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William Hazlitt, by himself (1802)

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Spotlight: Romantic Essayists

Helen E. M. Brooks, *Actresses, Gender and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. x + 201. £58. ISBN 9780230298330.

Helen Brooks contributes to the thriving critical debate on eighteenth-century theatre with *Actresses, Gender and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women*, in which she argues that successful eighteenth-century actresses carefully negotiated gender in their on- and offstage performances. Brooks resists the conception of actresses as marginalised social figures operating outside of accepted gender norms, and instead suggests we need a more nuanced analysis of femininity. For Brooks the stage was a space in which 'female identity could be examined, tested, and reflected back to wider society' (7), with actresses as active players in shaping gender during a period in which gender identity was in flux.

Although the main actresses featured in this study (Anne Oldfield, Peg Woffington, Sarah Siddons and Dora Jordan) will be familiar to many, this book provides a new focus through a study of how these actresses negotiated and displayed contemporary concepts of gender in order to create themselves as profitable and marketable commodities. Brooks thus enables us to 'consider the distinctive meaning on offer through the female performing body' (8), providing an alternative performance style trajectory to the male-centred Betterton-Kemble model. The thesis hinges upon the shifting cultural conceptions of gender from the one-sex body to the two-sex body, as argued by Thomas Laqueur. Brooks complicates this simple chronological shift by exposing the competing ideologies, approaches and images of femininity presented to audiences throughout the period, with each chapter exploring the negotiations of gender within a shifting, but not yet shifted, paradigm.

Chapter 1, 'Playing for Money', argues that actresses were businesswomen and economic agents who had the potential to earn 'a fortune' (41). Brooks details the salaries of actresses throughout the period, revealing that low- and middle-tier actresses earned favourably compared to other women (although not fellow actors) in other professions. Top actresses, however, were 'transforming their gender from a liability to an asset' (41), resulting in pay that equalled or surpassed not only their male counterparts but also, as in the case of Dora Jordan, men of other professions too. The argument is compelling, although the sheer amount of facts and figures in this chapter, reflecting extensive research, is dense: a table or chart to complement would have been welcome.

Chapters 2 to 5 focus attention on the different manifestations of gender on the eighteenth-century stage. Chapter 2, 'Playing the Passions' reminds us to pay attention to the play in performance and not text alone: the text of Rowe's *Jane Shore* (1714) adheres to stereotypes of the weakness of women and their susceptibility to the passions. Yet, as Brooks argues, the rhetorical skills required by actresses to produce a performance necessitate 'masculine' skills, which 'challenged the model of weak and irrational femininity' (50). Conceptions of masculinity and femininity are further explored in Chapter 3, 'Playing Men', in which travesty performances and breeches parts from Woffington to Jordan complicate gender boundaries. Particularly interesting is the idea that these performances addressed women in the audience (rather than the conventional idea that they simply titillated men).

Chapter 4, 'Playing Themselves', explores the increasing alignment between onstage and offstage identity (thus complicating the cross-dressing explored in the previous chapter). Brooks considers the increasing importance of role choice; whereas Woffington was renowned for both tragic and comic parts, Siddons and Jordan were cast as particular types given the growing 'perception that their performances were expressions' (97) of themselves. Brooks's useful term 'techniques of sincerity' (102) describes the methods used to mask the artifice of public 'authentic selves'. Chapter 5, 'Playing Mothers' considers the role of motherhood as

performed onstage and as a lived experience by Jordan and Siddons. The development of maternity as central to bourgeois feminine ideals both complicated and legitimised actress-mothers. Rather than accept that their 'working bodies' (126) negated bourgeois ideals, actresses' economic impetus was repackaged as fulfilling the role of motherhood by providing for their children. The lack of formal conclusion is welcome as it reflects Brooks's intention for this study to be an invitation for further scholarship into other actresses and other displays of gender.

Brooks manoeuvres through different disciplines, engaging with a wide range of source material; and draws together two distinct methodologies of theatre studies, showing how they inform each other – theatre economics and literary/cultural analysis. Brooks offers an impressive contribution to the study of eighteenth-century actresses, appealing to scholars of theatrical history, eighteenth-century drama and women's history, to sit alongside work by Laura Engel, Felicity Nussbaum, and Kristina Straub. The triumph of *Playing Women* is the exploration and expansion of concepts not just of how actresses played women but also shaped 'what it meant to be a woman' (6) in the eighteenth century.

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Wendy C. Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012. Pp. 195. $80. ISBN 9781611494303.

Wendy C. Nielsen's well-documented study brings a comparative lens to the rich subject of fighting women by focusing on drama in England, Germany, and France from 1789 to 1815. Less a comprehensive exploration of warrior women on the Romantic stage, as the title might suggest, than a collection of four discrete case studies, what unites the volume is Nielsen's interest in the figure of the female warrior as an allegory representing 'fantasies of empowerment and issues of social justice' (xiii). With particular emphasis on women playwrights and actresses, and the national political context of each play, Nielsen looks for patterns in the historical and dramatic portrayal of female soldiers, terrorists, Amazons, and sailors, asking questions about the political messages sent when women are shown occupying men's spaces and dressing in men's clothing, as well as the erotic and generic implications of images linking women and violence. The introduction covers a lot of ground, providing useful background on theatre, politics, and gender relations in France, Germany, and England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a time when these nations were at war and when censorship shaped the stage. Nielsen distinguishes the woman warrior from the *femme fatale* and 'just warrior' of Biblical, classical, and medieval traditions (xiii). The difference with plays from 1789 to 1815, she argues, is that 'they suggest that women *as a whole* (not just extraordinary individuals) can accomplish great deeds' (xiv) and thus present a case for extending citizenship to all women.

The book is structured in two parts. The first, 'Female Fighters of the French Revolution', focuses on the familiar historical figures of Charlotte Corday and Olympe de Gouges. Chapter 1 ranges over various French plays that alternately depict Corday as monster or maiden (*femme fatale* or just warrior) depending on the politics of the writer. However, Nielsen's main focus is on the champions of Corday abroad: in Britain through Edmund Eyre's *The Maid of Normandy*, and in Germany through Christine Westphalen's *Charlotte Corday: Eine Tragödie*. Nielsen shows how the playwrights alter history to appeal to local audiences: Eyre by turning to romance to 'domesticate Corday's political act' into a narrative of British

Liberty, and Westphalen by turning to bourgeois tragedy to 'fashion Corday for German nationalism' (30). Though conservative and progressive respectively, both plays emphasize Corday's passive, feminine qualities rather than masculine or seductive ones, and ultimately concern the plight of women more than politics. Chapter 2 focuses on Gouges's theatrical career and her play *L'Entrée de Dumouriez* which features female soldiers (based on the real-life Fernig sisters). Nielsen places the play in the context of Gouges's feminism in order to establish the relationship between the fight for universal rights and the woman warrior, arguing that Gouges herself is a warrior – of the pen rather than sword. Gouges's revival of the notion of 'La Femme Forte' from the *querelle des femmes* to indicate a strong or heroic woman allows Nielsen to extend the notion of warrior to include non-martial women as well.

Part II, 'Staging Civic Empowerment', explores the morality of war. Chapter 3 compares two German plays about mythological female warriors, Friedrich Schiller's *Penthiselea* (1808) about the Amazonian Queen and Karoline von Günderrode's *Hildgund* (1805) about a Germanic princess. As in her discussion of Corday, Nielsen demonstrates that for male writers, the woman warrior commits violence out of an excess of feeling whereas for female writers she fights to protect others and sacrifices herself for political ideals. The fourth chapter turns to England and the actresses Dorothy Jordan and Mary Darby Robinson, known for playing breeches parts. Nielsen narrows in on plays about female sailors which reflect class and political tensions in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century to argue that the actresses used these parts to refashion civic virtue into more democratic forms (98). Women were thus able to intervene in public affairs, making actresses like warriors: transgressive of social and gender norms by appearing in public, donning male forms and modes, sexualized or desexed as unnatural monsters, and battling for equal citizenship and rights.

An epilogue on 'Liberty and Marianne' considers the woman warrior as national and universal icon in the nineteenth century, and three appendices offer a chronology, bibliography of plays, and English translation of Karoline von Günderrode's *Hildgund* respectively.

Overall, Nielsen is less interested in the women warriors of the plays than the writers, actresses, and artists who employ them to forward (or counter) arguments about equal rights for women. At times, the definition of warrior seems too inclusive (as does the label Romantic, which Nielsen extends to include Gouges); however, Nielsen's comparative approach and narrow focus bring a fresh perspective to the diverse material. Directed at an English-speaking audience with little or no knowledge of French or German, the book will be of interest to anyone working on women and theatre of the Romantic era and women and war.

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William D. Brewer, *Staging Romantic Chameleons and Imposters*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 255. $90. ISBN 9781137389213.

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. Pp. 368. Pb. $26.95. ISBN 9780822353415.

Thirty years ago, in her groundbreaking *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (1986), Terry Castle presented the masquerade as a popular institution and a cultural metaphor that cast 'the true self [as] elusive and inaccessible – illegible – within its fantastical encasements' (4). More recently, Lisa A.

Freeman, in *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century Stage* (2002), argued that eighteenth-century theatrical character represented not a person but a vital trope. Building upon Castle's insights, Freeman identified eighteenth-century culture as inherently theatrical: one 'where the all-consuming interest of society in the mobilities of character could be tested and explored and where identity itself could be understood as a public property rather than a private or privatized concern of the subject' (237). Both scholars articulated a relationship between performance, the theatre and society that continues to evolve in new and thought-provoking directions.

One of these new works is William D. Brewer's *Staging Romantic Chameleons and Imposters*, which raises relevant questions about the 'fantastical encasements' (Castle, 4) of identity in the Romantic theatre. One of its strengths is its extensive catalogue of references to chameleons and imposters in literature, political tracts, and the theatre during the period, especially with regard to the playwrights, Richard Cumberland, Thomas Holcroft, Hannah Cowley, Mary Robinson and James Kenney. The chameleon metaphor is particularly suggestive in that it blurs the boundary between the human and the non-human animal. The reader might relate this metaphor to Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2008), and consider, as David Clark has in his article, 'What Remains to Be Seen: Animal, Atrocity, Witness' (in *Yale French Studies*, 2015), what it means to fall under an animal's prowling gaze in the midst of era's well-known atrocities: to name just a few, slavery, the Napoleonic wars, and the acts of genocide committed during the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire. But Brewer does not identify these characters as potential silent witnesses, and it is unfortunate that he does not develop this metaphor in this way. This has less to do with the texts he chooses to write about than it does with his focus on the fundamental fluidity of the metaphor. Brewer confines his 'slippery and versatile metaphor' (18) almost exclusively to discussions of authenticity as is suggested in the titles to chapters 3, 4, and 6: 'Thomas Holcroft's Politicized Imposter and Sycophantic Chameleon', 'Fluid Identities in Hannah Cowley's Universal Masquerade' and 'James Kenney's Opportunistic, Reformative, and Imitative Chameleons'.

Another evocative concept that Brewer deploys in this book is that of the polygraph. He introduces the idea in Chapter 4 in a discussion about Hannah Cowley and the masquerade and develops it in Chapter 5, 'Mary Robinson's Polygraphs'. Here, referring to Robinson's *Walsingham*, Brewer defines the polygraph as an imitator, and then traces the word's meaning to the Greek, where, he explains it means 'writing much' (141). By the eighteenth century, he notes, 'the word could signify a copying device, an individual who writes on many subjects, and a person who imitates or looks identical to another' (141). Once again, Brewer's metaphor is embarrassingly rich with possibilities. The polygraph represents another nexus point between the human and the nonhuman, in this case, between the human and the machine. Brewer focuses mostly on the mechanics of repetition through acts of imitation and even touches on the important issues of plagiarism and counterfeiting, but does not fully develop the potential to discuss actors as automatons or as a mirror-like apparatuses through which the audience views itself or the larger society. In many ways, *Staging Romantic Chameleons and Imposters* represents a hall of mirrors wherein images of imposters, chameleons and polygraphs are reflected upon in a series of close readings. While Brewer emphasizes the pervasive theatricality of British Romanticism in terms of a 'spectacular world […] of relentless self-fashioning' (Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre* 218), he does not, like Castle or Moody, situate these observations within a larger historical or cultural context. Brewer's work would also have benefited from a more active engagement with contemporary discussions about the human/animal nexus and the philosophy of science. These ideas would have helped him develop his rich metaphors into some type of cultural commentary on either the Romantic theatre or the significance of character fluidity in this tempestuous era.

In *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849*, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon shifts the conventional geographical focus from Britain to the circum-Atlantic region, marking critical 'turning points in the history of popular sovereignty and theatrical performance in the Atlantic world' (2). As with many transatlantic and circum-Atlantic studies, Dillon extends and complicates the temporal framework of conventional literary and historical periods, creating a long eighteenth century that begins with the execution of Charles I at Whitehall in 1649 and concludes with the 1849 Astor Place Riot that took place in New York City. The beheading of Charles I, Dillon argues, raised the curtain on a new type of performance that held the stage for two centuries throughout the Atlantic rim. Instead of examining how the theatre destabilized identity constructions, Dillon's book emphasizes how New World theatres and their performances transformed subjects into citizens. The story of the loss of the commons, as the shared property of the English people since the sixteenth century, is transformed in Dillon's study to one about the 'virtualization' of the commons from land to a political practice, which, she writes, 'appears forcefully in the space of the theatre in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world' (3). The theatre functioned as a cultural nexus, providing a physical space where both the body and the voice of the people materialized through performances occurring on and offstage. These productions mobilized the 'promiscuous' social energies of the multitude, but they ultimately succumbed to the forced enclosure of the theatres through legal interventions that brought about its privatization in the aftermath of the Astor Place Riot.

Dillon incorporates multiple geographical locations into her narrative, effectively reproducing the network of colonial relations between London, Charleston, Kingston and New York City. Emphasizing mobility, assemblages and the theatre as a dynamic site for cultural production, Dillon provides her readers with an alternative, wide-ranging perspective that does not confine the cultural imaginary to the commonplace historical constructions of nation, race or even those of the theatre. Adapting Joseph Roach's concept of circum-Atlantic performance in *Cities of the Dead* (1996), Jürgen Habermas's study of the public sphere as well as Jacques Rancière's important work on the relationship between the aesthetic and politics, Dillon maps the construction and the transformation of 'colonial relations' throughout the Atlantic region. Dillon's first chapter is devoted to formulating this pivotal concept. She uses it to refer to the colonial economic structures at the heart of modern capitalism and to other structures of the 'intimate distance' (23) between the colonized and the colonizer that both shaped and racialized relations between Africans, Europeans and native peoples. The construction of political freedom, Dillon notes, is intimately tied to 'a shadow economy of dispossession, specifically, the dispossession of property (from Native Americans) and labor (from New World Africans) that fuels the property ownership regimes of metropolitan and creole Europeans. The colonial relation […] renders the scene of expropriative violence in the colony "invisible" (distant, dismissable, nonpertinent) to those who reap its economic and political benefits' (8). Following Rancière, Dillon unveils the tangible political stakes of representational strategies and, brilliantly adapting Giorgio Agamben's idea of *homo sacer* or bare life, she illustrates how 'bare labor' has existed under the forces of erasure at the core of modern capitalism: undermining the rights of enslaved Africans, disenfranchising creole Europeans and displacing indigenous peoples while simultaneously allowing for what Orlando Patterson has referred to as their 'social death' (*Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, 1982). *New World Drama* is an important, field-changing study. Dillon challenges and encourages her readers to revisit familiar theoretical and historical models while at the same time expanding what it means to be interdisciplinary and transnational.

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Jeremy Tambling, *Hölderlin and the Poetry of Tragedy: Readings in Sophocles, Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Benjamin.* Brighton, Chicago and Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2014. Pp. 310. £65 (hb). £27.50 (pb). ISBN 9781845195878.

To scholars of British Romanticism, Hölderlin tends to fall between the cracks: unknown to the big guns of nineteenth-century Anglophone literature, he was also slow to attain reputation in Germany. It is primarily because of their influence on Nietzsche, Benjamin, and Heidegger that Hölderlin's writings have garnered later critical attention. Tambling is mindful of these figures in this study of Hölderlin's interpretations of tragedy, and of his poetry, which often explores ideas from drama. This is an ambitious monograph that aims to retrieve Hölderlin for the Anglophone reader via generous quotation, translation, and critical analysis, and also draws on Heidegger's and Benjamin's thought to assert the importance of Hölderlin's work amidst philosophies of tragedy more widely.

Tambling's introductory analysis of Hölderlin's poetry is sensitive to the ideas at play. There are useful cross references here to give the newcomer a sense of Hölderlin's voice. Tambling invokes Wordsworth to explain Hölderlin's intimation of the potential crisis implicit in the space between a spot of time and its recollection in verse (4); invokes Derrida, in contemplation of the contradictory association of a river – both divider and constituent of landscape – simultaneously with the violent centaur and the servile Ganymede (7); and Hopkins, in analysis of fire's duality as force of destruction and supportive ether (9). A Romanticist might wish for more substantial reference to other Romantic writers as context. For example, Tambling analyses Brecht's reflections on epic theatre – in which Brecht refers to '"caesuras", as if quoting Hölderlin' (25) – as evidence of direct influence, but with no acknowledgement of relevant theories of dramatic illusion in Fichte or Coleridge. Doubtless Tambling has chosen to contend for Hölderlin's importance by emphasis on his inheritors rather than contemporaries, but the sense of Hölderlin's originality and influence is tacitly exaggerated because of these lacunae. In later passages, by contrast, there is attention to Hegel's reading of *Antigone*, and Schelling's fatalism.

The disruptive devices of caesura and parataxis – central to this study – correspond to Hölderlin's insanity, which Tambling does not romanticise. Hölderlin's interest in tragedy is revelatory: his madness can be communicated by reference to the analogous undoing of Orestes and Pentheus; his own poetry is dense with allusions to psychosis in classical literature. Tambling cites the rage of Achilles to communicate the sense of loss in Hölderlin's anger, the proximity of 'grievance' to 'grief' (50). Sophocles' Ajax laments – not rages – for not being awarded the late Achilles' armour, and is driven finally to suicide. In Hölderlin's poem 'Mnemosyne', such lack of composure is a failure, which leads to the loss of memory, and with it the possibility of grief. Tambling says that Benjamin 'continues the process' by theorising an impersonal melancholy at the heart of *trauerspiel*, wary that loss of the capacity to mourn entails a modern prevalence of 'signs without meaning' (57); madness writ large as a civilisation that cannot communicate.

Some readers might reasonably turn pale at Tambling's poststructuralist approach. Undoubtedly Hölderlin can be interpreted by that method. For example, his implication that sorrow is the best condition in which to poeticise joy invites reinvestigation of the relationship between supposed opposites (58). But this may not be the most effective critical method to contend for Hölderlin's importance *per se*, a stated goal of the monograph. Tambling proceeds systematically through Hölderlin's works, but the argumentative substance feels as though he is ticking off a checklist of Foucauldian and Derridean concepts, whose aggregate persuasiveness will depend on one's commitment to that body of theory. Considerably long

sections adopt poststructuralist perspectives, and consult modern commentators to assess tragedy as a genre, but do not mention Hölderlin at all.

The book is at its best where it focuses on what Hölderlin *does* with tragedy, particularly in his translations – which he theorises as 'free imitation' (158) – and explicit commentary on the genre. Hölderlin's version of *Oedipus Tyrannus* anticipates Freud: the king wonders whether his dream might have killed Polybus, and Jocasta speculates that dreams of incest are common (121). Antigone claims kinship with Zeus, and Creon is an innate rather than an incidental blasphemer; yet Antigone's recognition of 'lawlessness' to the gods 'makes her the Antitheos' (167–71). These are radical departures from Sophocles' texts, demonstrating Hölderlin's own psychological interpretation of the genre. At the heart of his conception of tragedy is the union of humanity and gods, which necessitates wrathful purgation. Tambling notes that such 'psychodrama' is 'Shakespeare-like' (198). There is political vision to Hölderlin's view that modernity lacks a sense of fate; his proposed solution is not to repeat Greek tragedy, but for new literary forms to uncover a national destiny.

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Diane Piccitto, *Blake's Drama, Theatre, Performance and Identity in the Illuminated Books*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014. Pp. vii + 241. £55. ISBN 9781137378002.

Michael Farrell, *Blake and the Methodists*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014. Pp. x + 259. £55. ISBN 9781137455499.

Blake has long been considered a transformative figure and two recent monographs seek, in differing ways, to investigate how his multimedia creative output draws on and reinterprets the cultural, artistic, and theological milieu of the Romantic period. Following recent scholarship on Blake and theatricality, most notably Susanne Sklar's *Blake's Jerusalem as Visionary Theatre* (Oxford, 2011), Diane Piccitto's timely study of theatricality and identity in Blake's illuminated books takes the frequently rehearsed phrase from *Jerusalem*, 'Visionary Forms Dramatic' literally, to consider Blake's poetry as 'dramatic performances of identity that create an active spectatorship' (1). There is a tradition of examining and reconfiguring Blake's works through the lens of theatre. Within the academy, scholars often discuss performativity when analyzing Blake's mythopoetic system and the vast cast of characters that populate this system. Beyond the academy, Blake's works have been and continue to be appropriated and adapted for performance; from the Job ballet and flag-waving patriotism of Last Night of the Proms, to digital platforms such as YouTube, Vine, and Tumblr. As Piccitto observes, there is 'an impulse to view [Blake's] works dramatically and put them on stage' (11). In terms of Blake's 'works', Piccitto is most interested in the illuminated books because their particular format emphasizes the interplay between the verbal and visual thus possessing the 'ability to transform the senses' (1). For Piccitto, the unique combination of image and text constitutes a dramatic performance in form, content, and reception.

In her first chapter, Piccitto grounds her claim that the illuminated books should be considered as 'dramatic theatre' (35) by situating Blake in the historical context of debates about popular theatre during the Romantic period. These debates centre on two types of dramatic performance and their corresponding effects on the audience: the anti-theatricals advocated 'the private reading of a text' that, following Lessing, privileges word above image

to feed the individual reader's imagination, and the theatricalists who championed the 'communal experience of seeing a text physically manifested' (25) as a vehicle for self knowledge. Despite Blake's frequent lauding of the imagination, Piccitto situates him on the side of the theatricalists because the illuminated books actualize the imagination via text while the images 'offer interpretative potential' that does not 'restrain the text' (27). Piccitto goes on to argue that theatricality is central to Blake's narratives, particularly his Prophetic poems which frequently comprise 'a number of performances and dramatic moments', 'the interactions and dialogues of several characters', who are often visually depicted 'in the middle of an action', and are driven by a narrative voice that operates 'more like a chorus' (35/6). Connecting Blake with his contemporary, the playwright Joanne Baillie, Piccitto also argues that Blake's conception of the role of the prophet as a social figure and prophecy as a public function is analogous to Baillie's socially-inflected view of the dramatist. The chapter closes with a detailed and often compelling reading of *America a Prophecy* that draws on the textual and pictorial variances between copies to argue that as specimens of dramatic theatre, the illuminated books construct a 'Blakean spectatorship' (52).

In the second and third chapters, Piccitto explores this idea of spectatorship through the critical lens of Brechtian alienation and the 'medieval experience of spectacle' to argue that in his illuminated books Blake 'manipulates the tension between alienation and immersion in order to provoke a transformative experience in his spectator' (53). To distinguish her claim from similar arguments, Piccitto also draws on the artistic principles Blake sets out in his description of *A Vision of the Last Judgment* to posit the idea that engagement with the illuminated books prompts 'an actual recreation of the world the text presents' (57). Deploying a liberal dose of Althusser, Piccitto uses *The [First] Book of Urizen* as a case study for a discussion of identity formation and the genre of melodrama. In her final chapter, she fruitfully analyzes how Blakean identity is bound up with performativity in *Milton*.

While many of Piccitto's arguments are presented with nuanced close readings there are some curious claims, such as when she stresses that the differences between copies of illuminated books are part of their theatricality, although such a reading necessitates Blake's 'audience' (both then and now) having access to more than one copy. Piccitto also likens theatrical performances to the trade of engraving because they share the same qualities of being 'unique, evanescent, experiential, and unrepeatable' (42), which seems to misunderstand the not unimportant reproductive feature of engraving. Fortunately, these are minor quibbles in what is a worthy addition to our understanding of Blake's relationship to a particular cultural context.

Michael Farrell also revisits familiar contextual territory in *Blake and Methodism*. As the title indicates, Ferrell is concerned with tracing where aspects of Blake's thought overlap with what was the largest dissenting religious group in Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As previous scholars have recognized, there are a number of congruities between Wesleyan Methodism and Blake, including his use of 'Methodist hymns as a model for his poetry' (3). Following on the heels of Jennifer Jesse's *William Blake's Religious Vision: There's a Methodism in his Madness* (Lexington Books, 2013), Farrell's premise is that contrary to earlier views of Blake as a lone voice crying in the theological wilderness, Blake operates in 'the same doctrinal territory' (2) as Wesley.

Farrell's study is, in part, a corrective to E.P. Thompson's dismissal of Wesleyan self-denial as an influence on Blake, providing a more balanced consideration of both flavours of Methodism, Wesley and Whitehead, and how they intersect with Blake's own belief system as set out in the illuminated books and a number of paintings and engravings. In his first chapter, Farrell addresses the established notion of Blake as something of a magpie or, to rehash Levi-Strauss's term for reuse, 'bricoleur', repurposing particular elements of discursive practices 'to fashion an alternative discourse of opposition' (19). Drawing on the work of Jon

Mee and Leslie Tannenbaum, Farrell takes the concept of bricoleur to not only describe Blake's use of Christ as a typological exemplum to be followed by Blake and his readers, but as the very act of reading and re-writing. Here, Farrell claims, we can see an instance of overlap between Wesley and Blake, for 'Wesley, too, was a bricoleur in his role as prolific author and publisher of existing work' (24).

In subsequent chapters, Farrell provides extremely helpful contexts, ranging from the Moravian origins of Methodism (Chapter 2), including a discussion of Blake's mother's connections with the Fetter Lane congregation; the theological writings of Wesley (Chapter 3), the literary culture of the period (Chapter 4) and the influence of Moravian and Methodist hymnody on Blake's poems, particularly *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to two of the authors and the works that Blake and Wesley had in common, bringing to light some intriguing correspondences between Blake's pictorial treatment of, and Wesley's commentary on, Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

In his final chapter, Farrell analyzes various Methodist strains that appear in Blake's work and letters during and after the crucial 1800–1804 period. As has long been recognized, Blake's three-year sojourn on the Sussex coast working for William Hayley and his return to London mark a distinct shift in Blake's thought. For Farrell, elements of this transition, as evinced in Blake's language, is 'typical of the Evangelical Revival' (162). While Farrell is wise to play down any suggestion that this transformative period signals a conversion to Methodism, there are several references in Blake's writings to Methodism's fundamental tenets as they relate to the importance of the imagination and spiritual sensation for Blake. As in the earlier chapters, Farrell does not always cover new ground here, but he does provide a series of useful contexts to demonstrate that Blake was sympathetic to Wesleyan Methodism. Perhaps where this book is strongest, however, is in showing areas where Wesley and Blake differ, such as their respective soteriological notions. By revealing these overlaps and differences, Farrell suggests some of the complexity of Blake's engagement with the various theological practices of the period and, as with Piccitto's book, provides a welcome addition to Blake scholarship.

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Helen P. Bruder and Tristanne Connolly, eds., *Sexy Blake*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. 260. £58 (hb). £45.99 (ebook). ISBN 9781137332837.

Bruder and Connolly (along with Steve Clark and Jason Whittaker) have made a major contribution to Blake studies with a succession of edited volumes that expand the boundaries of Blake scholarship. Precursor volumes to this collection are *Women Reading William Blake* (2006) and *Queer Blake* (2010), building on Bruder's *William Blake and the Daughters of Albion* (1997) and Connolly's *William Blake and the Body* (2002). *Sexy Blake* is one of two progeny of the 2010 Oxford conference of the same name. Whereas *Blake, Gender and Culture* (Pickering and Chatto 2012) offers richly historicized essays, this volume provides an argumentative and diverse set of meditations on the darker sides of Blakean sex. As Bruder and Connolly make clear, the word 'sexy' is a coinage of the end of the nineteenth century. But this anachronism allows the reader to enter just those territories of dirty, confusing, bodily sexual attraction that readers and critics (with the exception of W.J.T. Mitchell's 1982 'Dangerous Blake') have mostly fought shy of.

The presiding genius of this volume is Christopher Hobson, whose *Blake and Homosexuality* (2002) began the task he outlines in his contribution to this volume, of 'overcoming the heteronormativity that remains characteristic of Blake studies' (221). Here Hobson looks back in commemoration of John Newball Hepburn and Thomas White, the 'Vere Street monsters' executed for sodomy in 1810 (235-237), to remind us that sexual ideology is a matter of life and death and sets future scholars the task of drawing on the 'now readily available archival material on eighteenth century homosexual life' (221). Thus Sean David Nelson's study of 'Sapphism and Chastity in Blake's *Jerusalem*' (83-97) can see the ways in which Blake challenges the 'mores of the emerging middle-class' (92) by making explicit Wollstonecraft's hints at the sexual nature of female friendship in *Mary*. The volume is equally committed to challenging assumptions about the representation of female sexuality including Susan Fox's 1977 claim that 'Females presented positively are passive […] Active females are pernicious'. Susanne Sklar illuminates the spiritual role of vaginal imagery in Blake's *Last Judgement*' (125-140) in a convincing reading that notes that the figures who fly up to heaven are 'predominantly women and children' (131).

Elsewhere this model can assume a story of progress – one that is admittedly explicit in Blake's poetry: 'Children of the future age,/ Reading this indignant page,/ Know that in a former time/ Love, sweet love, was thought a crime'. Thus Michelle Leigh Gompf's study of 'Violence and Feminist Moments in Blake' (65-80) argues for violence in Blake's poetry as "radical chemotherapy" (80, quoting Bealer): Blake is implicitly read via an American culture of medicalized intervention. Paige Morgan sets up a comparison between Blake's sense of the limits of the body and the performance artist Stelarc whose theatrics of pain (suspending his own body via metal hooks) 'produces objects and performances that echo Blakean principles in a world where technology has vastly expanded the limits of potentiality' (178). Typically modern categories seep into David Shakespeare's 'Sexual Vision and Obscurity in Blake's Milton' (113-124) where Ololon's 'transgendered qualities' enable 'visionary perception […] possible through her various guises' (121). In 'Helyos and Ceylen [A Poison Tree]', Tommy Maybery (161-176) (ironically) translates Blake into a series of contemporary clichés.

Hobson enjoins critics to come 'to grips with Blake's presentation of the multiform perverseness of human sexuality' (221). It is the pencil marginalia of the *Four Zoas* manuscript rather than the beautifully androgynous bodies of the illuminated books that take central stage. Opening a section on 'Violence and Domination', Lucy Cogan's 'Subjectivity, Mutuality and Masochism' (21-34) can recognize that the *Book of Ahania* offers a vision of maternal bliss but is more interested in the exploration of female masochism. Ayako Wada (35-46) traces Blake's presentation of adulterous birth in *The Four Zoas* within the promising context of Britain's assertion of moral superiority over France in wartime. Yoko Ima-Izumi's 'Blood in Blake's Poetry of Gender Struggle' (47-63) morphs into a tantalizing examination of the role of sexualized blood in Japanese culture inflected by an engagement with Romanticism.

For some contributors it is Blake the man, as well as the work, that is 'sexy' (or not). Magnus Ankarsjo's account of the Notebook verses (99-112) leads him to lament: 'one cannot help but wish for a more extensive knowledge of Blake's personal life at this time' (105). Angus Whitehead and Joel Gwynne's 'The Sexual Life of Catherine B' (193-210) traces the sexual fantasies of the female biographer (with a title allusion to Catherine Millet's 2003 *The Sexual Life of Catherine M*, an explicit account of the libertine adventures of a female academic). Yet what emerges, of course, is the critic's fantasy: 'How might an albeit strong-willed Catherine's recorded awe, obedience, and reverence of "Mr Blake" alongside her pity for him, or indeed Blake's repeated fascination with torture and rape, have shaped the couple's relations?' (208). How indeed, if Blake *was* fascinated with torture and rape. As Kipling realised in his account of the Janeites, a search for the author tells us a lot about the critical present. Philippa Simpson's stunning 'Blake and Porn' (211-220) foregrounds this assumption

and makes it part of a complex argument about how a limiting definition of 'art' has constrained our ability to see the closeness of Blake to pornography. In Simpson's essay – as in the best of these essays – the critical freedom offered by anachronism allows the present to talk to the past and thus to see beyond the familiar boundaries of Blakean scholarship to uncover a new Blake.

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Monika M. Elbert and Lesley Ginsberg, eds., *Romantic Education in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: National and Transatlantic Contexts*. New York and London: Routledge, 2015. Pp. 290. £90. ISBN 9781138781122.

The essays collected in this volume chart the legacy of Romantic pedagogy in American literature from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth. The book is organised into four sections, each consisting of four essays. The first section is concerned with exploring the way in which Romantic pedagogy was interpreted within the Transcendentalist tradition. Ken Parille and Anne Mallory offer a particularly stimulating discussion of how Bronson Alcott's Pestalozzian theory of education faltered in practice. Alcott's experience of teaching boys convinced him that corporal punishment was a necessary part of their education: a conviction that conflicted with his investment in 'the Romantic figure of the spiritual child' (26). The fraught relationship between theory and practice is one of several themes that recur throughout these essays, and is reflected by the book's engagement with both literary and more obviously didactic writing.

The book's second section explores how Romantic conceptions of art were translated into socially progressive pedagogy. These educational agendas were subsequently transmitted via a number of forms: from the popular serialised novels of E.D.E.N. Southworth (discussed in Joyce W. Warren's essay) to Susanna Rowson's *Spelling Dictionary*. As Lorinda B. Colhoon argues, with its inclusion of words such as 'blockade', 'bomb', 'debenture' and 'emancipate', Rowson's *Dictionary* provided its young female readers with lessons about 'citizenship, property, and power' (75). This section also includes Anne Bruder's essay on Jane Addams, whose egalitarian principles led her to establish the 'embodied pedagogical experiment' (121) of the Hull-House settlement and, later, a museum dedicated to labour. Bruder offers a fascinating account of how the museum's celebration of women's work helped individuals to find solace in an industrial age through the recovery of 'maternal attachments' (130).

The third section of the book addresses the vexed issue of race. Lesley Ginsberg considers the 'tension between Romanticism and reform' (146) with reference to the career of Lydia Maria Child, while Valerie D. Levy examines the abolitionist poetry of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Bringing matters into the present day, Wendy Ryden suggests that educators perpetuate a form of Romantic ideology when teaching the autobiographical writings of Frederick Douglass. Ryden's polemical essay argues that teachers too frequently universalise Douglass' experiences, transforming him into an emblem of Romantic self-actualisation. Sarah Ruffing Robbins also engages with the shortcomings of Romantic pedagogy, exploring how Elaine Goodale Eastman's private and professional lives were shaped by her engagement with 'the so-called "Indian problem"' (193).

The focus on what the editors refer to as 'the "other" or the child left behind' (7) informs the essays in the final section of the book, which is entitled 'Romantic Pedagogies and the Resistant Child'. The idea of 'resistance' is interpreted variously, but is most pronounced in the contributions from Carol J. Singley and Monika M. Elbert. Singley's essay begins by referring to Ralph Waldo Emerson's brother, Robert Bulkeley Emerson who, 'in today's parlance, might be called learning disabled' (230). However, rather than focussing on the challenge that such children may have posed for Romantic models of pedagogy, Singley's discussion turns to more conventional figures of 'resistance': the troublesome children in novels by Hawthorne, Stowe, Alcott and Twain. Similarly, Monika Elbert considers the figure of the 'empathic disabled child protagonist' (260) in novels ranging from *Little Women* to *Pollyanna*. Both essays offer illuminating accounts of the fiction they discuss, but are sadly unable to connect theory and practice in the manner of the earlier essays; as Elbert notes, relatively little information about the education of disabled children in this period has been discovered. The book's final section also contains Allison Giffen's excellent discussion of Martha Finley's *Elsie Dinsmore* series. Giffen describes how the Romantic sentimentalisation of girlhood has found new popularity among the evangelical Christian right in the US, before drawing out the disturbingly incestuous undercurrents prompted by the image of the 'redemptive daughter' in Finley's novels (247).

As this overview suggests, the book offers detailed explorations of both canonical and relatively obscure figures. While the essays are consistently thought-provoking, it is a shame that their discussions cannot always be developed in the relatively short space each is afforded. Readers with a particular interest in Romanticism may also feel frustration: while the essays offer an excellent appraisal of the debates that shaped American pedagogy, the version of Romanticism to which they appeal is sometimes rather narrow. Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' is frequently invoked as a shorthand for Romantic attitudes towards childhood. Similarly, although many of the essays are particularly attentive to gender, they offer little sense of how American authors responded to earlier women writers of the Romantic period, despite the influence that figures such as Maria Edgeworth and Anna Letitia Barbauld had upon their transatlantic counterparts.

Nevertheless, this book does not aim to reassess British, or European, Romanticism: its intention is to examine the history of American education from a range of new perspectives. Its success in this endeavour is enhanced by the careful sequencing of the essays. While each is self-contained, collectively they provide a valuable examination of the way in which Romantic ideas were transmitted, contested, and reformulated in response to the educational demands of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America.

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Eva König, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Vicissitudes of the Eighteenth-Century Subject*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. 277. £58. ISBN 9781137382016.

The possibilities of the literary orphan in the nineteenth-century has attracted interest due to both the Romantic conceptualisation of childhood and the importance of the concept of the family as social and imperial structure. Eva König's new book, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, considers the orphan figure at an earlier moment, the formative moment of

the novel as a genre. In doing so, König explores how this genre gave voice to the emerging middle-classes while articulating a notion of female selfhood in an overtly patriarchal society.

In truth, part of König's project offers a familiar understanding of the novel as a potentially radical form, speaking to the developing middle-classes while offering opportunities for women writers. This has been central to eighteenth-century and genre studies for the past few decades. However, König offers a wide-ranging and extensive examination of sixteen eighteenth-century novels by Defoe, Richardson, Haywood, Inchbald, Burney, Lennox, Austen, Hays, Smith, Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe. The book is all the more impressive for the detailed, considered analysis of texts which ensures that this certainly is not a survey but an original contribution to the understanding of the texts through the overarching conceptual vehicle of the orphan. The construction of Burney's *Evelina* as a site of battle between patriarchy and matriarchy is particularly useful; the battle for the orphan Evelina by the opposing grandparents at the moment of her entrance into society is, as König identifies, an attempt to usurp patriarchal power. König deliberately chooses novels that narrate stories of orphans nearing adulthood; this is a key 'liminal phase', the process through which full selfhood is announced. It coincides with the moment whereby social responsibilities and social practices restrict the agency of the self.

From the onset, König is clear that her conceptualisation of the orphan is not as 'an empirical reality' but rather as an 'empty signifier' through which debates regarding the role and status of women, selfhood and the development of the novel as genre could be played out. The novel, with its emphasis on the sustained development of character, provides a useful vehicle through which notions of selfhood and identity could be both negotiated and critiqued. König's particular interest in gender reflects the choice to examine predominantly women authors writing about female orphans. As such, it is an extremely useful contribution to gender studies particularly understanding how gender was negotiated through authorship, readership and aesthetic form.

With a particular focus on female orphans, König explores how the authors probe patriarchy and the restrictions placed on women. For female readers these narratives operate as 'conduct manuals' on how to be interpellated into patriarchy. Ironically, for male readers these narratives allow them to experience vicariously the exercise of male power and the process of becoming a subject.

The wide-ranging role of the family as seat of patriarch, property, and social identity offers a daunting obstacle which female orphans coming of age need to negotiate. Entrance into the family through marriage would mean the loss of any financial independence a female orphan might have. These middle-class orphans, who have some property providing them with unusual freedom and autonomy, provide the greatest interest to König as she explores how they are gradually brought under control by a patriarchal system. As such, the family could be seen as operating as a mechanism of female castration.

König marries the wider issues regarding gender, identity and social place with a Lacanian framework which categorizes various literary orphans as representative of stages of development from the 'boundless pre-imaginary', through the mirror stage (imaginary) and ultimately ending up in the symbolic. It is a movement into language, narrated through language, which constitutes the development of selfhood. The structuring of the book into five sections ('Bastards and Foundlings in Pre-Imaginary Oscillation Mirror', 'Mirror on the Wall: The Deluded Heiress and the Imaginary', 'Dispossessed Children: The Subject of the Symbolic', 'The Return of the Repressed: Radcliffe's Matriarchy', 'The Orphan in Mourning') clearly charts the movement of the book through these Lacanian development stages, offering an important narrative intersecting narratives of class and social structure in the eighteenth century.

However, by emptying the signification of the literary orphan, ignoring the material in privileging the psychoanalytic, König misses the opportunity to explore the development of the middle-class family system within the demise of the feudal (another family system of sorts), robbing the orphan of its specificity which in itself negates selfhood. One cannot help but feel that engagement with work such as Cheryl L. Nixon's *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Law and Literature: Estate, Body and Blood* would have further developed König's work. This is not the only omission of work published on orphans: it is not a crowded field, König would have done well to situate her valuable work within it.

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Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 868. £110. ISBN 9780199662128.

Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Invisible World: Lectures from the Wordsworth Summer Conference and Wordsworth Winter School*, selected and ed. Richard Haynes. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015. Pp. 280. Pb. £14.99. ISBN 9781503290259.

You need both hands to steer the tanker of an *Oxford Handbook*. The series of Oxford Handbooks aims to provide new essays from a range of key perspectives including leading directions in current research. This volume on William Wordsworth goes for full comprehensiveness, arranged into very general sections, rather than exclusive selectivity, and represents an enormous compilation in book form, which only a reviewer is likely to read from cover to cover. Researchers and students can consult areas of particular interest from the wide coverage and will find detailed and often original essays (forty-seven in all), mostly of around sixteen pages. All the major poetic works are addressed together with many other poems, sequences, and the most significant prose works. You would have to work hard to find any obviously relevant topic that has been omitted, and the editors even acknowledge their own supposed lacks: the northern Wordsworth, 'Wordsworth and the Victorians', and the writer's 'broader cultural presence' (which is a significant gap). To encompass the vast array, the book's six parts have to be of general purpose: Life, Career, and Networks; Poetry; 'The Recluse' (the whole project, mainly *The Prelude*); Poets and Poetics; Inheritance and Legacy (particularly an *omnium gatherum*); and Aspects of Reception.

Given the gargantuan framework for the book, so different from the comfortably sized and arranged *Cambridge Companions*, the editors are to be congratulated on assembling an extraordinary cornucopia of uniformly authoritative and often freshly stimulating contributions. The dizzying scope – the editors 'find no surface where [their] power might sleep' – challenges organisation. Though the volume is scrupulously edited, the thematic contents of the indexing are sparse. The introduction helps, with brief surveys of running themes and subjects within the sections, though they can seem a little haphazard. It begins with an account of Wordsworth's nineteenth-century reception, interestingly via Dickens, to represent some of the poet's Victorian impacts, and proceeds to address his later influences as the poet of feeling and nature, extending to the domestic and social concerns which manifest themselves in the Victorian novel and up to Lawrence. When it comes to fixing the leading landmarks decade by decade in the later twentieth-century (Geoffrey Hartman predictably

looms largest) clearer focus and selectivity enter in. Significant trends evoked are textual scholarship and the vaguer 'experimental' poet, and other groupings which begin to lose shape, apart from the Marxist assault. More about the historicisms might have been expected, and there is no account of feminist and gender or religious and psychological approaches (though there are equally excellent individual essays on all these subjects). The attention to ecology and formalist approaches is more assured, and new shoots are necessarily individually indicated. The book ends with a section on Recommended Reading.

A reason why the introduction does not incorporate any pinpointed treatment of modern critical approaches is that that job is done brilliantly by Andrew Bennett in one of the useful survey essays on reception in the final section which also discuss Wordsworth's presence for his contemporaries and in the US. Some idiosyncratic features serve to offset the book's monumental inexorability. It starts off with an *hommage* to Hartman, the Wordsworth critic for all seasons, in the form of his poem on Helvellyn, and a 'Prelude' of what seems disarmingly to have been a late addition of an essay on two poems, 'Daffodils' and 'Yew Trees', that had not shown up elsewhere. The editors have decided that 'the Tintern Abbey poem' should now be called '"On Revisiting the Wye", "Lines on the Wye", or simply "The Wye"' (13).

There is no room here to engage with individual entries, except to respond to the final survey on 'Editing Wordsworth in the Twentieth Century', where Bruce E. Graver delivers the Cornell view of the Cornell Wordsworth. It is a fascinatingly unbuttoned account of the genesis and development of the series founded on the generous donation of the Wordsworth family's manuscripts by the 'curious fellow' with a 'degree from Eton' (819), Gordon Wordsworth, the poet's grandson, from which so many academic careers have prospered. The history as told represents Jonathan Wordsworth personally as a break-away 'rival' of the Cornell project, here conceived as everyone and everything concerned with the innovatory tendency towards recovering the earliest versions to which Jonathan Wordsworth was originally and would remain integral. I think it would be better judged to present his editorial approach as driven by compelling alternative aims – relatively modestly resourced and not best defined simply in relation to an advisory role for the Cornell series – of making the texts more generally available in readable form by students and others. His was another, different path within the editorial diaspora which had been opened up and which may be argued over time to have generated very different clusters of sub-editions in the evolution of the Cornell series itself. The vindication and dissemination of Jonathan Wordsworth's approach is best gauged in the Norton edition of *The Prelude*, edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, Stephen Gill and M. H. Abrams and in the independently edited versions for several widely disseminated Romantics anthologies, some of which Graver names.

Jonathan Wordsworth, who died in 2006, was the single most influential presence in Wordsworth studies of his time through the variety of his activities which are summarised in the Author Note at the close of the posthumous collection reviewed here. Apart from his critical books, he inspired and supervised a large number of now leading Romantics scholars at Oxford and chaired the Wordsworth Trust at Dove Cottage for over a quarter of a century, making it the Mecca for British Romanticism, particularly through the summer conferences and winter schools, which he came to direct and at which he was the leading light. The Grasmere gatherings helped provide a productive context for the encounters of American and British academics, both young aspirants and major reputations. The ten lectures included are transcribed from recordings by the Wordsworth Trust at Grasmere from ones delivered at the Wordsworth Summer and Winter Schools, 1989–2004.

The collection includes four on Wordsworth (Revolutionary positions, *The Excursion*, sympathetic imagination, 'transformations'), three on Blake, and one each on Keats, Burns

and James Macpherson, and Coleridge and Cowper. As a major editor intimate with the manuscript evidence of Wordsworth's creativity, his criticism is unashamedly glued to the texts. These lecture-talks, which reflect the diverse audiences of the Grasmere schools – academics, students and enthusiasts – demonstrate wonderful powers of reading the text, sometimes in various versions (see especially his discussion of 'Frost at Midnight') and reveal sound and sometimes surprising cross-referencing over the comparative field of Romantic literature. There is no index, but a lucid introduction offers detailed summaries of the individual arguments.

The style is personal talking, based on common-sense intelligence leavened with analytic shrewdness. It can be challengingly opinionated, but is always sure-footed. His own associative method matches the compositional movements within the poetry, pacing the experience of the poetry. Seemingly naïve openings can lead to revelatory guidance, as especially in 'Understanding Blake: the First Book of Urizen'. The lecture on Keats's verse-letter to Reynolds is a luminous unwinding of Keats's imagination.

The summer schools were started by Jonathan Wordsworth's cousin, Richard Wordsworth, and his own direct descent from the poet's brother, Christopher, gave him an unusual standing of family prestige and the suspicion of proprietorship. One thinks of Sir Charles Tennyson; some thought of Bayreuth. In fact, he was an exceptionally generous and humane scholar whose entire career was dedicated to spreading his passion for Romantic literature on many levels. His concern for the common reader was related to what interested him most in Romantic literature, namely, as he describes in the lecture on Blake's 'Doors of Perception', 'what the great writers of the period seem to have in common, despite their differences in age, education, class and temperament' (144), seeing them as 'Platonists all questing for confirmation of the oneness of existence' (169). That motivation lay behind his series of over 180 Romantic works, each with a re-arousing introduction, 'Revolution and Romanticism', and his gratification at the blockbuster success of his exhibition, *William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism*, which he co-devised and co-catalogued. It attracted 'two hundred thousand people' to major American libraries and 'two million more in the form of poster panels' (145). Romanticism students and readers generally who want to get close to the poetry itself could still hardly do better.

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Alex Broadhead, *The Language of Robert Burns: Style, Ideology, and Identity*. Lewisburg, PA and Plymouth: Bucknell University Press, 2014. Pp. 237. $75. ISBN 9781611485288.

This study makes an outstanding contribution to the on-going reassessment of the function of language in Robert Burns's literary works. Applying ideas and methods from modern sociolinguistics, Broadhead undertakes a perceptive evaluation of Burns's linguistic astuteness, and he challenges the common misconception of the poet as a vernacular writer marginalised by his mixing of English, Scots and local dialects. Instead, Broadhead offers a critically nuanced account of the poet's multilingualism and linguistic experimentalism, and one that emphasises Burns's role in initiating not only an 'imaginative reconceptualization of […] the language of Scottish literature' (72-3), but also a 'radical revaluation of poetic language' that subsequently influenced the linguistic thinking of Shelley and Wordsworth (171). In the process, Broadhead succeeds both in offering a new perspective on the linguistic

complexity of Burns's literary endeavours and in illuminating the centrality of language in the poet's cultural and literary legacies.

Broadhead develops this new perspective over the course of five chapters, each of which ranges across Burns's oeuvre in order to address different aspects of the poet's language and his linguistic routines. Broadly speaking, these chapters can be divided into two sections. Chapters 1 and 2 attend to Burns's thinking about language, initially by way of his poems and songs, and then by way of his prefaces, dedications and glossaries. From here, Chapters 3 to 5 turn to consider three distinct qualities of Burns's linguistic repertoire, specifically: his strategic deployment of national linguistic stereotypes; his transformative mixing of different languages and dialects; and his creative use of code-switching. Consequently, Broadhead shows us not only how Burns sought 'to transform and to reinvent' the 'functions, boundaries, and taxonomies' of language (1), but also how, as a poet, he succeeded 'in creating new fusions of existing [linguistic] varieties' (158).

Broadhead's specific interest in Chapter 1 is the ideological significance of the metalanguage (or 'language about language') found in Burns's verse. As a poet, contends Broadhead, Burns was intensely aware of the '*constitutive* power of language' in creating, consolidating and reinforcing 'social identities' (5). In building up this claim, Broadhead principally turns to the presentation of English and Scots in *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, arguing that the collection enabled Burns both 'to carve a space' in which Scots could be appreciated as more than simply a counterpart of English, and, in the process, to encourage a more nationally coherent and self-contained sense of its linguistic identity (71). In Chapter 2, Broadhead elaborates on these ideas by attending in detail to the rhetorical functions of the general preface included in the 1786, Kilmarnock edition of Burns's *Poems* and the personalised dedication that was added to the collection when it was published in Edinburgh the following year. Broadhead argues that whereas the former text 'sought primarily to appeal to Anglophone literary reviewers and to pre-empt their criticism by downplaying the difference between English and Scots', the latter 'sought to assert the national linguistic heritage [Burns] shared with his Scottish subscribers' (80).

The consideration of Burns's use of linguistic stereotypes in Chapter 3 follows a similar trajectory. Here Broadhead argues that, rather than 'promot[ing] a narrow and false image of Scottish culture', Burns's employment of stereotypically Scottish words, grammar and pronunciation 'enabled' him 'to project the persona of a "parochial" speaker or bard', and 'to reconfigure […] the relationship between the local and the national' (120-21). Like the other aspects of Burns's language that Broadhead goes on to explore in his final chapters, stereotypes are, therefore, shown to be part of a 'complex identity performance' (119) that is central to Burns's literary praxis. Picking up on this idea, Chapters 4 and 5 branch out to consider Burns's linguistic fusion and alternation as characteristic of his poetics. 'Burns's poetry', writes Broadhead, 'is truly multilingual, comprising different registers of English, Broad Scots, Scottish Standard English, and local dialects of Scots' as well as 'idioms from French and Latin' (142). In combining and alternating between these linguistic varieties, he concludes, Burns helped to transform them, and to create a language that requires and rewards our close attention.

What emerges from Broadhead's study, then, is neither a portrait of a Scottish poet struggling to preserve his culture and dialect, nor one of a poet stretching his talents to compose in a language other than his own. Rather, Broadhead provides an account of a poetical polyglot and verbal artist with a remarkable ear for language and a tremendous capacity for combining different linguistic registers and different styles in his verse. Broadhead's analyses consolidate, extend and refine previous scholarship. His chief contribution in this respect stems from his intensive application of sociolinguistic theory. Non-linguists may find some of the sociolinguistic concepts and terminology employed in this study difficult. But by thinking

through Burns's language and writing about language in these terms, Broadhead increases our appreciation of Burns's linguistic thinking and his stylistic routines.

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Henry Stead, *A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795-1821*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 339. £65. ISBN 9780198744887.

In this latest addition to Oxford's *Classical Presences* series, Henry Stead tracks Catullus' 'turbulent journey into the British classical canon through the stormy seas of Romantic-era Europe' (1). Catullus, on Stead's reading, comes by the epithet 'Cockney' in two ways. First, the Romantic spike in Catullus' literary stock was facilitated largely by members of the so-called 'Cockney School'. Second and more fundamentally, the qualities that distinguish him from the Latin canonical mainstays Virgil and (at least in the *Odes*) Horace – Hellenistic Greekness, aggressive obscenity, political satire, and frank celebration of things like sex and love, male friendship and sociality, emotion, paganism, idleness, and flouting gender norms – all conspired to align Catullus with the period's alternative and countercultural voices.

In Chapter 1, 'Catullus Unchained', Stead examines the two English versions of Catullus whose dates of publication frame his study. John Nott's anonymously published 1795 translation, less poetically ambitious and now less familiar than Charles Lamb's 1821 version, turns out to have been the far more interesting and influential achievement. Bilingual, with Latin text facing a workmanlike verse translation and (accessible) scholarly notes underneath, Nott's edition made *all* of Catullus available to a growing and diverse body of readers seeking knowledge chiefly as a means of social advancement. While cleaning up the dirty bits in translation – rendering e.g. Poem 16's threat of anal and oral rape as 'I'll treat you as 'tis meet' and concealing the gender of the boy toy Juventius – Nott also, as Stead shows, always left enough clues to alert a curious reader, and to open up the possibility of sympathetic readings of poems that cheerfully flouted every established norm. The glossy surface of Lamb's translation, with the nasty poems omitted altogether, seems by contrast a throwback (minus the literary excellence) to the gentlemanly style of polite letters embodied in the epic Englishings of Dryden and Pope. Lamb's translation project, Stead shows, was less a reflection of a widespread conservative cultural turn than is often thought and was even lambasted by one contemporary critic as 'absolute murder' (65-66).

Chapter 2, 'Catullus 64 in Translation and Allusion', begins by comparing two Romantic translations of the miniature epic on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. Frank Sayers' 1803 'free imitation' in heroic couplets bespeaks the influence of Ovid's *Heroides* and German drama by its intimate psychological interest in Ariadne's half-awake state of consciousness, while Sir Charles Alexander Elton's 1814 blank verse translation proceeds by 'unwrapping' the meaning and syntax of the Latin, often in pedantic detail. Stead here complicates the tidy binarism imposed by the translation theories of Lawrence Venuti. 'Domestication,' Stead insists, 'does not always work in favor of the hegemonic classes' (121), and Elton succeeds not so much in 'foreignizing' Catullus as in showing 'what it was like to translate a Catullan poem if you had been to Eton' (122). The rest of the chapter spotlights allusions to Catullus 64 in Thomas Love Peacock's *Rhododaphne*, Keats' *Endymion*, and Hunt's *Bacchus and Ariadne*.

The 'Non-Cockney Responses to Catullus' surveyed in Chapter 3 include translations and poems by Landor, Wordsworth, Thomas Moore, and Byron. A high point here is Stead's reading of the Catullan borrowings in Byron's Latin elegy (discovered in 1974) on the death of his beloved John Edelston. The chapter ends by studying some reactionary appropriations of Catullus in the *Anti-Jacobin*, where the poet's 'openly affectionate and normatively effeminate style' (207) is parodically aimed at pro-revolutionary Romantics like Erasmus Darwin.

In Chapter 4, 'Catullus the Reformer: Leigh Hunt's Reception', Stead presents the king of the Cockneys wielding Catullus (often mediated through Nott) as a powerful implement for activist intervention. In translations published in *The Examiner* and elsewhere, Hunt is shown teasing out the countercultural potential implicit in Catullan sociality and affect, through diction that draws those aspects of his poems into the sphere of Cockney 'talk' and 'cheer'. The chapter closes strikingly with Hunt's use of Poem 63, on Attis the self-castrating devotee of Cybele, as a reflection first on Primitive Methodist 'ranters' and later on the last of the great Italian castrati.

Chapter 5, 'Keats' Catullan Samphire', concludes the book with new perspectives on how the most famous of the Cockney poets read Catullus: knowledgeably, in Latin (having mastered the language at Enfield by translating the entire *Aeneid*), and with a keen ear that sometimes manifested itself in sonic allusion to the original text.

With sensitive critical alertness and in an engaging post-ironic style warmed with a generous measure of the 'cheer' and sociality he imputes to the best Cockney readers he studies, Stead tells an important story about how Catullus came to look the way he looks now. It is a story that will interest classicists, comparatists, and translation theorists as well as literary historians.

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Porscha Fermanis and John Regan, eds., *Rethinking British Romantic History, 1779-1845*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 350. £60. ISBN 9780199687084.

Ben Dew and Fiona Price, eds., *Historical Writing in Britain 1688-1830: Visions of History*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. 228. £58. ISBN 9781137332639.

Thirty-three years after the publication of Jerome McGann's *The Romantic Ideology*, the pump of history-driven Romantic scholarship remains remarkably well primed. If a squeak had become audible in the first few years of this millennium, it has since disappeared under the lubricative pressure of what might be termed a 'historiographical turn' in Romantic studies. The two books under review make a significant contribution to this area of research. Where McGann, Levinson and their successors tended to focus on the historically-conditioned *reflexes* dictating the shape of ostensibly ahistorical works, these later studies are more interested in the *theories* and *methodologies* developed – tentatively, imaginatively, consciously – by writers in response to unanticipated and paradigm-shifting historical phenomena (including upheavals within the world of historical writing itself).

Although *Rethinking British Romantic History, 1779-1845* and *Historical Writing in Britain 1688-1830: Visions of History* share several concerns, there is very little direct overlap

between the subject matter of individual chapters across the two books. This is an indication of the great variety of contributions to the two collections as well the potential for further investigation that still exists in this area. Chief among their shared concerns are: firstly, the challenge posed by new forms of historiography to the liberal, universalising and abstract variety of stadial history popularised by the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment (as well as the hybrid forms of stadial history which arose in response to these new developments); secondly, the ambivalent adoption of ideas and devices from literary genres (in particular, those associated with sentimentalism) by historical writers; thirdly, the rise of historical narratives written by and about women, and, fourthly, cross-cultural influences and discontinuities.

Where they differ is in the slightly more pronounced eagerness of *Rethinking British Romantic History* to stress the impact of literature on historical discourse (as opposed to the other way round). Indeed, one of the stated aims of the collection is 'to demonstrate that "history" in Britain, as we know it today, arose alongside and even *within* the kinds of cultural practices that also transformed the literature and other art forms of the period in which literature was a perceptible force' (4). This mild and carefully-worded partiality is not wholly attributable to the fact that all of its contributors are literary scholars (in contrast with *Historical Writing in Britain*, which, alongside chapters by researchers in British literature, also features essays by an art historian, common-or-garden historians and a specialist in French literature). It arises additionally from an implicit desire to offer a more constructive appraisal of the historical value of Romantic literature than it generally received at the hands of the New Historicists.

Another respect in which the two books diverge from one another lies in the greater reluctance of Dew and Price to frame the essays of their collection in terms of a single, overarching narrative, suggesting that 'the complexities of the vast array of historical genres and subgenres […] mean that any sort of generalisation concerning "history" has become dangerous' (6). Their solution is to present the essays in terms of that most unliterary-critical of genres: the case study (6). This is a strategy that works well within the context of a book which brings several different disciplinary perspectives into play, and a move that also hints that the accommodations and tensions subsisting between the literary and historical discourses of the long eighteenth century are still detectable in their twenty-first century equivalents.

The need for brevity means that I cannot do justice to the many eye-opening and fascinating discoveries offered by both books, but instead must single out a few highlights. To *Rethinking British Romantic History*, Fermanis contributes a chapter on Carlyle, whose work embodies the complex 'ambivalence' and 'adjustments' which characterised the relationship between littérateurs and historians during the period. Fermanis renders a Carlyle who was repelled by the unreality of fiction but drawn to its rhetorical strategies and its emphasis on interiority; a writer who self-consciously speculated on the hidden thoughts of his subjects – even momentarily writing in the first-person as if he were Oliver Cromwell – yet nevertheless viewed himself as 'a professional, empirical historian' (111-12). Also worthy of note is Christopher Bundock's essay, 'Historicism, Temporalization, and Romantic Prophecy in Percy Shelley's *Hellas*', in which it is suggested that the sense of 'intense discontinuity in historical experience' (149) provoked by the French Revolution persuaded commentators that 'historical events are no longer just the content of a narrative that transcends and subsumes them but, rather, are capable of exercising a force on the form of their conceptualization' (146). In a chapter on Byron's *Don Juan*, Richard Cronin draws a compelling distinction between 'deep and shallow time' as a way of making sense of the seemingly contradictory desire of early nineteenth-century readers for both ephemera and tradition (165-79). Byron also comes under the scrutiny of Paul Hamilton, who considers the relationship between style and history not only in the work of Byron but in that of Clare too. Hamilton notes: 'writers can manipulate

the artificiality of an aesthetic expression to criticize the historical viewpoint from which it was natural to use that expression. Where we cannot do this, we are subject to history in a different, inescapable manner' (224). For Hamilton, Byron is 'an example of the first kind of writer' and Clare 'an example of the second' (224). If one caveat could be expressed here, it is that while Byron was a writer whose imagination thrived on the nuanced gradations of social, historical and cultural differences part of the power of Clare's writing lies in its robust rejection of taxonomy: be it botanical or linguistic. Thus while Hamilton's alignment of stylistic variation and historical escape works well for Byron, it seems less appropriate for Clare, in spite of the latter's admiration for and occasional imitation of the older poet.

In *Historical Writing in Britain*, Sanja Perovic's essay on the 'divided legacy' of the French historian, Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820), comprises an intriguing account of a writer who inspired the lyrical visions of Blake and Shelley in Britain while at the same time leading the charge in France towards a more scientific and 'objective' form of historical discourse. A comparably contradictory writer is the focus of Charlotte Roberts' essay, in which William Robertson (1721-93), whose apparent paradoxical attachment both to the antiquarian desire for facts and the stadial historian's attachment to 'theoretical systems of explanation', is seen to embody a 'tension emblematic in eighteenth-century British history' (110). In 'Female Worthies and the Genres of Women's History,' Philip Hicks reveals how a literary mode (biography) held out to authors the means to write women back into history while simultaneously 'straitjacketing' them within the confines of a single genre (28). Price's chapter on historical fiction written in the interim between the French Revolution and the publication of *Waverley* – a body of work which paints a less ameliorative picture of commercial society than that offered by Scott (158) – is also highly deserving of attention. Finally, Noelle Gallagher reads Godwin's sentimental historiography in the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century responses to *Don Quixote*. Cervantes' knight, for Godwin, embodied the archetype of the ideal sentimental reader, whose emotional engagement with texts 'blurs genre distinctions' (174), including those dividing literature from history, in a potentially subversive way. In light of this, suggests Gallagher, *Caleb Williams* might be read as a 'depiction of failed quixotic readers [which] posits sympathetic engagement with texts as well as people as the only effective form of resistance against a mode of historical progress that will otherwise obliterate the potential for quixotic benevolence' (175). More straightforwardly literary arguments such as this are all the more persuasive for being offset by the work of historians such as Robertson. This is one of the great strengths of *Historical Writing in Britain*.

These volumes might most productively be read alongside one another. Where the Oxford University Press collection seeks to develop a more literature-friendly approach to historical scholarship than that associated with New Historicism, the Palgrave Macmillan collection opens up a cooperative dialogue between literary critics and historians: something that, as Fermanis and Regan note, the New Historicists failed to achieve (1). Together, the two volumes significantly widen the scope for future research in this area.

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Emily Rohrbach, *Modernity's Mist: British Romanticism and the Poetics of Anticipation*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015. Pp. 185. $85. ISBN 9780823267965.

Focusing on 'changing and competing forms of historiography' (10) in the Romantic period, *Modernity's Mist* proposes not only that 'Romantic literary concepts of time constitute a historical engagement' (15), but also that several Romantic writers represent the temporality of their historical moment as persistently elusive. This sensitivity to, in some cases, indeterminacy (Keats) and, in other cases, overdetermination (Byron) of the present stands in stark contrast to Enlightenment historiography, where history conforms to predictable stages (33). While acknowledging 'uneven development' across the globe, such thinking, for Rohrbach's Romantics, is stifling: an obsessive attempt to relate to history in the grammar of the '*future anterior*' or to figure history as 'what *will have been*' (2). Odd as living one's present as if it were a memory sounds, as Peter Brooks notes, narrative itself takes an analogous tack: 'Perhaps we would do best to think of the *anticipation of retrospection* as our chief tool in making sense of narrative, the master trope of its strange logic' (qtd. in Rohrbach, 111). Such formulations of time seem necessary for the generation of coherence, which may be precisely why they fall short of an accurate representation of the Romantic experience of time. Focusing on 'Keats, Austen, and Byron [precisely] for their nonprophetic qualities' (160), Rohrbach identifies a style of historiography that 'courts a sense of its own incompletion and imaginatively offers multiple, simultaneously available points of contact with the spirit of the age' (55). This is writing that attempts to embody the pervasive experience of history's constant shifting. Reading Keats's shorter lyrics, Austen's *Persuasion*, and Byron's *Don Juan*, Rohrbach illustrates how these texts engage history not as an object known but as 'mist' – obscuring, foggy, and also 'missed', evasive (5) – that registers indirectly in 'conspicuously arrested narration' (116), 'exceptional disjunction' (117), palpable 'dizziness' and 'disorientation' (25), and, in Byron's case, 'the lateral movement of digression' (151).

Rohrbach's first chapter reads Helen Maria Williams's 'less progressive than revisionary' representation of the Revolutionary decade beside William Hazlitt's 'full-fledged lateral sense of time' and sets both against a background of Scottish Enlightenment historiography represented by Robert Henry, William Robertson, and Hugh Blair (29). Inventive as the latter thinkers were in their efforts to marry comprehensiveness with narrative clarity, Rohrbach argues that they shared Hume's confidence – and therefore error – that isolating the 'underlying "springs" and "causes"' of history by 'plumbing the depths of "human nature" [was] a necessary and realizable goal' (42). Invoking William Godwin's brief but potent essay 'Of History and Romance', Rohrbach isolates a strain of Romantic historiographical thinking sceptical of Enlightenment assumptions concerning history's directionality (43-48).

Chapters 2 and 3 focus largely on Keats. Resisting critics who would subordinate Keats's imagination to political history, Rohrbach argues that Keats cultivates an orientation to history akin to negative capability: Keats is not uninterested in history so much as attentive to moments (consider the turn in 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer') when his speaker is suddenly exposed to something beyond historical precedent. Keats's great contribution to Romantic historiography is thus the 'capacity for historical surprise' (78), or in the words of Jürgen Habermas, the ability to recharge "the future as a *source* of disruption" in spite of its near complete depotentiation by the narrative of progress (qtd. in Rohrbach, 66). In chapter 4, Rohrbach focuses on moments in *Persuasion* where characters anticipate retrospection. Such instances, we discover, do not stabilise so much as fracture the present. In contrast to the historiography of Scott's *Waverly*, *Persuasion* reminds us of the hypothetical quality of the

future and the multiplicity of trajectories cohabiting within the present, a point driven home by Austen's decision to end the text just before Napoleon's escape from Elba: 'Austen situates the entire novel within a (pre-Waterloo, 1814 to 1815) time of peace that she knows will turn out, in retrospect, to have been a false sense of peace' (121). Finally, 'through its temporality of presentness' (146), *Don Juan* embraces a digressive narrative form, one wherein 'the poem's logic of what happens next comes […] from the nonsemantic materiality of language in a tight rhyme scheme' (139). As his participation in world-historical events indicates, Juan is an historical figure. However, his movement through history is idiosyncratic, wayward, errant – a movement made possible, strangely, by the fact that his experiences do *not* mark him and so cannot become either lenses for anticipation or objects of retrospection.

Three quibbles: first, the treatment of Lacan seems somewhat perfunctory; second, the chapters on Keats and Byron would benefit from an engagement with Angela Esterhammer's *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750-1850*; finally, *Modernity's Mist* hews quite closely to Chandler's *England in 1819*, not only in subject matter but in many of the texts singled out for analysis – but it is hard to complain about this.

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Alistair Heys, *The Anatomy of Bloom: Harold Bloom and the Study of Influence and Anxiety*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 280. £17.99. ISBN 9781441183460.

I was not quite sure what to expect from Alistair Heys's *The Anatomy of Bloom*. The description at the back of the book, however, seemed quite promising. The book offers to survey the life of Harold Bloom as a literary critic and to provide a chronological examination of his works, in the hope that the examination will reveal that Bloom's works, and, predominantly, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), are 'best understood as an expression of reprobate American Protestantism' that is nevertheless 'haunted by a Jewish fascination with the Holocaust' (blurb).

Unfortunately, *The Anatomy of Bloom* fails to achieve this ambitious outline. From the very beginning, it is obvious that the work does not intend to survey Bloom's life. Although Heys offers some biographical anecdotes, offhandedly woven into the text, he fails to provide an insight into Bloom's life in correlation with his intellectual development. This, for me, is the book's main shortcoming. The small sections in which Heys does dwell on Bloom's life are truly interesting and entertaining. For example, Heys comments that when starting his academic career in 1950s America, Bloom only received a small basement office in Yale. Later in the book, Heys briefly mentions that Bloom's career coincided with the dying of anti-Semitism in the USA. I found these little instances far more interesting than the actual work as a whole. It is also in these instances that Heys's somewhat tangled style of composition becomes lighter and easier to follow, thus making the experience of reading far more enjoyable.

In many ways, as much as this is a book about Bloom's theories, it is also quite obviously a tribute to Bloom's literary achievements. Heys's awe and admiration of the critic are easily detectable, particularly when Heys (more often than not) adopts Bloom's tone and style of writing. Heys sees Bloom as 'Mr Self-Invention, a questing critic from a poor background, who came to the ivory tower of Yale, an iconoclast who left behind the Orthodox Judaism of his Bronx family background to redefine himself as an American gnostic' (1).

Accordingly, Heys marks Bloom's cultural Jewish background and the American-Protestant culture he entered as an academic, in order to showcase how these two strands of thought forged Bloom's gnostic theory and writings.

The book is divided into seven sections, each exploring the gnostic elements in Bloom's literary theories. The first section, examines Jewish and Protestant influences. Heys looks at how Judaism and Protestantism define Bloom's own cultural identity and how they are expressed in his works. In short, Heys claims that 'ideas associated with Protestantism and Judaism are frequently combined in Bloom's oeuvre in the form of his own brand of Gnosticism' (15). Continuing this line of investigation, the second section elaborates on how Judaism and Protestantism contributed to Bloom's conception of 'the Scene of Instruction'. Sections three and four continue the book's religious standpoint while examining Bloom's relationship with deconstruction and the deconstructionists whom Bloom calls his 'remote cousins, intellectually speaking' (53). In particular, Heys compares Bloom's theories to those of Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Section five explains Bloom's attitude towards 'the School of Resentment' while section six explores Bloom's writings about the Kabbalah and Judaism. Section seven is dedicated to Bloom's writings on Protestantism.

The *Anatomy of Bloom* is indeed rich in research and insight, and Heys's breadth of reading is truly impressive. Heys's summary of Bloom's works and his insightful commentary will be particularly of value to students interested in literary theory, but the scope of the writers and subjects covered may also make it appealing to a wider spectrum of undergraduate students. With regards to how this work contributes to our reading of Romanticism, it fails to innovate and push existing scholarship. In general, the book offers a wealth of material on early British Romantic writings and American Romanticism, primarily Emerson. But even these constitute a summary of Bloom's work, which simply invites us to go directly to the source and read Bloom's original publications.

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Heather J. Jackson, *Those Who Write for Immortality: Romantic Reputations and the Dream of Lasting Fame*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. 294. ISBN 9780300174793.

Those Who Write for Immortality is a quietly provocative, timely, but ultimately frustrating study of those whom we now consider 'Romantic', and why. It invites us to consider some useful and challenging propositions about the Romantic canon and the aesthetic, political, social, and, perhaps most importantly for Jackson, pragmatic reasons for its crystallization into the 'Big Six plus Austen' formulation; about the management of Romantic afterlives; and about the various factors at play – most of them beyond the conscious control of the author – which govern how posthumous fame is granted. The fundamental questions Jackson asks are not small: What is this thing we call Romantic literature, and how did it come to assume its present dimensions and meanings? Should we study 'it', or does the field require a rethink?

The book, inevitably, struggles to properly address these issues, but in doing so it nevertheless provides a timely reminder, as Romantic studies shows signs of turning away from the historicist mode which has dominated criticism for the past two decades, of the forces that determine literary 'immortality' beyond questions of merit. Jackson makes her argument through a series of comparisons between the 'winners in the Romantics' immortality stakes' and those who 'failed': Wordsworth versus Southey and Crabbe; Austen versus Scott and

Mary Brunton; Keats versus Leigh Hunt and Barry Cornwall; Blake versus Clare and Robert Bloomfield (29). Literary immortality, for Jackson, means being read, and studied, and known of, now, not only by specialists in the academy, or even students, but by a general readership. This last audience is important, and explains why she considers Southey, Scott, Hunt, and Clare – four authors whom most Romanticists would not consider lost or unheard of – to have failed to achieve the lasting fame she seeks to interrogate.

Jackson is also clear that this is a study intended for 'readers outside the academy' as well as (or arguably instead of) those in it, and it's difficult to know to what extent we should take this claim at face value (xii). Certainly the relaxed, fluid, occasionally chatty style seems to indicate this wider audience, although the clarity and directness of Jackson's prose, which wears its knowledge extraordinarily lightly, would be equally welcome in any academic text. This general audience might also explain why the Romantic canon that Jackson wants to re-examine is one that, in 2015, following the recovery work of feminist and historicist criticism, some Romanticists might question. Jackson is interested in why, for example, Blake's works 'are widely loved, read, and recognized', and in tracing why Austen and Wordsworth have accreted their respective cultural industries, rather than in what, and who, receives critical scholarly attention (168). However, the questions about Romantic fame and afterlives she poses seem, to me, ones that the discipline has been attempting to get to grips with for some time now, whether through work on reception, readership, and the publishing industry, on the role of biography and memorials, or on nineteenth-century cultural tourism, and in this way the study acts as a survey of various concerns that appear academic rather than general.

Jackson does an efficient job of showing how a wide range of factors including sufficient range to appeal to changing literary fashion, perceived appropriateness for school curricula, association with a marketable location, and a good biography and letters or other literary remains combine to ensure longevity for some and obscurity for others. She neatly punctures the views of Wordsworth and Southey, in particular, that lasting fame was a matter within the author's control, and gives short shrift to the idea of literary merit; thus she will not say that Keats is absolutely a better poet than Hunt or Cornwall: 'his work enjoys almost universal approval and has done for a long time now', but 'judgements of quality depend on the criteria applied', and were we to 'obliterate the critical heritage of the nineteenth century and begin again', we might get a different outcome (162). There's no vantage point outside culture and history from which we might make any kind of truly objective assessment, of course, which is Jackson's point. However, in the absence of any sustained close reading in the study, and not much in the way of quotation, such claims are difficult to follow. Jackson argues, for example, that Mary Brunton was experimenting with free indirect discourse at the same time as Austen, but offers no examples. Despite the frustrations of its not-quite-academic not-quite-general nature, however, the study is ultimately a valuable invitation to continue rethinking the Romantic canon and the processes that determine it.

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Susan J. Wolfson, *Reading John Keats*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 174. £12.99. ISBN 9780521732796.

The third installment in a new *Reading Writers and their Work* series from Cambridge University Press, following Saree Makdisi's *Reading William Blake* and Emily Steiner's *Reading Piers Plowman*, is Susan J. Wolfson's *Reading John Keats*.

There is perhaps no scholar better suited to the task of reading Keats's poetry and letters than Wolfson. Alive to the puns and word play, the literary allusions and biographical associations, Wolfson weaves these elements elegantly into her readings of individual poems as she narrates the poet's artistic development. As an introduction to Keats's poetry for undergraduate students or the casual reader, the book is useful not only for its fine readings but also for the way it models how subtle readers can make the most compelling writers. For Wolfson's own prose inherits the sparkling quality of Keatsian word play; she characterizes the poet's ceaselessly interrogative, self-reflective temper, for instance, as 'leaving no tone unturned' (19). Such turns of phrase underscore the work of reading itself as immersion in and performance of imaginative play.

In ten short chapters, Wolfson takes us from the earliest aspirations to the latest poems, and she concludes with a brief sketch of the legacies shaped by readers of Keats from Percy Shelley to Adrienne Rich. As in *The Cambridge Companion to Keats* (2001), which Wolfson herself edited, we find here both a list of the poet's memorable statements and phrases culled from his letters, and a chronology situating the poet's activity in the context of the historical events of the age and the lives and works of his friends and contemporaries. Each of these offerings, the memorable phrases and the chronology, is more abridged in *Reading John Keats* than in the *Companion*, but refers us to the *Companion* for the fuller selection. At moments, the book reads like a refined version of Spark Notes, such as when a fairly thorough plot summary of *Endymion*, book by book, precedes the poetic analysis. But Wolfson's study is obviously more sophisticated and ambitious than that. It includes, for instance, a number of significant archival images, such as a manuscript page for *The Eve of St. Agnes* in which we see the very texture of the poet's 'work[ing] hard to get the blend of spirit and sense just right, arriving at *warm* gules after trying out *red* and then *rich*' (76). In this respect, Wolfson convinces us that she thinks like a poet by making visible the very progress and logic of Keats's poetic thinking. Wolfson's work is at its finest when it draws suggestive connections between the language of Keats's poems and that of his reading; among many such instances, she notes the relation between Lamia's 'beauteous wreath' and the 'wanton wreath' of Satanic seduction in *Paradise Lost*, words that Keats underlined in that text (112).

For the study of a poet who, as such, claimed to have 'no self,' 'no Identity' (cited by Wolfson, 147), one might expect that the introduction of biographical information as a source of poetic illumination would be accompanied by methodological reflection, but *Reading John Keats* does not open that self-reflexive critical door. Considering Keats criticism of the last thirty years or so, one might even say that Wolfson's new study remains in the 'Chamber of Maiden Thought' (*Letters of John Keats*, ed. Rollins, 1: 280). A symptom of that lingering appears in the selections for Further Reading, which include almost no critical book or article from the twenty-first century. That is to say, as brilliant as Wolfson's insights are throughout the entirety of this study, they only consolidate and bring to a pitch critical work of the mid- to late-twentieth century; *Reading John Keats* neither opens up a new way to read, nor brings its various methods of engagement into conversation with recent critical debates, such as those concerning distant reading, surface reading, slow reading, and so on. Nevertheless, teachers of poetry competing with a multiplicity of media for the attention of a young generation of readers will no doubt welcome this loving and lively book.

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Jacqueline Mulhallen, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet and Revolutionary*. London: Pluto Press, 2015. Pp. 170. Pb. £12.99. ISBN 9780745334615.

This concise biography of Percy Bysshe Shelley focuses on highlighting the radical elements of its protagonist's life and opinions, and it offers a clear and detailed analysis of the development and culmination of Shelley's political ideology. The most salient element of this ideology, and the thread that runs through Mulhallen's account of Shelley's life, is the struggle towards equality that comes across in all the examples of Shelley's literary output introduced in the book. Mulhallen draws connections between the contents of Shelley's political views and the state of affairs in today's world, which on the one hand establishes the extent to which Shelley's thinking was ahead of his time, and on the other hand displays his influence on later activists.

Shelley's views are placed in their historical context through the substantial consideration Mulhallen gives to the political climate of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, as well as to specific writers whose views Shelley found compelling. One of the major points in this regard is the enormous impact of the French Revolution on British society. Mulhallen describes the initially positive reaction of both the ruling class and the working class to the Revolution, but she also depicts the plight of those impacted by the after-effects of the war, such as the wave of unemployment made worse for many by industrialisation. Shelley was greatly influenced by Thomas Paine and his arguments in favour of the people's right to revolution in the face of a corrupt government, as well as his championing of more equal distribution of public wealth. Written in the aftermath of the Peterloo massacre, Shelley's own essay on the subject of necessary changes to the political system, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, also takes many of its ideas regarding the specific measures proposed in order to move towards a more equal society from William Cobbett.

One of the principles strongly advocated by both Cobbett and Shelley, and a subject related to the question of equality, was freedom of religion, which in Shelley's case culminated in his strong support for Catholic emancipation and his radically open atheism, on the grounds of which he was expelled from Oxford. Both are at the forefront of Mulhallen's portrayal of Shelley's worldview, together with the poet's startlingly modern stance on women's position in society. This stance is reflected in his opposition to the institution of marriage, which he found oppressive to women. It was a view Shelley had adopted from his future father-in-law, William Godwin.

The great influence of Paine, Cobbett, and Godwin on Shelley's political views has been established by previous biographers, but Mulhallen adds to these a strong emphasis on Shelley's connection with Quakers, to whom, according to her, he 'owed much of his own political education' (128). By simultaneously emphasising Shelley's connection with Quakers and his ardent atheism, Mulhallen is able to highlight the complex network of ideologies that moulded Shelley's worldview. The picture that emerges is that of a man deeply committed to advancing the rights of disenfranchised groups within the society. It is also made clear, that while he did not encourage the use of violence in order to achieve changes in society, Shelley was not opposed to it as a last resort.

At the end of the book, Mulhallen notes that Shelley was greatly admired by Marx and Engels, and she draws attention to the similarities between Shelley's idea of a republic and that of Trotsky. This rather cements the impression created of an early prototype of a socialist – albeit Mulhallen is careful to emphasise that 'Shelley died too early to be even a Utopian socialist […] and certainly too early to be a Marxist' (130). Other groups that have since drawn influence from Shelley are also mentioned, among them the suffragettes and the Rolling Stones. Mulhallen also draws connections between the world in the early nineteenth century

and in our day, as when she compares the fight of the Spanish colonies against the oppressive motherland to the Vietnam War, or when she highlights the relevance of what Shelley called the "double aristocracy of landowners and bankers and stockbrokers" (135) to today's class system.

In addition to shedding light on the development of Shelley's political views, Mulhallen dedicates a great amount of her book to analysis of Shelley's literary productions, offering several insights into his lesser-known works. The most thorough attention is given to the satirical drama *Swellfoot the Tyrant*; a play based on the trial of Queen Caroline that highlights the oppression of the people by the elite. Mulhallen ends the book by calling for a more equal distribution of the funds allocated to the arts, which seems a fitting conclusion to a book about a poet whose career was dedicated to championing social equality.

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Franca Dellarossa, *Talking Revolution: Edward Rushton's Rebellious Poetics, 1782-1814*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Pp. 238. £75. ISBN 9781781381441.

Paul Baines, ed., *The Collected Writings of Edward Rushton*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Pp. 348. £75. ISBN 9781781381366.

Edward Rushton (1756-1814) was in every sense an original talent. An authentically working-class philanthropist, a staunch English radical who never wavered in the face of popular conservatism during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and an unswerving abolitionist based in Liverpool, the European capital of the slave trade; his is not a story that fits comfortably into the ur-narratives of the Romantic period. Possibly as a result of his singular nature, Rushton has been largely neglected by scholars for much of the past century. Now, with the publication of Franca Dellarossa's superb monograph, accompanied by the first modern volume of his collected works (painstakingly edited by Paul Baines), this unique and – in so many senses – *disruptive* voice is once again considered with the seriousness it demands.

In about 1766, Rushton, aged 10, the son of a Liverpool barber, went to sea as a ship's boy aboard a West-India merchantman. Seven years later, he returned to his home town, blinded by a contagious form of opthalmia he had caught while tending to one of the slaves being transported aboard his ship. A tenacious autodidact, he paid a boy to read him selections from 'the best essayists', including Addison, Steele and Johnson, and embarked on his own writing career around 1781.

At the most general level, throughout all of his poetry and prose, Rushton was interested primarily in the experiences of the dispossessed. As Dellarossa writes, 'the assumption of the marginal as the privileged focus and the exploration of the potential for agency of those who spend their lives in the margins are a central concern in Rushton's poetry' (50). How this was manifested in relation to Liverpool's maritime working classes forms the focus for the first half of Dellarossa's analysis. Rushton's experiences as a seaman gave his trenchant political radicalism – associated during this period in Liverpool more with a particular subset of the liberal finance-capitalist bourgeoisie than the shop-keeping, or indeed ordinary seafaring classes – the fairly unique appeal of genuine, locally-inflected authenticity. In 'Seamen's Nursery' (1794) and 'Will Clewline' (1801), for example, the sentimental

discourse of familial or romantic separation was framed by the abusive conditions of seafaring and the constant threat of impressment, respectively. Similarly, in 'The Tender's Hold' (1794), Rushton called attention to the irony that Britain's constitutional 'freedom', much vaunted by conservative ideologues, was in fact defended by the unfree labour of impressed working-class sailors: 'While landmen wander uncontroul'd, / And boast the rights of freemen, / O! view the Tender's loathsome hold, / Where droop your injur'd seamen; / Dragg'd by oppression's savage grasp, / From every dear connexion' (Rushton, 87). While these anxieties might appear at first to apply equally to any port town during the wartime years of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Dellarossa demonstrates that Rushton's poetics respond to the very specific cultural and material conditions of Liverpool. For example, in an illuminating reading of 'To a Redbreast in November' (1806), she teases out the metaphor of a Robin's 'warbling strain' (Rushton, 116) as representative of a vulnerable and unrepresented urban proletariat straining to be heard against a discordant 'fetishisation of capital' and, particularly, the industrialised violence financially undergirding colonial slavery (Dellarossa, 38-42). Her invocation of Ian Baucom's *Specters of the Atlantic* is particularly instructive in this context.

Partly because of this focus on the working-class experience, much of Rushton's poetry took the form of the popular ballad or the irregular ode. His work, as Baines suggests in his introduction to the *Collected Works*, 'had a genuine popular edge, like a sort of authored folksong' (Rushton, 4). Indeed, the intentionally popular nature of Rushton's ballads (and of course the obvious factor of his acquired blindness) led him to draw upon musicality and lyricism as expressions of the Romantic subjective self. As Dellarossa puts it, caught 'in between orality and print culture, but also music and text, narrative and lyric modes, Rushton's experience of writing has Romantic generic contamination as its own underlying generative principle' (49). In this sense, Rushton's work remains rebellious even divorced from its (highly compelling) historicity.

Of course, Rushton's 'rebellious poetics' were not entirely confined to the banks of the River Mersey. Indeed, revolution in a global context was to prove the topic to which he returned most often. In this respect it is possible to chart two distinct phases to his political trajectory, straddling a creative hiatus stretching from about 1783 to 1787. Dellarossa describes him as 'fully entangled in a pro-imperial stance' during his earlier, 1781-82 phase, unable to break free from the parent-child paradigm characteristic of anti American independence political rhetoric (133). Works such as 'To the People of England' (1781) and 'The Dismember'd Empire' (1782) were at times reliant on this rhetoric, though hints of his later anti-imperialist (and especially anti-slavery) agenda were already palpable: 'Britons first aspir'd to govern slaves / and hurl'd destruction 'cross th' Atlantic waves; / […] freedom's boasted sons, elate with pride, / Deny'd to others what themselves enjoy'd' (Rushton, 33). However, beginning with his abolitionist 'West Indian Eclogues' (1787) and spanning the rest of his corpus, Rushton 'revealed extreme, tenacious consistency in his dedication to radical libertarian, anti-slavery, republican, anti-war and anti-imperialist beliefs' (Dellarossa, 101). In an unconventional 'interlude' between the fourth and fifth chapters, Dellarossa very convincingly hypothesises that the 'watershed' moment in Rushton's political development was the *Zong* massacre of 1781, in which around 140 enslaved Africans were needlessly drowned by the ship's crew during the middle passage (127-141). For Rushton, this case served as the catalyst for a new commitment to the antislavery and anti-imperial writing for which he is now best remembered.

Undoubtedly, Rushton's abolitionist work ranks among his most politically radical. In the four 'West Indian Eclogues', for example, the 'progression from the first section to the last implies a movement from the wish for violent rebellion to its enactment by another [enslaved] actor in an unrelated situation' (Dellarossa, 156). Similarly, 'Briton, and a Negro Slave' (1806), 'Toussaint to his Troops' (1806) and 'The Coromantees' (1824) invoke the violent,

insurrectionary potential of oppressed slaves. Comparable themes were threaded through most of his prose works. It was an act of almost unimaginable effrontery for Rushton to write his *Expostulatory Letter to George Washington, of Mount Vernon, Virginia, on his continuing to be a Proprietor of Slaves* (1797), in which he claimed that the former President's 'present reputation, future fame, and all that is estimable among the virtuous, are for a few thousand pieces of yellow dirt, irremediably renounced' (Rushton, 189). Relatedly, his *Attempt to Prove that Climate, Food and Manners, are not the Causes of the Dissimilarity of Colour in the Human Species* (1824), sadly not discussed at length in Dellarossa's book, will be of particular interest to scholars of the intersection of racial and radical thought.

These two volumes will make a significant contribution to restoring Rushton's work to centre-stage in future studies of Romantic-era writing and political culture. As Baines pointed out at the 2014 conference marking both the bicentenary of Rushton's death and the publication of these books, the attempt to collect, collate and rationalise the fugitive poetry of a figure whose work was often ephemeral, unattributed or reproduced without permission on either side of the Atlantic was a formidable one. The scale of this undertaking is evidenced by the 102 pages of commentary that accompany the works themselves. Dellarossa's monograph, meanwhile, represents the first book-length study on Rushton's work to appear in modern scholarship. While it would perhaps have been nice to see some more attention given to, for example, Rushton's writings about women (his poems, whether nominally about sailors, the Irish rebellion of 1798 or plantation slavery, demonstrate a constant anxiety about rape and female marital infidelity), Dellarossa is absolutely right to prioritise the prevalence of rebellion and radicalism in his work. At its core, Rushton's work, as a philanthropist, a bookseller, an editor, an essayist and a poet, was always about power and its abuses.

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Jeffrey N. Cox, *Romanticism in the Shadow of War: Literary Culture in the Napoleonic War Years.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 276. $95. ISBN 978110707194.

Jeffrey Cox has written an elegant and persuasive book about literary genres considered as cultural maneuvers on the English home front during the course of the Napoleonic Wars strictly defined, 1800–1815. His central figures are Thomas Holcroft, Anna Letitia Barbauld, and Leigh Hunt, regarded as foils for major works by, respectively, Byron, the Shelleys, and Keats. Each of these authors is the focus for one of the book's six chapters; Holcroft and Byron paired under the rubric of melodrama, Barbauld and the Shelleys as instances of innovations in satire, and Hunt, Keats and the Cockney School as examples of a new openness toward foreign influences, represented as 'Italianism.'

The generic thrust of Cox's study is enlivened by a clever *schema* that links genres with some of the military maneuvers characteristic of this war. He suggests we 'should think of the Romantic period – both in its military actions and its cultural productions – as the era of small feints, limited campaigns, border raids' (4). One of the most enlightening aspects of the book is the introductory overview Cox gives of these different aspects of warfare, as heuristic types of literary practice exploited by writers who were opposed to the war, but could not speak out directly against it. Thus Holcroft's 'border raids' on Parisian theaters brought back to London a new genre, melodrama, which 'enters the English language with [his] play, *A Tale of Mystery*, in 1802' (37). Unlike established and licensed dramatic forms, melodrama

(like border raids) could attack apparently impregnable political and moral targets by indirection, surprise, disguise, and sudden unsettling shifts in tone, tactics, and mode. Its naïve elements allowed dramatic geniuses like Holcroft to play artfully with its conventions.

In the chapter pairings, the first item is usually the more successful, while the second is more problematic, allowing Cox to do some masterful close reading and cross-cultural inflecting, where most of the book's value lies. Thus following Holcroft with Byron's *Manfred*, considered as a melodrama, allows Cox to connect it with similarly mixed-genre works by other authors that significantly expand our sense of the work that could be done by contested genres in very controversial times.

With satire, Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* leads the way. In a retrospective future-fiction, this 'brave and supremely strange poem' (104) imagines a ruined England visited by American tourists, viewing the 'faded glories' of 'fallen London' contemporaneous with her time of composition, such as the British Museum (109-110). Such a perspective could still rile English bile, and in 1812 the howls of outrage were deafening, effectively ending Barbauld's poetic career. But Cox patiently shows how its typical maneuver, the 'sally' or sudden burst of attack, followed by sudden retreat or change of course, enables its progress. Barbauld intensifies Juvenal with doses of Jeremiah, producing a species of prophetic satire breathtaking in scope and implication.

Cox extends this generic innovation into a consideration of Percy Shelley's similarly 'dated' satire, 'England in 1819,' and what he astutely called Shelley's 'England in 1811,' the unpublished Esdaile manuscript (1812). This brilliant move leads him on to an insightful reading of *Queen Mab*, followed by an explosive consideration of *Prometheus Unbound*. The chapter concludes with similarly contextualized treatments of Mary Shelley's *Valperga* and *The Last Man* – another 'dated' satire. In some respects, these works don't *mean* all they can, unless they are seen in the context of a national cultural situation when the end of the world seemed not a fiction but a likelihood.

Similarly, the erotic, sensual, luxurious language of Hunt, Keats, and others of the Cockney School – to use neutral terms for a rhetoric which critics lambasted in far harsher language – looks significantly different when seen in a cultural context in which a tragic view of life was being urged as mere common-sense 'realism'. Of course the Cockneys did not always succeed, but they knew very well what they were doing. The quest for eros becomes a kind of heroism when all leading public voices are counselling resignation, and despair replaces terror as the new order of the day. Cox's framework reminds us that post-Waterloo euphoria was soon nipped in the bud by a Restoration of old tyranny, of which Peterloo stands for many other instances.

Cox's comparatist training allows him to look much further afield than the usual 'second generation' rubric allows, and suggests a three-part pedagogical grid for viewing the period: roughly, 1789–1803, 1803–1815, 1816–1830. Cox is liberal with his thesis statements throughout, making the book user-friendly for undergraduates; a less expensive paperback edition would be highly effective in classroom use. If some of Cox's intricate 'can-be-seen-in-this-way' defenses of the cultural work being done by these oft-neglected texts seem problematic, what is that but an open invitation to both teachers and students to pursue and test his conclusions further?

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Oskar Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 261. £63. ISBN 9781137555373.

In *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822*, Oskar Cox Jensen considers the portrayal of Napoleon in British popular song both during and in the years following the Napoleonic Wars, with the aim of ascertaining what these portrayals can reveal about British popular sentiment towards Napoleon. This body of material has tended to fall through the cracks of scholarship, with songs being overlooked as cultural objects due to their status as mere ephemera, given only surface-level readings by historians who have frequently taken loyalist songs stemming from the London press as representative of the era as a whole. Cox Jensen brings to light a vast array of popular songs from across the British Isles, many of which are recorded and made available via a link to SoundCloud that accompanies the book, and he provides a fresh reading of them by considering their aesthetic as well as political dimensions. In doing so, he reveals that popular songs encompass a much broader range of perspectives than has frequently been assumed.

Chapter 1 provides an in-depth account of popular song culture in Napoleonic Britain, considering both their production and consumption through an examination of writers, printers, singers and listeners. The main portion of the study, Chapters 2–4, provides a chronological account of British songs about Napoleon from 1797, when he first enters British song, to the aftermath of Waterloo. Cox Jensen demonstrates that portrayals of Napoleon differ over time and across geographical areas, often reflecting local concerns. For instance, Napoleon is initially admired as a respected general and a rival to the hero Nelson in songs celebrating the latter's naval victories; depicted as a tyrant after rising to First Consul and then Emperor; mocked as a figure of ridicule towards the end of the Wars; and portrayed sympathetically as a tragic figure in post-Waterloo songs. Songs produced in London are almost exclusively loyalist, whereas numerous songs from Northern cities also express radical sympathies. This survey is impressive in its scope and level of detail, and is abundant with examples taken from songs from across the British Isles; 382 relevant songs are tabulated in a useful appendix.

Regional differences are further explored in Chapter 5, which provides a detailed case study of songs stemming from Newcastle. Cox Jensen shows that many of the 'non-loyal' songs being produced there largely stem from reactions to loyalist propaganda and the press gang, therefore reflecting anti-authoritarian rather than necessarily pro-Napoleon sentiments. The case study of Newcastle illustrates one of the book's main conclusions: that the loyalist propaganda songs churned out by the London broadside press largely failed to achieve any significant impact on the wider popular imagination.

A major strength of the study is Cox Jensen's critical approach to the songs themselves, in which aspects such as meter and text-setting are considered as well as the overriding message of the song's lyrics. This allows him to make observations that are not possible when the songs are treated merely as texts, particularly regarding reception and impact. In order to be well received a song had to be singable and memorable, besides conveying a message that was likely to resonate with its listenership. Cox Jensen's approach allows him to demonstrate where clunky text-setting rendered a song ineffective, as in the case of 'Boney's Degradation', set by an anonymous lyricist to the tune 'Maggie Lauder' and published in 1813. The lyricist '[struggles] endlessly with meter and stress', and the dense narrative of the lyrics is furthermore a poor match for the lively dance-like tune (83). The accompanying recording is particularly useful here, as it allows the reader to hear this uncomfortable mismatch rather than leaving them to imagine it. These critiques add weight to the conclusion that much of the loyalist ephemera stemming from the London broadside press largely failed to infiltrate wider

popular song culture. Writers 'seeking to manipulate popular song from above found the form resistant' if the conventions of good song writing were disregarded for the sake of espousing a particular political viewpoint (164).

Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822 is an excellent study that brings fresh insights to our understanding of both the political and cultural histories of this period. It demonstrates that a nuanced reading of the era's popular song is highly rewarding, and its critical approach should serve as a model for scholars working with any ephemera of any kind.

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Ina Ferris, *Book-Men, Book Clubs, and the Romantic Literary Sphere*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 192. £55. ISBN 9781137367594.

Offering a decentred understanding of book culture in the late Georgian period, Ina Ferris places the bookman at the centre of her engaging and deeply-researched study. While much work has been undertaken with regards to the Romantic literary sphere's rich body of periodical reviews, the bookman's liminal position on the border between literary production and reception, as Ferris ably points out, has effaced the important role that such bibliophiles had in changing the way that people thought about and lived with books during the early nineteenth century. As opposed to the 'literariness' of the *belles-lettres* tradition, the bookman's 'bookishness', Ferris makes clear, was 'attached to print: to book copy and to the practices technologies, and rituals that make up the fabric of book culture' (1). Exploring the prevalence of the book club in various geographical locations from the elitist clubs of London, to the provincial circulating clubs of Chichester, Ferris' work represents an important development in our understanding of reading culture beyond the high-minded criticism of the Edinburgh journals.

The first part of Ferris' study deals with 'urban associations' and opens with a discussion of London's Roxburghe Club which was founded in 1812 by the archetypal bookman, Thomas Frognall Dibdin. Whereas literary societies met with the purpose of reading and discussing works of literature, the 'bibliomaniacs' (18) of clubs such as the Roxburghe 'notoriously downplayed reading and dissemination' and were instead interested in 'unreadable old books outside current circulation' (19). Understanding books 'as literal "pieces" of the past' which 'they valued as the products of printers and other-book-craftsmen' rather than as 'immaterial authorial texts' (19), such bibliomaniacs were commonly charged with elitism and intellectual myopia. Whilst the literary-sphere sought to select books based upon their literary merit, members of elite clubs such as the Roxburghe offered contesting justifications for the books that they sought to reprint and were 'content to supplement rather than reform current taste' (19). As Ferris argues throughout her study, in fact, it was in their disregard for common notions of what merited preservation that bookmen not only questioned the literary-sphere's discourse of improvement, but also provided a polyphonic addition to Romantic book culture. Inaugurating a new genre of 'book fancy' in their bibliographical publications, men such as Dibdin, as chapter one demonstrates, bridged the gap between literary appreciation and book production in a way that has never received due consideration.

Chapter 2 develops discussion of bibliomania to consider the ways in which the process of printing as an art in and of itself featured in the bibliographical publications of the bookmen of the nineteenth century. Again focussing on the representative works of Dibdin, Chapter 2 argues that the bookman's interest in print served to complicate the author-reader relationship

by foregrounding the book as a material object made possible by the burgeoning print industry. 'Outliers' (vii) to the literary sphere, bookmen's keen interest in print culture saw their influence extend across class barriers with their publications, as Ferris points out, devoting great energies to valorising Britain's artisanal printers.

In Chapter 3, Ferris takes us to Edinburgh in her examination of Walter Scott's antiquarian Bannatyne Club. Dedicated to the reprinting of long-forgotten historical works, printing clubs such as the Bannatyne delved into the archive and faced criticism for their less than rigorous selection process. Despite being accused of reprinting the 'rubbish' (85) of history by the professionals of the literary-historical world, however, such clubs, as Ferris argues, brought history to light in a dynamic way that resisted the contemporary urge to standardise interpretations of the past.

The second part of Ferris' study takes into account reading cultures 'beyond the metropolis' (vii) in provincial book clubs and reading societies. Long regarded as imitations of metropolitan clubs, the country book club, as Ferris ably points out, was in fact a very particular organisation which broadened the horizons of book culture. While many books clubs, with their meetings held in taverns and inns, remained defined by their masculinity, country book clubs, as Chapter 4 underlines, also 'domesticated' bookishness and provided a space for female engagement with book culture. Demonstrating the ways in which the social aspects of country book clubs 'connected books, persons and locality' (113) Ferris' study closes with a consideration of the archetypal 'clubman' John Marsh. A member of a number of book and music clubs, Marsh's journals are used by Ferris to highlight the important role that clubmen had in shaping provincial engagement with artistic culture.

It is a testament to the usefulness of Ferris' model of reading book culture from its margins, in fact, that her study provides various routes for future scholarly endeavour. Bringing the bookman to the fore of our understanding of book culture, Ferris' work, I am sure, will offer an engaging point of departure for future studies of reading culture during the Romantic period.

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Mary O'Connell, *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Pp. 220. £75. ISBN 9781781381335.

Mary O'Connell's exploration of the relationship between Byron and John Murray is a comprehensive analysis of the professional and personal communications between two of the most well known individuals of nineteenth-century literary society, and of the complex nature of the book selling market. In this book, O'Connell reveals the complexities of the author-publisher and writer-reader relationship in early nineteenth-century society.

Byron's relationship with Murray was by no means straightforward. It was actualised by the machinations of others, such as the introduction of Byron to Murray made by Robert Charles Dallas. It was, moreover, fraught with complexities brought about by Murray's experience of the publishing market, by Byron's self-determination as a writer, and by the years Byron spent in self-exile. During Byron's exile Murray became one of the key recipients of Byron's not-so-private letters, and used this position to control the information that reached the public sphere. O'Connell confronts this tumultuous relationship by undertaking a chronological review of the relationship between Byron and Murray and marrying close

readings of Byron's works, including discrepancies between editions and manuscript corrections, with the circumstances of Byron's personal life that affected not only his writing but all those around him.

O'Connell places sociability at the core of her discussion, and acknowledges that Byron and Murray's professional association was shaped by the presence of others. These included William Gifford, editor of Murray's *Quarterly Review*, and Byron's self-nominated protector John Cam Hobhouse. Sociability in Murray's publishing house was an imperative, and Byron himself was aware that he could never be Murray's sole author, and that Murray already published eminent bestsellers such as Walter Scott.

A notable aspect of this study is identified by O'Connell at the very beginning: that the role of the publisher and bookseller are not exclusive, and that for Murray these titles could be used interchangeably. Murray surrounded himself with authors in the same way that he surrounded himself with books, as exemplified in a letter to his brother quoted by O'Connell: 'I transact all of my departments of business in an elegant library, which my Drawing room becomes during the morning where I am in the habits of seeing Persons of the very highest rank […] such as – Canning – Frere – Mackintosh – Southey – Campbell – Walter Scott – Mad de Stael – Gifford – Croker – Lord Barrow – Lord Byron' (104). This sociability had great benefits for both Byron and Murray. Murray was particularly gratified by the relationship he fostered between Walter Scott and Byron. O'Connell states that 'while Byron claimed that he had "not much weight" with his publisher, he used his influence to persuade Murray to publish Coleridge's *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* and Leigh Hunt's *The Story of Rimini*' (107). Between them, Murray and Byron helped to shape the literary landscape of the nineteenth century.

O'Connell neatly explores the demands that the publishing market placed on both Murray and Byron, reminding us that both the author and publisher had to negotiate concepts of marketability, aesthetics and that ever fickle concept of literary quality. For example, Scott and Southey were particularly critical of those purchasers who were attracted more to the aesthetics of a publication as opposed to its literary quality. By the publication of the first cantos of *Don Juan*, Byron too was critiquing the purchasers of his poetry, and protested that he never intended to write poetry for the popular market. O'Connell interrogates this claim and demonstrates that Murray always ensured that Byron's works were popular with those who bought into literary works as aesthetic items, as well as those who bought works due to their literary appeal or merit (noting that the concepts of appeal and merit are not necessarily synonymous).

Overall, *Byron and John Murray* is as much a contribution to studies of sociability, the nineteenth-century publishing world, and the bookselling market place, as it is to accounts of Byron and Byronism. By bringing together reception history, private letters that were exposed to a public world, and Byron's literary works themselves, this book enhances our understanding of the changing literary landscapes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Marie Mulvey-Roberts, ed., *Literary Bristol: Writers and the City*. Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2015. Pp. 224. Pb. £15. ISBN 978908326737.

> Consider the nature of a city. It is a vast repository of time, the discarded times of all the men and women who have lived, worked, dreamed and died in the streets which grow like a wilfully organic thing, unfurl like the petals of a mired rose and yet lack evanescence so entirely that they preserve the past in haphazard layers, so this alley is old while the avenue that runs beside it is newly built but nevertheless has been built over the deep-down, dead-in-the ground relics of the older, perhaps the original, huddle of alleys which germinated the entire quarter.

This passage from an Angela Carter novel, quoted by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (29), serves wonderfully as a keynote to the book as a whole. The eight chapters, which cover a 250 year range of Bristol writers from Thomas Chatterton (born 1752) to Diana Wynne Jones (died 2011), accumulate like the historical layers Carter describes, showing the city within the city, the palimpsest of impressions created by the imagination of its inhabitants. The chapters work best when they enter this imaginative space through the eyes of their subject authors. By and large the book transcends parochial championing, and Catherine Butler's final chapter rounds off the book brilliantly by looking critically at the pros and cons of tying literature, or authors, to a specific place.

Writing for *The BARS Review*, I feel duty bound to dwell on the chapters about Romantics, but before doing so I commend this book as a whole. It is lavishly illustrated (with 15 colour plates), greater than the sum of its parts, and a bargain at £15. The later chapters: Chiara Briganti and Kathy Meizi on E. H. Young, Dawn Fowler on the Bristol New Wave Dramatists, Zoe Brennan on Angela Carter's 'Bristol Trilogy', and Catherine Butler on Diana Wynne Jones are all well worth reading.

Mulvey-Roberts' 'Gothic Bristol: City of Darkness and Light' sets the scene that the book goes on to populate. The fourteenth-century Perpendicular Gothic church of St Mary Redcliffe is linked nicely to Bristol's Gothic revival buildings to show 500 years of atmospheric continuity. On the cliffs above the old city, Clifton, a bright and new Spa town in the late 1790s, had by the 1960s decayed into Angela Carter's 'twilight region of one-room flats [with] a leprous and mice-nibbled look' (174). The port below, so central to the city's prosperity, gave Bristol its 'dark legacy of the slave trade' (29) and its reputation as the mercantile city which let its boy-genius Chatterton starve.

John Goodridge's chapter shows how John Gregory (1832–1922), shoemaker, poet, and socialist, responded to the Chatterton myth. St Mary Redcliffe, whose pillars were 'arborescent monsters' (111) to Gregory, is brought into the present age by Goodridge as a 'Gothic spaceship' (115) haunted by the excluded Chatterton. May the generous and benevolent spirit of John Gregory himself (previously unknown to me, and so well captured here) continue to haunt Bristol as pervasively.

Kerri Andrews uses Ann Yearsley's troubled relationship with her patronised definition as the 'Bristol Milkwoman' – a label which confines her geographically and socially – to enrich the discussion of sense of place that pervades the entire book. Andrews demonstrates how adroitly Yearsley manoeuvred in her verse to transcend these categories, speaking to, and on behalf of Bristol, ironizing and satirizing the identity imposed on her, to create a 'liberating space' (103) within the 'place' her readers thought she had been allotted.

Of the Romantic authors, Robert Southey fares particularly well. Mulvey-Roberts discusses his Gothic verse (41-47), an under-appreciated aspect of this prolific and versatile author, and Robin Jarvis' chapter, 'Bristol's Romantic Poets: Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge', gives most space to the former, which affords Jarvis the opportunity – in a

short chapter that needs to cater for the non-specialist – to cover new ground. Southey haunts the Avon Gorge rocks and caverns above Bristol in particular. His 1797 poem 'Inscription for a Cavern that Overlooks the River Avon', appositely illustrated by a Turner painting on the same subject (74), leads Jarvis to describe an inverted inscription genre where 'the place or natural object […] addresses an imaginary passer by – and by extension the reader' (72). This cavern appears in Southey's Common-Place Book as part of a projected poem about St Vincent's Rocks, which overlook Bristol and the Avon Gorge: 'It might begin by saying why I ought to celebrate them. The camp, my cavern, the legend of the building to which there leads no path, Cook's folly and its tale, the suicide at Sea-Mills, Trenchard and Gordon. Chatterton. Bristol too might have its fame' (73-4). That poem was never written, but Bristol – through books such as this one – has its fame.

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Angela Esterhammer, Diane Piccitto and Patrick Vincent, eds., *Romanticism, Rousseau, Switzerland: New Prospects*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 229. £55. ISBN 9781137475855.

Since the tercentenary of Rousseau's birth there has been a resurgence of interest in his life and work. This new collection is of central importance to this trend and offers insightful contributions to our understanding of the fascinating intersections between Rousseau, Swiss philosophy and landscape, tourism, literature and art in order to interrogate the 'subtleties and counter-currents beneath some of Romanticism's dominant ideologies' (17). The editors make an eminently persuasive case for the parameters indicated in the title by situating the collection within the context of notable research conducted by the likes of Cian Duffy, Thomas McFarland and Gregory Dart. While such research has ably evaluated Rousseau's profound impact upon British Romanticism, the editors propose that 'this relationship is rarely considered in terms of Rousseau's embeddedness within Swiss culture and landscape' (4). The essays thus seek to fill an important but often neglected niche within Romanticism scholarship.

The initial focus of the collection is on Rousseau's contribution to intellectual debates. Enit K. Steiner, for instance, provides a thought provoking reading of *Emile* alongside Francis Brooke's *Julia Mandeville* in order to interrogate the fraught questions surrounding the issues of education and liberty, while Michelle Faubert offers a richly perceptive analysis of Rousseau's treatment of suicide vis-à-vis questions of personal liberty. Although rewarding, Faubert somewhat problematically conflates issues around 'discursive' and 'contagious' debate and the vexed issue of 'silencing contagious texts' (47), and both Faubert and Steiner appear to eschew a consideration of the 'embeddedness' of Rousseau 'within Swiss culture and landscape' promised by the editors. Indeed, this tendency to depart from the parameters indicated by the title and the editors seems a hallmark of the collection. Rachel Corkle, for instance, makes incisive connections between botany, reading and individual interpretative acts, and Wendy C. Nielson examines Rousseau's *Pygmalion* as a means of exploring issues surrounding emotionality and the artificial, but neither essay fully integrates or embeds Rousseau into his Swiss context. The subsequent three essays by Nicola J. Watson, Gordon Turnbull and Pamela Buck examine the significance of Switzerland more specifically, however, and usefully investigate Rousseau-inspired tourism. Watson draws upon an impressive array of material to shed light upon 'Rousseauistic places of retreat' (98) from perspectives as diverse as those of Boswell, Piggott, Helen Maria Williams, Wagner and

Byron, but Turnbull's contribution on Boswell's visits to Rousseau in 1764, though eloquently described, appear somewhat over-reliant upon conjectural psychoanalysis (particularly in relation to Rousseau's apparent recognition of Boswell's need for 'forgiveness' and a 'retroactive erasure of the boyhood inscriptions of abjection' [112]), have little correspondence to the 'romanticism' promised in the title, and requires a somewhat incongruous 'skipping forward' (14) for it to mesh with Buck's subsequent chapter on Dorothy Wordsworth. Buck's discussion of Wordsworth is much more successfully engaged with Romanticism's mediation, construction and representation of Swiss scenery and the essay provides a perceptive reading of the manner in which Wordsworth provides a critique of 'a tourist aesthetic that relies on art more than reality' (123). However, Rousseau is distinctly absent from the discussion, which again seems at variance with the emphasis promised by the editors, despite Buck's contribution clearly being of vital importance to highlighting Dorothy Wordsworth's significance as a perceptive 'travel writer in her own right' (130).

The final five chapters of the collection attend to the ways in which Switzerland became a subject of representation. What is particularly interesting about this section is the manner in which familiar texts and topics (such as Byron's *Manfred* and the notion the Byronic hero) are given a Swiss 'new prospect' alongside fascinating expositions on less familiar material, most notably Kirstyn Leuner's exploration of the picturesque, representation and perception in Rodolphe Töpffer's early comic strips (although this final essay again suffers from the same lack of engagement with the core issues surrounding 'Romanticism, Rousseau, Switzerland'). Patrick Vincent, for instance, offers a particularly insightful and productive investigation of representations of Swiss topography via 'technologies of the picturesque' (15) and very successfully links these to their 'philosophical correlative, Rousseau's state of nature', and the 'Romantic period's social imaginary' (145). Simon Bainbridge, meanwhile, offers a similarly perceptive close reading of *The Peasants of Chamouni* to explore critiques of Swiss mountaineering, although again the wider implications of these issues vis-à-vis Rousseau and Romantic aesthetics/children's literature would have been a useful correlative. Angela Esterhammer's exploration of the 'perpetuation of clichéd images' of Switzerland (16) and their complex intertextuality, meanwhile, is more successful in exposing the artifice of 'imaginary Switzerlands' in 'increasingly textualized and touristic' forms (197-8), but this needed contextualising in relation to Rousseau, and a link to issues associated with nationalism would have enriched the perceptiveness of the essay even further.

As a whole, the collection more than fulfils its aim of articulating 'new prospects' and is likely to be seminal in terms of signalling and laying the foundations for the current resurgence of interest in Rousseau. The essays could have been more clearly signposted in terms of their grouping into themes and some of the contributors wander a little away from the parameters indicated by the title and the editors' preamble. As such, the title should not be read too literally. Nevertheless, the collection is undoubtedly impressive and is to be commended as an invaluable contribution by eminent voices within Romanticism scholarship.

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Martha C. Nussbaum and Alison L. LaCroix, eds., *Subversion and Sympathy: Gender, Law, and the British Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 336. £53. ISBN 9780199812042.

Martha Nussbaum and Alison LaCroix's edited book *Subversion and Sympathy: Gender, Law, and the British Novel* (2013) is viewed with mixed feelings. The interdisciplinary venture is in itself very commendable as it tries to connect history, gender studies, philosophy, literary studies, and law. It aims at reinvigorating the methodology of the law and literature movement – which started in the 1970s – by provoking a cross-disciplinary conversation. When embarking on this project the editors hoped that the examination of human character nearly two centuries ago could instruct us today and enrich our understanding of deeper human issues. The scope of the enterprise may have been too large and ambitious for the outcome to be fully satisfactory.

In her preface, Diane Wood states that the book wishes to focus on the position of women in the British novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which the title does not announce very clearly. If the concept of subversion is indeed dealt with at length, little is said about 'sympathy', which may be one potential methodological weakness. Whereas the Preface only consists of a basic reminder of the status of women at the time and the existence of a set of constraints which they complied with or rebelled against, the Introduction does a brilliant job of raising crucial theoretical issues about the blindness of the law monopolised by a mostly male social elite. Literature is expected to serve as an eye-opener for the law since the British novel is closely associated with movements of social recognition. From its inception the genre offered something radically new in the history of letters by painstakingly chronicling the lives of ordinary people. It thus serves as a mirror that reflects both the qualities and flaws of society. This is why Ian Watt associates the rise of the novel with the rise of democracy. The book as a whole promises a lot through its excellent Introduction connecting law and literature, and yet achieves much less, as the editors themselves seem to be aware of: 'taken as a group, the papers do not have a "bottom line" either about normative social issues or about the relationship between literature and law' (21). That said, the essays in this volume still deserve our full appreciation for energizing the debate, qualifying and complicating the reader's thinking.

The volume consists of fourteen essays written by eminent British and American scholars in both fields, literature and law. It is divided into four main sections 'Marriage and Sex', 'Law, Social Norms, and Women's Agency', 'Property, Commerce and Travel' before concluding with a more metatextual reflection on the role of readers. The themes are varied and the structure is coherent. Yet, despite a few very welcome studies of Defoe, Scott, and Austen, half of the corpus deals with Trollope (4 essays altogether) and Hardy (3 essays altogether). Considering the ambitious programme, a broader range of authors would have helped avoid repetitions and enlarge our reflections. Texts by Dickens, Thackeray or Eliot are surprisingly absent.

The first two sections of the volume are particularly illuminating, with Julie Suk examining the legal consequences of wife sale, and Geoffrey R. Stone looking at the way the law regulates artistic expression and, in particular, sexual explicitness. Adopting a more pessimistic approach, Amanda Claybaugh convincingly demonstrates that the law is irrelevant to the deeper sufferings of human beings: even though unhappy couples could divorce in Victorian times, they did not tend to do so. According to Richard A. Posner, novels do not supply a direct template for legal reform. This is seen through the examples of Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy, who report legal cases with no reformist spirit. This section successfully

concludes that novels are valuable to the law, and to lawyers, mainly because of the general insights into society and human beings they afford.

The second section of the book deals with the extent of women's agency and freedom against the background of constraining social norms. It investigates the space for choice despite a large-scale absence of choice, through the example of women defying conventional male norms in Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, or via the image of 'bastards' and the ways that stereotypes are challenged.

The next two sections are more problematic, mainly because they depart from the road map announced in the Introduction; a departure which, once again, the editors seem to be well aware of ('not overtly linked to gender', 207). This takes us away from the core of the debate and returns us instead to the initial question of marriage, resulting in a feeling of argumentative stasis.

This book is well worth a read: it is well presented and nicely written. Even if the substantive contribution is questionable, the methodological addition is tangible. It deserves credit for bringing literature and law together. It paves the way for more debates about how the two disciplines can engage with and learn from each other.

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Teresa Barnard, ed., *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 183. £60. ISBN 9781472437457.

Teresa Barnard's edited collection, *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century*, seeks to demonstrate British women's contributions to scholarly production in the period. The strength of this book lies in its heterogeneity. Nine chapters focusing on various scholarly fields, several examining multiple eighteenth-century women, allows for a powerfully nuanced approach. Indeed, it may be that an edited collection is ideally suited to this area of study. Since women in the period had to negotiate a more complex path to professional life than their male counterparts, the strategies they adopted to achieve this were perhaps necessarily more contingent upon personal circumstances and individual personality. As such, what might work for one woman might not for another, and perhaps an interdisciplinary study such as this is able to paint a more accurate historical picture of the relationship between women and the intellectual world than a discipline-specific monograph.

Daniel J.R. Grey's study of Mary Wortley Montagu in the opening chapter shows how Montagu negotiated the medical academy as a woman, and drew on her own experience and personality, to contribute to the introduction of the small pox vaccine in England. Teresa Barnard reveals how Anna Seward and Eleanor Anne Porden Franklin exploited a trend for disseminating scientific knowledge through poetry in order to participate in the scholarly fascination with the volcano in the eighteenth century. Focussing on Mary Wollstonecraft, Malini Roy demonstrates her 'hermaphroditic, double alliance with the male writers on childcare and her own, female subjective reception of their ideas' (65). By marrying participation in the dominant, male-centric debates on paediatrics with evocations of her own practical experience as a mother, Roy shows how Wollstonecraft made a lasting contribution to childcare theory and practice. Taken together, these opening chapters reveal multiple strategies adopted by women to make important scientific interventions.

While recognising the overall conservatism of Hannah More, Susan Chaplin nevertheless shows how More's writing can be seen to give spiritual and moral authority to women. Maintaining the religious angle, but focussing more on the particular historical conditions of English society, Kaley Kramer's reading of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, shows how the text '"educates" the reader on the subtle exchanges that enable a peaceful coexistence between Catholics and Protestants' (105). Natasha Duquette examines the theological interventions of dissenting women, and identifies a collaborative female dissenting literary community. In a move that mirrors the strategies of women who used poetry to contribute to scientific debates about volcanoes, Duquette shows how women dissenters couched their religious reasoning in aesthetic forms deemed suitable for female writers. Inchbald's use of the novel to make religious commentary could also be considered in this light. As such, a major contribution of the book is in showing how women writers exploited culturally acceptable forms of literary production to comment on traditionally masculine subjects, such as geology and theology.

Laura Mayer's essay stages a convincing rethink of the history of Elizabeth Percy. Specifically, Mayer argues for the aesthetic value of Percy's restoration of Alnwick Castle, done in the Gothick style (a lighter, less historically accurate form of the 'Gothic'). In addition, Mayer highlights Percy's contributions to the local economy and society. In an examination of Joanna Baillie, Louise Duckling highlights how Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* received high critical praise when published anonymously, only to see an immediate and severe negative shift in critical opinion when Baillie identified herself as the (female) author. Moving forward, Duckling shows how Baillie adopted several strategies in her writing which shielded her from the worst of gendered criticism when tackling subjects seen as unfeminine. Another prevailing theme of the collection is the relationship between individual personality and gender ideology, and how this could affect women's participation in the intellectual world. The idiosyncrasies of both Montagu and Percy are highlighted as key elements in their struggles by Grey and Mayer, respectively. The final essay in the collection, a discussion of sisters Harriet and Sophia Lee by Imke Heuer, continues this theme, arguing that the Lee sisters moved in a 'male-dominated literary market' (156) with 'unquestioning confidence' (156). The literary readings offered support Heuer's claims, revealing women that fearlessly entered into current social and political debates, despite their status as women.

British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century makes useful contributions to various scholarly fields, including social history, literary criticism, the medical humanities, religious history, and interdisciplinary studies in the long eighteenth more generally. Moreover, many of the chapters incorporate an element of critical biography, giving this book a broader appeal to anyone interested in learning more about the lives of intellectual women in the period.

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Louise Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp 267. £64.99. ISBN 9781107131514.

Louise Curran's *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing* is a detailed and perceptive examination of Richardson's extensive private correspondence. In this engaging study, such correspondence is invested with its long overdue critical significance; the monograph as a

whole can be read as an attempt to reinstate the familiar letter to the 'privileged status' it commanded in the early eighteenth century (8). The book is concerned with examining Richardson's letters 'in their own right' rather than purely supplementary documents to support wider discussions of his fiction (14). In focusing instead on the 'interplay' between Richardson's correspondence and literary works, Curran is able to make a case for their connections. Just as letters create and maintain the figures of Pamela, Clarissa and Grandison, epistolary exchange likewise 'play[s] a leading part in the construction of [Richardson's] own authorship' (16). In each case, letter-writing is essential to individual attempts at 'self-fashioning' (75).

The book opens with a valuable account of the status of an author's correspondence in the early to mid-eighteenth century; a period where 'letter writing [...] emerged as a distinct literary form' (4). Such private, familiar epistles became desirable commodities in the burgeoning 'marketplace for letters' (12). While reference is made to the letters of James Boswell and Laurence Sterne, it is the figure of Alexander Pope who dominates this opening discussion; Pope being, Curran claims, the first writer with a shrewd awareness of the saleability of his letters. By contrast, Richardson emerges as a complex figure who, though cautious of the public taste for private correspondence, is nonetheless enticed by it.

This five-chapter study then traces Richardson's endeavours to construct his authorial identity through his correspondence and literary works. Chapter 1 details Richardson's attempts to find his private, epistolary style while he hones his public, literary style in his early works of fiction, particularly *Apprentice's Vade Mecum*, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends* and *Pamela*. Both styles, Curran argues, are deliberately plain and unadorned, reflecting Richardson's lifelong preoccupation with, what he later termed, 'the natural and easy beauties of the pen' (107). Chapter 2 focuses on Richardson's newly-acquired role as celebrity correspondent, paying particular attention to his substantial epistolary exchanges with Lady Bradshaigh. This relationship, at once intimate and distant, allowed Richardson to not only express his own 'character' – as both public author and private man – but mould the epistolary characters of others. Curran relates a striking instance where Richardson pleads with Lady Echlin – Bradshaigh's sister and author of the notorious *Alternative Ending to Richardson's Clarissa* – to relate Bradshaigh's 'History' in miniature (78). Such a request reaffirms Richardson's preoccupation with the making of character. It also, more crucially, underlines that such self-creation is bound up with the letter form. Chapter 3 expands upon the concerns of Chapter 2 in its examination of Richardson's correspondence with a coterie of female writers including Frances Sheridan, Hester Mulso and Sarah Fielding, among many others. Though Richardson critics have, in the past, alluded to such letters, Curran's astute and detailed examination of these documents is something altogether new. In particular, the account of Richardson's plans to create a sequel to *Grandison* – using letters penned by his female correspondents – makes for a compelling read.

The final two chapters are primarily concerned with Richardson's attempts to construct a virtuous 'masculine authorial identity' as both a private man and a public author (143). Such attempts find most striking expression in Richardson's letters with other men; letters which form the focus of Chapter 4. These largely critically-neglected letters are considered alongside *Grandison* and make the case that Richardson's preoccupation with the 'good man' in his final novel was one initially voiced in his private epistles; reiterating that Richardson's correspondence was an integral part of his writing process. The final chapter examines how Richardson organised and edited his correspondence for his posthumous readers; a process Curran aptly refers to as 'archiving the self' (159). Curran's insightful reading illustrates how Richardson's previous endeavours to self-fashion his character as an author and correspondent are intensified at the prospect of his own death.

Astute and persuasive throughout, Curran's book is a striking addition to Richardson scholarship and to studies of 'the great age of letter-writing' more generally (2). By far the most impressive aspect of this work is Curran's ambitious engagement with Richardson's extensive oeuvre. This study relies as much on Richardson's unpublished – even unprinted – works as it does on his published works. Such a focus produces original and nuanced readings of, often critically overlooked, texts. Curran's compelling examination of 'The History of Mrs Beaumont' in Chapter 2, for instance, is particularly worthy of note. Such an uncompromising dedication to these obscure texts has not been seen perhaps in Richardson scholarship since Thomas Keymer's seminal *Richardson's 'Clarissa' and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (1992); placing Curran's book, quite deservedly, in erudite company.

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Spotlight: Romantic Essayists

James Grande, *William Cobbett, the Press and Rural England: Radicalism and the Fourth Estate, 1792–1835*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. 250. £58. ISBN 9781137380074.

Part thematic intellectual biography, part Romantic critical portrait, James Grande's conceptually nuanced and compelling study adds an epistolary dimension to the range of recent scholarship engaging with Cobbett's multifaceted cultural project. Grande argues that in Cobbett's periodical prose, found most notably in his *Political Register*, 'the newspaper becomes a form of weekly correspondence, stamped with a vivid sense of personality and founded on the epistolary tropes of intimacy, authenticity and spontaneity', brining together 'mass appeal with intimate address' (4). Cobbett's unique bond with his audience is dissected alongside what Grande calls his 'oppositional idea of rural England' (8) – a rural imaginary, Grande argues, that 'forms one of the neglected landscapes of British Romanticism […] as visible to contemporary audiences as Wordsworth's Lakes or Scott's Borders' (5).

The first chapter traces Cobbett's emergence as a journalist in Philadelphia after the Revolutionary War, demonstrating that 'writing as a fiercely patriotic Tory in America […] involved a strategic appeal to ideas of national character and patriotism', and thus, 'sow[ed] the seeds for Cobbett's English ruralism' (18). Chapter 2 frames the development of some of Cobbett's signature tropes of oppositional popular journalism around his correspondence, from 1800 to 1806, with the first financial backer of the *Political Register*, the leading anti-Jacobin politician William Windham. Cobbett's journalistic innovations are mapped dialectically, his pioneering periodical record of parliamentary debates (later to become *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*) and distinctive editorial personality that emerged in response to the official practices of the British government, marking out a 'tension between the newspaper as an intimate, impassioned rejoinder and a dispassionate system of information' that was 'central to the development of the *Political Register*' (50).

Chapter 3 examines Cobbett's series on England's financial system, written while imprisoned in Newgate, *Paper Against Gold* (1810–11), and his landmark November 1816 'Two-Penny Trash' edition of the *Register*. These two enterprises are related, in part through Cobbett's mode of address pioneered in the former. 'As Cobbett uncovered a system of war, corruption and speculation,' Grande observes of *Paper Against Gold*, 'he found a representational crisis which required increasingly innovative forms of address' (70). Grande brings an original critical perspective via the correspondence of Cobbett with his family in rural Botley during his imprisonment, arguing that 'the printed letters of *Paper Against Gold* and the archive of family correspondence are based on an opposition between the paper system and a rural world of common sense, productive labour and tangible goods' (81).

Chapter 4 engages with Cobbett's *A Grammar of the English Language* (1818) through a series of open letters published in his *Register* during his second American exile in Long Island, the latter 'laying the ground' for the main ideological impetus of the former, 'working out his ideas before his audience and linking rural life, clarity of expression and political reform' (104), with 'grammar as the tool that will restore agency' to his audience (105). Chapter 5 highlights how Cobbett's 'characteristically domestic mode of writing takes on renewed significance when encountering the relatively new idea of the royal *family*' (115) during the Queen Caroline affair, using 'the epistolary form to transform Caroline into a paradoxically chivalric symbol of radical reform' (128).

Chapter 6 looks at Cobbett's 'distinctively modern version of the polemical tour' in *Rural Rides*, 'combining political argument with documentary evidence' (148). Grande

observes how this method 'can also operate alongside a vivid sense of wonder' in the description of rural landscape (159), and draws parallels between the *Rides* and Wordsworth's poetry of the 1790s, 'which are both preoccupied with ideas of rootedness and itinerancy' (161).

The final chapter juxtaposes Cobbett's activist journalism in the *Register* during the agricultural riots of 1830–31 with the periodical's overlooked writing on the contemporaneous July Revolution in France. This Anglo-French context brings an important new perspective on the three open letters Cobbett published in the 23 October 1830 *Register* that 'weave together what was happening in the southern counties, London and Paris' (180) – a rhetorical feat 'bring[ing] apparently disparate events into correspondence during the Swing riots, shuttling between England and France to place current events within a long narrative of oppression' (181). Grande's archival research enriches his account of Cobbett's subsequent trial for seditious libel by the Whig Government, using family and Home Office papers to illuminate the strategies on both sides.

William Cobbett, the Press and Rural England significantly develops what is already a formidable body of scholarship on the most influential contemporary English prose writer of the Romantic period. Grande's painstaking research in the Cobbett family correspondence yields a rich new interpretative context for assessing a range of his most enduring texts and the journalistic innovations showcased in the *Political Register* and *Two-Penny Trash*. But this major new study is more than simply a synthesis and presentation of valuable archival research. It re-imagines Cobbett as a distinctively Romantic writer sharing a range of moral and aesthetic concerns with the likes of Wordsworth, whilst convincingly portraying this leading radical champion of English localism as one of the most cosmopolitan and international writers of the age.

Note: The present reviewer contributed an essay to the author's *William Cobbett, Romanticism and the Enlightenment: Contexts and Legacy* (London: Pickering, 2015), co-edited with John Stevenson.

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Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts, eds., *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine: 'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. 310. £63. ISBN 9780230304413.

This brilliant collection of essays is stimulating and useful for anyone with an interest in Romantic print culture. Such is the clarity and insight of each essay that scholars of all stages will find thought-provoking readings of many aspects of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In their introduction, Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts explain what made *Blackwood's* a unique and dynamic player in the literary marketplace. By collapsing generic categories and 'mixing together fiction, reviews, correspondence, and essays', William Blackwood created a new model for magazines (2). He also fostered a distinctive character for his miscellany, which 'bristled always with confidence and contradiction' (1). The introduction sets the tone for the lively style and high calibre of the discussions which follow. Picking up Coleridge's admiration for the 'unprecedented Phenomenon' of *Blackwood's* as 'the only – remaining link between the Periodical Press and the enduring literature of Great

Britain' (qtd. 14), the collection examines the important role *Blackwood's* played in shaping post-Waterloo literary culture and debates.

While the twenty chapters are arranged under five broad headings, situating *Blackwood's* in relation to 'the Periodical Press', 'Culture and Criticism', 'Fictions', 'at Home' and 'Abroad', the editors and contributors also invite other ways of exploring shared currents of interest. The use of cross-referencing, with contributors often responding to one another's work, creates both a strong sense of critical dialogue and shared intellectual enterprise. Overall, readers are given the impression of being encouraged to join an exciting critical conversation.

Philip Flynn's chapter on the first issue of the rebranded *Blackwood's* of October 1817 perfectly captures the provocative way in which the magazine ('Maga' to its friends) exploded onto the literary scene. It contained John Wilson's savage review of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*; J. G. Lockhart's vitriolic attack on 'the Cockney School'; and the scandalous 'Ancient Chaldee Manuscript', a parody of Edinburgh literary politics in biblical style, co-authored by Hogg, Lockhart and Wilson. Thomas Richardson counters the prevalent idea of Lockhart's venom by shedding light on his intelligence as a critic and his contributions of poetry and translations of classical literature. Several essays focus on Wilson, starting with Morrison's illuminating comparison of him with De Quincey. Richard Cronin gives a compelling account of his career and placing as a Regency author, while John Strachan draws out the importance of sports to Wilson's brand of masculinity and national vigour.

Gillian Hughes's excellent essay has a vital role in emphasising *Blackwood's* as a Scottish national project, as well as elucidating James Hogg's importance as both a contributor of short stories and poems and a fictional character in the magazine. Tim Killick's chapter, one of the best in the volume, demonstrates how, within a few months of its inception, *Blackwood's* began to create the modern short story. Conversely, William Christie attends to its pioneering scientific culture through the work of Robert Jameson and David Brewster, who went on to shape nineteenth-century science.

Conflicts of identity, politics, class, and canonicity were fought in and out of Maga's pages. In keeping with the blurring of fiction and non-fiction explored by Killick, David Higgins analyses how confessional writing addresses the broader magazine culture of authorial duplicity, and Tom Mole elucidates the complexities of 'personalities'. As Mark Schoenfield shows, identities were fundamentally unstable in periodicals and their ownership was fraught; the *Blackwood's* taste for violence spilt out into the duel which killed John Scott. More playfully, David Stewart argues that the contrary impulses of a 'culture of miscellaneity' and the separation of 'high' and 'low' literatures, which were defining features of *Blackwood's*, were expressed in 'a peculiarly Blackwoodian mode of cultural allusion' (116). Jason Camlot similarly explores the interplay of the canonical and ephemeral in the competitive attempts of critics to elevate themselves to equal status with poets.

The stand-out essay for me was Nicholas Mason's fascinating take on 'communal Romanticism' and the *Blackwood's* 'school of criticism' through the reception of Mary Shelley. He reveals how Shelley's work was 'read and mis-read through an ever-changing set of pre-assumptions about her authorial identity and the literary communities in which she was imagined to be participating' (104). Nanora Sweet provides a welcome analysis of Felicia Hemans's successful career in the male-dominated magazine, and of the 'disciplining' of her ambitions through the *Noctes Ambrosianae* (242).

The final chapters consider *Blackwood's* and the wider world, with Daniel Sanjiv Roberts looking at the mediation of Indian literature, and Anthony Jarrells exploring tales of the colonies. But a stronger re-positioning of *Blackwood's* at home would also have been useful. Attention to Maga's national identity is largely lacking, and it is not at all clear how this collection situates itself in relation to 'four nations' Romanticism. It might have been

interesting to conclude the reassessment of *Blackwood's* and 'Romanticism' with some discussion of its reception by young readers who became Victorian writers (the Brontës, Dickens, and Robert Browning) or its transatlantic influence on readers such as Edgar Allan Poe. Nevertheless, this is an informative and engaging book which prompts our own re-thinking.

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Kevin Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 336. £99. ISBN 9780198709312.

As his 'day-star of liberty' continues to rise, Hazlitt revisionism has become a fun new sub-category in Romantic studies. Since David Bromwich's thoroughgoing reevaluation in 1983 (*Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic*), new Hazlitts have appeared with increasing frequency — but that need not stop us from having another, since, as Kevin Gilmartin reminds us in his noteworthy new *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist*, Hazlitt's was a 'fluid and unresolved literary persona' (34). Hazlitt has boldly been rebranded as the 'first modern man', as an idealist metaphysician, even – this from an online journal named after him – as 'the original blogger'. His commitment to an unorthodox, uncompromising radical politics is a part of his myth, thanks to his canonical attacks on the late 'apostasy' of the Lake School poets; but his politics has sometimes been treated as an embarrassing footnote to his legacy as Romantic critic.

The Hazlitt Gilmartin introduces here is a writer whose politics cannot come second to his criticism, because the two are inseparable. Pitting himself '[a]gainst the view that partisan commitment compromises literary style' (24), Gilmartin argues convincingly throughout the book 1) that Hazlitt's political essays themselves are by and large as stylistically complex as the rest of his writing, and 2) that his better-known essays on culture and the arts share crucial patterns of rhetoric *with* that political writing, revealing how his stylistic investments resonate with political ones. The result effectively combats the tenacious view that 'politics need be a reductive or distorting factor' (35) devaluing Hazlitt's literary style.

The book works, therefore, as a study of Hazlitt's 'distinctive political voice' (25) that attends closely to its internal contradictions in order to demonstrate that 'a fuller understanding of Hazlitt's politics can deepen our appreciation' of the buzz of other voices always present in his literary productions (35). Drawing on Jon Mee's recent work on 'conversable worlds', Gilmartin is wonderfully sharp on the polyvocality of what he calls Hazlitt's 'combatively miscellaneous energy' (25) (this becomes Gilmartin's favorite metaphor for the essays' abrupt switchbacks or second thoughts: 'alternating currents' [78, *et passim*]). From its opening, the book pursues this dialogic complexity through readings that irreducibly fuse politics and criticism with insights into the historical specificities of a periodical print media that allowed Hazlitt to assume multiple voices or viewpoints at once. Refreshingly, Gilmartin is *not* saying that politics 'holds the key' to giving Hazlitt an identity we can square with his love of paradox; rather, he reveals how, due to the complexity of his political views, we can see how 'any interpretive sense of convergence [in Hazlitt's oeuvre] should remain provisional' (35).

The Introduction frames the book through a literature review ranging between those critics whose methods and aims are more distant from Gilmartin's (M. H. Abrams, Uttara Natarajan), alongside and among those more proximate (Marilyn Butler, Seamus Deane). Five chapters and a conclusion address the style of Hazlitt's politics through meticulous, sometimes

overwhelming analyses of representative terms and concepts that appear repeatedly in the political essays – e.g., corruption, decay, and apocalypse; diagnoses of the contemporary "age" alongside evocations of the past (what Gilmartin calls 'progressive retrospection' [200]); the civic value of controversy and criticism; democratic organization and the unreliable 'body politic'; and above all, the threat of 'legitimate' government. Essential to Gilmartin's account is a fuller appreciation of the longer history of British political dissent reaching back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and of the contemporary radical wing of the press active around Hazlitt (including Cobbett, Woolard, Hone, Wade, and others). As Gilmartin repeatedly demonstrates, such contexts crucially inform Hazlitt's self-orientation as a radical Dissenter in an era of post-Napoleonic political reaction. This confirms the sense, in reading the 'chameleon essayist' (54), that one needs to recognize these political environments in order to spot the colorful ironies of the aesthetic or less overtly political writings.

On its own terms, this book is tremendously effective, and represents a notable intervention in the rapidly transforming study of Hazlitt's Romanticism. It may well be of interest not only to Hazlitt enthusiasts and conscientious Romanticists, but to a broader readership interested in the ways aesthetics and politics are entangled in literary representation. Gilmartin carries on Bromwich's legacy in reasserting how many hats Hazlitt's writing wears simultaneously, only now to emphasize that style does not stop where politics begins. Against those who have (unknowingly or not) disclaimed Hazlitt's political writings as biased, aggressive, or obsolescent by design, Gilmartin underscores their 'rhetorical complexity and rich emotional range' (21). It is perhaps worth adding, that Gilmartin's attention to Hazlitt's mixed registers has its parallels in the works of less historicist critics (e.g., Anahid Nersessian, Jacques Khalip, Emily Rohrbach), whose rhetorically-motivated readings of Hazlitt also frequently reveal the political undertow of his style.

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