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William Blake, Illustration to Dante's "Divine Comedy", 'Paradiso', Canto XXV – St Peter, St James, Dante and Beatrice with St John (1824-27). © Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduction used under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.

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Reviews

Christina Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. 199. £37. ISBN 9781421425764.

When do we read? How does reading transform our experience of time? Christina Lupton's book engages with the temporality of reading in the eighteenth century to offer a renewed history of the book which draws on a wide array of practices: the book one browses through, the book one buys for future reading, the book one shelves and forgets about, the book one gives, the book one hopes to write one day. Her media-oriented vision of book consumption foregrounds material strategies to 'extract, cut up, reuse, and read novels indexically' (78). The printed codex book thus becomes an invitation to partial, repeated, desultory, or deferred reading, resisting the measured time of clocks and the modern temporal economies of productivity and profitability. Located 'in time opened up by contingency as an awareness of what could have been otherwise, and in the time that has not yet come' (12), the codex becomes an agency in intellectual life by making time, by opening up new and creative patterns of temporality.

Although grounded in book history and material studies, Lupton's analysis is less committed to the social history of reading than to a literary and theoretical approach. She summons readers from various backgrounds, from the book dealer James Lackington to the politician William Wyndham Grenville. Literary figures traditionally known as writers, such as Amelia Opie, William Godwin, and Samuel Johnson, are here studied as readers. Yet, Lupton focuses less on their individual experiences than on a shared phenomenology of book use, on the temporal framework those readers live, work, and read in, or rather, on the temporal zones their reading practices generate. The books themselves are also present, through close-readings of the construction of time in conjunction with patterns of book consumption, in narratives such as Henry Fielding's *Amelia*, Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, Samuel Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, or Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*.

The four chapters explore time scales which resist the homogenous time of clocks and calendars. Chapter 1 looks into eighteenth-century readers' perception of their lack of free time to read. It explores the challenge of making time to read, especially for female readers, in a context where books compete with work and social obligations, but also with more immediate and enticing reading material, such as pamphlets, periodicals, or newspapers. The second chapter unfolds on the scale of the lifetime. It studies the practice of returning to books one has already read and explores the temporality of rereading in terms of shifting and renewed interpretations. Chapter 3 turns to the parallel times unfolding within the codex book, which invites practices of nonlinear reading as well as a reflection on 'the sense of contingency that this brings to scenes of its real and imagined reading' (121). Chapter 4 is deeply relevant to scholars and students of Romanticism because of its emphasis on the politics of book reading. For Lupton, the printed book plays a part in the emergence of the revolutionary imagination in Romantic Britain, as it opens vistas onto a more democratic future in which people have the time, leisure and education to read more. Chapter 4 thus contends that the Romantic poetics of prophecy also stems from William Godwin's vision of books as 'oriented in time toward a future in which they already participate' (143).

One of the many strengths of this study is its reflexive take on research methodology, as it questions new forms of scholarship based on data mining and on spatialized representations of intellectual transactions. According to Lupton, digital visualizations of book circulation relying on spatiality leave little room for the temporalities of book reading and its inherent discontinuities, from the unread book to the various paces of reading. More generally, Lupton's

study circulates between the eighteenth century and our own current reading practices as academics, throwing light on their origins in eighteenth-century practices of translation and conversation. This allows her to reflect on the future of the humanities and to advocate for reading as a practice undertaken for its own sake.

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Joanna Wharton, *Material Enlightenment: Women Writers and the Science of Mind, 1770-1830*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018. Pp. 276. £60. ISBN 9781783272952.

Material Enlightenment is part of a new Boydell & Brewer series, Studies in the Eighteenth Century, published in association with the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. It sets a very high bar for the series as a whole.

The volume's interest is in the influence of Lockean philosophy of mind (largely as transmitted through Hartleyan associationism) on the educational and philosophical practice of five leading eighteenth-century women educators: Anna Letitia Barbauld, Honora Edgeworth and her better-known stepdaughter Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More and Elizabeth Hamilton. These women had a spectrum of political allegiances, and each negotiated in different ways the Jacobin taint of materialist philosophy, perceived by conservative critics as a by-word for Gallic atheism. Against them, Wharton sets up Mary Hays as a wholeheartedly radical foil, whose enthusiasm for materialism could be expressed without self-censorship. Wharton sees Hays as typical in her interest in materialism, if not in her unflinching openness in discussing it. In this 'period of remarkably politicised human consciousness and its relation to the material world,' Wharton argues, 'women writers engaged closely and enthusiastically with the "science of man", taking significant risks in the act of publication alone' (7). By suggesting the possibilities for shaping the developing mind through education, however, associationism clearly offered a potential avenue for women to exert influence through their focus on the rising generation, either within their own families or beyond, through public contributions that would become the foundations of the nascent discipline of child psychology.

Wharton painstakingly creates a complex picture of women engaging both with materialist philosophy and with one another as they work to revolutionise children's education. Barbauld is a key figure here. Her series *Lessons for Children* and *Hymns in Prose* were designed to appeal to even very young children's sensory experience of their world and offered a powerful model for many contemporaries. Barbauld's books encode an idealised form of intimate pedagogy, one that Wharton's archival research into the Edgeworth papers show was put into practice by at least one important (and very large) family. After Honora Edgeworth's early death – and the contestation of her legacy by partial survivors – her major contribution to her family's influential work on education was largely overlooked. An example of meticulous archival detective work, Wharton's reconstruction of Honora Edgeworth's observation-led educational practice is a brilliant recovery of the 'material traces' of her efforts which demonstrates their importance to the later theories of her husband and step-daughter.

In her examination of the work of Hannah More and Elizabeth Hamilton, Wharton takes on two of the period's more conservative commentators on education. More and Hamilton attempted to appropriate Locke for conservative ends and dissociate his educational ideas from their republican connotations. More's evangelical efforts are well known, but Wharton sheds new light on them by explaining both their tacit Lockean theoretical basis, and More's practical

struggles to prosecute her educational agenda. More's evangelical ambitions for Somerset's working class have long been seen as problematic: Wharton shows how mistrust of More's aims and methods were there from the beginning.

The discussion of the work of Elizabeth Hamilton and Maria Edgeworth underscores the interconnectedness of the work of all five women (and some men, such as Richard Lovell Edgeworth) in their efforts towards the 'pre-history' of child psychology. It is here that the inescapably feminist potential of this field is made fully apparent. Hamilton, like More, was conservatively opposed to a Wollstonecraftian liberational proto-feminism and does not challenge her society's gender norms overtly. It is clear, however, that the gendered division of labour which made – and typically continues to make – the work of educating very young children women's work, gave women an outstanding advantage in developing and theorising what we would now think of as developmental psychology.

This highly informative book reflects its acknowledged origins as a PhD thesis in the best conceivable way: Wharton offers an innovative, persuasive and intellectually well-grounded argument that unfolds over five richly-evidenced chapters, bringing to bear wide-ranging reading from often neglected primary texts and a wealth of exciting material drawn from careful archival investigation.

Wharton stops short of claiming the status of originators of the discipline of psychology for her subjects, which – given what she presents of their work in various proto-psychological fields – seems overcautious. The evidence adduced by *Material Enlightenment* suggests, to the contrary, that the women who are the focus of Wharton's study ought to be credited with the first careful observations of infant learning that we would now think of as fundamental to developmental psychology, and some of the earliest experimentation and evidence-backed theorising in the field.

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Sibylle Erle and Morton D. Paley, eds., *The Reception of William Blake in Europe*. 2 vols. London: Bloomsbury, 2019. Pp. 768. £250. ISBN 9781472507457.

Despite a plan to fund a trip to Rome in 1784, the furthest William Blake ever got was the Sussex coast, from where he could look across a stormy sea to France. It is Byron of course, not Blake, who is the European Romantic, but the thirty or so contributors to this volume from across Europe uncover a complex reception history. Who would have expected that the earliest musical setting of a Blake poem outside Britain was a 1910 Finnish version of 'A Cradle Song'? Blake arrived in Europe via many different routes. As illustrator of Blair's *Grave* or Young's *Night Thoughts*, Blake's work may have been invisible to early readers and his engravings for the Dutch-Scottish J. G. Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition* were often replaced in French, German, Italian, Swedish and Dutch versions. Nevertheless, Blake's friendship with the Swiss Fuseli and his abiding interest in the work of J. C. Lavater ensure a special relationship with Swiss readers. In Italy Blake is particularly known as the illustrator of Dante. And he was known in Germany via Henry Crabb Robinson's 1811 article even though this early contact was with a 'mad Blake'. Reinvented as a Symbolist and an Irishman, Blake was introduced to a new European readership by Yeats. Just three years after the Yeats-Ellis edition, Zinaida Vengerova published a long critical article on Blake in Russia. The same edition introduced Blake to the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. Chapters by Susanne Schmid and Sibylle Erle highlight the

work of Helene Richter, whose 1906 study of Blake singlehandedly drew attention to his working process.

Exhibitions at Tate (described by Martin Myrone) and across Europe spread interest in Blake as an artist. In 1947 (the same year Northrop Frye published *Fearful Symmetry*) the British Council, committed to cultural reconstruction across Europe, organized a Blake exhibition which moved from Paris in March-April to Antwerp in May-June then to Zurich in July-August before returning to the Tate Gallery in August-September and on to Harvard in October-November. That summer in New York, Miró worked with other Surrealist artists to reconstruct Blake's method of relief-etching. David Bindman's chapter describes the important Hamburg Blake exhibition of 1975. The Paris Blake exhibition of 2009 and Moscow exhibition of 2011 are highlights of the chapters on French and Russian reception. Reviews of a 2012 exhibition of Blake in Madrid greeted the work of 'the English Goya'.

Translation of course is key to the reception of Blake's poetry. Andre Gide's French versions of 1922/3 would be a source for Pablo Neruda's 1934 translation of *Visions* and *The Mental Traveller*. But the simplest poems seem the most difficult to translate: catching the play of repetition and variation in 'The Tyger' challenges practically all attempts.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of these two volumes, however, is what they reveal about the distinct Blakes that have been shaped by politics. Nazi critics and art historians focused on physiognomy, 'national character' and national myth-making. In August 1939, a right-wing journalist wrote that Orc would rise against England: 'If he rises against the nine-fold damned darkness of Urizen, he will break into England' (I, 276). Blake similarly gained ground in Italy during the Fascist era (1922-43) via an interest in race and genealogy. In the Soviet Eastern Bloc there was a revival of interest in Blake after 1957 when Blake appeared on postage stamps in Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union. Blake's recognition at this time as a 'progressive' thinker may have owed something to the influence of A. L. Morton who lectured in Eastern Europe (mostly at universities in the GDR) and whose 1952 *The English Utopia* stressed Blake's revolutionary sympathies. Contributors writing from ex-communist countries tend to view the idea of Blake as a social critic with some scepticism, seeing in such versions the ideologically constrained readings of the period of state socialism. As Ludmilla Kostova and Ludomir Terziev explain in a fascinating chapter on the Bulgarian reception, 'foreign writers could be proven to fit the process […] Progressive writers were in fact "made" rather than discovered' (II, 607).

A quite different Blake appears as a herald of new artistic freedoms in France in May 1968 or in Portugal after the 1974 Carnation revolution when David Mourao-Ferreira spoke of the power of European poetry: 'let me tell you today – at last out loud – what this program has meant to me: just another means […] of transmitting – through poetry translations – the exalting and wonderful diversity of free voices that have expressed themselves in other languages'. These two wonderful volumes are the fruit of a pan-European collaboration which testifies to the power of transnational reception. The first Portuguese recording of a musical adaptation of Blake's poetry appeared in 1996 on a CD called 'The European Union sings its great poets' (I, 205), an identity which Blake may be about to lose.

Susan Matthews
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Jeff Strabone, *Poetry and British Nationalisms in the Bardic Eighteenth Century: Imagined Antiquities*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. 351. £69.99. ISBN 978331995254.

This is an impressive, subtle, and well-informed book that links the emergence of cultural nationalism in Scotland, Wales and England during the eighteenth century with the editing of archaic texts and the use of poetic metre. Nationalism remains central to these nations and the United Kingdom they currently form a part of, and Strabone joins many Romantic critics in exploring that topic. It is far rarer, though, to see such detailed attention paid to the role that poetic metre plays in these constructs, and the book is especially valuable for that reason.

Drawing on but pushing beyond Benedict Anderson, Strabone argues that the version of nationalism that emerged in the eighteenth century can be described as 'modern': 'non-elite actors gave the nation cultural definition rather than a political definition controlled by the powerful' (49). Poets, antiquarians and editors began to look to medieval literary texts for the cultural foundations of their nations. Where it might now seem natural to think of *Y Gododdin*, Gawin Douglas, or *Beowulf* as the origins of a continuous cultural story, that is possible only if those texts are, first, available and, second, framed critically as valuable. For Swift, Dryden and Pope, access to such texts was impossible, but also undesirable: the literary roots they aspired to were classical, not rugged and rude, and the poetic metre they adopted aimed to replicate the polish they found in that heritage. In the years following the 1707 Union, this began to change.

Allan Ramsey's editing of Middle Scots poets like William Dunbar and Robert Henryson established 'a new kind of national poetry, more low than high, which unapologetically elevated the demotic and advanced a uniquely Scottish sense of sociability' (98). This depended on two slightly dubious moves. First, Ramsey makes these cosmopolitan European poets appear far more rugged than they ever were. But he also reveals his Popean inheritance, intervening in the editing process to smooth out the metre, to make it more pleasingly classical. Ramsey's Scottishness, Strabone shows, is a complex thing, and these contradictions and overlapping motivations make his work the more telling.

The relationship between Wales and England dominates the book. After rather exhaustively detailing the history of politics and printing in Wales in the medieval and early modern periods, Strabone details the emergence of a new kind of interest in early Welsh poetry. The crucial mediator is Evan Evans, who collated, translated and published ancient Welsh texts. Evans in turn provided the means by which English writers defined an English national past that quietly absorbed the Welsh bardic tradition. Strabone brilliantly reads Thomas Gray's anxiously precise bending of classical metre to evoke the quite different metrical traditions from Wales and Old Norse, and in doing so construct a new story of English cultural continuity.

We encounter many other figures, such as Iolo Morganwg and Edward Jones, but the centrepiece is a reading of Coleridge's *Christabel*, a poem that from the first was recognised for the startling strangeness of its metre, a set of experiments that seemed both old and new at the same time. Strabone reconstructs the readings and misreadings of Edmund Spenser and Thomas Percy that produce the poem's dazzling if fictional attempt to mediate a rude authenticity.

The study as a whole raises questions that other scholars may be provoked to take forward. It is not quite clear which nation's cultural history Coleridge thinks he is invoking. This is a poem of the English north that makes use of Percy's border lore and claims the Welsh bards as the originators of English-language poetic traditions. Welsh and Scottish cultural nationalisms are defined tightly by the figures Strabone considers, but English nationalism is a vaguer thing, as it still is. As David Higgins's *Romantic Englishness* (2014) indicates, the interweaving of local, English, British and imperial senses of belonging can prove productively unsettled. As Strabone indicates, the Isle of Man, Cornwall, Shetland, Yorkshire, Norfolk and other locations all made remarkably similar claims in the period to a set of cultural traditions

that look close to being 'national'. Strabone excludes Ireland, Scottish Gaelic culture and Ossian, but I couldn't help wondering how the story would look if those interactions had been mapped. Fuller consideration of Walter Scott – antiquarian, metrical experimenter, editor and forger of ancient texts, and writer whose novels can be considered a set of essays on the fictions that create Scottish, Welsh and English cultural nationalism – would certainly deepen the story Strabone develops here.

It is a strength of Strabone's original and thorough research that it so often made me wonder about those figures who lie just beyond his limits. This insightful and original book will have a significant influence on Romantic studies, most especially in its intelligent balancing of metrical and historical forms of knowledge.

David Stewart
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Brandon C. Yen, *The Excursion and Wordsworth's Iconography*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018. Pp. 316. £95. ISBN 9781786941336.

Brandon C. Yen's study argues that through an exploration of the 'iconography of landscape images' in *The Excursion*, political and 'historical weight' can be found in 'Wordsworth's apparently marginal images' (36). Presenting a complex web of intratextual and intertextual examples, Yen analyzes how Wordsworth develops and expands iconographies and how their implementation in *The Excursion* reasserts the poem's place in Wordsworth's major poetic project. The critical framework underlying this study is a successful 'middle point' between the prevailing interpretive traditions which focus on either *The Excursion*'s 'philosophical abstraction' or its 'touristic realism' (36). Iconography imbues what appear as merely descriptive images with philosophical, political, and historical significance, which Yen argues is lacking from the existing scholarship on the poem.

The first chapter establishes what Yen sees as the prevailing thematic foundation of Wordsworth's poetic project: the themes of 'paradise lost' and 'paradise regained'. Through biblical and Miltonic images, Yen presents Wordsworth's association of the Fall of Man with the French Revolution. The Solitary's despondency is a result of a feeling of 'paradise lost' in the post-revolutionary world and, as Yen argues, the rhetorical exchanges between the characters and our reading of them is an ongoing attempt to regain paradise, or at least find belonging in a post-lapsarian/post-revolutionary world.

The following chapters present five 'active' images in *The Excursion* that are often considered 'marginal', 'descriptive', or 'collateral', but which are revealed to have more complex, implicit meanings that are often overlooked. Chapter 2 focuses on the first of these images: envisioning. Yen tracks the image of the 'prospect view' and its many valences. Yen exhibits how the variable interpretive capacity of the 'prospect view' derives iconographical meanings for Wordsworth despite being closely related to a 'politics of abstraction' (73).

The breadth of Yen's study is highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, 'Rooting' and 'Dwelling', respectively. These chapters feature the majority of Yen's readings of pictorial sources. The descriptiveness of his introductions to the images are accompanied by equally lucid interpretations of the images. Tracing the symbolic etymologies of trees like the 'oak', 'mountain ash', and the 'Liberty Tree' through James Gillray, Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and others, Yen shows the intricate socio-economic and political meanings implicit in these seemingly 'collateral' images. Trees are associated with a place and the roots they put down are associated with dwelling or 'an instinct for home building' (191). Dwelling can transform a space into a '*place* where one belongs' (211). The image of dwelling in Chapter 4

is explored through images of the 'ideal cottage', 'sanctuaries', and 'temples', which all factor in different ways to the sense of 'belonging' presented by the characters of *The Excursion*.

There is an unresolved tension between some of the images of dwelling Yen presents, but this tension leads into the final chapter which takes up images that are not grounded nor abstract like those of the preceding chapters. 'Flowing' and 'reflecting' are 'fluid images' which have 'iconographical indeterminacy' in *The Excursion* (256). This chapter contains some of the most adept of Yen's prosodic readings to demonstrate how the flow of the text contributes to the development of the image in the poem. The indeterminacy is a result of the characters' varied implementations of water images. Though reflections in water are fragile, 'brotherly resemblances' and other reflective images create a 'bond of brotherhood' between the natural and the human as well as the past and present. Yen argues this image holds a special place of 'redemptive potential for Wordsworth'. Yen recognises in his conclusion that despite the fact that *The Excursion* is 'fraught with tensions that resist final reconciliation', 'we should not be deterred from seeking to understand the complex ways in which they are composed' (285). It seems that the indeterminacy and complexity Yen foregrounds by examining water images in the poem should be enough reason to study *The Excursion* with continued vigor.

An outstanding and persistent feature of the book is Yen's seamless integration of the poetry into his prose. This creates a hybrid voice, at once presenting the poetry for reconsideration and providing an enlightening interpretation of it. Ultimately, through this hybrid voice, Yen emerges as an advocate for renewed and increased scholarly attention to *The Excursion*. Yen asserts that *The Excursion* 'captures the spirit of the age […] through its explorations of ways to regain a sense of home in the post-revolutionary world with all its conundrums, a world that we still recognise today. The post-revolutionary/post-lapsarian condition in *The Excursion* is the human condition itself' (51). He argues throughout that the Wordsworthian themes as they are portrayed in *The Excursion* exhibit a universality and timelessness which lead Yen to what seems to be a simple underlying motivation of the study. He plainly states, 'The poem deserves a wider readership' (51).

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Stephanie Elizabeth Churms, *Romanticism and Popular Magic: Poetry and Cultures of the Occult in the 1790s*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Pp. x + 303. £59.99. ISBN 9783030048099.

Romanticism and Popular Magic draws attention to the survival of occult practices in late-eighteenth-century Britain and uncovers their presence in the poetry of the Romantic *fin de siècle*. Instead of addressing the supernatural and the occult at large, the book focuses on 'popular magic', a cultural formation that Stephanie Elizabeth Churms describes as a set of 'practices deployed as part of a service-driven, material and economic trade' – not the more familiar philosophical or proto/pseudo-scientific varieties of the occult, but 'the everyday charms and spells that existed at a point of intersection between the marvellous and the mundane' (19). Churms's methodology revolves around a historicist contextualisation of (predominantly canonical) Romantic writing against the background of such demotic forms of occult activity.

The study opens with a more general account that situates popular magic in the varied landscape of late-eighteenth-century manifestations of occultism. Interested in 'the social reach and impact of occult practice' (8), Churms focuses especially on cunning men and women and their 'multifaceted roles as healers, detectives, and advisors' (21). Acknowledging the relative

scarcity of contemporary written or printed evidence of popular magic in the period, she manages to recover a corpus of contemporary texts (pamphlets, booklets, chapbooks, and illustrations) that deals with the subject. The recurring concern of the book is the relationship between the Romantic occult and its importance in the political debates that followed the French Revolution. Analysing the discursive currencies of the magic with writers such as Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, the third chapter provides a fascinating discussion of how the charge of rhetorical obscurantism – the idea that language formed 'a tool of ideological bewitchment' (82) – became a strategy used by conservatives and radicals alike to discredit their opponents.

The main part of *Romanticism and Popular Magic* is dedicated to author-centred case-studies that trace the reverberations of popular magic and its political appropriations in British poetry of the 1790s. After a short chapter on John Thelwall's Welsh exile and his adoption of an occult persona in the final years of the decade, Churms offers what for many readers of her book will be the most rewarding part of its discussion: a densely interwoven account of the socio-political uses of the occult in Wordsworth's contributions to *Lyrical Ballads* and in the literary responses these elicited from Coleridge and Robert Southey. Reframing the 1798 collection as 'a volume invested in curses, spells and the psychological effects of a belief in magic' (147), Chapter 5 argues that the occult was key to the social agenda Wordsworth pursued in *Lyrical Ballads*. Departing from the critical tradition that reads his engagement with the supernatural as part of his avowed programme of moderating contemporary readers' appetite for gothic excitement, Churms suggests that Wordsworth's poetry of 1798 is 'so bound up with surviving cultures of material occult practice' (134) that it cannot plausibly be seen as a distancing from them. Discussing texts that she subsumes under the rubric of 'spell poems' (143) ('Goody Blake and Harry Gill', 'The Thorn', 'The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman', 'The Mad Mother'), Churms focuses on marginalised female figures and the 'social empowerment' (140) they derive from assuming occult identities. Rather than dismissing popular manifestations of the occult as naive folk superstition, to the Wordsworth readers encounter here 'magic becomes charged with the ability to act as a political tool for the disenfranchised poor' (139).

The subsequent chapter emphasises Coleridge's rejection of Wordsworth's emancipatory use of popular magic. It reads a handful of his canonical poems from the latter half of the 1790s to argue that they reflect not only his renunciation of radicalism, but also his gradual acknowledgement of the dangerously occult nature of radical rhetoric. Highlighting Coleridge's depiction of 'popular magic and superstition as incarcerating, tyrannical forces' (178), Churms contrasts his scepticism with what she describes as Wordsworth's liberationist treatment of them. Structurally similar to this discussion, the book's final chapter turns to Southey's 'ambiguous response' (218) to *Lyrical Ballads* in his 1799 *Poems* and beyond – texts that here emerge as symptomatic of his 'conflicted political sympathies' (215) at the turn of the century. It is in these two chapters, in particular, that Churms's historicist methodology pays off, uncovering allusions to late-eighteenth-century British popular magic in attentive readings of texts such as 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' or Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*.

Although Churms's book deals with popular magic in its complex relation to larger topics such as social power, revolutionary politics, and public eloquence, its focus on a small group of poets and a narrow slice of their writerly output prevents it from becoming a more comprehensive literary and cultural history of the Romantic occult. Its unconventional subject matter and fresh close readings, however, make *Romanticism and Popular Magic* a stimulating invitation to reassess major writers and texts.

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Robin Schofield, *The Vocation of Sara Coleridge: Authorship and Religion.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. 260. £79. ISBN 9783319703701.

Robin Schofield begins his engaging book by focusing on Sara Coleridge's relative neglect in literary history. Coleridge's life has mainly been studied in relation to the Lake Poets, and a number of biographical monographs are dedicated to her interactions with her uncle, Robert Southey, family friend, William Wordsworth, and her often-absent father, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Schofield recognises this in his introduction, and instead aims in this study to be the first to place the central focus on Coleridge herself, and her literary works.

Although twenty-first-century scholars have begun to explore Coleridge's writings, Schofield's central premise emphasises 'Sara's religious writings of her final decade, and how she became a religious author of such distinct originality' (5). He goes on to show how Coleridge was the contemporary of influential theologians such as F. D. Maurice and John Henry Newman. Schofield then stakes the claim for her being remembered as their equal, due to Coleridge's ability to 'exploit and subvert the gender conventions of her times' (16). The development of her professional career, irrevocably linked with that of her religious ideas, runs through the core of the book, with each of the five further chapters exploring a period in Coleridge's life and subsequent development in her writings.

Schofield's second chapter covers how collaboration and dialogue were mainstays in Coleridge's work from the very earliest of her writings, the first of which was a Latin translation published anonymously in 1822 when Coleridge was nineteen. Whilst critics have generally accepted that 'translation is a subordinate literary activity', Schofield counters this with his claims that for Coleridge, translating was not just 'empowering', but 'of decisive importance for Sara's future literary activities' (34). The chapter concludes with Schofield's analysis of Coleridge's early works, including *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (1834) and *Phantasmion* (1837), noting how these works 'had origins in the family circle' (52), as they were written for her eldest son, Herbert. Schofield's notable interest in the way Coleridge's family and associates' views influence and are challenged by her resonate throughout his work.

The third chapter, '"On Rationalism": "The Authoritative Word" and "Liberty of Conscience"', describes Coleridge's little-studied essay 'On Rationalism' (1843), and explores its 'assured and forthright critique' (67) of the theology espoused by John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement. Finishing by detailing Coleridge's rejection of Tractarianism, and the similarities between Newman and Coleridge's authorship, Schofield moves on in the fourth chapter to focus on her role as editor of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Coleridge republished her father's work in 1847, complete with a new introduction written by herself. This chapter also looks in detail at the ways in which Wordsworth and Southey influenced Coleridge's works, and how she dealt with the claims of her father's plagiarisms. Chapter 5, entitled, 'The Theory and Practice of Polemical Writing: Religious Authorship, 1847-1849', explores Coleridge's religious authorship during these two years, as she writes about Kantian philosophy, post-baptismal sin, and regeneration in both her prose and poetical works. The final chapter uncovers Coleridge's 'experiments with a style of dialogue' (184) discovered in *Biographia Literaria*, which she utilised in her mostly unpublished series of texts, *Dialogues on Regeneration*, produced in 1850-51.

The Vocation of Sara Coleridge admirably addresses Coleridge's extensive body of work and, whilst focusing primarily on the last ten years of her life, provides a succinct and enlightening exploration of her entire career, beginning with her earliest translations and ending with 'For My Father on His Lines Called "Work Without Hope"'. The book's strength lies in its ability to perform close analysis on a number of Coleridge's little-known and understudied works, combining this with a study of early-nineteenth-century religion. Schofield's book is

certainly an original contribution to Coleridge studies, as the author explores not only the influence of religious thought, but that of her various famous friends and relations, in order to turn the spotlight on Coleridge's own achievements and career. It also provides a valuable reassessment of Coleridge's relationship with her father's literary legacy, emphasising Coleridge's role as a key editor of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria.* The author dedicates a large amount of discussion to *Biographia*, and Coleridge's edition of her father's work is worthy of a monograph study in itself.

Coleridge died aged just forty-nine in 1852, after suffering from breast cancer. She left her final work, an autobiography written for her daughter, Edith, unfinished. As a poet, prose writer, literary editor, and religious thinker, Coleridge's output during her short life was prolific. As Schofield concludes by contending, she certainly 'occupies a unique and significant position in early Victorian religious and literary history' (244). With this in mind, Schofield's book is a catalyst for future research, and demonstrates that further study of Coleridge's life, letters and predominantly her works would be welcome.

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Jessica Fay, *Wordsworth's Monastic Inheritance: Poetry, Place, and the Sense of Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 238. £60. ISBN 9780198816201.

In her accomplished and useful study, Jessica Fay conveys the depth and extent of Wordsworth's thinking about and qualified attraction to monasticism or, more specifically, 'the coenobium or "conventual establishment", which contrasts with eremitical forms of monasticism in which an eremite (recluse or hermit) lives alone' (6). Wordsworth, Fay contends, distrusted eremitism or reclusion (despite his dream of writing *The Recluse*), valuing instead coenobium as the most important community in the north of England during the Middle Ages, the ancient heart of the 'national ecclesiastical unity' recounted by the Venerable Bede (AD 672-735) and that Wordsworth saw threatened, in the 1820s, by Roman Catholic Emancipation. Fay is fully aware of the tensions in Wordsworth's position; his admiration for a defunct Catholic institution, as well as Bede's 'Northumbrian Renaissance' (174, 197), are at odds with his opposition to Catholic Relief, or the building of new monasteries. Which is why, for Wordsworth, English monasteries are now best when suitably moldered and thus naturalized, indices of historical continuity amidst mutability, better to remember than relive.

Fay's Introduction announces her chronological focus on Wordsworth's life of writing from 1806-7, during the poet's residence at Sir George Beaumont's Coleorton estate, to the publication of *Ecclesiastical Sketches* in 1822, 'the culmination of a sustained period of interest in the monastic history of his local region' (3). (By Fay's count in Appendix I [201-04], Wordsworth visited 40 monastic sites over the course of his life, 18 of them between 1806 and 1822.) At Coleorton Wordsworth consorted with Quakers who, surprisingly to me, appear in Thomas Clarkson's and others' writings as quasi-monastic in their quietism, shared silence, and rural retirement amidst sacral space (75-77). By 1822, Wordsworth's was completely devoted to the Church of England, although it was for him a church somehow continuous with a medieval and Catholic past, a continuity the Tractarians and Oxford Movement would later explore. Fay's Wordsworth appears an orthodox, Trinitarian Christian, almost without interruption, from cradle to grave; she sidelines his short if well-known divagation into potentially unorthodox speculation, 1798-1805 – metaphysical speculation that contributes significantly to what we still sometimes identify as Romanticism.

Wordsworth's Monastic Inheritance contains passages of astute, historically-informed close reading, all of it attentive to Christianity but not all of it directly related to monasticism. Thus, for example, a detailed comparison of Spenser's Una and her lion with, from *The White Doe of Rylstone*, Emily and her doe concludes that Emily, unlike Una, properly construes her animal's spiritual significance; her interpretive ability 'is precisely the skill Wordsworth expects his reader to develop' (41). Imagination, meanwhile – that power endlessly discussed in Wordsworth criticism in relation to the Crossing of the Alps episode in *The Prelude* Book 6 – appears here, in a verse epigraph to *The White Doe*, as instrumental to faith in a future, beatified state (50-51). Fay's discussion of *The Excursion* hews more closely to monasticism proper, as the Solitary is presented as too eremitical, while the Solitary and Pastor understand, each in his own way, the necessity of coenobium or, more generally, mutual intercourse (154-58). Yet the Solitary nonetheless has a crucial insight into 'the monastic Brotherhood', in Wordsworth's phrase, and its superiority to the false pastoral ideal that initially beguiles the Poet (158).

Fay's Epilogue summarizes the ways in which Wordsworth shared an interest with his contemporaries in three matters – antiquarianism, the romance revival, and the gothic revival – and yet differed from them, too. He made 'topographical and antiquarian studies' subservient to his own emotional and poetic motives. He 'adopted the framework of romance [chiefly in *The White Doe*] but overturned narrative conventions, aiming to subdue rather than excite the reader'. Finally, 'his knowledge of ecclesiastical gothic architecture was extensive but he valued monastic remains because they had been subsumed and consecrated by nature' (198). One relevant context Fay does not address, but might in future work, is the extensive eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century poetry of retirement and seclusion in which Wordsworth seems to participate. Michael Edson has given us a 9-page 'Checklist of Printed British Retirement Poetry, 1690-1830' ("'A Closet or a Secret Field": Horace, Protestant Devotion and British Retirement Poetry', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35.1 (2012), 17-40). This literary tradition is, arguably, more Protestant than Horatian, but I would like to know, after reading Fay's thought-provoking book, to what degree, if any, it too shares a monastic inheritance.

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Heather Tilley, *Blindness and Writing: From Wordsworth to Gissing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 219. £75. ISBN 9781107194212.

Blindness and Writing: From Wordsworth to Gissing opens with a discussion of John Thomas Smith's etching of a blind man, published in 1817. The cross-hatching of the image makes the placard the man wears illegible to the viewer, breaking down the distinction between blind subject and sighted viewer. It is in this liminal space, where the separation between blindness and sight breaks down, that Tilley situates her book, building on recent studies on the material conditions of blindness to examine the way in which blindness assumed new meanings through its relationship to literacy in the nineteenth century.

The book is divided into two parts, the first of which examines the central role played by the figure of the blind person in Enlightenment philosophy; offers a reappraisal of William Wordsworth as a 'blind' poet (he contracted chronic trachoma, in 1805, leaving him sensitive to light), arguing for the blind Beggar of Book VII of *The Prelude* (1850) as a reflection of the speaker's own poetic self; investigates the technological development of embossed writing systems, including braille; and recovers a 'category of life stories' (12) produced by blind

people, including Edmund White, a railway guard who wrote poetry to supplement his income after witnessing a traumatic accident (108).

Chapter 5, which begins the second part of the book, investigates the relationship between writers' experience of blindness and renderings of blindness in the *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman*. The chapter reassesses two of the most famous blind characters in Victorian literature, Edward Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Romney Leigh in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), revealing how Brontë and Barrett Browning's personal understanding of cataract and trachoma feed into their representations of blindness, signalling a pervasive concern, in Brontë's case, with the way in which books have a material existence, contingent upon an embodied reader and writer (138).

Chapter 6 traces the shift from metaphoric to material registers of blindness in Charles Dickens's work, exploring the author's encounter with the blind, deaf and mute Laura Bridgman as recounted in *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842); the description of David Copperfield as blind in the 1849-50 novel of the same name; and Esther Summerson's near-blinding in *Bleak House* (1851-2). Reading Esther as a figuration of Dickens's authorial self, Tilley maintains that her temporary blindness followed by sight restoration is a revealing portrait of the author as blind (173), arguing that such an act of authorial blindness makes explicit Dickens's anxiety that writing as a material form is an arbitrary system whose meaning is circumscribed by the limits of the bodies that produce and consume it (173).

Chapter 7 examines gendered constructions of blindness in Frances Browne's fictional autobiography, *My Share of the World* (1861) and Wilkie Collins's *Poor Miss Finch* (1872). Browne lost her sight as a child, and the protagonist's loss of vision metaphorically associates blindness with the end of writing. Collins's *Poor Miss Finch*, by contrast, returns its heroine to blindness, rewriting the paradigm connecting writing and blindness in a way unavailable to a blind female author like Browne (183).

The final, rather short, chapter examines George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), which codes blindness as tragedy. An epilogue to the chapter uses Gissing's novel to reassert the central claims of the book, suggesting that Gissing closes down the possibilities for blindness as a condition for knowing and writing the world (217).

Given Tilley's claim that *Blindness and Writing* seeks to address the exclusion of blind people's writing and experience from literate culture it seems odd that the blind writers on which she focuses are excluded from the book's title, reinforcing both canonical and popular writing and the primacy of visual-based culture, a bias reflected in the structure of the book itself: the second section is devoted entirely to canonical and popular writing. Only one chapter in the first half of the book focuses on the autobiographical writings of blind authors such as Edmund White, whilst Wordsworth warrants a chapter of his own, albeit oddly placed in the first section. *Blindness and Writing* deliberately undermines, in this way, the findings of its Epilogue, itself acting as a negation of the phenomenology of blind literary culture it has sought to foreground. Moreover, Tilley's phenomenological readings often remain metaphorical, confirming her acknowledgement early in the book that there can be no clear distinction between the two. Still, *Blindness and Writing* is an energised and persuasive call for nineteenth-century disability to be grounded in its material and embodied context, as well as a timely challenge to current cultural assumptions about bodies and ability.

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Spotlight: Romantic Ideas

Paul Cheshire, *William Gilbert and Esoteric Romanticism: A Contextual Study and Annotated Edition of The Hurricane*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018. Pp. 254. £85. ISBN 9781786941206.

William Gilbert was part of the literary scene in Bristol in the mid-1790s, where he published *The Hurricane: a Theosophical and Western Eclogue*, and impressed the more famous Romantics living there. Paul Cheshire seeks 'to provide a guide and introduction to that strange unfiltered work: to show how it made a contribution to Romantic culture and that, behind Gilbert's fragmentary exposition, there lies a coherent metaphysical scheme' (2).

The first section covers Gilbert's early life and literary connections, in London, writing on prophecy and astrology for *The Conjuror's Magazine*, and then in Bristol, where he interacted with the first-generation Romantics. Coleridge positioned himself between Gilbert's esotericism and John Thelwall's empiricism, believing each to be a valid, but partial, kind of knowledge. Wordsworth acknowledged borrowings from Gilbert's poem. When the Solitary in *The Excursion* imagines an American man, uncorrupted by civilization, though, Cheshire argues that Wordsworth transforms the original passage from *The Hurricane* 'into a portrayal of delusion' (97). Wordsworth did not trust Gilbert's apprehension of the spirit in nature. The Southey chapter is less successful because Cheshire notes parallels between Southey's *Joan of Arc* and *The Hurricane*, but does not argue for any direct influence either way. Consequently, when Cheshire later claims that Joan's natural theology 'can be seen as an expression of esoteric romanticism', the relevance of Gilbert seems minimal.

At the centre of the book is the new edition of *The Hurricane*. It is a fascinating poem and merits greater attention from scholars. It bears comparison with the work of William Blake, and the early, apocalyptic poems of Coleridge. Cheshire's annotations offer insightful commentary. Most of the poem consists of Gilbert's own extensive, and often abstruse, notes. Cheshire carefully explains Gilbert's explanation.

The final third of the book further elucidates *The Hurricane*'s obscurities. The poem's scheme is 'based on the belief that the arrangement of the physical world is analogous to, and reveals the nature of, higher metaphysical principles that are the true causes of events on the physical plane' (166). In the 'Hermetic Geography' of *The Hurricane*, the continents correspond with the four elements and different modes of knowledge. When Europe colonizes the Americas, there is an infusion of American spirits into European bodies: divine wisdom triumphs over the shallow materialism of European enlightenment ideas. This inspires the French Revolution (symbolized by the hurricane), and ultimately, Europe's spiritual renewal.

Cheshire also clarifies *The Hurricane*'s references to the Eleusinian Mysteries, the secretive rites centred around the worship of the goddesses Ceres and Proserpina, as part of a Neoplatonic allegory for the journey of the soul through purification to return to the divine realm. Cheshire suggests that the peaceful island at the end of the poem is the realm of purified souls, but also wishes to avoid 'a precise interpretation'. Instead 'the point lies in being receptive to where *The Hurricane* takes you, and the ideas you bring to bear, as you are drawn into the mysteries of this strange poem' (201).

Cheshire considers Gilbert as a Romantic poet. Although Gilbert's extant poetic corpus is small (just three poems), Cheshire raises the possibility that his verse developed due to the influence of the Bristol circle, and that they led him to see nature as the agent of spiritual renewal. The antepenultimate note to *The Hurricane* provides Gilbert's own vision of nature's 'one life', 'while seeing beyond the pantheistic *appearance* of this experience' (182). Furthermore, Gilbert's poem 'A Solitary Effusion in a Summer's Evening' (first published with

The Hurricane and reproduced here), depicts 'Nature', Cheshire argues, as 'a living presence' (221). Although the focus of this study is *The Hurricane* itself, more detailed attention could have been given to this shorter poem, which is Gilbert's version of the greater Romantic lyric.

The book concludes by considering the relationship between esotericism and Romanticism. Cheshire notes that two key features of esotericism, as identified by Antoine Faivre, overlap with Romanticism: '*Living nature*' and '*Imagination and mediation*'. The unanswered question is whether the Romantics treated nature as an intermediary, whether they understood participation in they divine 'as coming *from* or *through* nature' (222).

William Gilbert and Esoteric Romanticism provides an excellent basis for further scholarly work, both on Gilbert, and on the esoteric in Romantic culture more generally. An oddity of the study is its arrangement. The later chapters, containing the exegesis of the poem, would actually work better being placed before the text of the poem, as an extended introduction to it. Conversely, the early chapters on Gilbert's literary relationship with the Romantics would have greater impact if placed after the poem, where they would feed more directly into the conclusions about 'Esoteric Romanticism'. However, this minor inconvenience of having to read the book slightly out of order should not detract from the illuminating scholarship throughout.

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Dahlia Porter, *Science, Form, and the Problem of Induction in British Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 293. £75. ISBN 9781108418942.

Porter's expansive study traces the history of mixed and composite forms from the seventeenth-century induction method into the Romantic self-conscious mixing of 'the oil of verse with the water of prose' (7). The 'problem' of induction central to the work revolves around the requirement to quote and cite borrowed material, whose 'seams and stitchery' were visible on the page, which in turn hindered the attempt to assimilate such material into a coherent 'expression of synthetic principles' (60).

Chapter 1 provides a history of the inductive method from its seventeenth-century Baconian origins, leading Porter to pinpoint how the method moved from a means of collecting and expounding knowledge to functioning as a model for textual production in the prose-verse composites of early Romanticism. The book's illuminating exploration of induction's seams and stitchery is then split across two parts which gives equal weighting to considering these composites in relation to 'making texts' and 'making minds'. The first part considers induction in the 'baggy blank verse' (7) of long and heavily annotated poetry, whilst the second investigates embedded verse and quotation in prose and pedagogical texts.

Chapter 2 is an insightful look into Erasmus Darwin's poems within the history of the 'philosophical poem', placing Darwin's work as a transitional moment in mobilising the distinctions between verse and prose to make knowledge. Porter looks closely at Darwin's push and pull between the linguistic realms of poetry and science, drawing attention to how the compositional form and page layout of these works broadcast the 'impossibility of sustaining this opposition' (76) between the two. Chapter 3 continues this focus on impossibilities, tracing the 'impossibility of grasping the secret relations between things' (142) and refusal to coalesce them into a coherent narrative in the structure of Robert Southey's long poems. Porter notes that Southey embraces the subversive and satirical potential of footnotes in his compositional process of accumulation without coalescing to reveal tensions between competing versions of

history. The first 'landing place' of the book explores these impossibilities and tensions across a broader chronological range of poetic works, where the annotated poems of Smith, Shelley, Byron and Scott (among others) are read briefly but so richly that it makes you long for more sustained attention to them.

The second part of the book begins with its exploration of 'making minds' by considering the pedagogical function of the poetic extract in Chapter 4, examining the inductive method in the educational texts by the Edgeworths, Charlotte Smith, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. Porter examines the form and format of Barbauld's pedagogical works to trace how she leads young readers through the inductive method to engender 'formal coherence' and develop a 'specific way of apprehending the world' (179-80). Porter then moves to examine how prose and verse were methodised by Edgeworth and Smith, tracing their uses of verse extracts as a means of inculcating ways of seeing and interpreting the world for young readers. Chapter 5 turns to Coleridge as 'an inveterate collector of textual scraps' (221). It examines Coleridge's compiling, arranging, and synthesising of quotation in his attempts at reinvigorating the inductive method in opposition to his criticisms of texts composed of extracts stitched together. This chapter returns us to the 'problem' of induction: how can the 'endlessly proliferation databank of particulars' (245) of induction result in a coherent work on the laws of nature? Coleridge's answer lies in the extracts themselves: by transforming 'quotations into sententiae' and aphorisms (224), Porter argues, he connects remote and distant passages through the power of accumulated meaning. Porter unravels how Coleridge enacts this through a reading of *The Friend*, with the discussion of the excerpt from *Paradise Lost* (249) being an especially clear example of how Porter's arguments are made all the stronger by the study's rich close readings.

In the book's final landing place, Porter centres on the figure of Victor Frankenstein's creature to stitch together different strands of the study: 'his mind is a miscellany, his philosophical origin is an irresolvable 'problem,' his body the bastardization of empiricism' (259). The creature becomes the embodiment of the text-composite, while Victor Frankenstein is aligned with Wordsworth and Coleridge to reveal Shelley's critique of their 'retreat from the composite order' after the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. If the composite still provoked anxiety at the endpoint of this study, Porter argues, it also held out the 'promise of revolution, resistance, revolt' (266), and perhaps it still does. Porter draws parallels between the information saturation point of 1800 and our current continuous production of data, and this stays on the mind throughout. Porter's rich examination of the broader cultural connotations of quotation and extracts across these texts causes a renewed look at all of these works and highlights the significance and timely nature of its argument in our age of 'cut and paste' (266).

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Maximiliaan van Woudenberg, *Coleridge and Cosmopolitan Intellectualism 1794–1804: The Legacy of Göttingen University*. London: Routledge, 2018. Pp. 340. £110. ISBN 9781472472380.

In 1799, with money from the annuity offered to him by the Wedgwood brothers, Samuel Taylor Coleridge left his wife and children in Somerset to embark on a ten-month trip to Göttingen in central Germany, to conduct research at its famous university. Maximiliaan van Woudenberg's study opens by asking itself 'what did Coleridge do in Göttingen?' (1). Moving past traditional responses to Coleridge's Göttingen period – that it wrecked his powers as a poet, or that Coleridge simply learnt to borrow (or steal) from German literature – van Woudenberg shows

that the trip was thoughtfully planned, that Coleridge experienced innovative research methods and moved through illustrious circles, and that he worked within a singularly progressive research library. He argues for Coleridge as a cross-cultural visionary, who was part of a nascent dialogue between English and continental intellectual cultures.

Chapter 1 pits Göttingen against 'Oxbridge', showing that the former was making strides as a reform university whilst the English system was struggling to throw off scholasticism. Chapter 2 argues that Coleridge's decision to study at Göttingen (and not the more radical university at Jena) represents a desire to understand the particular 'historical-critical' method that dominated there. With Coleridge arrived in Germany, Chapter 3 focuses on what van Woudenberg calls the 'cosmopolitan intellectualism' of Göttingen – the networks of professors and intellectuals Coleridge moved within, and the structures of knowledge that came with them. Chapter 4 focuses on the reading habits of Coleridge (that famous 'library cormorant') in the university's research library, and carefully reconstructs the organizational principles that made it one of the best known libraries in Europe; primarily, this concerns the systematic organization of its *Realkatalog*, allowing scholars to easily make thematic connections between works. And Chapter 5 focuses on the substance of those research activities: Coleridge's planned *Life of Lessing*, which he worked on assiduously, but which was destined to remain unfinished.

Chapter 6 traces the immediate aftermath of Coleridge's German excursion. It is well known that the two projects that directly followed were, at the time, failures – an ambitious verse translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* was critically derided, and the *Life of Lessing* never materialized. But what van Woudenberg shows is why they failed. Coleridge had been fortunate to travel when he did – after the completion of Göttingen's *Realkatalog*, but before the French occupation of Germany shut the doors to wandering Englishmen. However, he was entirely unlucky with the timing of his Germanic works: any public appetite for continental literature had ebbed amidst a conservative climate, and German plays and poems in particular were dismissed as 'Jacobinic'. Thus *Wallenstein* was panned, and Coleridge was forced to shelve the work on Lessing. This amounts, amongst other things, to a defence of *Wallenstein*, and, given that Coleridge spoke no German two years prior to composing it, van Woudenberg rightly describes it as 'a remarkable intellectual achievement' (206).

After this, Coleridge' tucks his Göttingen experiences out of sight, but they quietly persist in his development of a 'coterie of Anglo-German enthusiasts' (215), including Crabb Robinson and, later, De Quincey. Less tangibly, the research methods he developed in Germany live on, according to van Woudenberg, in works such as the *Biographia Literaria*, and are traceable through Coleridge's notebooks. Van Woudenberg's conclusion focuses on Coleridge's 1817 prospectus to the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, and its promise of a 'scientific method' of organization, to the betterment of 'the whole system of Human Knowledge'. Here, the systematic arrangement of the *Realkatalog* meets with the metropolitanism of Göttingen, and we glimpse the legacy of 'Coleridge's second university career' (231). And yet, as is something of a motif in the story of Coleridge's German education, the *Encyclopaedia* would never be written.

Coleridge and Cosmopolitan Intellectualism should be taken on its own terms, as a painstakingly historicized reconstruction of Coleridge's time in Göttingen. It is not a study of his poetry, nor is it especially interested in accounting for the possible influences of Göttingen on the later works. What it offers instead is a study of knowledge transmission: of access to ideas, institutional or social knowledge transfers, networks of information, cross-cultural exchanges. It will no doubt act as a resource for future readings of Coleridge's work, and such readings will be aided by seven appendices that supply a wealth of information, including Coleridge's library borrowings, and a chronology of his and Wordsworth's time on the continent. The book responds well to that opening question ('what did Coleridge do in Göttingen?'), answering in a manner consonant with the 'historical-critical' methodology it

describes. This is a valuable book to anyone interested in Coleridge's transition from lyrical balladeer to an analytic thinker in the German tradition, and it forcefully revises the notion that, because the *Life of Lessing* failed, so too was the whole trip a failure.

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Evan Gottlieb, *Romantic Realities: Speculative Realism and British Romanticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016. Pp. 238. £19.99 (pb). ISBN 9780748691418.

Over the past decade, speculative realism [SR] has been of increasing interest to scholars in a range of disciplines. It would probably be misleading to describe it as a 'movement'; rather, it is a congeries of often contradictory ideas and arguments brought together by a concern with the significance of things beyond their significance for human beings. That is to say, speculative realists critique post-Kantian correlationism: 'the belief […] that we can only ever talk or think about reality in relation to our human subjectivity' (2). Evan Gottlieb's excellent new book relies on the broadest possible definition of SR, including thinkers generally associated with the field (e.g. Graham Harman, Raymond Brassier, and Quentin Meillassoux), those who have influenced it (e.g. Bruno Latour and Alain Badiou), and those 'new materialists' who share its anti-anthropocentrism even if they differ in other respects (e.g. Jane Bennett and Manuel DeLanda). Although this is not an ecocritical study, Gottlieb rightly points out that the success of SR is related to a sense that linguistic critique struggles in the face of the environmental problems that beset us (4). With this in mind, it is notable that Romanticism – so prominent in the first wave of ecocriticism – has been considerably less so in more recent work in the environmental humanities and material ecocriticism. SR and the new materialism have the potential to give Romantic ecocriticism a much-needed impetus.

A major strength of *Romantic Realities* is its lucid and even-handed explication of complex philosophical ideas. Its concise summaries manage to condense and simplify without misleading: as Gottlieb was invariably accurate about the thinkers with whom I am familiar, I was willing to trust him on those whose ideas I know less well. The book's aim is 'to locate and explore a series of conceptual continuities and mutual illuminations between SR and British Romantic poetry' (2). The broadest of these continuities is probably the attempt to move beyond the limitations of the individual mind and to reach some kind of absolute. That is not to say, of course, that contemporary philosophy and British Romanticism fit together in any straightforward way; Gottlieb is alive to the dangers of presentism and to those moments when his texts do not chime in with the ideas of SR. He focuses on five of the canonical male Romantic poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. The absence of any female poets may well raise eyebrows, although Gottlieb gives a rationale for this focus (10); among other things, this book is very much conceived as a starting point for further research. Each chapter is focused around a single poet and the ideas of two thinkers. Wordsworth is paired with Harman and Timothy Morton; Coleridge with DeLanda and Iain Hamilton Grant; Byron with Latour and Badiou; Shelley with Brassier and Meillassoux; and Keats with Bennett and Levi Bryant. This approach is productive in all cases and works particularly well for Percy Bysshe Shelley because the concerns of his poetry (and perhaps even of his metaphysics) are clearly akin to those of Meillassoux and Brassier, as has also been recognised in recent work by me, Greg Ellermann, and Chris Washington.

Occasionally, Gottlieb seems a little disappointed that some of the poetry he addresses is not more closely aligned with SR. One gets the impression that he sees Wordsworth's

tendency to 'fall back' into correlationism and anthropocentrism (46) as a kind of failure, although generally his analysis of the poet in relation to the object-oriented philosophy of Harman and Morton takes a more interesting approach. I also felt at one or two points that SR was being 'applied' in a slightly clunky way to the texts. For example, it is not clear what Latour's recent work brings to the study of different 'modes of existence' in *Don Juan* that could not be brought by longer-standing methodologies focusing on discourse or ideology. However, given the novelty of Gottlieb's approach, a certain schematism is probably inevitable. *Romantic Realities* will play a major role in allowing SR to feature more organically in Romantic studies, alongside more familiar weapons in the critical armoury. Above all, it strikes me as a generous book: scrupulously fair to its sources and opening up the field to researchers (like me) who may not have Gottlieb's impressive grasp of the philosophical context. Whether or not the reader agrees with every interpretation or connection is not important. S/he will certainly have learnt a great deal about SR and canonical male Romantic poetry, and one could hardly ask for more from a single volume.

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Brian Rejack and Michael Theune, eds., *Keats's Negative Capability: New Origins and Afterlives*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019. Pp 291. £90. ISBN 978178941817.

Keats's Negative Capability: *New Origins and Afterlives* opens with a note in which Nicholas Roe reminds the reader of 'Keats's universe of uncertainties, mysteries and doubts" and warns them "to prepare to make up their minds about nothing' (xxi). 'Negative capability' originates in Keats's letter to his brothers Tom and George in 1817. This collection of essays reassesses the notion of 'Negative Capability' starting with its dubious publication and its many readings. Brian Rejack invites contributors to explore the possible meanings of the concept in Keats's work, its reception by his contemporaries, as well as by its succeeding generations of poets, writers, and artists.

The editors supply a compelling Introduction, which discusses in detail Walter Jackson Bate's influential *Negative Capability: The Intuitive Approach in Keats* (1939) and Li Ou's *Keats and Negative Capability* (2009) and concludes by reflecting on how critics have aligned Keats's concept with imaginative and sympathetic identification. The essays collected here as a whole, however, outline both new disciplinary implications and (afterlives) of Keats's concept through a reconfiguration of our understanding of Keats's poetry and letters, his authorial ambitions, his aesthetic philosophy, and his legacy.

Keats's letter on the subject of negative capability addressed to his brothers, Tom and George, is lost, nor is there any known manuscript of it, yet its text was published in 1845 in a transcription by John Jeffrey of Kentucky, the second husband of the widow of Keats's brother, George. Following Rejack's opening gambit (about Jeffrey's editorial misprisions), Brian Bates suggests another move that reveals Keats's attachment to the genre of Pantomime. He associates negative capability's aestheticism, what Bates calls 'a tragic poetic vision' (16), to the eventful reception of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni', first performed in 1817. The Harlequin on stage watched by Keats with his 'cockney' friends becomes an epitome of the 'ephebe' figure who observes pantomimes as a *mise en scene* for Keats's own speculations about poetic identity. For Bates, Keats's scene of transformation and of writing itself proceeds from 'a pantomimical capability' in 'full display' (30). With different critical emphases, Theune makes the point that negative capability is 'over-riding /-writing of natural capacity' (56). He persuasively argues that Keats's

negative capability is similar to William Hazlitt's 'Natural Capacity', accounting for the poet's 'linguistically mercurial moods' (53-56).

Following Keats's female literary critics (Anne Mellor, Marjorie Levinson and Susan Wolfson), Carmen Faye Mathes, alternatively, proposes a feminist and gendered reading of negative capability. In her essay, 'Feminising Keats', Wolfson claims 'the effeminacy of Keats's character, receives fresh credit for Victorians reading his love letters' (99). Argha Banerjee's *Female Voices in Keats's Poetry* also tracks the rhetoric of weakness of masculinity and aligns it with Keats's struggles with social and psychological attitudes about gender in his own age (34).

A further female reading in this collection of essays is by Cassandra Falke. The author places Keats's 'negative certainty' in a phenomenological context, in which knowledge is gained from the self's capacities for perception and recognition. The second part of the collection sets out to exemplify negatively capable forms and Falke's contribution is a perfect illustration of these aims. Similarly, Kurtis Hessel believes that Keats's withdrawal from 'systematic thought' in his other celebrated letter (on 'the departments of knowledge') is another form of negative capability enlarging the meaning of negative capability to include poetic elements such as metaphors, symbols and allegories which dwell linguistically and epistemologically on 'the intermedium between thought systems' (99). Emily Rohrbach proposes an anthropological reading of 'To Autumn', claiming that the ode engages in a social *passage of rite* whereby 'subject making … is a process of becoming that requires a world in which to feel and suffer'. She concludes that 'the Keatsean subject is reducible to the body or to social identity … sealed off from social experience' (125).

One of the closing essays, by David Sigler, is radically transformative in its discussion of negative capability and psychoanalysis. Sigler argues that negative capability served 'as a proto-psychoanalytic concept' for Romanticism, and from the start it anticipated 'clinical' aspects of psychoanalysis. He considers its reception in thinkers, such as Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Marion Milner, to show how, in their different fashions, their work constitutes 'Negative Psychoanalytical Capability' (231). For instance, in Milner's writing, 'Negative Capability' serves to 'help us locate a middle ground between ignorance' and 'fancied certainty' (229). In his reading of Keats and Milner, Sigler admonishes scholars of various fields to 'take seriously the challenge that literary thought might present to the psychoanalytic tradition' (231).

The collection will be essential to students and scholars of Keats as Rejack's analysis of John Jeffrey's role in transcribing 'Negative Capability' refreshes our understating of the concept. Contributors to this collection have risen to Rejack's editorial challenge and, produced prominent and diverse readings, which extend in variety across a range of critical approaches, including feminism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. Keats's 'Negative Capability' remains a vital concept, which continues to provoke readers and writers alike to reflect on its myriad values and virtues in the present and will continue to do so in the future.

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Charles Morris Lansley, *Charles Darwin's Debt to the Romantics: How Alexander von Humboldt, Goethe and Wordsworth Helped Shape Darwin's View of Nature.* Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018. Pp. 274. £60. ISBN: 9781787071384.

This book-length study explores the ties of Charles Darwin's works and his thought with Romanticism and Romantic influence. Although the figure of Darwin is habitually associated

with the Victorian period, Charles Morris Lansley's book addresses how Darwin's perspectives are rooted in Romantic ideas such as his particular use of different metaphors, his aesthetic approach to imagination, and his objective distance and mechanical point of view on Nature.

Drawing on key works by Darwin (*The Voyage of the Beagle*, *On the Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and the *Notebooks*), Lansley identifies the indebtedness of the major ideas of Darwin to British and European Romantic authors, including William Wordsworth, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Alexander von Humboldt. Across a diverse range of chapters, Lansley's study examines the organic constitution of Nature, Darwin's metaphors linked to Romanticism, the influence of reflection and imagination in Darwin's study and contemplation of Nature, his aesthetic thought and relation with the sublime, as well as Darwin's moral values and their basis.

In his first chapter, Lansley explores Humboldt's perspective on natural unity, which accords with Romantic conceptions of organism, and examines how similar ideas remain prevalent in Darwin's concept of a 'web of affinities' (p. 30). More importantly, this chapter analyses how Humboldt's study of Nature influenced Darwin's own methods. The presence of Wordsworth is also much in evidence in this chapter, especially in relation to Darwin's organic conception of Nature as one reality that unifies the external experience and the inner nature of Man, as well as the conception of Nature as the primal origin for Mankind.

Chapter 2 focuses on Humboldt and his influence on Darwin in terms of the relations between natural aesthetic and law central to Darwinian observations about Nature and its ambiguous forces that produce the processes of natural selection and evolution. These observations, as is taken up in a later chapter, are the source from which can be established a common origin for Man and the natural ground to defend equality between men against slavery. Another key aspect of this chapter is how Darwin's concept of the original unity of Nature provides a base from which to defend equality between men and position selves against slavery.

The aesthetic method of Humboldt that relates emotions and subjective experience with objective data remains central to Chapter 3, because of the particular relation between Humboldt's perspective and Darwin's own imaginative approach to the topic of natural selection in Nature. More significantly, the figure of Goethe offers a model for a Darwinian methodology that incorporates scientific imagination and analogical thought to trace a history of Nature. Chapter 4 explores further these relations between natural observation and subjective approach. Lansley contends that a completely objective and empirical relation with Nature is not possible, because of our own personal reflections that we arrive at when we observe Nature.

What emerges, then, is that 'Reflection' and 'Imagination' are not just essential concepts for our human knowledge of Nature, but also for moral reflection, which is a distinctive human feature that distinguishes us from animals and is the key to building social relations. So, in Chapter 5, Lansley exposes how this view can be seen as a kind of Romantic materialism in close relation to a concrete approach to Nature and human evolution from the common and humble origin of every being.

Retracing the Romantic origins of concepts such as 'Nature' and 'Mind', Chapter 6 consists of a sociological analysis of Darwin's morals and how these ideas developed according to Romanticism can be framed in the Victorian era holding some Victorian values and rejecting others. Consequently, the figure of Darwin blends together both Romantic and Victorian conceptual paradigms. The concept of 'Mind' is at the core of Chapter 7, which explores the evolution of Darwin's perspective about the development of Man's Mind. The intersubjective aspect of Mind is explored through Darwin's works to demonstrate how Darwin's Romantic imagination is equally rooted in empiricism, since it rises from the experience and observation of Nature by the individual. Chapter 8 reads the poetry of Erasmus Darwin to illustrate how Darwin's materialism could in fact be influenced by the perspective of his grandfather.

Finally, the end of Lansley's study takes an unexpected turn and focuses on Darwin's own legacy. Chapter 9 analyses Ruth Padel's *Darwin: A Life in Poems* (2012) about Darwin, her great-great grandfather. Her poems recover the figures of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Samuel Taylor Coleridge to bring a deeper understanding of Darwin's connections and intellectual exchanges with Romanticism.

Lansley's book presents a persuasive case for the connections between Darwin and Romanticism from England and Germany. Lansley's research constitutes an impressive study, which is genuinely and rewardingly wide-ranging and interdisciplinary in its approach. Exploring the scientific perspective of Darwin, and also his aesthetic and moral ideas, Lansley's book interrelates organically and perceptively these scientific and literary fields.

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