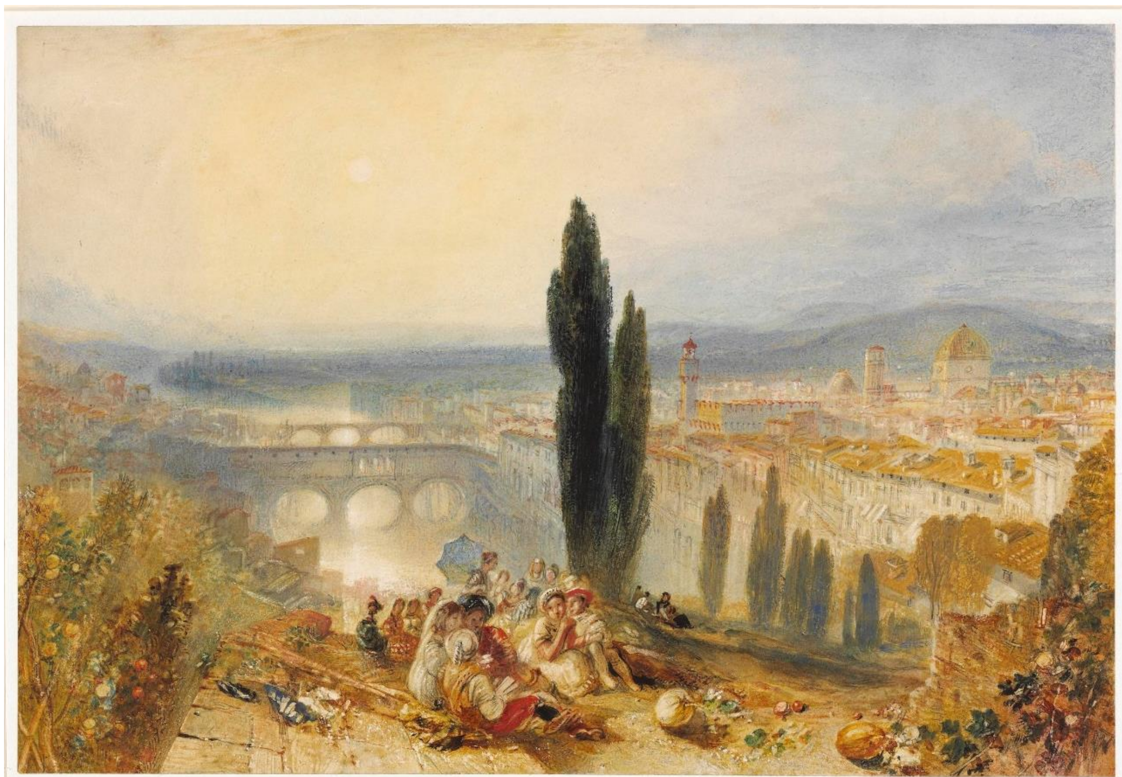
The BARS Review

ISSN: 2049-7881

Editor: Mark Sandy (Durham University)
General Editor: Anthony Mandal (Cardiff University)
Technical Editor: Matthew Sangster (University of Glasgow)

Published online by the British Association for Romantic Studies



J.M.W. Turner, Florence, from San Miniato; the city viewed from the roof of a house, in the foreground a group of figures, fruit trees at l, and cypresses beyond them, two bridges in the mid-distance. c.1828 watercolour, touched with bodycolour. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduction used under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.

This is a compilation of all the reviews published online in Number 56 of The BARS Review. *A numbered contents list with page references is provided on page 2 of this document. Fully searchable versions of these reviews with enhanced metadata, as well as the archive of past numbers, can be viewed on* The BARS Review *website:* http://www.bars.ac.uk/review/.

Contents

Reviews

1) Ben P. Robertson on **Andrew O. Winckles, *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing and the Methodist Media Revolution: 'Consider the Lord as Ever Present Reader'*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019** and **Joseph Morrissey, *Women's Domestic Activity in the Romantic-Period Novel, 1770-1820: Dangerous Occupations*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.**	p. 3
2) Jonathan Cutmore on **Michael E. Robinson, *The Queer Bookishness of Romanticism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021** and **Shayne Husbands, *The Early Roxburghe Club 1812-1835: Book Club Pioneers and the Advancement of English Literature*. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2017.**	p. 5
3) Nowell Marshall on **Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume II. Gothic in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020.**	p. 8
4) Claire Sheridan on **Gordon Bannerman, Kenneth Baxter, Daniel Cook and Matthew Jarron, *Creatures of Fancy – Mary Shelley in Dundee*. Dundee: Abertay Historical Society, 2019.**	p. 9
5) Pauline Hortolland on **Michael Demson and Regina Hewitt, eds., *Commemorating Peterloo: Violence, Resilience and Claim-making during the Romantic Era*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.**	p. 10

Spotlight: Romantic Travels and Trajectories

6) Diego Saglia on **Agustín Coletes Blanco y Alicia Laspra Rodríguez, *Romántico país: poesía inglesa del trienio liberal. Estudio crítico y corpus bilingüe anotado*. Salamanca: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 2019** and **Robert Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, ed. by Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores. London and New York: Routledge, 2021.**	p. 13
7) Lucy Cogan on **Tilottama Rajan and Joel Faflak, eds., *William Blake: Modernity and Disaster.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.**	p. 16
8) José Ruiz Mas on **Keith Crook, *The Imprisoned Traveler: Joseph Forsyth and Napoleon's Italy*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2019.**	p. 17
9) Jerónimo Ledesma on **Monika Coghen and Anna Paluchowska-Messing, eds., *Romantic Dialogues and Afterlives*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021.**	p. 19
10) Chloe Wilcox on **Essaka Joshua, *Physical Disability in British Romantic Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.**	p. 20

Andrew O. Winckles, *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing and the Methodist Media Revolution: 'Consider the Lord as Ever Present Reader'*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 272. £90. ISBN 9781789620184.

Joseph Morrissey, *Women's Domestic Activity in the Romantic-Period Novel, 1770-1820: Dangerous Occupations*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. 225. £79. ISBN 9783319703558.

Two new books by Andrew Winckles and Joseph Morrissey provide intriguing insights into the works of women writers during the Romantic era. Winckles offers a well-researched examination of the way Methodist evangelicalism altered the media through which women expressed themselves, while Morrissey focuses on how women used various forms of 'domestic activity' to control their environments and communicate their points of view. Scholars with interests in Romantic-era women will find the books illuminating individually but might want to consider reading them in tandem, since they complement one another well.

Winckles notices a paradoxical preference in Methodism for 'conservative central authority' despite the 'democratizing tendency' of the religious denomination (1). These two features worked together to foster an environment that encouraged women to seek alternative media for self-expression. As Winckles argues, Methodism 'fundamentally alter[ed] the conditions and terms of the structures of mediation' (3). Winckles provides an overview of Methodism and contemporary attitudes toward its practitioners, pointing out that many people associated Methodism and radical thought. For many writers of the time – especially women writers – this tendency led to a restriction of publication opportunities. However, Winckles demonstrates that women often actually preferred not to be published through traditional channels and, instead, circulated their work through oral narrative and through handwritten text in the form of documents such as letters, diaries, transcribed personal accounts, and commonplace books. As a result, these women writers were able to exert a significant level of control over the dissemination of their ideas – far greater than they would have been able had they chosen traditional publication through male-dominated print media. Paradoxically, however, the use of alternative media resulted in the relegation of many such works to obscurity since so many later scholars have tended to ignore these alternative methods of dissemination and since gaining access to such material is significantly more difficult than accessing traditional print media. In Winckles's view, the truth of Methodist women's writing must account for alternative media and must recognise texts produced through said media as literature. Dismissing these texts as irrelevant allows only a partial picture of Methodist women's writing.

Having established the context for discussion, Winckles moves into a consideration of 'how early Methodist women used the new media practices and protocols of evangelicalism to transmit and transform public life and literature by examining how their social networks used the space of mediation to develop a public voice' (13). He focuses on the 'unique discourse structures' fostered by the Methodist movement through various types of meetings held by its adherents and suggests a complicated interaction among oral, manuscript, and printed media that exerted lasting influence on the development of the novel and the literature of sensibility (25). Winckles argues that the influence of women's letter writing can be seen in the structures of early novels such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, and he suggests that various forms of life-writing helped many women writers, like Hester Ann Rogers and Mary Wollstonecraft, to encode female erotic desire in their texts in ways that promoted authorial control over the resulting literature. Winckles credits Methodist leader John Wesley with much of the acceptance women were able to attain in traditional print media and suggests that after Wesley's death, women writers' opportunities contracted in ways that prompted additional reliance on alternative media

since Methodism became 'more centralized, more carefully controlled, more bureaucratic, and more male' (26). Using the examples of Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, Mary Tooth, and Hannah More, Winckles suggests that even reputedly conservative women writers of the time chose to employ alternative media strategies for subversive purposes. Furthermore, writers like Sally Wesley, Elizabeth Hamilton, Mary Tighe, and Maria Spilsbury were prompted to use alternative media – including, in Spilsbury's case, painting – to express their evangelical beliefs. Finally, Winckles considers the works of Agnes Bulmer and Felicia Hemans 'as theology' (27).

While the focus of Winckles's monograph is alternative media for Romantic-era women writers, Morrissey's interest lies in the domestic activities that women used for self-expression during the same period. As Morrissey summarises his argument, 'this book is an attempt to reconstruct Romantic-period women's domestic activity as human endeavours intimately related to the creation and expression of self, and as interventions into the web of human relations' (14). Morrissey brings a unique point of view to the study of Romantic-era women by emphasizing the 'human messiness and unpredictability' of domestic activity, which he sees as 'a function of fluctuating psychological processes and interpersonal relationships' (3). From Morrissey's standpoint, traditional examinations of domestic activity have tended to ignore the emotional expression that is inherent in the completion of such activity, and Morrissey's intent is to restore some of the connectedness between the two. Moreover, Morrissey is curious about the 'representation of the domestic act as it unfolds' (9). Essentially, Morrissey suggests that domestic activities like needlework and reading novels provided Romantic-era women with the means to express their emotions and consolidate interpersonal relationships. His immediate interest includes selected novels of Charlotte Smith, Jane Austen, and Frances Burney.

After establishing the cultural milieu surrounding his discussion and providing a definition of his terms, Morrissey moves to examinations of specific literary works that help to illuminate the extent to which women writers presented various types of domestic activity in their writing as conduits for feminine agency. Morrissey turns first to authors Charlotte Smith and Jane Austen and their respective novels, *The Old Manor House* and *Mansfield Park*, interrogating the representation of major characters engaged in needlework. Although Morrissey frames the characters' needlework as an activity that fosters the creation and strengthening of interpersonal relationships, he suggests that, ultimately, the authors are unable to extricate themselves fully from existing 'misogynistic stereotypes' (11). Morrissey finds a more optimistic approach to domestic activity in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*, in which music is presented as 'a vital source of human friendship' for women (12). In Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Morrissey focuses on the act of reading as another domestic activity with far-reaching consequences for women. Specifically, he discusses reading as an 'aspect of psychological growth' and as a source of pleasure (12). He then turns to depictions of sensibility and sympathy in Smith's *Ethelinde* as ambiguously feminist and misogynistic. One of the strengths of Morrissey's argument is this acknowledgment of ambiguity in the domestic activities being discussed. While the activities provide women characters with means of self-expression and reification, the very fact that they occur in the domestic sphere tends to relegate them into secondary strata that suggest a reaffirmation of patriarchal misogyny. Morrissey rightly points out that the social constraints and pressures surrounding the domestic activities in question are far more complicated than they might seem at first glance and encourages readers to maintain a sceptical attitude that will keep them from oversimplifying the complex realities of women's expression.

Both these monographs provide substantive and unique approaches to women's writing in the Romantic era and make important contributions to the corpus of literary criticism related to the period. The only flaw in either book is that Morrissey's reads as if it were rushed into print without adequate editing, a defect that many readers will find consistently distracting. Regardless of any flaws in the texts, the two authors provide convincing arguments in favour of their ideas

and admirably lead readers through lines of reasoning that are likely to inspire similar additional research. Scholars of Romantic-era women and their writings will find both books illuminating.

Ben P. Robertson
Troy University

Michael E. Robinson, *The Queer Bookishness of Romanticism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021. Pp. 232. £81. ISBN 9781793607935.

Shayne Husbands, *The Early Roxburghe Club 1812-1835: Book Club Pioneers and the Advancement of English Literature*. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2017. Pp. 216. £70. ISBN 9781783086900.

In their respective studies, Michael Robinson and Shayne Husbands contribute substantially to what Ina Harris has nicely termed the 'bookish turn in Romantic studies'. The transgressive topic known variously as 'bibliomania', 'bibliophilia', 'bibliosophia', is, contra Robinson, not a neglected interest in Romantic studies. Counting from Philip Connell's 2000 essay, 'Bibliomania, Book Collecting', the topic is in its third decade and has given rise to distinguished papers and monographs. Robinson's and Husbands's contributions bring to the topic fresh perspectives and stimulating analyses.

The second decade of the nineteenth century saw the publication of books, pamphlets, and review articles in which bibliophiles were criticised as having an inordinate interest in books as objects. Critics labelled collectors 'enthusiasts', enthusiasm being a code word for madness. For critics of bookishness, such unhinged behaviour was an unwanted distraction from the weightier debates that were taking place in a civilisation-defining moment in the nation's literary history. The great increase in the number of publications of all types and of reading by persons of all ages, sexes, and classes was profoundly impacting the political, social, and economic landscape. Among key points of contention in the broader debate about the place of literature in society was the nature of authorship and the control of meaning. Nationalists and Romantics valorised authors and their books as a national heritage. In contrast, critical review journals damned the Romantics as egoists and modelled collective, anonymous authorship and the production of texts as marketable products. The debate over bookishness was small fry in a sea of literary contention. That does not make it an unimportant topic or less telling. Robinson and Husbands convincingly argue that bookishness played a role in these debates.

Husbands and Robinson ask why a marginal issue, bookishness, elicited intense abuse. Husbands focuses the debate regarding book love on class issues, and the contribution to literature of authorship, editing, publication, and distribution of facsimile reproductions. In Robinson's book the focus is on the disordering of boundaries between reading and the 'author function' (passim), the dissident uses of books by readers, critics, pedants, collectors, and auctioneers, and, particularly, book love as a form of eroticism that embraced rather than transcended materiality. As Robinson puts it, the 'discourse of shared book love is actually about something much more scandalous and fatal than books' (97).

At the core of contemporary discontent with bookish men and women was their provoking materialism, their perverse advertising of uses for books other than the reading of them. The acceptable view of a book's legitimate purpose was the preservation and dissemination of shared knowledge. Robinson locates the source of abuse of book lovers in heteronormative discomfort with bibliophilic desire and bibliographic pleasure. He finds a resemblance, even an equivalence, between fulfilling a lust for books through gratuitous purchase and onanistic satisfaction of sexual desire. Bibliomaniacs were using books for

affective self-gratification and, guilty themselves of the seven deadly sins, were condemned for encouraging sin in others.

Husbands locates a class element as well in the social condemnation of bookish behaviour. Critics were anxious that promiscuous book collecting, and the printing of long-forgotten vernacular texts, cocked a snook at the cultural hegemony of the middle class. The extravagant sums bibliomaniacs paid for rare and neglected books (for all the public knew, justifiably neglected books) inspired thoughts of aristocratic wastefulness, promiscuity, luxuriance, acquisitiveness, exclusivity, and preening self-regard.

Husbands and Robinson focus on individuals whose bibliophilic behaviour attracted unfriendly attention. There are several familiar, top-deck passengers in Husbands' and Robinson's Ships of Fools – Sir Walter Scott, Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Charles Lamb. Much refreshing attention is given, though, to literary steerage, to the bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin; to the queer Ladies of Llangollen; to the book forgers Henry Forman and Thomas J. Wise; to the man who started the fuss, the duke of Roxburghe; and to the ill-fated bibliophile Alexander Boswell. That approach is neither peculiar nor perverse; it is essential to the bookish project. The experience of individuals is the flesh and bone of book history.

Robinson investigates the 'strangely vehement' (14) response of society to this 'peculiar' (105) community of consumers for whom books were an object correlative of their owners' inner state. He makes his case in a series of biographies, surveys of the 'lived experience' (88) of Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby; of Dibdin; of Lamb and his fictional alter-ego, Elia; and of Forman and Wise. Robinson's theory-driven analysis is sometimes syntactically challenging but deeply analytical and intellectually stimulating throughout. In his subjects' private and public personae Robinson discovers an aesthetic defined by a perverse pleasure in books' typography, margins, paper, and binding, or their rarity, antiquity, or inflated valuation. Shared pleasure, disapproval, and marginalisation created among these bibliophiles an 'ornamental community' (86) of the happily oppressed.

Robinson discovers a resemblance between the marginalisation of bookish men and women and the ostracisation of sexual dissidents. Bibliophilic affection for a material object triggered a phobic social response equivalent to that meted out to 'dissident sexual expression' (13). It was an intolerant response that drove such men and women to the margins of society and the literary world.

Elements of Robinson's initial chapter, on the Ladies of Llangollen and Plas Newyyd, their Welsh retreat, appear to undercut his broader arguments. The retreat, we are told, was a site of camp, queer masculinity, off-putting to the locals, one would think, but apparently the locals welcomed them, and a cavalcade of magi visited them. His most curious and entertaining chapter is on the *flâneur* Charles Lamb. Robinson sketches Lamb as a dissident stylist. Lamb is a 'punk' antiquarian, an ambivalent ironist, a collector of the 'detritus of the retail market for books' (143). Lamb perversely drew attention to his collection of dog-eared and broken-spined throwaways for which he paid a few pence. Robinson's uncovering of Lamb's bohemianism and his likening it to consumerist pleasure seeking and Protestant expressive individualism are among the most interesting passages in his book.

Robinson is difficult to summarise. He presents arguments not in the manner of stepping stones but as brilliant flashes. Because flashes of brilliance fade, even after several readings one struggles to recall the argumentative relevance of 'dissident homemaking' (80), 'discursive erethism' (123), and the like. One suspects that Robinson gives in to a temptation he warns against, that of 'over-read[ing]' (142), of finding queer themes where none might exist. Robinson's few sins are endemic to the academy. They do not detract from a considerable achievement.

Husbands tilts at her own obsession of sorts, at the underappreciation and unwarranted vilification of an early and famous community of bookmen, the Roxburghe Club. She sees the

club members as instead pioneers who made a significant contribution to British literature by preserving, reprinting, and educating the public on the value of ancient vernacular texts. In several crisp, deeply researched, and lively chapters, she rejects the traditional denigration of Roxburghe members as a group of frivolous, gourmandising dilettantes who published unauthoritative editions of rare books. Critics found objectionable the Club members' class-challenging neglect of genius authors, gentlemen, in-favour of printers and typesetters, and tradesmen. Husbands interestingly attributes continuing denigration of the group by bibliographical scholars to emotion, to an 'almost self-conscious dissociation between academic study of the book and its antiquarian past' (3).

Bibliomania, she explains, was as much a 'media construct' (13) as it was a condition traceable to psychological or social forces. In any case, most members of the Club do not qualify as bibliomaniacs. Richard Heber and a few others excepted, members' collecting was not indiscriminate. Their libraries were intelligently curated collections of early texts and books valuable as literature, not merely collectible.

Animus was directed at the Club for its supposedly extravagant dinners. Their dinners, Husbands points out, were no more extravagant than other clubs and societies. Like the Royal Society, the Roxburghe Club was justly criticised as being more a social society than a serious intellectual body. She finds it unsurprising, though, that the tenor of the Club in its first years was more social than academic, more clubbish than institutional. The Club consisted at first of a group of friends and Club membership was based on shared knowledge and a shared passion.

Other criticism of the Club was similarly misplaced or was the product of envy or personal animosity. The Club was criticised for publishing books of interest only to members, but it was at the same time criticised for not making copies available for public purchase. Some of the attention the Club attracted Husbands attributes to 'celebrity culture' (23), the enduring public fascination with elites born equally of envy and admiration. Husbands deftly sweeps aside the accusation that Club members failed to contribute to the diffusion of useful knowledge, to promote the interests of living authors, or direct their wealth into the local economy. Husbands dispenses with the Roxburghe Club's reputation as a retreat for moneyed aristocrats. She demonstrates the political, social, religious, and class eclecticism of the early group.

Robinson's and Husbands's books overlap since both investigate bookishness, Thomas Frognall Dibdin, and the Roxburghe Club, and since both seek to understand the source and importance of bibliophiles' status as pariahs of the literary world. Otherwise, there is little resemblance between the two writers' substantive information and analytical approach. As a single but typical example, Robinson and Husbands discuss Dibdin's colourful and prolix prose. Robinson finds in it 'camp sensibility' (143) and the anticipation of 'narratives of homosexual self-realization' (146). Husbands more simply but also interestingly explains Dibdin's 'overblown romantic style' (49) as a personal tic that, while embarrassing even to some of his supporters, evidently attracted an admiring audience.

These two fine books are valuable contributions to knowledge in the field and they deserve to be widely read, but one fears their narrowness of subject matter will confine their readership to specialist scholars and their purchase to academic libraries.

Jonathan Cutmore
University of Toronto

Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume II. Gothic in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xvii + 541. £120.00. ISBN 9781108472715.

Given the proliferation of guides and companions to the gothic, readers encountering Cambridge's three-volume *History of the Gothic* may ask: what is left to be said? Dale Townshend and Angela Wright's second volume, *Gothic in the Nineteenth Century*, answers that question succinctly: *a lot*. Seasoned scholars and readers new to Gothic studies will find the book a well-organised, thoroughly researched, and accessible read.

Following a first volume on the long eighteenth century, Townshend begins volume two with a detailed historicization of the term *gothic*: whereas the term was firmly associated with the medieval in the eighteenth century, in the early nineteenth century, 'Gothic would lose many of its older historical and political meanings and come to serve as the name for the modern literature of horror and terror, wonder and supernatural enchantment' (4). Townshend identifies key gothic figures and tropes, discusses overlaps and oppositions between Romanticism and the Gothic, and highlights Gothic's shift from genre to mode by the late nineteenth century.

The book's initial chapters reveal crucial Gothic influences. Madeleine Callaghan and Angela Wright flesh out the well-known Summer of 1816 that spawned Lord Byron's 'Darkness' and *Manfred*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and John Polidori's *The Vampyre*. Maximiliaan Van Woudenberg builds on this by showing how Jean-Baptiste Benoît Eyriès's 1812 translation of German supernatural tales inspired the ghost-story competition at the Villa Diodati and provides a genealogy of the book's many editions and variant stories. In this cluster's last chapter, Jerrold E. Hogle uncovers the origins and permutations of the vampire throughout the nineteenth century, ranging from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel*, Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Polidori's *The Vampyre* through Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Thomas Peckett Prest or James Malcom Rymer's *Varney the Vampire*, J.S. Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Hogle casts a wide net, and, including metaphorical vampires (often of the class-climbing variety), expands his genealogy. But the chapter also conflates two very different types of vampire, the literal and the metaphorical.

The next section digs into Victorian Gothic. Tom Duggett argues for gothic resonances between Robert Southey in 1817 and Victorian stalwarts like William Morris, John Ruskin, and Thomas Carlyle around 1877. Alexandra Warwick's chapter shifts the conversation around Morris and Ruskin (adding A.W.N. Pugin) to engage debates over Gothic architecture. Anthony Mandal offers a nuanced analysis of the often-neglected subgenres of Gothic chapbooks, blue books, penny bloods, and penny dreadfuls. Four additional chapters examine Victorian Gothic poetry, the origins of the Victorian ghost story, gothic elements within Charles Dickens's work, and Victorian symbolic mother-daughter relations in domestic gothic in ways that word counts prevent me from doing justice. Kelly Jones's chapter on Victorian Gothic theatricality rounds out this section by arguing that 'as the fin de siècle loomed, attempts to repress the Gothic on stage were met with an increasingly Gothic representation of the theatre itself within the wider popular and literary imagination' (163).

Readers interested in technological advances and their social impact will find reverberations among Jones's essay, Joe Kember's work on magic lantern shows across the century, Corinna Wagner's discussion of Darwin's influence on Victorian depictions of monstrosity, and William Hughes's vivid essay on the Gothic aspects of the emerging railway system.

Surprisingly, the volume contains only two essays on American Gothic. Setting aside his antiquated use of 'Indian' (a term long ago supplanted by Native American, American Indian, and/or Indigenous in the US), Charles L. Crow's rich overview of American Gothic could serve

as the basis for a PhD exam list. Likewise, Maisha Wester's wonderful chapter demonstrates the impact of the Haitian Revolution on depictions of race in the Gothic.

Readers familiar with British and American Gothic will find the cluster of essays addressing non-English Gothic unexpected and innovative. Taken as a whole, these four essays – on Spanish, Italian, Scottish, and Irish Gothic, respectively – suggest new directions in marginalised areas of Gothic studies. At the same time, though, they make a volume that is already heavily focused on British Gothic feel even more Eurocentric. Andrew Smith's concluding essay on the imperial Gothic offsets this to some extent, arguing that empire 'is not a unified concept' (463) in the late Victorian period. He considers the subtleties relating to Ireland near the end of the chapter, but the bulk of the chapter focusses on H. Rider Haggard's Egypt and Rudyard Kipling's India, making connections to global Gothic – something that the series' third volume explores more fully.

The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume II adds depth and complexity to the field of Gothic studies. Should Cambridge release an affordable paperback edition, many of these chapters would prove invaluable additions to entry-level and advanced Gothic/monster studies courses.

Nowell Marshall
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Gordon Bannerman, Kenneth Baxter, Daniel Cook and Matthew Jarron, *Creatures of Fancy – Mary Shelley in Dundee*. Dundee: Abertay Historical Society, 2019. Pp. 134. £7.50. ISBN 9780900019616.

Creatures of Fancy: Mary Shelley in Dundee makes a convincing case for what one of its authors, Gordon Bannerman, calls 'the persistence of place in the human imagination' (39). The place in question is Dundee, where 'Mary Godwin, as she was then, stayed […] from June to November 1812, and again from June 1813 to March 1814' (9), spending, in total, just over a year in the town at a formative age. *Mary Shelley in Dundee* reminds us that Shelley travelled to Scotland from London as 'a solitary girl aged fourteen' (9). This is the adolescent described at the time by her father, William Godwin, as 'singularly bold, somewhat imperious' (9). It is entirely believable that this was an impressionable time for her, and that Dundee made a long-term impact on her psyche, 'that the eerie, eldritch, supernatural Scottish element she absorbed […] very much informed the birth of *Frankenstein*' as Billy Kay puts it in the Foreword (2). When we consider that Shelley began writing *Frankenstein* little more than two years after her final departure from Dundee, the idea that 'it would be incorrect to portray Mary's visit to Dundee as anything other than highly significant' (8) becomes even more persuasive.

The converse argument, that while Dundee probably 'shaped' (101) Mary Shelley's fiction, Mary Shelley can also be regarded as having left a mark on Dundee in return, is made interestingly in '"The Eyry of Freedom" – Culture and Science in Mary Shelley's Dundee' (47). This is the essay by Matthew Jarron and Kenneth Baxter which forms the middle of the book. Along with entertaining stories about the history of the town – including details such as the imprisonment of a seditious tree in the 1790s (78), and the use of an alarming sounding 'whirling chair' to treat patients at the Dundee Lunatic Asylum in the 1820s (88) – this chapter looks at the zeitgeist of Dundee before, during and after the period of Mary Shelley's stay. Fascinating links are traced between Shelley and various figures who promoted 'the growth of science and learning in Dundee' throughout the reform era (100).

The influence of Dundee on Mary Shelley's writing beyond *Frankenstein* is also explored. Daniel Cook's essay, 'Mary Shelley's Gothic Scotland', concludes the publication

with a discussion that encompasses Shelley's second-most-famous novel, *The Last Man* (1826), and the way 'Scotland features in the novel as a safe haven of sorts' (121). Cook points out that one particular fanciful detail the novel is known for, the inclusion of a 'sailing balloon' as the novelist's idea of 'a late 21st-century means of transportation' (121), is occasioned by a trip the protagonist takes to Scotland.

Some of what is discussed in *Mary Shelley in Dundee* is necessarily speculative. Statements based on educated guesses abound: 'Mary may well have had an interest in Dundee's small but growing art scene' (52); 'It is possible but highly unlikely that Shelley visited the Orkney Islands' (119). These reminded me of a point made by Betty T. Bennett, that 'Godwin, with few exceptions, simply didn't keep letters from his children.' Any letters the young Mary Godwin might have sent home to her father have not survived, so we cannot know what she did and where she went in Dundee with exactness. As Bannerman puts it: 'we lack much granular detail on Mary's activities' (22–23). The book highlights the limits to our certainties about even such a well-documented figure as Mary Shelley. It also explores, albeit tangentially, the room this leaves for historically and biographically inspired fiction. Billy Kay's Foreword mentions the 2013 novel *Unfashioned Creatures* by Lesley McDowell, 'which gives a fictional account of some of the crucial Shelley relationships which began during her sojourn in Dundee' (3). The endnotes to Daniel Cook's essay point to another recent work of Shelley-inspired fiction: 'A sequel to *Frankenstein*, Kate Horsley's *The Monster's Wife* (London, 2014)'. Cook notes that this 'fleshes out' the Orkney portion of the original novel. Additionally, Cook himself evokes a teenaged Shelley, who, with her most significant Dundonian friend, Isabella Baxter, 'revelled in morbid storytelling' and a 'sense of imperilled adventure', and whose 'Gothic imagination doubtless ran riot' (110). This is reminiscent of no one so much as Jane Austen's Catherine Morland, the heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, and not just because Mary's friend and co-enthusiast of the Gothic is called 'Isabella'.

In fact, Isabella Baxter, and her relationship with Mary Shelley, is key to *Mary Shelley in Dundee*. The book's contribution to Romantic sociability studies is one of its strengths. An informative account is given by Bannerman of the friendship between Isabella and Mary: its intricacies, ambivalences, lapses, and the pressures the two women faced. This aspect of the three essays, their sense of the communities we can discover in the connection between Mary Shelley and Dundee, is especially rewarding.

Claire Sheridan
Independent Scholar

Michael Demson and Regina Hewitt, eds., *Commemorating Peterloo: Violence, Resilience and Claim-making during the Romantic Era.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019. Pp. xii + 300. £85. ISBN 9781474428569.

Published in 2019, this remarkable collection of essays not only seeks to preserve the remembrance of Peterloo but also to provide new perspectives on the event, as well as a historical reappraisal of its violence. In their perspicuous introduction to *Commemorating Peterloo*, Michael Demson and Regina Hewitt artfully address 'the question of what is being commemorated' (2): although the massacre is often deemed representative of a culture of violence, it should be widely remembered as 'the ultimate triumph of the people over repressive violence' (2). As Demson and Hewitt define the three notions highlighted in the subtitle of the volume ('violence, resilience, and claim-making'), they single out 'resilience' as the key term of the book and as a symbol of the reformers' 'continuing resistance to violence in all its forms' (3). Crucially, Peterloo was about identity shaping, and the gathering demonstrated 'the ability

of the people to carry out normative contention' and to maintain a non-violent identity (10). Carefully articulating rather than partitioning these three notions, the twelve essays of this ambitious collection provide multi-perspectival and fresh reinterpretations of the 1819 massacre and its posterity.

The first essay by Stephen C. Behrendt appropriately extends the reflective dimension of the editors' introduction by analysing the 'moral ambivalence of the divergent responses' to Peterloo (33) and by showing how this 'collective public experience' was sometimes manipulated (35). Like many others in this volume, this essay is interspersed with various sources such as poems, satirical prints, and press articles which scripted the political identity of the people while sometimes giving a biased representation of this identity. In an ambitious essay, Ian Haywood draws attention to the 1819 massacre in an innovative way – while most accounts make us eyewitnesses of the event, Haywood recreates its politically charged soundscape. Relying on an analogy between 'the swelling crescendo of popular protest' (58) and the sound of a volcanic eruption, Haywood's reconsideration of the aural sublime of the protestors' voice as 'bad sublime' (59) subverts Burke's anxiety about the vox populi in his *Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757).

Other contributors explore different perspectives on the event, laying emphasis not only on well-known authors and political figures, but also on understudied artefacts and symbols. Murray Pittock retraces the genealogy of Henry Hunt's white hat as a non-verbal sign of sedition symbolising 'allegiance to the radical cause' (84) which complemented, but also confused the message of the more traditional red cap of Liberty. Frederick Burwick shifts attention to drama and unveils the hidden posterity of Peterloo on stage by demonstrating how the historical figure of Guy Fawkes was turned into 'a hero of the oppressed' (100), covertly spreading radical ideas despite censorship.

What makes this volume a perfect addition to the 'Edinburgh Critical Studies in Romanticism' series is its awareness of Scottish and Irish responses. Gerard Carruthers focuses on responses to Peterloo in Scotland from 1819 to 1822, underlining how 'enduringly heartfelt was the response to Peterloo and to Henry Hunt in the West of Scotland' (136). Conversely, James Kelly shows the widening gap between Ireland and England after Peterloo, as the massacre reactivated memories of 'Tory coercion' on the island (141), but also stimulated Irish eloquence. Michelle Faubert focuses on the Irish response to the massacre by contrasting Castlereagh's suicide with Peterloo as both self-sacrifice and 'ultimate betrayal' of the body politic (170), raising the issue of public sympathy. Katey Castellano's chapter brings an international dimension to the volume by considering claim-making in the United States, foregrounding William Cobbett's ambition to counter the 'animalisation of the working class' (184) in public discourse by creating a memorial for Thomas Paine in England.

The last four chapters show how Peterloo disturbs the cultural narrative of a diminishing violence in Britain by uncovering a hidden or 'dispersed' violence. John Gardner reveals how Peterloo was more important than church scandals in 'widening the rift between reformers and religion' (224). Victoria Myers analyses Jeremy Bentham's 'complex notion of violence' in his *Plan of Parliamentary Reform* (1817) and underlines his insight that 'non-legal (but hidden) violence was the real *modus operandi* of the governing class' (246). Philip Shaw argues that the massacre indirectly spurred William Wordsworth to reflect on 'the place of conflict in civil society' (252) in his post-Peterloo poetry.

Michael Scrivener's suggestive reading of the work which became the most famous denunciation of Peterloo – Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* – finally highlights the poet's call for empathy, but also for 'a repetition of Peterloo' in the future (282). This final essay aptly echoes the cover image of the volume – J. M. W. Turner's *Death on a Pale Horse* – which is sometimes considered a representation of the fall of Anarchy (a figure modelled after Benjamin West's earlier painting with the same title) in Shelley's poem.

By bringing together these fresh perspectives on a seemingly well-known topic, the book makes an important contribution to scholarship and to the understanding of Peterloo.

Pauline Hortolland
Université de Paris

Spotlight: Romantic Travels and Trajectories

Agustín Coletes Blanco y Alicia Laspra Rodríguez, *Romántico país: poesía inglesa del trienio liberal. Estudio crítico y corpus bilingüe anotado*. Salamanca: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 2019. Pp. 480. €25.00. ISBN 9788413111643.

Robert Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, ed. by Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. 588. £110. ISBN 9780815356554.

Recent years have seen a steady increase in Romantic-period research on textual and other representations of Spain and the Iberian/Hispanic worlds more generally. In literature, while confirming the central contributions of figures such as Matthew Lewis, Robert Southey, Walter Scott, Lord Byron, or Felicia Hemans, this body of work has also rediscovered a host of little known or undervalued cultural mediators, as well as throwing into relief a diverse panorama of innumerable, nameless limners and promoters of what we could call a Spanish or Iberian discourse. In the past, research on Anglo-Hispanic relations in the Romantic age was mostly concerned with military, political, and diplomatic histories of the Peninsular War. It was from about the 1990s onwards that Anglo-Hispanic relations started to be considered as more than marginal or occasional manifestations and sustained attention to be paid to their many forms of textual and visual inscription. The discourse of Spain in Romantic-era Britain began to gain visibility as a multi-layered and contradictory composite at the nexus of questions of otherness and notions of modernity. In the late eighteenth century, Spain was still largely envisaged from an Enlightenment perspective of dismissal and demonisation, visible in 1790s Gothic fiction, socio-political theory, and moral philosophy, and symptomatic of the continued impact of the 'Black Legend' of Spain (popularised by the journalist, historian, and sociologist Julián Juderías in the 1910s, this label gained significant currency among Anglo-Saxon critics and historians). But this negative outlook coexisted with a slowly emergent fascination with Spain, a Hispanophilia, that became widespread in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This development can be envisioned as a narrative that stems from the alternating relations in the 1790s and early 1800s, dictated by the repercussions of events in revolutionary France; the Peninsula War (1808-14), which partly changed and partly confirmed established views on Spain; the Restoration of the *ancien régime* and absolutism (1814-20); and the *liberal triennium* followed by another phase of absolutism (1823-33) that caused many liberal politicians and intellectuals to emigrate to France and Britain. This Eurocentric picture is, of course, complicated further by South America, which looms large over, and exerts pressure on, Anglo-Hispanic relations everywhere between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The two publications in this review are among the most recent products from this lively area of study and research, which is also part of a broader shift towards a re-mapping of the inter- and transnational coordinates of Britain's Romantic-era culture.

One of the most obvious merits of Flores and Gonzalez's edition of Southey's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* is that of making available, in a reliable text complemented by a rich paratext, a principal document of late-eighteenth-century Anglo-Hispanic and, specifically, Iberian discourse. Indeed, Southey's vision was decisively Iberian, informed by a re-evaluation of the culture and history of Portugal; the cultural and political cohesion of medieval Iberia; the multiplicity of languages, cultures, and state systems of the federative Spanish crown; and the intertwined medieval and modern histories of the two Peninsular kingdoms. In addition, this edition of *Letters* returns to us a major work not only in

pan-Iberian and Anglo-Hispanic discourse, but of Romantic-period literature more broadly. It enables us to rediscover how *Letters* both conformed to and innovated with established travel-writing conventions. Also, with its three editions of 1797, 1799, and 1808, it bears visible traces of the transition from eighteenth-century to Romantic visions of Spain, bearing witness to the transformations in Spanish discourse in Britain at the turn of the century, and announcing Southey's major role in it. In their extensive introduction, Flores and Gonzalez help us recover this book's significance to Southey's biographical and authorial trajectory, as his journey to Portugal and Spain in 1795-6 disclosed to him new fields of knowledge, questions, and concerns, which became central in his post-Pantisocracy years and remained so in decades to come. Moreover, *Letters* marks a fundamental step in Southey's transformation into a (possibly *the*) major Romantic-period Iberian specialist. In this respect, as the editors rightly stress, his inclusion of a section on the poetry of Spain and Portugal (advertised on the frontispiece of the first edition) reflects his intention to offer something different and increase the saleability of the volume, as well as that of filling a gap in current knowledge of Iberian culture. Importantly, this section and the volume as a whole feature translations and re-elaborations of Spanish verse, which effectively pave the way for the translations he later published in the periodical press, as well as his own fictional recreations of Iberian themes – from *Madoc* to *Roderick* and *A Tale of Paraguay*.

At over 550 pages, this edition of *Letters* is a large and generous book. In a sizeable portion of these pages, Flores and Gonzalez give us multiple tools to navigate this expansive, multi-layered volume: a glossary, two chronologies, a map of Southey's journey, editorial notes resulting from a prodigious amount of source hunting, and an appendix listing variations and additions in the 1799 and 1808 versions. The editors do a great job of tracking and glossing references and allusions, and therefore of valorising the book's typically Southeyan intertextual density. Their work bears out how, here as in so many of his works, Southey's erudition seems to resolve itself into a mass of redundant details (in 1821 he confessed 'I have a dangerous love of detail'), yet, on closer inspection, his notes are far from marginal pieces of the mosaic that is his depiction of Spain and Portugal.

Much in *Letters* is in line with late-eighteenth-century travel writing. Southey's brief preface touches on several recognisable features: the journey will be minutely delineated so as to be useful to other travellers; and 'things', he says, are represented 'as they have appeared to me' (48), so that factual reliability is counterbalanced by a subjective perspective that also parries possible accusations of reading the country and its people incorrectly. At the same time, though, as the editors stress, *Letters* is original in various ways, and importantly anticipates Southey's later Spanish ventures because of the anecdotes and tales amounting to a myriad interpolated narratives (these recall the narratives embedded in the notes to *Roderick*), the combination of geographical and cultural dimensions (landscape, history, monuments, literature), and a pervasive sense of fascination with Iberia (though one conventionally mixed with critical remarks), which will evolve into a lifelong passion.

Travel accounts of Spain circulated widely in the late-eighteenth-century book market, many of which have been amply studied, especially by Spanish scholars. Flores and Gonzalez's edition gives us the opportunity to reappraise the peculiarity of Southey's contribution to this discourse through his distinctly encyclopaedic curiosity and attention to the palimpsestic nature of the country and its neighbour, and the relevance of this early Iberian foray for his later transformation into a major purveyor of Iberian-themed imaginative literature. They have effectively recovered for us an outstanding piece of late-eighteenth-century transcultural writing, one that is of interest not just to scholars of Southey or Anglo-Hispanic questions, but Romantic-period scholars more generally.

The other title under review here, *Romántico país: poesía inglesa del trienio liberal* ('Romantic country: English poetry of the liberal triennium'), takes us on a different journey to Spain – not a literal one, and one deeply conditioned by political-historical events. Edited by

Agustín Coletes Blanco and Alicia Laspra Rodríguez, the book is a collection of English-language poems reacting to events in Spain between 1820 and 1823. But this is too reductive a definition. In its nearly 500 pages, Coletes and Laspra include not only English originals and Spanish versions of these texts, but also a whole range of contextual materials, thus offering readers an immersive experience of Anglo-Spanish literary interrelations in the early 1820s. And though Spanish is the book's main language, it is not exclusively for readers of that language.

Echoing Byron's apostrophe to the country in *Childe Harold* 1. 35 ('Oh, lovely Spain! renown'd, romantic land!'), the title reprises what had become a clichéd image by the early 1820s, when Spain takes centre stage again in international affairs after the military *pronunciamiento* headed by General Rafael del Riego led to the institution of a constitutional monarchy based on the Cadiz charter of 1812. These developments galvanised Byron and Shelley, intrigued (and alarmed) Southey, and sent shockwaves across the newly restored regimes of the Continent. The poems collected and examined in this volume deal, explicitly or allusively, with this turn of events and its consequences: the French invasion, sanctioned by the Holy Alliance in 1823, to quash the liberal regime; its downfall and the ensuing waves of political emigration, mainly to France and Britain; and the onset of a reactionary repression that lasted until 1833 (the so-called *ominosa década*). On occasion, the poems also address (and interrogate) the position of Britain and its government's refusal to intervene in favour of Spain's liberal government.

The product of wide-ranging and painstaking research, Coletes and Laspra's book gathers a significant number of texts from periodicals and volumes, translated into Spanish by the editors themselves, and occasionally accompanied by illustrations. The poems are divided into chronological sections that follow the varying fortunes of the *liberal triennium*; and Coletes and Laspra's essays (in Spanish) offer substantial treatments of the historical, political, and literary contexts of this poetic burgeoning from comparative and intercultural perspectives. In particular, the opening 'Estudio crítico' is a detailed analysis of the *trienio* and its repercussions in Britain, which uncovers some fascinating connections and intersections between the two countries and cultural systems (as in a contemporary commentary linking events in Spain to Peterloo). The book is completed by an extensive bibliography of primary and critical materials, and two indices of first lines (in English and Spanish).

As for the poems, the editors/translators present and analyse them individually in the introduction to each section. Transcriptions and translations are accompanied by information on the original place and date of publication (and, where pertinent, of republication). This ample corpus confirms that periodicals were crucial outlets for verse in the 1820s, as well as bearing out their sustained engagements with foreign cultures and literatures. In the Iberian/Spanish case, this was already evident in poetic responses to the Peninsular War, to which the editors dedicated another ground-breaking anthology entitled *Libertad frente a tiranía: poesía inglesa de la Guerra de la Independencia (1808-1814)* and published in 2013. But their collection on the *trienio liberal* highlights a different panorama characterised by the proliferation of periodicals in the 1820s and their promotion of discourses of national culture in conjunction with an attention to foreign cultures. Thematically, the poems range from occasional circumstances and political commentary to examinations of abstract principles (liberty, most notably), historical figures, the lives of exiles, women's experience and point of view, and more. Obvious entries – Byron's *The Age of Bronze* and *Don Juan*, Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Ode to Liberty', poems by Felicia Hemans, Thomas Campbell, and Edward Bulwer-Lytton – blend with countless texts by anonymous, pseudonymous, or little known authors. Unexpected discoveries turn up at every page, as with Charles Cochrane's song 'The Spanish Exiles', which he later re-used in his pseudonymous *Journal of a Tour Made by Señor Juan de Vega, the Spanish Minstrel of 1828-9, through Great Britain and Ireland, a Character Assumed by an English Gentleman* (1830). This short composition well exemplifies the tendency, shared by British writers both in 1820-23 and during the Peninsular War, to write (about) Spain in ways that oscillate between an interest in its

history and culture and a desire to reflect on Britain from jointly national and international perspectives. These ways of writing Spain produce forms of ventriloquism and manipulation, which, as in many of the texts included here, do not necessarily carry negative connotations. Rather, they are attempts at approaching and interpreting the other country, as well as making it present and relevant for readers by linking it to the British context. In consequence, one of the most important contributions of Coletes and Laspra's volume is that, besides expanding our knowledge of Romantic-era cultural relations between Britain and Spain, it opens up insights into the mechanisms orchestrating these relations and their textual inscriptions. Ultimately, their anthology converges with Flores and Gonzalez's edition of Southey's *Letters* in contributing to expanding and nuancing our knowledge of a cross-cultural conversation pervasive in the literature and culture of a Romantic period that is more or more clearly emerging as a network of inter- and transnational encounters and collisions.

Diego Saglia
University of Parma

Tilottama Rajan and Joel Faflak, eds., *William Blake: Modernity and Disaster*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 328. $90.00. ISBN 9781487506568.

In their introduction, the editors, Tilottama Rajan and Joel Faflak, frame this collection as an attempt to explore Blake's complex and creative responses to modernity in the form of the alienating advances in the sciences and culture of his era. In setting out the methodology, the editors present a full-throated defence of a deconstructionist approach to Blake criticism that has largely fallen out of favour since the 1990s. The embrace of the complexity and pessimism facilitated by deconstruction is presented as a means of making space for more speculative arguments than are commonly found in contemporary Blake studies.

The collection thus sets out to explode the cosy myths of Blake studies surrounding concepts such as prophecy and apocalypse, and thereby recover the iconoclastic verve of the earlier deconstructionist analyses of his writings. The editors leave it to the contributors to 'unfold […] the multiplex disasters of Blake's corpus' (15), who then proffer competing definitions of disaster that exist in tension with ideas of prophecy and apocalypse. If these meanings do not fully cohere then this might be taken as a virtue of the Blanchotian methodological approach which does not force a redemptive synthesis upon contradiction. Nonetheless, Morton D. Paley's evocative description of an 'apocalypse without millennium', cited by more than one contributor, rather than the more nebulous ideas of disaster, seems to bind the essays together as a whole.

Noah Heringman opens the collection arguing that Blake 'extend[s] the myth of the Fall to bodies of knowledge' (31), making connections between Blake's embodiment in Albion of a prelapsarian corpus of knowledge with antiquarian speculation regarding positively connoted primitivist knowledge systems which Blake came into contact with as an apprentice engraver. Fittingly it is Rajan's essay that most closely exemplifies the introduction's vision for the collection, making use of Deleuze and Guattari's difficult-to-pin-down concept of a 'body without organs' to rethink Blake's representation of Urizen's bodily formation as one of a body '*with* organs that lacks organism' (55). Peter Otto then reads Blake's unfinished epic *The Four Zoas* as a Gothic fiction of ruination haunted by the reality of suffering in a post-Terror society.

In the contribution from the second editor of the volume, Joel Faflak reads *Milton* as a 'vast identity crisis' (112), in which the process of reading and interpretation is conceived as psychosomatic, driven by affective impulses related to developments in the early history of

psychiatry. Lily Gurton-Wachter's chapter then finds something new to say about the well-worn ground of Blake's 'London' by considering Blake's representation of the contagion of shame in wartime London as a symptom of the shrinking of the imagination to the community of the nation, limiting the capacity for sympathy. In a wide-ranging essay, Christopher Bundock then reads the relation between Albion and Jerusalem in *Jerusalem* as a form of national hypochondria regarding the integration of the other that emerged in response to the Jewish Naturalisation Bill of 1753 and was revived by Richard Brothers' declaration of himself as the 'Prince of the Hebrews' in the 1790s.

In a stylishly framed essay, Elizabeth Effinger examines the conflicting impulses in Blake's work regarding the emergent sciences of his day which furnish him with some of his most potent images – the polypus, disembodied organs, hybridised bodies – but also seem to fill him with anxiety. In the following essay David Collings addresses the strangely anticlimactic apocalypse of *Jerusalem* which miraculously emerges from outside the self and seems therefore to negate the labours of Blake's artist-avatar Los. Steven Goldsmith then considers Blake's anti-materialist insistence that all loss is a disastrous fall into history against the 'New Materialists' who embrace matter as productive and resilient even in decay, and for whom, as he puts it, 'loss is more'.

The final section of the volume, the coda, includes two essays that focus more fully on Blake's visual art. In an analysis of Blake's painting *Pity*, illustrating a highly metaphoric speech from *Macbeth*, David L. Clark argues that the image reveals something about Blake's 'composite art' as it is not a literal representation but rather a dreamlike 'image of language' (236). Finally, Jacques Khalip uses Derrida to take on the theme of the apocalypse in Blake's *Behemoth and Leviathan* and *The Ghost of a Flea* as representations of the posthuman, or rather the posthumous, which leaves the humanist worldview behind, opening up space for the animal gaze.

This volume brings together both established Blake scholars and newer voices to form a provocative and often exciting collection which resists previous framings of the apocalyptic in Blake's writings in religious or mythographic terms and instead considers how his works 'disclose an imaginative attunement to disaster' (3).

Lucy Cogan
Maynooth University

Keith Crook, *The Imprisoned Traveler*: *Joseph Forsyth and Napoleon's Italy*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2019. Pp. 266. $34.95 (pb). ISBN 9781684481620.

The title of Keith Crook's recent book anticipates three of the four main actants of the life and deeds of the Scotch traveller and art connoisseur Joseph Forsyth (1763-1815): his long imprisonment of eleven years in France, from 1803 to 1814; his travels in Italy (1802-3); and the consequences of Napoleon's war in the Italian Peninsula. The fourth actant, art, a great protagonist of Forsyth's perception of Italy in his travels, is not mentioned in Crook's book title, but a perceptive reader would easily assume that any Grand Tour travelling in Italy during the Romantic period would unquestionably enjoy art as an unavoidable magnet, especially if Forsyth's travel account is the main theme.

Crook's initial interest in Forsyth and his travel account on Italy dates back to 2001, when he authored a scholarly edition of *Forsyth's Italy* (University of Delaware Press). In his canonical travel book, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (1813), known as *Forsyth's Italy* for short. Forsyth wrote many of his 'remarks' as a therapeutic way to combat his isolation, his frustration, and his depression throughout his unfair imprisonment. In

the first edition, Forsyth omitted his most critical remarks in order to appear in the eyes of the Napoleonic authorities as a mere scholar who was visiting the artistic feasts of Italy and thus be granted the freedom that might be expected from Napoleon's posing role as patron of the arts for France and Italy. Forsyth's brother Isaac made sure that the second edition of *Forsyth's Italy* (John Murray, 1816) included the author's early unguarded impressions of his travels in Italy, the hatred that the Italians felt for France, and his seclusion in France, as well as his critical impressions of Napoleon's artistic mass plundering of Tuscany, Venice, and Rome. Crook dedicates six well-informed chapters to different key aspects of *Forsyth's Italy*, namely, the historical context in which the travel account was written; the odyssey of Forsyth's imprisonment in various jails in France and the living conditions of the prisoners; the traveller's scholarly and well-respected knowledge of Italian classical, Renaissance and Baroque art and literature; a detailed analysis of both editions of Forsyth's travel account; and to the writer's favourable account of the Italians, so deeply hurt in their national pride under the French occupation. Crook pays special attention to the illustrious British and Italian scholars, politicians, scientists, and literati that Forsyth met in Italy (Count Vargas, Cardinal Duke of York, Prince Ernest Augustus, Angelica Kauffmann, Signora Fantastici, etc.), and to the veritable intention of Forsyth's 'remarks', considering that he was not fully free to write about his real self and perceptions of French-ruled Italy. These chapters are followed by a number of fully annotated letters that the two brothers wrote to each other, though many others must have been lost along the way, especially after Napoleon's 1806 prohibition of any post. Written between 1801 and 1815, these letters give a more humane view of a restrained Forsyth. He was doing his best to disguise his suffering and ill health from his family but enjoyed any petty information and gossip offered by his brother in times of loneliness and separation. Crook's monograph on Forsyth's travel book also includes two useful appendices for any researcher on Italian art or on literary travel in nineteenth-century Italy: one consisting of an annotated list of works of art that Forsyth saw and wrote about (his artistic critiques were much valued by nineteenth-century travellers in Italy) and the other consisting of the sequence of passages that were omitted in the self-censored 1813 edition of *Forsyth's Italy*. Apart from the long bibliography cited by both Crook and Forsyth in their respective works, special praise must also be granted to the inclusion of numerous high-quality colour photographs of the main artistic masterpieces commented on by the Scottish traveller and a number of black-and-white period illustrations of the main historical events.

Byron and Hobhouse did not refrain from praising Forsyth's travel account, preferring it to even Rev. John Chetwode Eustace's popular art guide *A Classical Tour Through Italy* (1802). Apart from various laudatory reviews of Forsyth's book, other knowledgeable travellers in Italy – Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Leigh Hunt among them – spoke of it appreciatively. Alas, Forsyth did not get to see the second edition of his work, which saw the light thanks to his brother, for he died soon after his liberation in 1815. Crook has assumed the privileged role of updating the twenty-first-century scholarly appreciation of Forsyth's seminal account of Napoleonic Italy, and Crook's book is a must on any shelf of specialised Romantic travel writing on Italy.

José Ruiz Mas
Universidad de Granada

Monika Coghen and Anna Paluchowska-Messing, eds., *Romantic Dialogues and Afterlives*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021. Pp. 350. £44 (pb). ISBN 9788323349204.

The previous versions of the twenty articles included in *Romantic Dialogues and Afterlives* were part of 'Romantic Interactions', a conference organised in the Polish city of Kraków in 2019 by the Institute of English Studies of the Jagiellonian University and the Polish Society for the Study of European Romanticism. The category of 'interaction', avowedly taken from Susan Wolfson's book *Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action*, functioned as a trigger for considering Romantic writers' dialogues with their contemporaries and the cultures of the past, as well as their diverse afterlives in later works. Hence the title of the volume, which puts one category of Bakhtin with another one of Benjamin – 'dialogue' with 'afterlife'– to account for the variety of relationships explored by the essays.

The most powerful feature of the book lies, precisely, in the fact that the cultural significance of literature, in the Romantic period as well as before and after it, is seen not as located in the immanence of meaning but in its interrelations, that is, in readings, rewritings, conversations, strategies of legitimation, quotations, and crossings between borders and between disciplines. In a way, it is as if all literature is seen as comparative literature, even that which is produced within strict national boundaries.

This is particularly visible in the attention given to Keats's famous category 'negative capability'. The essays that recover it (Mary Jacobus, Gerard Kilroy, Ricardo Rato Rodrigues) emphasise its epistemological power; Jacobus even recognises in Keats an affinity with Benjamin's philosophy of history. Something similar can be said about other recovered Romantic theories, such as Schelling's 'indivisible Remainder' (surprisingly studied with Melville's *Moby Dick* by Marvin Reimann) or the experience of loss in Wordsworth and Coleridge's 'dejection' odes (Frederick Burwick). This is especially true of the revisitation of the ghost in the work of Percy Shelley by Monika H. Lee: the importance of spectrality is correlative with the (political and epistemological) importance of thresholds as spaces of intelligibility. It does not seem inappropriate, therefore, that Keats dominates the whole, since his work is made to claim that all poetic experience is relational, and that history is always in need of redemption. In addition to the three Keats essays already mentioned, the effect of the dialogue with Haydon in the sonnet 'Greats Spirits now on Earth are sojourning' (Hiroki Iwamoto) and the afterlives of 'Isabella' in visual art (Malgorzata Łuczyńska-Hołdys) are analysed.

Several contributions in the first half of the book return to Romantic authors of the British canon to review their conceptions of literature, using well-established methods of comparative analysis. There are studies on the presence of Neoplatonism in Coleridge's 'Religious Musings' (Natalie Tal Harries), the recourse to epic in the post-Revolutionary decade in Mary Robinson's *The Progress of Liberty* (Rayna Rosenova), and the way Byron weaves the poetics of *Don Juan* into a subtle re-reading of Horace (Rowland Cotterill). In the second half of the book, we find less expected dialogues and afterlives. We can read about the specialisation of geology in Zejszner (Marcin Leszcyński), the re-appropriation of one of Shelley's lines ('A subtler language within language wrought') in the philosophical projects of Earl Wasserman and Charles Taylor (Andrzej Pawelec), and the figure of the 'Noble Savage' in three German poets (William Christopher Burwick). Several works are directly devoted to investigating women's writing: Julie Donovan deals with the representation of Wales in Maria Edgeworth; Rebecca Warburton Boylan focus on the male rupture of domestic space in Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Emily Brontë, and Rachel Whiteread; and Marek Wilczyński follows in the footsteps of the American Margaret Fuller in Europe. One of the book's editors, Anna Paluchowska-Messing, offers a splendid study

of the legitimation strategies of female playwrights in the Romantic era (Hannah Cowley, Sophia Lee, Frances Burney, Joanna Baillie) by reading their paratexts, while Juliette Wells gives a lesson on the material study of reception and its critical potential by documenting the role of William Dean Howells in the 'rise of American Janeitism'. The volume concludes with a study by Nina Nowara-Matusik and Marek Krisch on the image of Poles in Germany during the *Vormärz* through a reading of Bettina von Arnim's *Polenbroschüre*.

The book's Polish mark is evident, but it is to be valued, above all, for its accentuation of comparatism as a literary approach. Although the book does not concentrate on this topic, it reminds us of the tension between national identity and forms of transnational circulation, which determined the Romantic experience and were replicated in its study. In addition to the contributions of each article, *Romantic Dialogues and Afterlives* reminds us of these tensions in the production of global knowledge and invites us to opt for comparative, interactional strategies to understand Romanticism. Perhaps the cover illustration (a Polish depiction of two Polish poets) should be read as a subtle and ironic underlining of this issue.

Jerónimo Ledesma
Universidad de Buenos Aires

Essaka Joshua, *Physical Disability in British Romantic Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. x + 302. £75. ISBN 9781108836708.

In her ground-breaking study of the presentation and implications of physical disability in British Romantic literature, Essaka Joshua challenges the 'first wave' (2) of disability studies in order to provide a novel and intersectional understanding of how physical disability, capacity, and deformity are presented in Romantic literature, separating aesthetics and function and maintaining this distinction through the structure and organisation of the study, as well as exploring the implications of these representations for both contemporary and modern disabled people. Joshua convincingly argues that previous theories and metanarratives of disability, which are concisely explained in the introduction, are only partial and anachronistic, limiting our ability to analyse disability in the Romantic period. Her evaluation of existing scholarship in the field makes the book highly approachable and accessible to those less well-versed in disability studies.

The study begins with chapters on William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, as a 'useful starting point for systematically unpacking some of the pre-disability concepts of the period' (34). Although both authors have already been extensively studied, Joshua notes how previous studies often miss or replicate the ableist assumptions within their works; the necessity of this novel study is thus underlined by the fact that 'it is relatively new for scholars to question the disparagement of impairment in the discourse of emancipation' (96) despite Wollstonecraft's depiction of weak women having been (rightly) thoroughly discussed through the lens of misogyny. In these two chapters, Joshua recognises and unpacks the way in which Wollstonecraft and Godwin, in separate works, attempt to attack one hierarchy (class or patriarchy) by enforcing another (capacity), revealing a hypocrisy and oversight in their work and the work of their critics and exposing the much broader issue of disabled people being left behind even within radical spaces. These ideas are logically built upon and developed throughout the chapters and make an excellent starting place as they 'provide evidence that late eighteenth-century writing on social equality shows a deep interest in capacity' (64), setting up the philosophical context for the evaluation of works to follow.

Although in my opinion weaker than other chapters, the chapter on Wordsworth's 'The Discharged Soldier' nonetheless succeeds in presenting a novel and thoughtful reading into why and how we treat disabled people, and the politics of 'deservedness' that, in Wordsworth's poem,

are explored in the context of desert claims but remain relevant today in the form of rigorous Personal Independence Payment (PIP) testing, for example.

Part two begins with a chapter on picturesque aesthetics, providing a detailed philosophical context for the following discussions of deformity and how those with deformities are treated and seen, as well as underlining the importance of exploring deformity in addition to function. Furthermore, the philosophies discussed here 'highlight the significance of deformity for questions that are fundamental to aesthetic production and appreciation in the Romantic era' (121). Through this chapter, Joshua maintains the distinction between modern notions of disability and pre-disability concepts that are more appropriate to apply to the literature discussed. Similarly to the study's introduction, this chapter functions to make part two of the book equally approachable and accessible to those less well-versed in disability studies, and especially in far less discussed notions of pre-disability. Expanding upon these ideas, the following chapter on Frances Burney's *Camilla* explores the novel's significance in disrupting the previously explored association of able-bodiedness with virtue and evaluates *Camilla*'s place in the history of pre-disability by its introducing relational approaches to deformity centuries before relational approaches to disability begin to appear. Similarly, Burney recognises a deformity/disadvantage binary that 'anticipates the impairment/disability binary of the social barriers approach to disability' (141), underlining the relevance of this analysis to modern disability studies.

Finally, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is analysed through a focus on how deformity is seen by others. Although deformity in *Frankenstein* has been heavily discussed, Joshua's study is novel in that she sets aside modern disability concepts in order to 'explore historically accurate group terms such as "deformity" and "monstrosity"' (160). Furthermore, she places emphasis on the ways of looking at monstrosity rather than the body of the creature itself, highlighting Shelley's interest in the 'creature's quest to find a sympathetic viewer' (178); these ways of seeing hold much more relevance for people with visible disabilities or deformities today. Joshua concludes this chapter by asserting that *Frankenstein* 'invites the reader to receive monstrosity and deformity transformatively' (180), acting as the creature's 'sympathetic viewer' (178).

Overall, Joshua succeeds in re-evaluating the history of disability through its presentation in literature and examining the consequences of these depictions for disabled people, giving the study an importance that much previous analysis lacked. Joshua re-examines texts and authors considered well-known and thoroughly analysed through a uniquely important lens.

Chloe Wilcox
York College