary theory and literary criticism. Bowie is conscious of it and though only in passing, for this is a well-tempered book berates traditional literary critics for their naive indifference to issues of theory: British Germanists, he claims, are especially remiss. This reader is not convinced that their indifference is entirely unjustified. After all, Bowie traces a two-hundred year old dispute to which no end is in prospect, and resolution of the issues involved is not a precondition of intelligent critical discourse. When Bowie does briefly address some of the practical consequences of the theoretical debate, they seem singularly elementary. What critic now needs to be told that the notion of interpretation as establishing what the author intended is a non-starter(p.116), or believes that interpretation involves the simple restatement of literary meaning in discursive form? The intentional fallacy and the problems associated with paraphrase are hardly news. Most contemporary critics would not see their activity as a search for a correct interpretationat all: that the best literary works are variously, rather than singly, meaningful is axiomatic now, and critics tend to offer readings, explorations of meaningfulness, which leave space for other alternative accounts. At times, it appears that it is Bowie who is out of touch. Even to speak of the truth of literature, as he does repeatedly throughout, seems quaintly Romantic and in the final chapter Bowie acknowledges that truth has been used in many different senses. Furthermore, his idea that the truth of literature might be defined with the help of Heideggers concepts of Stimmigkeit (which he translates as rightness) or the world-disclosing capacity of literature looks vulnerable to problems of regress: Stimmigkeit is a metaphor which entails a notion of truth as correspondence or accord, and thus leaves undecided the question of how ightness could be recognized and described except in terms of an alternative discourse such as the psychoanalytic or socio-economic. Equally, any disclosuremust presumably be articulated, and the problem of judging its truth content reappears. One is left wondering whether it would not be better to abandon entirely the idea of truth in relation to literature, just as the idea of beauty as something to be pursued and defined has ceased to be a practical goal of criticism. But this is not to detract from the value of Bowies splendid book. Not the least of its merits is that in spite of the complexity of the argumentation, at least for the uninitiated, it remains at all times demanding, intelligible and highly readable. The confidence and ease with which difficult theoretical issues are set out and

elucidated is immensely impressive. Whether its mediatory intentions will meet with success is hard to predict, but the book is certain to be referred to for a long time to come and should be acquired by all university libraries.

Given Bowies strictures on the poverty of theory-consciousness among British Germanists one turns to Andrew Webbers book on the Doppelgänger with high hopes that our collective honour will be vindicated. The subject of this work is the figure of the Double in German literature. (Translations are given whenever German is cited). The restriction to German literature -- there is only passing acknowledgement of Poe and Wilde -- is justified because it was here in the Romantic writers of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century that the Doppelgänger begins to emerge as a significant theme, and nowhere else does it have quite such resonance. Why this should be, however, is not a question addressed by the book. Nevertheless, in its scope, it is an impressively ambitious work. While the Romantic period is the main focus, with chapters on Jean Paul (too little known in the English-speaking world), Kleist and E. T. A. Hoffmann, Webber finds significant echoes of the motif in the works of the so-called Poetic Realists of the mid- to late nineteenth century, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Gottfried Keller and Theodor Storm. Nor does the enquiry stop there. Webber pushes on into the Modernist age and explores recurrences of the Doppelgänger theme in Schnitzler, Hoffmannsthal, Meyrink, Kafka, Musil, Werfel, and even some examples in Expressionist film. For Webber the figure of the Doppelgänger is an indication of what he calls a crisis of subjectivity, a crisis in the very notion of the self as a unitary consciousness present to itself. He is particularly interesting when showing how the work of the psychologist G. H. Schubert, who wrote on the symbolism of dreams, impinged on these early writers, Hoffmann in particular; for them the idea of an unconscious mind was no paradox but a reality. In the more positivist world of the realists, poetic or not, the fantastic and grotesque was not at home, but Webber demonstrates undoubted historical (and intertextual) links between the later authors and the Romantics. After the psychoanalytic revolution of the early twentieth century the treatment of the theme becomes imbued with a different kind of awareness, historical, self-conscious, late at the same time the examples become more diffuse and the figure of the Doppelgänger is traced to texts where it is not self-evidently present, as in Kafkas Ein Landarzt and Freuds text of his dream of Irmas injection. The very nature of the subject means, almost inevitably, that Webbers discourse is broadly and eclectically psychoanalytic, with Lacanian concepts as likely to feature as Freudian, but he is well aware of the pitfalls and there are no naive assumptions that his method gives him privileged access to a writers meanings. Indeed, the book has none of the naivety with respect to theoretical discourse of which Bowie disapproves: semiotics and deconstruction are also a part of Webbers critical armoury. My own reservations about the book are nevertheless connected to the issue of theory. As J. Hillis Miller has argued, theory has to be performative or it loses its vivifying function in criticism and becomes neutered, reduced to merely another academic sub-discipline. The test of >theory= in criticism is the quality of the readings it calls forth, and it is here that Webber fails to satisfy. Too many of the readings of specific texts neither convince nor challenge in the kind of way that sends one back to the text eager to >try out= the new

insights. (The comparison may be unfair, but Hillis Miller reading of Kleists story Der Findlings penetrating and challenging in a way that Webbers does not approach). Instead, Webbers readings are performativeonly in the sense that they seem intended to display the critics cleverness or ingenuity. The contrast with Bowies book is startling. Bowie pays the reader the compliment of assuming an intelligence capable of being swayed by evidence and complex argument. Webber gives the impression of having no interest in persuading the reader at all: it is enough that the reader should be impressed. This fault, to be fair, is linked to the book=s great merit, its scope and breadth: so much ground has to be covered that the readings are somehow a breathless, hurried rush. This reader was struck by the relative infrequency (and shortness) of quotation. There is the appearance of close reading= but textual reference is too often confined to individual words and phrases. And too often, on closer inspection, the cleverness does not look so clever. Just one example. Webber writes (p.197) of Kleists ambivalence towards the virtually closed circuit of scientific knowledge which keeps the [horrors of superstition] at bay but only by losing the subject in the ambiguous luxury of a labyrinth. This is close to nonsense. What Kleist actually writes about in the letter cited is indeed a criticism of scientific knowledge, of its tendency to lead humans away from a condition of natural simplicity (where we are prey to the horrors of superstition) and towards the kind of sensual indulgence (French cuisine is mentioned) and love of luxury which is a labyrinth. Perhaps this is an oversight, and certainly it is minor, but there are other times when the cleverness looks rather thin: a literary critic should have enough grammar to know that the conditional is not a tense (pp. 117 and 143). And a close reader of Der Sandmann should not refer to either Coppelius or Coppola as an alchemist: there is only Claras surmise to justify describing Coppelius in this way (none whatsoever in the case of Coppola) and it is a rationalization for which there is no unambiguous supporting evidence in the text. All of this might sound rather nit-picking and ungenerous, but it is not intended to be. The subject of Webbers research is important and as a historical survey of an important theme the book will be widely consulted. In spite of this, it stands or falls as literary criticism by the quality of the readings it offers of a wide variety of texts, and in this respect it seems to me seriously flawed.

Jim Simpson University of Liverpool

William G. Rowland Jr., Literature and the Marketplace: Romantic Writers and their Audiences in Great Britain and the United States. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 230. £38. ISBN 0 8032 3918 1. William G. Rowland has culled numerous interesting observations from a variety of well known studies of the literary markets of England and America, such as Altick's The English Common Reader and Charvat's Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850, in support of the insight that many artists of the Romantic era were uneasy about the relation between the writer, the publisher and the reader. The general stance offered towards Romanticism, informed by Jerome J. McGann (one of the work's readers) and by Marjorie Levinson, is that 'Romantic literature accommodates bourgeois culture by subordinating criticism of specific aspects of daily life being created by rapid social and historical change to an imagined escape from that life into a private realm of freedom'. The specific refinement

of this stance is that the Romantics, while in theory progressive, generally failed to adapt to the pressures and opportunities of the mass market, or -- by and large -- pay sufficient attention to the common reader. Their stance is reactionary compared to the eagerness with which William Cobbett, as writer, and James Lackington as publisher, embraced the notion of communication with a new mass reading public. 'In many British literary works and manifestoes, the poet replaced the actual readers of the time . . . with auditors built into the poems themselves, because actual readers were assumed to be unaware of the great writer, unsympathetic to great literature, and unable to comprehend the writer's deepest feelings'. The arch-villain, of course is Wordsworth, whose 'Tintern Abbey', as we have all learnt in recent years, 'expresses the prevalent sense of its cultural moment that social life is an unpleasant business that takes place "out there" but need not influence private life'. An incorrigible idealist, 'Wordsworth dismissed Crabbe because he made poetry out of facts' (as proved by his remark that 'nineteen out of twenty of Crabbe's Pictures are mere matters of fact'). Wordsworth, whose resentment of being patronised by Murray shows him to be nostalgic for the eighteenth-century practice, and who 'felt that proper relations between writers and readers had been reversed; the writer should be the despot, not his readers' is shown to be critically confused, out of touch with the reader, and duplicitous. For instance, when the poet claims that he selected the language of the common people because it is 'less under the influence of social vanity' what he really means is that 'it is not that of urban industrial society'. This book may well portend the critical practice of a new generation of Romanticists whose readings are no longer contaminated by the displaced generation of Abrams, Hartman, Langbaum, and so on. These critics not only venerated the so-called 'primary' texts but also -- in McGann's phrase (cited here from The Romantic Ideology) -- tended 'to transform the critical illusions of poetry into the worshipped truths of culture'. Indeed, Rowlands's work illustrates how we might learn to dispense with the texts altogether. Such poems as are recognized in his text tend to be mediated by canonical critics. Thus, when demolishing The Ruined Cottage, Rowlands informs us that Margaret 'as noted by Jerome McGann' is a victim of social upheaval in the 1790s. It is not Wordsworth, or the Pedlar, note, who manifest any awareness that Margaret might be the victim of such unpoetical facts as warfare, drought, prices, depopulation and military enlistment, alongside more poetical ones like despair, destitution, and decay. As Romantic poets always 'convert history into transcendence' it is now safe to assume that a raw historical datum will not make it into a Romantic text unless its presence is certified by a bona fide new historicist. It would be unfair to represent this frequently startling book only by its Wordsworthian dimension. The book also addresses Blake (who wrote so obscurely that even Gilchrist and Rossetti didn't understand him, but because they were infected by romantic ideology knew better than to expect to), Shelley (who was very self-divided, as is proved by the critical disagreement surrounding his work), Emerson (whose audiences could never remember a thing about his lectures, but went along to be reassured that there was something beyond them, in every sense of the phrase), Hawthorne and Poe (none of whose works rate more than a line or two), Melville (who wrote books like Pierre, about which 'the most remarkable thing was that it did not bring Melville's career to an end') and, incidentally, Dickinson (who didn't

want to communicate at all). Melville gives rise to one of the book's most signal judgements. Just as Wordsworth ought not to have written 'Tintern Abbey', or The Ruined Cottage, so Melville ought not to have written Benito Cereno, or at least not in a way that might puzzle any reader still suffering from 'savage torpor'. For 'the story raises the most divisive moral issues of the 1850s but withholds comment on them, as if the true artist's function was to offer impenetrable ironies rather than statements on the problems of the day'. Argal, the true artist's function is to offer 'statements' on the problems of the day. So there we are. It is refreshing to have the act of uniformity so forthrightly stated. Will the prophets, I wonder, own their disciple?

Richard Gravil University College of St Mark & St John

Mohammed Sharafuddin Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient. London and New York: I. B.Tauris and Company Publishers, 1994. Pp. 296. £34.50. ISBN 1 85043 785 8. It has of for some time been customary to point out the methodological and historical shortcomings of Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and the critical tradition which it inspired. However, Mohammed Sharafuddin's Islam and Romantic Orientalism demonstrates how interpretation which fails to take serious account of Said's critique of orientalism itself risks falling into the Orientalist trap. Sharafuddin sets out to argue, against Said, for something called 'realistic orientalism' which permeated British Romantic representations of the Islamic world, marking a 'gradual advance towards true understanding [of]...and sympathy with the Orient, and therefore a distancing from the centralising complacencies of an established [Anglocentric] patriotism' (p.xviii). Sharafuddin's 'realism' ('objective rather than perspectival') is more interested in the way in which ideologies supposedly transcend themselves than in how they determine literary consciousness. His book is professedly concerned with the 'personal side' (awkward term) of writers rather than their relationship to intellectual and cultural milieus. The book's introduction briefly explores attitudes to Islam in the work of writers like Edmund Burke, Anquetil-Duperron (whose name, incidentally, it misspells, along with many others), Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Sir William Jones, George Sale and William Beckford. It also discusses travel-writers like James Bruce, Constantin Volney and Carsten Niebuhr, although consideration of their work tends to be limited to passsages cited in the footnotes of Orientalist poetry. Sharafuddin makes the obvious but nonetheless important point that even these 'most authentic of sources' (i.e. travel writers describing first-hand experience of Arabic lands) failed to 'reproduce the perspective of the native Arab, for whom, presumably, the act of living in his own environment was no more special than for the native Englishman in his' (p. 194). The main body of the book comprises four long chapters on Walter Savage Landor's Gebir, Robert Southey's Thalaba, Tom Moore's Lalla Rookh and Byron's Turkish Tales. It is gratifying to see a critic giving close attention to non--canonical Romantic poems like these (although ninety pages on Thalaba might seem to be overdoing it a bit), and the author's first-hand knowledge of Islamic tradition does help to illuminate aspects of the poems and notes to which a lay critic might be oblivious. A lot of information on the poets and the poems has been gathered together here, and texts are quoted generously. Sharafuddin contends that Romantic orientalist poems 'opened a space for the recognition of Islam as a unique form

of life, as worthy of respect as the home culture' (p.vii). The story he wants to tell is one of historical progress towards enlightenment, as primitive tribal prejudices are replaced by greater understanding and empathy between cultures, a progress in which Romantic poets played a pioneering role. There is undoubtedly something in Sharafuddin's thesis of a 'friendly', objectivist attitude to Islam on the part of some Romantic writers. There is no smoke without fire, although Sharafuddin finds a blaze. We do need to be reminded that in 1799 Coleridge and Southey started work on a collaborative poem whose hero was Mahomet; 'Prophet and priest, who scatter'd abroad both evil and blessing', who 'crush'd the blasphemous rites of the Pagan / And idolatrous Christians', as Coleridge's fragment had it (although why does Sharafuddin make no mention of this fragment, and pass over Southey's Mahomet with only a cursory reference, when both pieces so strongly support his argument?) English radicals, inspired by the relativistic spirit of the enlightenment and French Revolution, as well as the 'Unitarian' elements in Islam, might (as in Coleridge's lines, although note the ambivalence) have regarded the Prophet as a revolutionary opponent of idolatry, priestcraft and tyranny. Unfortunately Sharafuddin tends to treat Christianity as a monolithic whole, thereby losing a sense of the way in which certain dissenting doctrines could enlist support from Islamic theology. Nevertheless, in contrast to the uniformly black picture which Edward Said paints of Western attitudes to Islam from Aeschylus to Kissinger, Sharafuddin is surely right in drawing attention to pro-Islamic elements in Romantic writing. The problem is, he greatly overstates his case. For a start, he too easily equates attitudes to Islam with attitudes to a composite Orient, failing to differentiate pre-colonial and colonial engagements with quite distinct Asian cultures during this period of increasing Western hegemony in diverse geopolitical zones. The sympathetic redaction of Zoroastrian or Sanskrit texts by Anquetil-Duperron or Sir William Jones didn't necessarily entail equivalent sympathy for Islam, and the example of these scholars undercuts Sharafuddin's assertion that 'Islam was the only alternative civilization powerful enough and sufficiently close to the West to invite such a positive reception' (p.ix). In India, the (Islamic) Mughal Empire was Britain's political precursor, and commonly regarded by British Orientalists as a tyrannical yoke crushing Hindu culture. Britons like Sir William Jones believed that one of their historical tasks was to liberate Hindus from the effects of centuries of Mughal misrule and restore the glories of a classical, Upanishadic golden age. Whilst Sharafuddin's opening chapter on Gebir offers a useful reading of Landor's poem as a critique of imperialism, its hard to see its bearing on Western attitudes to Islam (rather than a more generalized 'Anthony and Cleopatra'-style Orientalism), as the poem is set in a classical, pre-Islamic past. Southey's Thalaba does on the other hand engage directly with the whole Western archive on Islam, and it is maybe true that the poem's denunciation of oriental despotism 'is exactly in line with Koranic doctrine' and that Thalaba's 'role as a 'designated' destroyer of evil is perfectly compatible with Islamic values' (p. 74). Yet nowhere is the shortcoming of Sharafuddin's a prioristic thesis more evident than in his interpretation of the following lines from Book Five of Thalaba: 'So one day may the Crescent from thy Mosques / Be pluck'd by Wisdom, when the enlighten'd arm / Of Europe conquers to redeem the East!'; 'It is the redemption of the East as the East', Sharafuddin writes, 'and not in the imposition of western ideology, that

is Southey's fundamental concern' (p.66). Plucking of crescents from mosques by 'enlightened' Europeans hardly seems very friendly to Islam. And why no mention of Southey's scathing description of the 'tame language' and 'dull tautology' of the Koran, the 'waste of ornament and labour' which he insisted characterized 'all the works of the Orientalists' [i.e. Islamic writers], the 'worthlessness' of Persian literature, or his view of the Arabian Nights having 'lost all their metaphorical rubbish in passing through the filter of a French translation'? (All these instances of Orientalism in the most negative, Saidian sense come from the footnotes to the first few pages of Thalaba). There is a strong impression throughout this book that we're only getting one side of the story. The chapter on Moore makes some intelligent remarks on Napoleon as a template for the false prophet Mokanna, and the links between Moore's orientalism and the Irish question. But once again the fact that in the poem called 'The Fireworshippers' Islam allegorises British tyranny brutally suppressing Zoroastrian (Irish) resistance -- a fact which severely qualifies the book's thesis about a 'friendly' representation of Islam -- is glossed over. 'It is only by keeping a tradition of resistance alive, even under impossible conditions, that the spirit of nationhood can be perceived'. Ouite possibly -- but the point which needs to be made is that the resistance which Moore is ostensibly celebrating here is a Zoroastran resistance against Islam. Romantic Orientalism is undeniably preoccupied with linguistic, ethnographical, historical and topographical accuracy in representing 'the East'. In this respect Sharafuddin's argument for a 'realistic orientalism' has something going for it, particularly on account of the prestige of Said's contrary description of Orientalism as a 'closed system' of knowledge. Said's epistemological dependence upon Foucault led him to underestimate the object of Western knowledge, as in the following sentence from Orientalism; 'Description of the Orient is obliterated by the designs and patterns foisted upon it by the imperial ego'. What about the painstaking, precise empiricism of many eighteenth-century travel-narratives, we might justifiably ask, or the Romantic fixation with the Orientalist footnote absent from exotic representations in earlier and later periods? But Sharafuddin goes to the other extreme by overestimating (without any debt to Lacan) 'the real', a category which he normally equates with Islam and Islamic societies; '[Southey] believes that Arabia itself has a real existence' (p. 124) or, 'In Byron . . . Islam has lost all traces of the allegorical . . . it plays its full part as itself in the moral, religious, and political situations of the Tales' (p.243). This suggestion of unmediated access to the object is merely epistemological naively. When Sharafuddin examines this Romantic 'objectivism' more carefully, however, it usually turns out to be somewhat less than objective. For example: Byron's sensitivity to Oriental metaphysics turns out to be the old chestnut of 'Islamic fatalism'; his appreciation of Oriental gender relations turns out to be a matter of 'individual masculine pride' set against the 'oriental mixture of sexual passion and fanatical fidelity' in Islamic women (opposed to 'over-sexed temptress[es] such as Byron might have encountered in the London salons'). When Byron is 'objectively' admiring Oriental landscapes, we discover that what he has before him is actually 'the realistic paradise constituted by the landscape of the Islamic Mediterranean'. Rather than being 'objective' characteristics of the Orient, these attributes all smack rather of essentialist, even stereotypical images, which Said and other critics have described as the stock-in-trade of

Western Orientalism. For all their concern for authenticity in representing the Orient, British Romantics seemed to have depended ultimately upon normative attitudes to Islam current in their culture -- and how could they have done otherwise? Sharafuddin even offers a hostage to fortune by suggesting that 'the Oriental landscape was necessarily a landscape of distance, in which the impurities and defects of actuality could not be perceived, and which therefore offered no resistance to the dreams of wish fulfilment' (p. 194). How does this 'dream-like Orient' square with realism and objectivity? What is ultimately lacking here is an analysis of the tension between established cultural stereotypes (always determining the manner in which one culture understands another), and the new pressure of empirical fact and political contact resulting from enlightenment relativism and the colonial encounter. Did increasing knowledge of Islamic cultures automatically ensure greater sympathy for them? It would be nice to believe that British Romanticism was as friendly to Islam as Sharafuddin would have it, but ultimately his book does not convince.

Nigel Leask Queens' College, Cambridge

Adela Pinch, Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen. Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. 240. Hb £30. ISBN 0 8047 2548-9; 0 8047 2549 7 Emotion is notoriously the shibboleth of Romanticism and its eighteenth-century precursors, repeatedly forming the foundation against which truth and value are to be measured. In attaching such importance to emotion, moreover, Romanticism not only highlights the role of the individual as its locus and guarantor, but also that of the text as its principal evidence, whose value thus depends on the directness and authenticity of its expression. Hence Romanticism particularly invites Pinch's sceptical treatment of emotion, in which the assumption of its pre-linguistic internality is continually questioned. Emotion, she suggests, is never something to which a text can unambiguously testify, but rather a phenomenon that can never be separated from the literary, social, and ideological structures it inhabits. Hence emotions are both more communal and more conventional than criticism has traditionally acknowledged, and the concept of a feeling which exceeds expression is always problematic. Rather than being expressed through language, emotions are largely effects of language, occupying an ambiguous territory between subjectivity and writing. Pinch's study is thus predominantly structuralist in its theoretical sympathies, albeit she defines her own approach as 'a contextualised, gender-sensitive formalism' which 'allows us to theorize our own epistemologies of emotion and gender in relationship to those of an earlier historical period' (pp. 12-13). Gender, she argues, is central to issues of feeling not only because of the cultural association between women and emotion, but also because the feelings which we experience or express are partly determined by relationships between language and gender. Charlotte Smith's sonnets, for example, illustrate 'a tradition of women's writings which simultaneously gives voice to women's suffering and reveals the dependence of that voice on traditional forms' (p. 70), thus demonstrating a 'sentimentality' which 'involves moments when the issue of whether feeling is authorized by literature or by life becomes a problem' (p. 69). That it gives voice to suffering at all might seem to threaten Pinch's replacement of personal feeling with an essentially texual problem of feeling which both

literary and philosophical texts of the period tend to highlight. This paradox is again prominent in her discussion of Hume, whom she describes not only as making his own feelings the model for his analyses of sympathy, but also as revealing how 'Sympathy works . . by converting ideas into their corresponding impressions' (p. 34), and hence as suggesting that emotions are not the personal and inward phenomena which Romantics often claim them to be. Her analysis of Wordsworth seeks to resolve this issue by postulating a network of sado-masochistic fantasies underlying his and other Romantics' representations of female suffering. Smith's suffering, she suggests, is thus at least partly the product of an ideology of gender in which Wordsworth is also implicated, though the melancholy described by Hume retains an ontological ambiguity implicitly justified by his own critique of empiricist conceptions of cause and effect. Pinch is most persuasive, however, in illustrating how Romantic feeling originates in 'the affective nature of reading and the power of words themselves' (p. 86), and especially how quotation influences the nature of literary emotions. The intensely personal origin of this theme, indeed, is revealed with startling (and ironic) clarity in her penultimate chapter: she herself, the author states, used to read Austen's Persuasion 'perhaps, like Sir Walter, to escape from "unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs"' (p. 160). The pleasurable effects of reading are thus her strongest evidence of the priority of text to feeling, yet in seeking to define her own and others' 'unwelcome sensations' as sharing the ontology of literary pleasure, she often stretches her thesis towards the paradoxical hyperbole of deconstruction. In a gesture familiar from Derrida, indeed, her subjects (or their texts) are often described as sharing her opinion that there is no means of distinguishing 'authentic emotional response from extravagance' (p. 116). Radcliffe's descriptions of the effects of reading, she argues, 'suggest that the language of the heart is never really one's own' (p. 127), while 'For Anne Elliot [in Persuasion] there is no falling out of quotation' (p. 163). Her detailed analyses of the uses which several authors make of literary allusion are often impressive, yet in order to reconcile these with an anti-essentialist view of feeling she draws so eclectically on conflicting theoretical positions as to leave her own 'epistemology of emotion' ultimately obscure. Her principal emphasis, indeed, is on the 'problematics' of emotion rather than any single model of its origin, and as in Derrida, the problematicity of her topic is implied to justify the self-subverting paradoxes of her writing. Perhaps the most interesting question raised by her study, however, is what underlies the post-structuralist flight from individual emotion. Why is it 'embarrassing' to refer to a feeling which resists expression (p. 11), and why should the falsity of many definitions of the self be interpreted as implying that there is no self, or feeling, to be false to?

David Vallins Hong Kong University

Tim Marshall, Murdering To Dissect: Grave-robbing, Frankenstein and the Anatomy Literature. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995. Pp. 354. Hb £45. Pb £15.99. ISBN 0 7190 4542 8; 0 7190 4543 6. While Frankenstein has been read as a parable for the dangers of modern science or as an allegory of parturition, until now there has been no substantial reading of the novel as a narrative of the history of dissection. Tim Marshall is not so much stating the obvious as peeling away another layer of the multi-faceted

mask of Mary Shelley's creation. His concern is more with anatomy literature than with the fiction of the dead-body business. In this respect, he builds on the work of Ruth Richardson, the author of Death, Dissection and the Destitute. It is from here that he has derived his main thesis that the new breed of resurrectionist body-snatchers became a species made extinct with the advent of the 1832 Anatomy Act. This legislation allowed the unclaimed cadavers of paupers to be available for dissection. Prior to that the bodies of murderers had been requisitioned for the dissecting table as is illustrated by a reproduction of Hogarth's Reward of Cruelty of 1751. What Marshall does not mention is that the engraving contains a portrait of Dr Freke, who had innovated a new method of incision, and is shown here plying his trade on the dead. According to Richardson, the implication of this utilitarian legislation was that the traditional punishment of dissection of the body for the crime of murder had now shifted to the crime of simply being poor. She notes further that the Anatomy Act, which was effectively masked by the Reform Bill passed in the same year, was 'in reality an advance clause to the 1834 Poor Law' (p.27). Accordingly Marshall sees Frankenstein as a proleptic script in support of the Anatomy Act. Building on this, Murdering to Dissect perceives the novel in Bakhtinian terms, voicing the view, inevitably amongst others, that it is the surgeons who murder to dissect. By contextualizing Frankenstein within the national anxiety dubbed 'Burkophobia', following the Burke and Hare trial of 1829, Marshall shows how the novel gathered new meanings after it was first published in 1818. Incidentally this was the same year that the patent coffins were registered and marketed, which protected its residents from grave-robbers. Since grave-robbing was rife in Scotland where Shelley spent some of her girl-hood, Marshall could have considered the theory that it was there that she had been inspired with the idea for Frankenstein. What would have made an appropriate post-script to the book is the story of Shelley's own burial. Her daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Shelley, in an authorized grave-robbing episode had the bodies of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin disinterred so that she could comply with Shelley's wish to be buried with her parents. Loading the three coffins in a hearse, Lady Shelley drove to St Peter's Churchyard in Bournemouth only to find that the Rector refused to accommodate such an unholy trinity of heretical authors. Eventually he relented and permitted the burials to take place. What was not permitted was for any reference to Shelley's authorship of Frankenstein to be made within the sacred precincts of the graveyard. In being exiled to the outside wall of the churchyard, like a pauper's body, this textual acknowledgement, has been disowned and dismembered from the body of its author. So many critical dissections to which the text has been subject have been a good deal less edifying than Marshall's treatment, which has galvanised a variety of approaches drawing on anthropology, linguistics and politics. In the same way as Marshall sees the dissection of the human body as an unmasking so too is his reading of Frankenstein an unmasking. In this he is assisted not just by the work of Foucault but also by the late Elias Canetti, particularly his writing on masks, to whom the book is a veiled tribute.

Marie Mulvey Roberts University of the West of England, Bristol

Robert Ignatius Letellier, Sir Walter Scott and the Gothic Novel. Salzburg Studies in English Literature: Romantic Reassessment no. 113.

Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press 1994; Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1995. Pp. 238. £49.95 ($89.95). ISBN 0 7734 1276 . The Salzburg 'Romantic Reassessment' series has published valuable contributions to Scott scholarship over the years, including works -- such as J. H. Alexander's two studies of the publication and reviewing history of Scott's poetry -- which devote specialist attention to neglected but essential aspects of his literary career. Robert Letellier's survey is therefore a surprising addition to the series. It offers little that might be described as a reassessment; indeed, it is markedly traditionalist in its critical maxims, its notions of literary value, its references to secondary scholarship, and its conclusions. The decision to conduct his project in a way which sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, continues the work of Walter Freye's Rostock dissertation of 1902 and Eino Railo's The Haunted Castle of 1927, and which reserves its most intense fire for Patrick Crutwell's observations on Scott in the 1957 Pelican Guide to English Literature, is especially limiting in the light of the extensive scholarship of the 1980s and early 1990s which so illuminatingly complicated readings of Gothic fiction and of Scott. Letellier cites Judith Wilt's Secret Leaves (1985), David Punter's The Literature of Terror (1980), James Kerr's Fiction Against History (1989), and Daniel Cottom's The Civilized Imagination (1985). Frustratingly, he gives perceptive brief accounts of them. But they have not prompted him to revise the terms of what feels like a much older enquiry. The discussion opens with a brief survey of Scott's changing critical fortunes and the reputation of Gothic in critical studies. There are significant absences, notably any work addressing the political context of Gothic writings: instead, Gothic is felt much more generally to be 'pervasive' in Romantic imaginings. Letellier next turns to Scott's own views on Walpole and Radcliffe and to various other factors in his interest in the supernatural and the marvellous. This is a reasonable enough survey, although its critical intentions are unduly unambitious. The section on Gothic's place in the terrors of the times deals somewhat unsteadily with historical detail ('the Peterloo Riots', the Act of Union of 1706), although these may simply be examples of the book's lack of confidence with names and dates (Fleurs Castle, Sir Walter Daloraine, Frankenstein of 1819, The Bride of Triermain, Ellogowan Castle, Julie Mannering: the list is extensive). Again, Ronald Paulson is conspicuous by his absence. A chapter is then devoted to 'Gothic' happenings in the major narrative poems, which Letellier presents as less complex versions of the move towards psychological realism in the Waverley Novels. The detailed parallels between Scott's poetry and the novels of Radcliffe and Lewis extend the list given by Freye in 1902, particularly in the case of The Lady of the Lake; but for The Lay of the Last Minstrel and Marmion there will be few surprises for those familiar with Freye's work or with the more discursive approaches of Eino Railo and Edith Birkhead to similar material. Turning to the novels, Letellier discusses Gothic motifs such as the supernatural, the lost heir, and the high incidence of imprisonment; the treatment of character; and, potentially a more original contribution, notions of space and structure (disappointingly, this turns out to mean Railo-esque castles and ruins, although there is more interest in his suggested parallels between Jeanie Deans and Emily St Aubert, and between the houses in The Mysteries of Udolpho and Waverley). The most valuable aspect of this more satisfying part of the book is its willingness to consider the full range of Scott's work as a novelist; its greatest limitation its reluctance to recognize different types of

fiction within that range. For example, the comments on Woodstock are promising, but Letellier returns too quickly to his list of motifs to develop such matters as authorial tone, manipulation of readerly response, and the complication surely introduced at every turn by the fact that Gothic fiction itself is highly allusive and far from original in the situations, characters, and events in which it deals. The final brief chapter asserts 'A Special Affinity' between Scott and Radcliffe, and again its brief pointers to genuinely complex matters would have benefitted from reference to such readings of Radcliffe as those by Coral Ann Howells and Elizabeth Napier. The 'Postlude', which states Scott's lasting significance by means of extracts from Cardinal Newman and John Buchan, frustratingly omits to consider that any confident placing of Scott in a tradition of Roman Catholicism challenges nothing more pressingly than his supposedly untroubled assimilation of protestant Gothic. Letellier's analyses become more varied and enquiring when he reaches the novels, and in this respect they complement Freye's tabulation of parallels, which is strongest on the poetry. But his study is hampered by a rigid compartmentalization of motifs and themes, and by a reluctance to look beyond them to more complex links, ironies, and self-questionings.

Fiona Robertson University of Durham.

Sir Walter Scott, Tales of a Grandfather: The History of France. Second Series, ed. William Baker and J. H. Alexander. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. $50. ISBN 0 87580 208 7. In 1827, when he undertook to write the first series of Tales of a Grandfather, Scott had just completed his Life of Napoleon. His new plan was a work on Scottish history resembling J. W. Croker's Stories from the History of England for Children. The grandson for whom he professed to be writing was only six, but Scott's desire to 'do something greatly better than Croker' was encouraged by a belief that children wanted 'exercise for their thoughts'. The three series on Scottish history, which appeared in the years 1827-9, thus combined historical anecdotes with philosophical interpretation. Confident that he could 'hash History with anybody', Scott planned similar series on England, France and Ireland. In 1830 he composed and published a series on French history to 1412, and in January 1831 Robert Cadell offered him £800 for another 'Series on French History' to appear at Xmas'. This fifth series of Tales of a Grandfather was planned as a work in three volumes, and when he died in 1832 Scott had written the first volume and part of the second. As its editors say, this is 'one of the most substantial manuscripts by a major Romantic writer to survive unpublished'. The period handled in the completed portion of the fifth series runs from Henry V's invasion of France to Francis I's invasion of Italy. Perhaps because his grandson is now older, Scott offers a less anecdotal and more continuous narrative. His principal source is Claude Petiot's fifty-two volume Collection complPte des mJmoires relatifs B l'histoire de France, published in paris in 1819-26. Scott's historiography, much more than his historical fiction, is dominated by conflicts and rivalries among kings and great noblemen. The outstanding events include the Agincourt campaign, the murder of John the Fearless, the siege of Orleans, the sack of LiPge, and the conquest of Naples by Charles VIII. The unifying theme is the gradual victory of the devious Louis XI of France over the impetuous Philip the Bold of Burgundy. That victory is a fifteenth-century

manifestation of the transition from heroic valour to political calculation which figures so prominently in the Waverley novels. The general parallel is clarified by the specific connections with Quentin Durward and Anne of Grierstein. The version of late medieval history which Scott offers to his invalid grandson is darker than that which he offered to his readers in the circulating libraries. It is less hopeful about the triumph of innocence, and it forces us to see the historical figures through less innocent eyes. Scott acknowledges that Louis's cold-blooded conspiracies fostered the growth of France as a political entity. He also insists that, in detailing the Parisian massacres of the fifteenth century, he is 'tracing the outline of what was performed in the end of the eighteenth'. As the editors observe, a comparison of this manuscript with Scott's published fictions about France and Burgundy stimulates 'further thought on the relationship between . . . the historian as novelist and the novelist as historian'.

David Lindsay University of Wales, Bangor

Forest Pyle, The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 225. Pb £12.95. ISBN 0 8047 2862 3. The latest attempt to put new historicism on the back foot, Forest Pyle's The Ideology of Imagination dissents from the view (identified principally with Jerome McGann) that the Romantic imagination distorts a social reality which could be recovered by conscientious empirical means. In reply, Pyle resuscitates Althusser's critique of ideology and emphasis upon the active function of the imaginary within the real, combining this with Paul de Man's late work on the materiality of language. This improbable alliance, which certainly gingers up the atmosphere of boredom which descends upon critical discussion when the imagination is mentioned, is used as theoretical underpinning for an argument concerning the social roles imagination is asked to perform. Imagination, Pyle claims, is the way in which a society figures to itself a coherence and unity which it cannot achieve in actuality, and it is the cultural manifestation of these ideals in projects of aesthetic education or in myths of nationhood that forms the main subject of his book. Pyle's five main chapters look at Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and, perhaps unexpectedly, George Eliot. Coleridge's thinking about the imagination is convincingly tied to his thinking about social and political matters, his translation of Kantian philosophy to Britain being understood in the context of his 'disespousal' of the French Revolution (the material outcome of an unsound philosophy). Pyle demonstrates the inherent instability of the imagination via a familiar treatment of the inconsistencies, paradoxes and doublings of Chapter Thirteen of Biographia Literaria, and argues its 'surreptitious' power to create ideological effects through a close reading of 'Constancy to an Ideal Object'. He finishes with On the Constitution of the Church and State, in which Coleridge posits the idea of the nation as a 'pure fiction' which secures cultural continuity and promises to reconcile antagonistic class interests. Just as the imagination, for Kant, mediated between reason and understanding, so it would mediate socially in Coleridge's eyes, generating symbols and myths that would help forge national unity. Pyle's chapter on Wordsworth focuses on the imagination's role in 'enshrining' the past -- a preservative function which can too easily become one of 'entombment'. This is familiar territory for Wordsworthians, but Pyle brings

new life to the final Book of The Prelude, in following the interwoven narratives of imagination as both source and object of the poem, and offers a fascinating postcolonialist reading of the Arab Dream in Book Five. He argues that Wordsworth's need to conserve the spiritual legacy of Western literature involves confronting the threat of the Oriental Other (the Arab), whose appearance is both a necessary condition for, and a foreign intrusion upon, the cultural achievements the poet values. For Wordsworth, as for Coleridge, what the imagination enshrines is a national heritage, whose imperial mission demands the suppression of difference. Shelley's dominant theory of imagination, we are told, is of an 'unseen Power' of demystification that is one with the general course of social and political enlightenment; only in his late work does he consider the imagination as a source of necessary error. This chapter is rather disappointing -- largely a rehearsal of the now overworked deconstructive reading of 'The Triumph of Life', but with the additional spin of interpreting the poem's multiplying and overlapping figures as premonitory of Althusser's theory of ideology. The poem, through its relentlessly teasing disfigurations, 'discloses the inadequacy of the model of ideology as "false consciousness"', and the only truths which its visions furnish are the unimpeachable verities of post-Marxism. Paul de Man also inspires the chapter on Keats, where the focus is on the tension between Keats's redemptive, humanist ideal of poetry, and the non-human, non-referential, remainderful dimension of language. Pyle's analysis of material resistances to thought in Keats's poetry is somewhat narrowly based, and his demonstration of the link between imagination and ideology here seems rather bodiless. George Eliot's novels distinguish between a positive imagination allied to the socializing power of sympathy, and a more desirous, self-involved imagination to which women are especially prone. As the realist novel struggles to cope with an increasingly complex and contradictory social reality, Eliot's narrative discourse increasingly takes over the sympathetic function which the communities represented in her stories fail to embody. Pyle's account of how 'Eliot's "aesthetic teaching" would teach "community" into existence' is an arresting one -- as is his association of her writing with the epistemological break he diagnoses in Shelley and Keats. Pyle defends his exclusive attention to canonical texts on the grounds that they are central to his concern with the production and reproduction of cultural value. Nevertheless, his selectivity does little to support the overarching generational narrative which is a feature of his argument: that is, an enshrining of imagination by Wordsworth's and Coleridge's generation which is variously desecrated by Shelley, Keats and other latecomers. In his epilogue, Pyle attempts to recover hope from the very failure of imagination to achieve the great marriage of spirit and matter: the gaps imagination discloses, he avers, are open spaces where we can discern the 'shadows cast by futurity'. As the conclusion to a stimulating reappraisal of one of Romanticism's grandest themes, this final act of 'despondency corrected' seems a curiously Romantic manoeuvre.

Robin Jarvis University of the West of England, Bristol

James P. Davis, An Experimental Reading of Wordsworth's Prelude: The Poetics of Bimodal Consciousness. Salzburg University Studies. Lewiston, Queenstown, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, p1995. Pp. 193. ISBN 0 7773 1245 X. What might constitute an 'experimental' reading? Or, rather,

what might be the consequences of distinguishing one's reading from other approaches to a text as, specifically, 'experimental'? According to James Davis, what is entailed is the development of a new paradigm: 'I call my study an "experimental" reading . . . although I make use of many orthodoxies in literary criticism, because I hope to assess the degree to which some of the paradigms from cognitive neuroscience might fruitfully inform one's reading of a literary text' (p. 8). What justifies the author in calling his reading 'experimental', then, is its attempt to relate The Prelude to the neurological concept of 'bimodal consciousness': the idea that different cognitive processes and aspects of consciousness are located in one or other of the two hemispheres of the brain, and that one can therefore speak of a relation between the analytic / reasoning 'left brain' and the holistic / imaginative 'right brain'. The 'experimental reading' of the title should thus be taken in the strictly scientific sense of practically and methodically testing a stated hypothesis in order to reach a series of explicitly definable conclusions. In the first chapter, Davis presents the hypothesis. He outlines a brief history of neuropsychology from its emergence in the work of Paul Broca in the 1860's, and argues that many of its discoveries are anticipated in the Wordsworthian account of 'two consciousnesses'. The link that the book attempts to forge between the two discourses is, however, difficult to determine. Typical of Davis's formulation is the following argument: 'the temptation is strong to speculate that Wordsworth's frequent celebrations of childhood insight and his wish to retain as an adult modes of perception he recalls enjoying as a child might reveal an intuitive sense of psychological development that is in loose tandem with studies in neuroscience' (p. 41, emphasis mine). The central hypothesis of the study is thus couched in language that consistently withdraws from making the precise claims that Davis's adoption of the scientific paradigm requires. One is left feeling slightly mystified by the exact nature of the experiment, and unsure about the conclusions that are to be reached. What might be expected from an 'experimental' reading is that a test of the hypothesis will follow, and that more specific conclusions will be developed as the argument progresses. However, the deduction fails to emerge: by Chapter Two, any reference to neuroscience is difficult to find as the book's focus transfers to an analysis of Wordsworth's relationship with Coleridge and the former's depiction of his friend in The Prelude. Davis approaches these issues with thoroughness and a great deal of clarity, and by working through The Prelude book by book produces a comprehensive account of Coleridge's place in the poem. This is the most impressive part of Davis's study: his reading of the poem is extremely lucid, and his focus on Coleridge provides a far more compelling account of the 'problem of unity in The Prelude' (p. 169) than the scientific discussion of the 'two consciousnesses' ever achieves. When the book finally returns to neuropsychology in its closing pages, the conclusions about Wordsworth's poetry and bimodal consciousness are no more specific than the hypothesis: Davis states that, if 'Wordsworth's simultaneously reaching beyond and remaining within boundaries of various kinds, as structural motifs in The Prelude, anticipate some of the efforts to distinguish between the processes of the right and left hemispheres of the brain . . . then we can discuss the assorted kinds of boundaries that Wordsworth explores in The Prelude as a single though blurry boundary between modes of thought' (pp. 177-8). This is

interesting as far as it goes, but what is missing is any account of why such a process might be important, how it might fit into contemporary critical debates, and in what ways the reading of The Prelude that it generates might be original or new. Despite the fact that the central thesis of Davis's argument is vague and often difficult to pin down, his reading of Wordsworth's poetry is intelligent, coherent and sometimes highly insightful. It is not the innovative idea that is of interest here, but the clear and methodical analysis of the poetic text.

Simon Malpas Manchester Metropolitan University

Crook, Nora, with Pamela Clemit, Betty T. Bennett, Jane Blumenberg, Doucet Devin Fischer, Jeanne Moskal and Fiona Stafford, eds. The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley. 8 vols. The Pickering Masters. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996. Pp. 2,896. £495 ($795). ISBN 1 8519 6076 7 (set). Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Valperga: or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio Prince of Lucca, ed. Stuart Curran. Women Writers in English 1350-1858. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xxvi + 454. Hb £37, pb £12.99. ISBN 0 19 510881 7; 0 19 510882 5. If it were ever recently in doubt, 1996 saw Mary Shelley's status as a canonical Romantic author fully confirmed with the publication of Pickering and Chatto's eight-volume edition of her Novels and Selected Works. This is one of the most important publishing events of the decade in Romantic fiction. Frankenstein is, of course, available in several academic editions, and Matilda, and The Last Man and now Valperga are also available in inexpensive paperback editions. Yet as the Consulting Editor, Betty T. Bennett writes in her 'General Introduction' to the Pickering and Chatto volumest: 'This edition for the first time offers readers the opportunity to examine the novels, the travel works, the essays and introductions, together with miscellaneous pieces as a whole' (p. lxix-lxx). Bennett claims that this edition will provide the basis for affirming Mary Shelley's status as 'a Romantic who outlived her peers, but not her Romantic principles or her claim to be situated among "the Elect" of nineteenth-century literature and political reform'. Whether or not one wishes to accept Bennett's claims for the consistency and unity of Shelley's ouevre which 'From Frankenstein to Falkner . . . dwell on questions of power, responsibility, and love' (p. lxiii), one can appreciate that this edition, in making available a far greater range of Shelley's texts, will support the transformation in the critical study of Shelley from the often pyscho-biographical study of two or so novels to an awareness of an important literary vocation which spanned a range of achievement not just in fiction but in travel writing, poetic drama, and essay writing and reviweing. This, however, is not the 'Complete Works' of Mary Shelley but an edition of the novels and other writings, organized around the availability of scholarly editions of other Shelley works: Charles E. Robinson's Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories (1976), Betty T. Bennett's The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1980-88), and Paula Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert's The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-44 (1987). Nora Crook, the General Editor of the edition explains how it is the first edited collection of the six novels, assembling together all the known authenticated works by Shelley which were published or prepared for publication in her lifetime, but excluding her Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Italy, Spain and Portugal for

Dionysius Lardner's Cabinet of Biography, her non-dramatic poetry, her translation of the Cenci manuscript and the tales and 'Defense of Velluti' (both the latter already available inother scholarly editions). Volume One of the edition contains the 'General Introduction' by Bennett which elegantly and concisely survey Shelley's life and the range of her achievement, providing sustained critical comment on the novels and writings collected. As well as a useful chronology of the life and works, this volume also contains the 1818 text of Frankenstein, edited by Nora Crook. Volume Two, edited by Pamela Clemit contains Matilda; the Mythological Dramas, Proserpine and Midas; Reviews and Essays, including the essay 'On Ghosts'; Prefaces and Notes, including the Preface to Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the Memors of Godwin. Volumes Three to Seven are devoted solely to editions of the novels: Valperga (edited by Nora Crook); The Last Man (edited by Jane Blumberg [with Crook]); Perkin Warbeck (edited by Doucet Devin Fischer); Lodore (edited by Fiona Stafford); and Falkner (edited by Pamela Clemit). The eighth volume (edited by Jeanne Moskal) contains Shelley's travel writing, complete in one volume: 'History of a Six Weeks' Tour', 'Letters from Geneva' and the Rambles in Germany and Italy. The copy text used is generally the first published text of each work and revisions and substantive variations are given in the appendixes. In the case of Frankenstein this will probably help to re-inforce the critical preference for the 1818 edition also published by Pickering and Chatto and edited by Marilyn Butler in 1994. World's Classics have published the 1818, again edited by Butler this year. In the case of Matilda, Midas and Proserpine the manuscript fair copy has been used. Every item in the edition is preceded by a very helpful account of the composition and publishing history as well as the critical reception of the work. The edition also boasts excellent and clear annotation, making available for the other novels and pieces the range of allusion and learning that has become established for Frankenstein. There is also a good index which is strong on placenames, people, and titles, but not on themeatic issues. The decision provide more than en edition of Shelley's seven novels is very welcome. Herer we get a sense of the writer's development and achievement in a series of genres. Alongside the fiction we have the fascinating travel memoirs (early and late), Shelley's contribution to the burgeoning field of travel writing in the period. We also have the movement of Shelley's life from the imaginative young woman, instilled with the importance of literature by her father and the legacy of her mother, to the mature writer, composing for financial necessity as well as the imperative of establishing Percy Shelley's reputation as a great poet in the years after his death. This edition will be important in pushing the critical concentration on Shelley's work away from Frankenstein and The Last Man to a more balanced understanding of Shelley's place in the literature of her period. All serious academic libraries will need to purchase this edition for use alongside the already published edition of the Tales and Stories, Letters and Journals and they will no doubt make its acquisition a priority. Although the cost of the edition places it above the reach of many individual purchasers, as a potential resource for research students working on Shelley, and Gothic and Romantic fiction it is a realtively inexpensive acquisition. This is an invaluable resource for both serious scholars of Shelley's work and for those new to the less familiar novels who will relish reading individual volumes of this finely-produced edition.

Following on the publication of the Pickering and Chatto edition is Stuart Curran's edition of Shelley's historical novel (and second novel) of the internecine strife of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines in medieval Italy, Valperga: or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca for Oxford University Press's series 'Women Writer in English 1350-1850'. I was sent the hardback edition of the text which costs £37.50 but, according to Books in Print the novel is also published in a paperback version which retails at £11.99 and brings this useful edition into the reach of individual purchasers. In his more critically pugnacious introduction to this volume, Curran also concurs with Bennett and the various reviewers of the Pickering and Chatto edition which I have read that Scholarship of Mary Shelley is based on 'speculations born of intense study of Frankenstein and very little else' (p. xiii). Curran is very interesting about the authorial personae adopted by Shelley, post-Frankenstein and makes the compelling link between Shelley's enforced anonymity (as a result of Sir Timothy Shelley's interdict to suppress the Shelley name in print) and the Scott's financially acute adoption of the person of 'the Author of "Waverley"' as a publishing strategy. Curran situates Valperga in the context of the development of the historical novel popularised by Scott, most notably for his purposes Ivanhoe with its contrasting heroines the fair Saxon Lady Rowena and the dark Jewish Rebecca, a binary which Shelley takes up in the contrasting women, Euthanasia de Adimari and Beatrice of Ferrara. Euthanasia ultimately stands for peace and conciliation rather than Castruccio's tyrannical ambition. Curran also provides a footnote to his introduction which coaches the reader in the correct Italian pronunciations of the names of places and characters in the novel, thus Euthanasia is pronounced 'Ayoo-tah-NAH-zee-ah' and Valperga is pronounced not in the Anglo-American manner 'Vahl-PURR-Gah' but in the Italian 'Vahl-PAIR-gah'. Although the editor does not feel that Shelley would have expected an Italian pronounciation for Beatrice ('Bay-ah-TREE-chay'). Both Curran's edition and Nora Crook's for Pickering and Chatto use the one and only published text of the firm of G. and W. B. Whittaker as copy text, the manuscript that Mary Shelley sent to her father for comment and approval being lost. Curran's annotations, as one would expect, are judicious, assured and helpful. This edition of Valperga is most welcome, especially so because in its paperback version it is affordable and thus accessible to the student and scholar of Shelley's fiction.

Peter J. Kitson University of Wales, Bangor