

(Editor's Note: Due to an editorial oversight the reviews by Philip Connell and Chris Goulding were not printed in their intended number and appear below. The Reviews Editor apologises for the late appearance of both reviews. [PJK])

Alison Hickey, *Impure Conceits: Rhetoric and Ideology in Wordsworth's 'Excursion'*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. 237. £30. ISBN 080472919.

'We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us', Keats's remark on Wordsworth's poetry approaches the terseness of Jeffrey's more famous 'This will never do', but says rather more about precisely about why *The Excursion's* first readers reacted to it as they did. Certainly Keats's implication, that Wordsworth's creative powers had ossified into mere dogmatic sermonizing, is one with which many more recent critics of *The Excursion* have been happy to concur. Alison Hickey argues that our failure to do *The Excursion* justice stems largely from the tendency (which Keats seems to have shared) to approach the poem, not on its own terms, but as emblematic of its author's declining creative powers. The question of Wordsworth's political and aesthetic apostasy in *The Excursion*, of whether he exchanged 'one kind of social imagination for an easier, more impersonal one' is often asked and answered without crediting Wordsworth with much critical self-awareness in the matter. But for Hickey, *The Excursion* is 'the text of Wordsworth's that, more than any other, thematizes and problematizes such questions, it does and undoes them' (p. 7). This is an original, and immediately plausible claim. It was, of course, Wordsworth's compulsion to authorize his high literary vocation as the poet of *The Recluse* that inspired *The Prelude*. It seems entirely credible that he might find himself driven, in the first part of *The Recluse* itself, to a further act of creative self-scrutiny. Hickey's ambitious reinterpretation of *The Excursion* suggests that this is indeed the case, combining formalist and historicist approaches in a dense, but generally lucid argument.

Any rehabilitation of *The Excursion* must depend for its success now just upon our reappraisal of the poem, but also upon a new sense of its relation to the existing canon of Wordsworth's verse. Hickey is sensitive to this fact, without allowing herself to be sidetracked into excessive discussion of more familiar texts. The stories of *The Excursion's* central books are briefly, but suggestively compared to poems such as 'Michael' and 'The Brothers', and a familiar reading of the 'Essays on Epitaphs' is reworked to elucidate the 'mediating layers of absence' which inform the poet's narratives (p. 72). Predictably, though, Hickey's single most important comparative text is *The Prelude*. She argues that the concerns of *The Prelude* are coterminous with those of *The Excursion*, that in the latter poem Wordsworth exchanges a private for a public (communal) imagination, and that he moves from an egotistical 'imaginative imperialism' to a vision of the imagination as 'a collective discipline' (p.135). For Keats (writing 1818), reading Wordsworth meant being 'bullied into a certain Philosophy engendered in the whims of an Egotist'. For Hickey, *The Excursion* represents not so much the poetic nadir of the egotistical sublime as its sceptical self-interrogation.

Approaching *The Excursion* in this way certainly proves an enlightening exercise. But to see the poem primarily as an extension and qualification of Wordsworth's imaginative project in *The Prelude* risks simplifying the relation of both poems to *The Recluse*. Relatively little is said about the identity of *The Excursion* in relation to *The Recluse* – perhaps because some of this ground has already been covered by Kenneth Johnston, perhaps because Hickey wants to reclaim *The Excursion* as a free-standing canonical text comparable in this respect, as in others, to *The Prelude*. As Johnston's work

has shown, any attempt to contextualize *The Excursion* within *The Recluse* project as a whole must involve some account of the poem's long and complex constitutional history. Hickey stresses the significance of that history, which stretches from 1789 to 1814, but makes disappointingly little of it in her reading of the poem itself.

This is not to say that *The Excursion*'s historical location is incidental to *Impure Conceits*. On the contrary, Hickey sees *The Excursion* as 'proto-Victorian' in its historical moment, an assertion which is intended to engage with, and unsettle, the poem's longstanding identification with the sort of smug Victorian pieties often supposed fatal (particularly by Romanticists) to the creation of great literature. By rejecting this association, and stressing the poem's ambivalence, scepticism and indeterminacy, Hickey does not seek to reclaim *The Excursion* as an archetypal Romantic poem, but rather to call into question our received ideas of the 'Romantic' and the 'Victorian' as distinct literary historical periods. This is extremely suggestive, and the brief concluding account of the poem's reception history valuably complements Stephen Gill's much more substantial *Wordsworth and the Victorians*. But Hickey does not have the space to develop her argument, and in the end the book seems to reinforce, rather than subvert historical stereotypes in the repeated and rather generalized identification of the 'Victorian' with 'the growing systematisation of English institutions' (p. 172). Nevertheless, *Impure Conceits* is an important book, persuasive in many of its central claims, and one of the best answers yet to Jeffrey's complacent declaration that *The Excursion* places Wordsworth 'beyond the power of criticism'.

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Joshua Wilner, *Feeding on Infinity: Readings in the Romantic Rhetoric of Internalization*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. 154. £27. ISBN 0 8018 6324 4

The Ariadne thread running through this slim and elegant volume of literary close readings ranging from well-known (and lesser-known) Romantic texts to the recent prose-poetry of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (familiar to Romanticists in particular as a critic of Gothicism) is its investigative preoccupation with the term 'internalization' as deployed in literary criticism and psychoanalytical theory. Although internalization is recognized as a key determinant of ideological formation, the term itself has been put to work on a confusing and sometimes unquestioned conceptual basis. The task Wilner sets himself is to clarify the term by returning to its roots within Romantic literary culture. Thus Wilner strives to show how the theoretical practice of writing in the Romantic period is, firstly, bound up with the emergence of the concept of internalization; and, secondly, though not unrelatedly, with the role of patriarchal cultural authority that the male Romantic writers succeeded in establishing via the intertwining of gender and genre hierarchies in their works. These are then the focal concerns of a series of associated readings involving Rousseau, Wordsworth, De Quincey, Baudelaire, Freud, Benjamin and Sedgwick.

Within the scheme of Wilner's version of literary history, the span of readings from Rousseau to Sedgwick indicates the distance travelled by the concept of internalization. An inaugural moment is located in the opening of Rousseau's *Confessions* which is compared with Montaigne's 'Au lecteur' preceding his *Essais*. For Montaigne, as Wilner shows, the truth of self-representation could be metaphorized in terms of bodily

nakedness, whereas, by contrast, Rousseau speaks of unveiling his 'interior' ['dévoilé mon intérieur'] before God to a public audience envisioned at an apocalyptic moment of Judgement. The trope dramatises what is taken to be an enduring cultural transformation in the nature of self-representation, which Rousseau may be taken to have inaugurated. The transformation thus effected in the modes of self-representation may be gleaned through the extensive imagery of physical ingestion in literary texts that Wilner deploys to figure the process of internalization. Hence the titular reference to Wordsworth's *Prelude* which famously depicts the 'mighty mind' of the poet as 'one that feeds upon infinity'. The trope of ingestion, crucial to a long 'oral' tradition of writing incorporating Romantic period works such as Wordsworth's *Prelude*, De Quincey's *Confessions* and Baudelaire prose-poetry may be seen to work its way into the literature of intoxication, Freudian theory and the autobiography of Sedgwick. Wilner's argument works best as it weaves between an array of texts, drawing attention through often familiar passages to unfamiliar elements, tropes, contrasts and parallels therein.

The chapter on Wordsworth, De Quincey and Baudelaire, for instance, situates the literary influence involved within the Romantic hierarchies of genre. De Quincey's citation in the *Confessions* of Wordsworth's description in *The Excursion* of a 'mighty city' seen amidst the clouds (2: 834-51), locates Wordsworth's transcendental poetic moment in the opium-eater's materialist prose text celebrating the chemical agency of opium. Baudelaire, responding to De Quincey, takes the literary influence one step further in his prose poem 'La Soupe et les nuages' in which Baudelaire's reveries on clouds are interrupted by 'une voix hystérique (...) la voix d ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui disait: "- - Allez-vous bientôt manger votre soupe, sacré bougre de marchand de nuages?"' ['a hysterical voice ... the voice of my dear little love, who was saying, "Are you going to eat your soup soon, you holy bugger of a cloud monger?"] Wilner reads this as a reinscription of the poet within the parameters of the market economy, with the soup representing the alienated labour of the woman who is the poet's loved one, cook and server. The fantasy of poetic transcendence is thus erected upon the edifice of female servitude.

As a kind of literary history, Wilner's work may be considered as a kind of poststructuralist riposte to the influential work of M.H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971) which famously argued for Romanticism as a kind of internalization and secularization of the Judeo-Christian textual tradition. However, Wilner's take on high romanticism plays off Wordsworth in subversive ways against voices such as De Quincey's and Baudelaire's. Instead of accepting the limitations of periodization which tend to define traditional literary histories, his work posits a long Romantic tradition which we can recognize in modern variants such as Sedgwick's creative writing. In contrast to Abrams's analogical account, however Wilner suggests a more involuted relation between the rhetoric of internalization and its critiques. Yet his thesis, based as it is on a fairly eclectic set of readings, cannot aspire to more than a frankly speculative value. One wonders whether a different set of readings, drawn (say) from the Romantic women writers whose work should surely provide a kind of flip-side testimony to his argument, might reveal a rather different story. The strength of this work lies in its enterprising and imaginative close readings; its larger viability for recasting Romanticism will become clearer in due course.

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Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (eds.), *Modernism and Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. 338. hb £45, pb £ 16.99. ISBN 0 7190 5306 4, 0 7190 5307 2.

The justification for this collection of essays is that the ‘pervasive but complex interrelations’ (p. 1) between literary modernism and empire have been neglected, and the aim of the volume is to overturn the Western-centred view of modernism which is ‘the legacy of the founding period of the study of modernism’ (the period after 1945) (p. 2). The claim that critics and theorists of modernism have tended to omit consideration of imperialism somewhat understates the extensive discussions of this topic within Conrad criticism (some of which are noted in Rod Edmond’s lucid and convincing chapter linking ideas of degeneration in imperialist and modernist writing), the rather different (recent) attention to it in Joyce studies (noted by C.L. Innes in his chapter on Yeats and Joyce as ‘anti-colonial nationalist writers’, p. 148) and the existing debates concerning Yeats in a post-colonial context (noted here by Elleke Boehmer in an original and illuminating chapter on Yeats and Leonard Woolf). Nevertheless the claim is broadly sustainable: certainly a trawl through general critical surveys of the European-American modernist movement reveals very little attention to the imperial context or to connections with modernism in other Anglophone literatures. The significance of such neglect, of course, depends on one’s definition of ‘modernism’. If one applies the term to a specific set of metropolitan, bohemian, avant-garde movements, groupings and aesthetics flourishing 1900 - 1930, then the significance of empire to modernism would be mostly a matter of modernism’s appropriation of the cultural plunder of empire (in the form of ‘primitivism’) and the suppressed presence of imperial hierarchies in modernism’s political unconscious. Helen Carr’s scholarly chapter on ‘Imagism and Empire’ examines such appropriation, focusing on the use of non-Western models by imagists (especially Pound), but she emphasizes that modernist primitivism is ‘complex and ambivalent’ rather than simply exploitative, involving as it does ‘an anxious loss of faith in the Western imperialist project’ (p. 65). Similarly Elleke Boehmer detects some Bakhtinian ‘accommodation’ (p. 93) and ‘decentring’ (p. 96) in the responses of Leonard Woolf and W.B. Yeats to the perception of otherness and relative value prompted by their exposure to Ceylon and to the work of Tagore respectively. Patrick Williams goes even further, arguing for ‘the possibility of modernism as the collective resistance of the colonised, anti-colonial insurgency at the level of culture’ (p. 26), while Nigel Rigby claims that the modernist aesthetics of Sylvia Townsend Warner are subtly subversive of imperial ideology. Parallels with *Heart of Darkness* are striking all the way through Rigby’s discussion of *Mr Fortune’s Maggot*, and the link is finally made in the concluding paragraph, but given the status of Conrad’s novella as a controversial test case, a fuller confrontation with the comparison would have been illuminating.

The dominant tendency of work on modernism in recent decades has been to widen its scope in terms of chronology, gender, nationality, etc, and this book takes the process a step further. If we define modernism simply as ‘a cultural response to modernity’ (perhaps as close as one can get to a consensus definition, as Patrick Williams notes in his opening theoretical chapter, p. 27), such a response is inevitably worldwide, though far from simultaneous. Hence the usefulness of Williams’s theme of ‘simultaneous un contemporaneities’ or the ‘combined and uneven development’ of modernism, modernity and imperialism’ (p. 31). As Mark Williams puts it nicely in a chapter which uses Katherine Mansfield’s *Urewera Notebook* to lead into a fascinating analysis of the

complexities of post-coloniality in New Zealand, modernism was ‘a varied response to modernity which arrived in different parts of the world at different historical periods with different intensities, with particular and local penetrations, seductions and disadvantages’ (p. 263). The drawback of a very wide definition of modernism is a certain loss of specificity and occasionally the net seems to be stretched rather thinly. Janet Montefiore’s attempt to see Kipling as a modernist throws up some fascinating parallels, but can seem like special pleading, as she perhaps acknowledges when she proposes modernity as ‘Kipling’s unconscious’ (p. 130). Similarly, Máire ní Fhlathúin’s chapter on ‘The Anti-Colonial Modernism of Patrick Pearse’ is a clear and informative account of Pearse’s literary strategies for reversing the ‘colonial hierarchy’ (p. 156), but the postulated affinities with modernism struck me as vague and tenuous.

A point of reference and dissent for a number of the contributors is Fredric Jameson’s well-known essay of 1988, ‘Modernism and Imperialism’. Patrick Williams describes Jameson’s configuration of modernism as ‘white-faced’ because he sees modernism as a metropolitan affair, irrelevant to the colonized. C.L. Innes objects to Jameson’s claim that there is little awareness of colonized states in pre-First War literature, arguing that ‘Jameson’s argument is scarcely tenable if one pays attention to anything other than the modernist works he chooses precisely because references to empire are not explicit’ (p. 144). Whereas Jameson’s essay is theory-driven, in the sense that literary examples are selectively deployed in support of an argument which takes its shape from pre-established principles (such as the exclusive explanatory power of ‘the Marxist problematic’), *Modernism and Empire* takes its cue from Stuart Hall’s remark, quoted here by Patrick Williams, that ‘theory is always a detour on the way to something more important’ (p. 15). In this respect each is probably in tune with its time. *Modernism and Empire* has a good claim to supplant Jameson’s essay as the crucial reference point for this historically important intersection.

Mark S. Lussier, *Romantic Dynamics: The Poetics of Physicality. Romanticism in Perspective.* Macmillan Press/St Martin’s: Basingstoke and New York. Pp. 220. ISBN 0 333 71891 7 (UK), 0 312 22671 3 (US)

In recent years, there has been a welcome increase in the number of interdisciplinary works being published that recognize the influence of scientific and philosophical thought upon literature. At first glance, Mark Lussier’s *Romantic Dynamics* seems a useful addition to the genre, with its stated aim of exploring dynamic models of cosmos and consciousness apparent in the work of the Romantic poets.

From the outset, the author’s approach is ambitious; poetic works by Blake, Byron, the Shelleys, and Wordsworth are to be ‘creatively collided’ with a wide range of concepts from contemporary theoretical physics in an attempt to ‘track shared assumptions in their models of material and mental dynamics’. Thus, he hopes to establish a new metaphoric terrain ‘liberated from the mechanics of Newtonian thought and more easily traversed with models articulated by Bohr, Einstein, and Hawking’. As a tool to facilitate this process, Lussier employs the Jungian concept of Synchronicity to help explain the ‘meaningful coincidences’ of thought which he sees as bridging the chasm that separates literary and scientific epistemologies lying nearly two centuries apart.

In principle, Lussier’s idea is a potentially fascinating one. The yearning expressed by the Romantic imagination to escape from the spiritual straitjacket of a classically mechanistic universe might well be portrayed as an important early stepping stone on the

path that would eventually lead to the complex and counter-intuitive abstractions of Quantum and Relativity theory. Were this the limit of his proposition, he may well have had an important thesis to offer. But Lussier goes much further -- indeed it must be said, too far -- in its application, with rather too much in the way of creativity on his part for this work to be meaningful and relevant literary criticism.

A typical example of the level of over-interpretation in which he indulges is his analysis (pp. 64-5) of Coleridge's lines from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (196-7):

And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'

Lussier attempts to forge the flimsiest of links between these lines and the concept of quantum indeterminacy. In support, he quotes Einstein's famous remark that; 'God does not play dice with the universe', following with Stephen Hawking's more recent rebuttal: 'God not only plays dice, but also sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen'. English Romanticism, says Lussier, '...offers no better evocation of the meaningful play of the random and uncertain, eclipsing the deterministic construction of the cosmos and complicating (even deconstructing) cause/effect relations'. Few poets were more philosophically minded than Coleridge, but Lussier is so immersed in seeking the complex postmodern imagery he desires, that he ignores more time-honoured concepts such as fate and luck, which surely represent a more likely and relevant interpretation of Coleridge's lines. It is difficult to see how his reading offers any aid or improvement towards understanding the poem.

Similar treatment is meted out to Byron's use of time imagery in *The Giaour*. Whilst the highly internal and subjective experiences of time described in this poem hardly conform to Newtonian concepts of absolute time, Lussier's tenuous attempts to present a commentary within the context of Einsteinian 'relativity' merely cast doubt upon his level of understanding of such scientific terms. Vague and utterly inappropriate references to 'black holes' (p. 118), 'event horizons' (p. 124), and 'thermodynamic time' (p. 128) in reference to the poem serve only to emphasize this. There are numerous such examples throughout the book, where Romantic writing expressing ontological doubt and cosmological speculation -- all based upon the philosophies of the early nineteenth-century and earlier -- are glossed by the spurious application of scientific jargon and imagery from twentieth-century physics.

Lussier might be saved if he were able to brush up a little on his science, and then present some explanation why his observations might be considered to have any meaningful significance. *Romantic Dynamics* fails in this, and for that reason it is a sadly missed opportunity. If the arts have any role in expressing scientific ideas, it is to assist, explore, and occasionally even anticipate the expression of complex abstractions by the means of metaphor. Indeed, it could be said that George Eliot's 'pier-glass parable' at the beginning of Chapter 27 of *Middlemarch* might helpfully be used to explain certain aspects of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. But to carry out a close literary analysis of that passage on such a scientific basis would be as ridiculous and pointless as reading the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius in the context of the atom-splitting of Rutherford and Bohr.

In recent decades the anachronistic mis-application of modern epistemologies to the past has led to the sort of clap-trap that emerged from certain academic sources during the 1970s. Then, Roman emperors and Renaissance kings were condemned by revisionist historians for their perceived shortcomings in areas such as social policy and political reform. In the same way, Lussier attempts to apply the imagery of our own sub-

atomic age to the verse of men who lived and died in what was still the age of gunpowder. The worlds of Hiroshima and Waterloo are simply too far apart for that to mean anything.

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**Jeffery W. Vail, *The Literary Relationship of Lord Byron and Thomas Moore*.
Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Pp. 249. £33. ISBN 0
8018 6500 X.**

Vail's study has two principal aims. The first is to demonstrate that 'Thomas Moore was a larger presence in Byron's life and work than any other contemporary writer' (p. 189). The second is to recover Moore from prolonged critical neglect and re-establish him as a figure of central importance in the literary culture of the early nineteenth century more generally.

As Vail points out, 'many scholars have recognized the fact' of Moore's influence on a wide range of other writers 'without analyzing it in detail' (p. 9). Vail successfully persuades the reader that this is an area that would reward considerable attention. Indeed, his account of Moore in relation to Byron suggests that such attention might have a significant impact on our understanding of a literary period during which Byron and Moore 'divided the poetical public between them' (p. 194).

Vail's book is divided into six chapters that follow the literary relationship between Byron and Moore from Byron's reading of Moore's poetry before 1806 to Moore's publication of his *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of His Life* in 1830-31. Vail's account is chronological, and focuses both on the direct influence of each writer upon the other and on the relationship between the two poets in terms of public perception and commercial competition.

Chapter One argues that, in his first encounter with Moore's poetry, Byron found a poetic model which, in so far as it was eroticized, self-ironizing, anti-Romantic (in the sense of rejecting Romantic notions of poetic sincerity in favour of an overt striking of poetic poses and wearing of poetic masks), suited his tendency to dramatize and demonize himself. Chapter Two focuses on Moore's influence on Byron's early satires: on the 'poetico-political "dialogue"' (p. 74) which began to form between the poets after their first meeting in 1811, on Byron's early efforts to achieve the balance of Moore's satire between the 'cutting' and the 'comical' (p. 55), his failure to do so until the composition of *Beppo* (Byron's pre-1818 political satires, argues Vail, 'tended to be merely savage' [p. 55]), and his temporary 'retreat' into other kinds of writing. Chapter Three discusses the influence of Moore's lyric writing on Byron's, suggesting that the attractions for Byron of Moore's lyricism included its 'tragic' tone and its Romantic nationalism, and arguing that Byron attempted to imitate these qualities in *Hebrew Melodies*. Chapter Four deals with Byron's influence on Moore's 'Eastern' poems (where Moore begins to feel intimidated by, but tries to emulate, the enormous success of Byron's 'Turkish Tales'). Chapter Five discusses the 'shadow of Byron' (p. 141) over Moore's composition, career and reputation after *Lalla Rookh*, focussing on Byron's *Manfred* and *Heaven and Earth*, Moore's *The Loves of the Angels* and its critical reception, and Moore's eventual switch to prose and surrender of the poetic field to Byron. The final chapter discusses Moore's biography of Byron – its genesis, its 'thesis' (p. 169), its impact on Byron's reputation and its impact on Moore's. Two appendices close the book: one offering an answer to William St. Clair's

claim that Moore ‘radically and systematically altered Byron’s letters ... in order to make them more flattering to himself and thereby improve his reputation’ (p. 195) and the other containing ‘A New Text of a Letter from Moore to Byron, 17 July 1823’.

The study has very real strengths. First is its retrieval of, and extensive quotation from, contemporary reviews and critical commentaries. A number of things emerge from this evidence: a powerful demonstration of Moore’s importance in the literary culture of the period and of the sustained public association of the two poets; an equally powerful reminder of Byron’s enormous commercial -- and critical -- success as a poet during his own lifetime (here seen driving Moore, as he drove Scott, out of writing poetry altogether and into writing prose); a sense of the extent to which Byron was seen to have ‘cornered’ various areas of the literary ‘market’ and of the lengths to which some of his ‘competitors’ went in order to open up new literary territories for themselves that were not overshadowed by his poetry; a number of valuable and sometimes revisionary insights into the critical culture of the early nineteenth century.

A second strength lies in the fact that Vail’s case for Moore’s importance in the life and work of Byron is not made primarily on the basis of poetic parallels drawn from the comparative study of the poetry in isolation, but by extensive quotation from the letters and journals of both Byron and Moore. Vail is less good at analysing literary texts than he is at marshalling historical documentary evidence, but the value of this book does not finally rest on the precision or persuasiveness of Vail’s readings of literary works. Rather, it is to be found in Vail’s demonstration of Moore’s considerable presence in Byron’s thinking about his own poetry and about poetry in general, and in his recovery of so much evidence of Moore’s cultural centrality during the Romantic period.

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John Beer, *Providence and Love: Studies in Wordsworth, Channing, Myers, George Eliot, and Ruskin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Pp. 335. £45. ISBN 0 19 818436 0. John Beer (ed.), *S. T. Coleridge: Poems*. London: Everyman, 1999. Pp. 589. Hb £10.99. ISBN 1 85715 027 9.

John Beer’s latest book is distinguished by its close attention to biographical detail and mastery of archival material, a good deal of it previously unpublished. It is this detail – along with characteristic critical acumen – that make this collection of essays valuable to scholars of both the Romantic and Victorian periods. Beer’s overall thesis is that the waning of faith in providence throughout the nineteenth century had, broadly, two immediate consequences: people turned to their experience of human rather than divine love as the grounding for their beliefs (often with disastrous results); and they began to seek out and rely on facts, either as the proof of a supernatural order (hence psychic research) or as guidance regarding one’s immediate duties. Such developments naturally drew on the Romantic cult of love and in a sense the book is about what leading Victorian thinkers and writers made of the Romantic inheritance. This is, then, intellectual history, but less cerebral than one might expect. The subjects of these ‘studies’, which include Wordsworth travelling through the Lakes to visit ‘Lucy’ during his Cambridge vacations in the 1780s, George Eliot defending her moral realism in letters and conversations with her Cambridge admirers, and the aging Ruskin battling despair while reliving his infatuation for the now deceased Rose La Touche, are all love stories, strangely moving

and often very sad. Beer follows each of his subjects in turn as he or she seeks to find in others or in the world the kind of spiritual certainty that the century's science has said cannot come from scriptural authority.

Beer's most controversial claim is that 'Lucy' was a real person, one whom Wordsworth loved and one, moreover, who proved to him the possibility of living with nature. The evidence marshaled on the side of this claim is considerable – from hints in the 'Lucy' poems themselves, as well as in the *Prelude* and the 1820 sonnets, to a bit of gossip picked up by De Quincey and, most convincing of all, a notebook entry penned by Coleridge during a trip with Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson to the Duddon Valley in 1808. Beer keeps on the right side of plausibility by presenting his evidence slowly and carefully, humbly reserving the revelation of the real 'Lucy' for the appendix to the book. In becoming Wordsworth's ideal child of nature, 'Lucy' played a providential role, guaranteeing faith just at the time it was growing weak. But can a human ever fulfil such expectations and live? 'Lucy' died young, so we will never know. But a generation later the scenario was repeated, with disturbing results. The young Frederick Myers (later co-founder, with Henry Sidgwick, of the Society for Psychical Research) fell in love with his cousin's wife, Annie Hill, and their liaison, sustained over several years, proved to him the possibility of Platonic love – until she took her own life.

Beer's sensitive telling of such stories as this is interesting in itself, but there is something else at work in this book. The episodes retold by this book are more than the detritus of history; they take on a contemporary life in Beer's own critical practice, specifically in the respectful attention he gives to the emotional lives of his subjects. In this sense the book contains a covert challenge to the tendency, present across English studies, of effacing personality in order to write history.

This relationship between critic and subject, which one might characterize as 'friendly', is clearly evident in Beer's Everyman edition of Coleridge's poetry, first published in 1963, revised in 1974 and 1993, and now reissued, with some changes and additions, in a new hardcover edition. Beer guides readers carefully but not obtrusively through Coleridge's *oeuvre* by grouping the poems in chronologically arranged sections: 'Juvenile Poems', 'The Collection of 1796', 'From Clevedon to Stowey', and so on, each section prefaced by a short essay laying out relevant biographical details as well as pointing out motifs, themes and images that readers are invited to look out for. In the case of the major poems like 'Kubla Khan' and 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', Beer goes further; he includes multiple versions of each and in his introduction draws on his own previous books to present readings of the poems that remain persuasive. Beer's helpful presence throughout the collection makes this an excellent student edition, but scholars will find it meets many of their needs too. In addition to Beer's characteristic attention to textual detail throughout, there is a new chronology, a new essay on 'Coleridge and his Critics', and a revision of some of the dating of the poems (they have been checked against J.C.C. Mays's forthcoming Bollingen edition). The book is, in short, both a collection and a companion, a reminder of both the poet's and the editor's 'poetic intelligence'.

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Anne K. Mellor. *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830*. Women of Letters. Indiana University Press. 2000. 172 pp. £26.95. 0 253 33713 5.

In *Mothers of the Nation*, Anne Mellor pulls together a number of women writers and a variety of literary forms to argue that, during the Romantic period, women succeeded in creating a public voice for themselves that did not so much exist alongside the Habermasian 'public sphere' as enter it wholeheartedly. In this she joins a number of recent critics of Habermas's rather sweeping claim that only the masculine subject demonstrated the qualities requisite to compete in the 'world', most notably those whose essays appear in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere* (edited by Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Clfona Ó Gallchoir, and Penny Warburton). Mellor's book is lively, informed and vigorous, and characteristically commanding, although it must be said that in many ways it is as sweeping as Habermas. In claiming that 'women writers', 'women critics', 'women poets', and 'women novelists' 'participated in the *same* discursive public sphere and in the *same* formulation of public opinion as did their male peers' (3), she effectively flattens the field of women's writing even as she elevates its inhabitants to the 'mothers' of modern British culture. In this book, as in her previous *Romanticism and Gender* (1993), there is very little scope for difference in women's writing: one feels that those women who do not fit Mellor's pattern simply don't count.

Mellor's work is always alive to the necessity of *numbers*: she uses multiple examples to back up her points. Even in Chapter 1, where the argument focuses on Hannah More as the exemplary 'revolutionary reformer', Mellor is careful to marshal together an impressive, and very interesting, number of nineteenth-century critics whose judgements on More match her own: that 'More's writings consolidated and disseminated a revolution ... in the very culture or mores of the English nation' (14; for Mellor, More's work makes possible the idea of Queen Victoria). It is an interesting idea: that Hannah More, with her emphasis on femininity as the touchstone of morality, singlehandedly transformed her culture and situated women as its symbolic and real centre. And yet it is hard to escape the conviction that when More lauds women's centrality in the 'public revolution of manners' (37), or 'specifically call[s] on women to save the nation' (38), she is doing so in a much more 'private' way than Mellor assumes. More's belief in and maintenance of social hierarchy make it much more likely that for her, women were meant to save through example and influence, not through active campaigning; that they were given a little eminence from which to rally their followers, but it was always to remain decorously enclosed in a cultivated garden. When More speaks in her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* of 'your [women's] private exertions', it is hard to see how Mellor can read this as 'emphasizing women's *public* role as mothers of the nation' (30).

Subsequent chapters continue the claim that in various genres women writers assumed the status of public speakers and symbolic national mothers. Chapter 2 focuses on 'Theater as the School of Virtue' and discerns in the work of Joanna Baillie, More, Hannah Cowley, and Elizabeth Inchbald the consolidation of a 'new woman', 'rational, just, yet compassionate, benevolent, and peace-loving ... the person best suited to govern the new British nation' (68). In Chapter 3, 'Women's Political Poetry', Mellor concentrates on Anna Letitia Barbauld, More again, Helen Maria Williams, and Lucy Aikin, with a short detour through Charlotte Smith; again, the emphasis is on the transformative nature of their poetry, 'intended to sway public opinion' (84). Chapter 4, 'Literary Criticism, Cultural Authority, and the Rise of the Novel', argues that the

criticism of Baillie, Barbauld, Inchbald, Clara Reeve, Anna Seward, and Mary Wollstonecraft reveals 'a powerful cultural authority: they had the intelligence and the taste to determine who writes best for the good of the nation' (85). Finally, Chapter 5, 'The Politics of Fiction', uses Charlotte Smith's *Desmond* and Jane Austen's *Persuasion* to conclude that women writers 'participated directly in ... fictionalized political debates' (103). Each genre, each writer is uniformly in line: all cohere to form the archetypal Mother, Britannia herself.

The book is focused, tightly argued, and forceful, and yet I left it feeling uncomfortably unconvinced. This is in part due to Mellor's blanket approach, mentioned earlier; there is no room here for dissenting women writers. Except for Chapter 3, which allows for a tradition of the 'poetess' (but then locates that tradition in the writing of Landon and Hemans, subsuming all other women's poetry to the 'political'), all women writers 'participated fully in the public sphere as Habermas defined it' (144). Full stop. The sonnets of Charlotte Smith, which determine solitude and privacy as the condition of womanhood, configure this privacy publicly. Does this mean the Habermasian public sphere? It seems unlikely, and yet Smith is one of Romanticism's women writers. Then there is the matter of the public sphere that women writers entered so willingly, the public sphere the existence of which Mellor begins her book by questioning. As the chapters proceed, the spheres resolutely separate: the end of Chapter 2 reinforces them by opposing the 'public sphere of the legitimate stage' to 'the private sphere' (68), while in Chapter 3 'the virtues of maternal love' are carried 'into the public realm' (83). Indeed, by Chapter 4 Mellor is arguing that women 'lay claim to a cultural authority which they used to promote a specific ideology' (86), which itself seems to be a different authority than that described by Habermas. The public sphere is redefined through the imagery of the private sphere, but the spheres themselves remain intact.

Perhaps it is that Mellor claims *so* much for the women writer that it simply is not credible. Why should women as a group be so much more politically motivated, and politically pure, than men as a group? And does it have to be spheres or no spheres? All women or none? Robert Shoemaker's *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* makes the claim that few or no women attended a variety of public political meetings and cites as evidence the absence of their names from attendance rosters. Mellor's counter-claim rests on the numbers of female names in the literary market. Do numbers tell the whole story? *Mothers of the Nation* does not need to define the aims of all women writers to be a valuable addition to the study of women writers; indeed, as all of us who work in this field know, Mellor's criticism from *Romanticism and Feminism* (1988) on represents its scholarly bedrock. But at the same time, to continue to write of 'women's writing' is to sustain the notion that it is containable, definable, when surely one of the most exciting things about writing by women, as about writing by men, is its infinite variety.

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Eve Tavor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. 304. hb \$48, pb \$18.95. ISBN 0 8018 6416 X, 0 8018 6417 8.

In *The Domestic Revolution*, Eve Tavor Bannet contributes to a growing consensus that domestic ideology and the doctrine of the separate spheres were not imposed on women by patriarchal males or by impersonal material forces connected with the Industrial Revolution. Instead, this ideology was initially formulated in early feminist discourse, and the professionalization of 'women's domestic offices' (p. 214) was achieved through women's victories or negotiations on the battlegrounds of family and state. Like Nancy Armstrong in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), Bannet situates the novel genre in relation to conduct books. However, in contrast to Armstrong, Bannet studies earlier and less canonical fiction. Indeed, her focus on such novels as Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, Burney's *Cecilia*, Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, and Edgeworth's *Belinda* provides evidence for the expansion in the past decade of the canon of the eighteenth-century novel. Bannet, moreover, follows the late Mitzi Myers in arguing that in the eighteenth century both conservative and radical women writers shared many of the same goals, in promoting women's education and establishing the dignity of the maternal role.

The plural *feminisms* in Bannet's subtitle points to the central structuring principle of her book. Rather than emphasizing the shared agenda of conservative and radical early feminists, Bannet seeks to distinguish two groups that she terms Matriarchs and Egalitarians. She qualifies her use of these labels, noting that they serve as 'heuristic devices' and that she is willing to accept 'the risk of appearing a little schematic' in order to present rival visions of the family and women's roles (pp. 10, 39). The relationship between these two camps would be less well described as opposition than as 'inter-translation', since ideas and arguments migrate across the ideological divide (pp. 9, 44). The notion of *translation* is a crucial one for Bannet, because by viewing women writers as translators of hegemonic Enlightenment discourse one can see them not as co-opted by men but rather as adapting male arguments in order to achieve feminist goals. Bannet describes Matriarchs as 'feudal-hierarchical traditionalists' and Egalitarians as 'leveling democrats' (p. 42). Matriarchs, who were often bluestockings, believed in female moral superiority and masked their will to power under the conventional tactics of governing by seeming to yield. Egalitarians, on the other hand, were highly suspicious of power. While Matriarchal novels present narratives of female success and often feature the figure of Mary Astell's Shunamite woman, 'towering over men in a woman-centered world' (p. 43), Egalitarians favour stories of female victims.

In the book's best chapter, Bannet argues that the 1753 Hardwicke Marriage Act was an effort to promote population and increase the labour force in response to the emerging discourse of political economy. Here, she shows how the supposedly traditionalist Matriarchs supported the view that morality was determined by legality, in following the innovative forms of the Marriage Act, whereas the ostensibly progressive Egalitarians looked backward to consensual moral unions based on pledged "troth." In general, Bannet contends that it was not the more radical Egalitarians who brought about the domestic revolution, but rather the socially conservative Matriarchs. In part, the Matriarchs achieved most of the shared feminist agenda because their claim to superior virtue came to be acknowledged by Church of England clergymen, who were threatened by the luxury and atheism of aristocratic men. More importantly, Egalitarians made what the anti-marxist Bannet sees as the strategic mistake of seeking wholesale social change, whereas the politically pragmatic Matriarchs fought as individuals, in the sphere of the family, for one feminist goal at a time.

The strength of this book resides in Bannet's impressively wide reading in conduct books, educational manuals, and early women's novels. Often, in order to substantiate a particular point Bannet will cite passages from three or more little-known texts. A

corresponding disadvantage is that her interpretations of novels are typically limited to four or five paragraphs, in which Bannet can do little more than summarise, shared features of plot. Indeed, despite reflecting, as well as helping to foster, the expansion of the canon, Bannet hints that she doesn't much like the novels she discusses (p. 248, n. 76). There is a potential problem of terminology in Bannet's use throughout the book of "Shunamite" to refer to the Matriarchal ideal of the powerful and morally superior woman. Readers who consult individual chapters without reading the passage in Chapter 1 about the Shunamite woman will likely find this term confusing.

Bannet is undoubtedly right that eighteenth-century novels were engaged in the same ideological debates as conduct books and tracts. However, one wonders whether the polemical force of novels depended on the survival throughout the period of the Renaissance mode of 'exemplary fiction', as Bannet maintains, or whether, instead, by the time of the French Revolution, the new form of the novel of ideas had developed. Given the prominence of historical literary criticism, it is not controversial for Bannet to argue that novels intervened in political debates and that fictional representations preceded and helped to create social change. For Bannet the separate sexual spheres are the creation of the ideological superstructure (the exemplary narratives and conduct books of the Matriarchs) rather than of the material base, since only at a later date did the Industrial Revolution reinforce the separation of home and workplace. Bannet may be on less solid ground in contending that this argument challenges post-Marxist analysis, given the reformulations of base and superstructure and the attention to uneven development in cultural materialist criticism. The large number of proofreading errors, including many mistakes in authors' names, detract somewhat from the extensive research and sometimes striking arguments in Bannet's *The Domestic Revolution*.

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E.J. Clery, *Women's Gothic. From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley. Writers and Their Work*. Northcote House, 2000. Pp. viii + 168. pb £9.99. ISBN 0 7463 0872 8.

E. J. Clery's project in *Women's Gothic* is ambitious: proposing a fresh critical perspective on the tradition of women's Gothic fiction, her study bypasses feminist readings of the genre as parables of late eighteenth-century gender oppression. Clery eschews an analysis of the archetypal Gothic plot in favour of an investigation of women's deft appropriation of the Gothic's distinctive feature, the sensationalist depiction of excessive passions. The starting point of Clery's argument, that women writers successfully colonized an aesthetic discourse of creative genius, visionary imagination, and authorial originality, a domain commonly perceived as exclusively masculine, is provided by the public adulation that accompanied the stage career of the great 'tragic Muse' Sarah Siddons. Contemporaries celebrated Siddons not merely as a passive conduit for Shakespeare's genius but credited her with creative imagination when they extolled her spine-chilling enactment of Lady Macbeth's murderous desires as a touchstone for original and authoritative performance. Siddons's widely publicized business acumen meanwhile ensured that her embodiment of affective hyperbole onstage did not raise doubts about her emotional stability offstage; the love of money was, as audiences well knew, the ruling passion of her life. Thus the Siddons cult, Clery argues, provided a

blueprint for professional women authors 'wishing to traffic in the passions, and earn lots of money in the process'.

In her chronological study of six Gothic women writers, their strategies to legitimize portrayals of emotional excess and to publicize their claims to visionary genius, Clery argues for a narrative shape within the genre's development. Over a few decades, she asserts, techniques to uphold fictional probability and distance terror diminished while the representation of passions became increasingly immediate. Where in the 1780s the Siddonian frame justified women's sensationalist writing, by the 1790s Siddons's unique fusion of legitimate tragedy and modern Gothic drama had ensured that 'the thorny path of Gothic experimentation was eased by the comfort zone of a national tragic tradition'. Thus, Clery posits, Clara Reeve's seminal romance *The Old English Baron* (1778) still employed a tripartite narrative economy to control readers' affective responses: a discourse of the marvellous, associated with evil and according to Burke's aesthetic concept of the sublime activating the most powerful of passions; mimetic realism to smooth over the preceding and appeal to an enlightened audience; and a rhetoric of sentiment to arouse feelings of pity and social sympathy. Sophia Lee's story-telling in *The Recess; or, A Tale of other Times* (1783-5), was already less stringently regulated, entralling readers with a series of histrionic confessional narratives, embedded within the familiar conventions of the she-tragedy which accorded central status to the heroine and the enactment of her passions. Clery argues that Ann Radcliffe, though she still employed moral sentiment as a regulatory medium, revolutionized the Gothic genre with the introduction of the philosophical concept of creative passions, powerful emotions that could be indulged without ill effects -- even by women -- when sublimated in aesthetic experience. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), perfecting a narrative technique which wove 'kidnapped' quotations by literary greats into a text interlaced with the lyrical effusions of her artistic poet-heroines represents, according to Clery, Radcliffe's own claim to original genius. Joanna Baillie's Gothic dramas of the late 1790s, meanwhile, dispensed with any need for moral instruction declaring tragedy's sole purpose was to increase the knowledge of human passions, however criminal or corrupt. Charlotte Dacre's salacious *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806) stretched the limits of women's Gothic even further, Clery points out, by introducing nymphomaniac heroines whose powerful passions seem to give rise to nothing but erotic longings and murderous designs. Clery's study closes with Mary Shelley who, as the latest contender, needed to escalate her depictions of excess even more to thrill the jaded tastes of a saturated audience. This she achieved in *Frankenstein* (1818) by literalizing the consequences of criminal passions in the creation of a 'real' monster, unrivalled in its alienation and lawlessness, and in her novella *Matilda* (written 1820), in which the confession of incestuous desire is linked to parricide and the daughter's torments of guilt become synonymous with creativity.

Clery's book is a valuable and inspiring study. Her focus on the aesthetics of the genre provides an original contribution to the current debate on women's Gothic; at times, however, it also proves limiting. Clery's argument hinges on the premise that late eighteenth-century culture was obsessed with the extremes of human passions but she offers few explanations for the phenomenon and muffles contemporary voices of dissonance. In this respect the omission of Charlotte Smith, arguably the precursor of the artistic Gothic heroine, seems a regrettable gap: for example, Smith's condemnation of the genre in her manifesto of realist writing which prefaced the second volume of *The Banished Man* (1794) could have added a dimension to Clery's argument which projects a trajectory of women's Gothic fiction that at times reads rather too smooth to be true.

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John Whale (ed.), *Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. Texts in Culture. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. 228. Hb. £40, pb. £13.99. ISBN 0 7190 5786 8, 0 7190 5787 6.

Few would dispute the claims for the *Reflections* which underpin this volume and qualify it for inclusion in a series on texts 'of seminal intellectual and cultural importance', as the general editors put it. As John Whale shows in his deft and informative introduction, the *Reflections* may be described as seminal on several counts, including the range of appropriations it has attracted, its continued capacity to generate new meanings, and its facilitating of 'future modes of thought which might have migrated a long way from those Burke himself would have recognized or agreed with' (p. 2). The afterlife of Burke's 'classic' or 'foundational' text, its shaping of and by the future, is one of this collection's connecting themes.

Of particular interest to readers of this Bulletin is the challenge made in a number of the essays, and from different critical perspectives, to literary Romanticism's construction of the *Reflections* as a seminal text of the political imagination. In the volume's opening essay F. P. Lock argues that to read the *Reflections* through the lens of a Romantic poetics (which he sees as the prevailing mode of recent critical commentary) is to lose sight of its classically rhetorical character. To use his own words, Burke's is a mimetic rather than an expressive project. Burke's claims for historical veracity, his studious matching of word and event, have to be taken seriously because he was addressing a knowing audience which would give its assent to a rhetorical discourse only when its conviction had been won by the deployment of rational proofs. Arguing from very different theoretical presuppositions Angela Keane also seeks to prise the *Reflections* away from a 'Romantic' context. In a complex but rewarding discussion she contests the view that the 'political power' of the *Reflections* 'lies in its rhetorical mastery of the Romantic symbol' (p. 200). Rather, Burke's text is the 'residually mimetic' (p. 216) product of a 'fragile empiricism', its system of correspondences and explanations (that matching of word and event) repeatedly undone by intimations of 'things yet to come' (p. 201). Kevin Gilmartin's more particularly historicized essay on the *Reflections* and 'vulgar conservatism' turns the critique of the 'Romantic' construction of Burke in a different and exciting direction. He argues that the centrality ascribed to the *Reflections* in the revolution controversy has 'limited and attenuated our understanding of anti-revolutionary culture in Britain, foregrounding a limited set of rhetorical, philosophical, and aesthetic issues, and shifting attention away from questions of political organization and agency' (p. 95). Burke's involved epistolary manoeuvres lent the *Reflections* an apparent aloofness which could be plausibly invoked as a sign of the text's classic status but which also sealed it off from an emergent sphere of plebeian opinion which Burke disdained but Hannah More and others sought to win for the counter-revolutionary cause.

Beyond these shared concerns the identity of a collection such as this can be inferred less from stated connections than from the employment of a common critical vocabulary and the recurrence of certain watchwords, not least those derived from the *Reflections* itself. Gender, the focus of many discussions of the *Reflections* over the last decade or so, is not conspicuous here. Instead, Burke's metaphor of 'the little platoon', cited in a number of the essays, signals the volume's interest in Burke's localism, his

understanding of the part played by attachments and loyalties, which he construed as instinctive, in constituting communities. Burke's naturalizing of these ties in the form of prejudice, the destructive potential of which he knew well from his familiarity with the effects of the penal laws against Catholics, is one of the topics discussed by Susan Manly whose intriguing essay foregrounds the religious dimension of the *Reflections*, otherwise not strongly represented in the volume. The little platoon is also of course the starting point for Burke's explanation of national belonging, and the issues of nationalism and nationality figure prominently in the collection. Alongside Tom Furniss's clear-sighted analysis of the construction of Englishness which emerges from Burke's repudiation of Richard Price are essays by W. J. McCormack and Claire Connolly which explore the meanings of the *Reflections* for Ireland's future and, more particularly, for the 1800 Act of Union.

Inevitably, in collections of this kind, it is left to the reader to imagine how points of disagreement between the essays might be developed or spaces for dialogue found. Lock's appeal for the *Reflections* to be returned to the rhetorical tradition could be said to be answered by other essays in the volume, though not perhaps in quite the terms he envisages. When Tom Furniss finds in the *Reflections* a 'process of *constructing* (or *reconstructing*) the English national character rather than simply reflecting a pre-existing character and set of opinions' (p. 125) he has in mind something very similar to the mode of ethical appeal which Aristotle describes at one point as almost the controlling factor in persuasion. The essays presented in this fine collection offer many such points of contact, as well as divergence, thereby illustrating another characteristic of the seminal text: its role as a testing ground for critical theory and a place where critical disagreements can be staged.

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Uttara Natarajan, *Hazlitt and the Reach of Sense: Criticism, Morals, and the Metaphysics of Power*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Pp. 209. £40. ISBN: 0 19 818437 9.

The central theme of this book is Hazlitt's attempt to combine an idealist view of the mind as actively shaping our experience with an emphasis on 'the "pragmatic", the "real", and the "particular" 'which more closely reflects the empirical tradition of eighteenth-century British philosophy. At first glance, this project might seem to have much in common with Schelling's and Coleridge's attempts to overcome the oppositions between conscious and unconscious or the active and passive aspects of the mind. Yet, Natarajan argues, Hazlitt's 'privileging of the "pragmatic" at the expense of the theoretical or abstract' makes him a proponent not of German, but rather of what we must call British idealism' (pp. 3, 9). Hazlitt, she writes, 'is neither merely derivative of nor merely isolated from Coleridge, but is grappling (in my view, more successfully than Coleridge) with just those issues that place Coleridge at the heart of our reconstructions of Romantic philosophy' (pp. 7-8). Natarajan's more detailed discussion of Hazlitt's theories, however, sometimes suggests a greater proximity between his and Coleridge's opinions than might at first appear. Hazlitt's distinctive view of associationism, for example, is said to consist in his making 'imagination ... the first cause in the associative process', and thus 'validat[ing] human agency' (p. 55).

Few things, however, are more characteristic of Coleridge's thought than the celebration of 'human agency', or of the mind's 'innate "power"' and freedom from subjugation to external influences' (p. 167), and Hazlitt's distinctiveness seems rather to consist in his using the term 'association' to denote an active and imaginative process rather than the passive or mechanical one which Coleridge contrasts with 'imagination'. His differences from Coleridge are more striking, however, in his attempt to limit the significance of imaginative discovery to the individual mind, rather than pursuing 'a general "truth" that is beyond the individual' (p. 59). 'The instrumentality of the self in determining imaginative truth', Natarajan writes, means that (in Hazlitt's own words) 'Truth is not one, but many; and an observation may be true in itself that contradicts another equally true, according to the point of view from which we contemplate the subject' (p. 133). This paradoxical position, Natarajan argues, has the virtue of escaping Coleridge's fundamental dilemma: 'the conflict between his view of the human or self-conditioned origin of poetic truth and the unconditioned, absolute basis of his religious belief' (p. 73). This 'conflict', however, seems closely to resemble the central opposition which Schelling and Coleridge resolve through the principle of imagination, which they describe as re-establishing the original or 'absolute' unity of conscious and unconscious or active and passive. The empiricist leaning which underlies Natarajan's view of Hazlitt as dealing 'more successfully' than Coleridge with the central issues of Romantic thought may perhaps explain the relative lack of emphasis in her study on German philosophy after Kant; yet even her reading of Coleridge's pre-Schellingian 'Eolian Harp' resists exploring its pantheistic idealism, describing it rather as stressing the 'passivity and submergence' of the individual mind in nature -- a view which, she suggests, is 'deeply and fundamentally antithetical to Hazlitt's view of the self-affirming activity of the imagination' (pp. 87-8). That 'deeply and fundamentally' tries hard to reinforce this problematic nub of Natarajan's argument; yet Coleridge so consistently opposed the Lockean view of the mind as 'passively' receiving rather than actively generating its ideas as to make Hazlitt's own vision of an 'active and empowered mind' (p. 16) seem less distinctive than she suggests.

Perhaps the most interesting and individualistic aspects of Hazlitt's thought, indeed, are those which deal with politics and morality, and particularly his view that 'the arbitrary power invested in a single individual is by nature inimical to the innate power with which we are all endowed' (p. 170). Even in his political essays, however, Hazlitt is sometimes more derivative of Coleridge than Natarajan suggests -- a fact which is especially evident from her discussion of Hazlitt's views on the relation between power and language (pp. 167, 172-3). Though Hazlitt's own empiricist leaning -- like that of the early Coleridge -- owes much to the tradition of Locke and Hartley, moreover, Natarajan's study at times risks too directly echoing Coleridge's opponents' recurrent view of his later idealist thought as somehow alien to the 'practical' spirit of the British nation. Paradoxically, however, her study also reveals that just as 'Platonic' and 'Aristotelian' thought compete and interact in Coleridge and many of his sources (including Hartley, Priestley, and Akenside), so they are also subtly combined in Hazlitt's closely-related theories.

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Michael Phillips, *William Blake: The Creation of the Songs, From Manuscript to Illuminated Printing*. London: The British Library, 2000. Pp. xi+180 (72 colour plates). Hb. £30, pb, £16.95. ISBN. 0 7123 4690 2 (pb).

Michael Phillips was guest curator of the recent Blake exhibition at Tate Britain and played an important role in focussing a great deal of that exhibition's contextual information on Blake as a printer. While this book includes some material from that exhibition, it concentrates more on the evolution of Blake's most popular work, *The Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, from initial drafts in Blake's Notebook to final variants of the illuminated book.

Since the beginning of the 1990s a substantial portion of Blake criticism has concentrated on bibliography, notably Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. This criticism has been instrumental in revolutionizing Blake studies, and Phillips begins his book with the bold claim that 'Nothing can tell us more about Blake than study of the processes by which his works reached their final form.' (p.1) I am not sure that this is a claim I entirely agree with: certainly nothing can tell us more about Blake as a *printer*, but a study of the formal technologies that are integral to his illuminated printing must also work alongside the significant contextual work that has been equally important to Blake studies over the past decade, as well as more conventional textual analysis, and Phillips is mindful of both of these factors. Nonetheless, such bibliographic study has been immensely useful for correcting many of the false assumptions made by Blake critics during the twentieth century (a point made repeatedly by Viscomi), and in this regard Phillips has produced an extremely meticulous and useful study.

The Creation of the Songs alternates chapters on the techniques of Blake's printing with textual analysis regarding the development of individual *Songs* in the Notebook. The chapters on illuminated printing (of *Songs of Innocence* and of *Songs of Experience*) are the most fascinating, concentrating on the technology of printing that was being transformed at the end of the eighteenth century, for example by the development of metal presses that enabled speedier mass production of newspapers or, closer to Blake, colour printing. One of Phillips's main arguments is that Blake's printing process for the later *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* utilises colour-printing techniques 'to produce his most remarkable graphic technique'. (p.97) The reason that Phillips goes into such detail regarding Blake's printing method (having recreated several of Blake's plates in the process) is to contradict some of Essick's and Viscomi's assertions, supporting instead the notion put forward by W. Graham Robertson and Martin Butlin, that Blake produces his pages by transferring them at least twice through the press.

Phillips also takes issue with Essick and (to a lesser extent, Viscomi) on the subject of Blake's method of composition as 'autographic', that he composed directly onto the copper plate. To support this, Phillips draws extensively on the Notebook to discuss the evolution of the poems, which takes up approximately two thirds of his text. The constant revision of the *Songs*, as well as a number of emblematic designs that appear in the Notebook, indicate to Phillips that Blake composed most, if not all, his designs prior to transferring them onto copper: because we do not have similar manuscripts for other works by Blake does not mean this is the exception that proves the rule, Phillips argues, but probably his typical method of composition. Viscomi, however, has made compelling arguments regarding *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* which suggest that Blake's method of composition was much more fortuitous, that he certainly did pre-design a number of visual emblems and even texts but that these served as a sort of commonplace book that could be called upon as and when required. What seems increasingly clear is that it is

difficult to argue for a 'one size fits all' approach to Blake's printing technique, and that different styles and forms require different processes.

Occasionally the book feels somewhat unbalanced, concentrating on the textual evolution of the *Songs* at the expense of the other elements of Blake's production of his books, not just printing but also distribution. There are tantalising snippets but a more general introductory chapter on how books were produced and sold in the eighteenth century would have been appreciated. It is extremely helpful, however, to have a guide to at least part of the chaotic Notebook: Phillips's discussion of poems such as 'London' or 'The Tyger', for example, are very good when determining how Blake's ideas on particular *Songs* could change in response to immediate circumstances. Also, while not this book's main concern, Phillips does not neglect the overall meaning of the *Songs*: 'What becomes clear, as Blake enters new poems, returns to revise them and to write more, is that his vision of *Songs of Experience* becomes sharper, more penetrating and more uncompromising with each stage. But however dark his vision becomes, nihilism never displaces the moral imperative that impels the creation of the poems' (p.43).

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