

Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*. London: Phaidon, 1999. Pp 448. pb £14.95. ISBN 0714834807.

Kenneth Clark described the Gothic Revival as ‘the most widespread and influential artistic movement which England has ever produced’ Chris Brooks’s *The Gothic Revival* is an excellent introduction to the Gothic Revival and its impact on architecture, art, painting, film and music not just in Britain, but in Europe and America. This superbly illustrated book is a survey of the Gothic Revival in its many manifestations and transformations over the centuries. Brooks tracks developments from seventeenth-century England, in which he pinpoints Gothic Revival’s beginnings, through garden follies in the eighteenth century, castellated and monastic gothic in the nineteenth century and theme park architecture of the late twentieth century. Even though the book’s main focus is on architecture, it also covers the Gothic Revival in other forms such as literary gothic, film and Gothic Punk. Brooks not only comments on aesthetics, but places developments within a cultural and political context.

The book helpfully maps key moments in the Gothic Revival. These include Henri IV’s rebuilding of the royal cathedral of Orléans, the university gothic of seventeenth-century England, the building of the Shotover Temple, the erection of Strawberry Hill ‘the first Picturesque House’ (p.90), and the New Palace of Westminster project.

If the architecture of the European middle ages had no style’ (p.9), then the architecture which grew out of it was a hybrid of different styles, aesthetically striking, and which was created to draw attention to itself. It is not easy to define what is the Gothic Revival in terms of one style as it is many different styles. For example, gothic buildings in the seventeenth century England often incorporated Elizabethan and Jacobean interiors. At Durham Cathedral the Gothic Revival elements were mixed with elements derived from the Baroque, and the elaborate high Victorian gothic often placed an emphasis on interiors in the metalwork, glass, painted decoration, mosaics, and stone carving.

In the variety of contexts in which Gothic Revival emerged, it had its different meanings. In this book, Brooks unpacks the significance of the adoption of the Gothic Revival for the different generations. The rebuilding of the royal cathedral of Orléans, was a ‘conscious act of stylistic revival, a reclamation of the medieval lineage of Church and state that the Huguenots had sought to disrupt’ (p.20)’. On the other hand, the University Gothic represented a ‘continuity of in the institution, its society, scholarship, culture, above all its religion’ (p.27). Gothic Revival styles were adopted by the Whigs in the eighteenth century to symbolise Britain’s need to defend her hard won liberties. Examples were Tyrrell’s garden architecture at Castle Howard, Yorkshire, and the gothic tower built at Whitton Park, Middlesex. Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill, built at Twickenham, was not modelled on any previous building, makes a clear statement about political liberty.

In the nineteenth century the Gothic Revival also found itself central to political and cultural debates. In Victorian England, the gothic suburban villa empowered the middle classes and the building of Houses of Parliament made a statement about ‘making a nation’ and creating a national identity. John Ruskin attacked Marx and Engel’s ideology through his writings about the Gothic and William Morris championed the Arts and crafts movements while attacking the great Gothic Revival perpetuated by practitioners such as George Gilbert Scott as bringing about capitalism.

Alongside the architecture and other art forms, Brook's gives examples the development of literary gothic including discussing Richard Hurd's challenge against classicism in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). He also charts the roots of gothic fiction with an exploration of the forgeries including Thomas Chatterton's 'foxed and faded manuscripts (p.110) that 'conjured a whole medieval fantasy'. James Macpherson's *Works of Ossian* (1765), and Walpole's *Castle of Ontranto* (1764). These texts were followed by the sublime literary gothic of the Romantic period with works such as Ann Radcliffe's disturbing and reassuring novels, Mathew 'Monk' Lewis's 'shocking' *The Monk* (1796), William Bedford's *Vathek* (1786), and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). In contrast, Brook notes the literary gothic of the nineteenth century internalised terror and fear in texts such as Mary Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White* (1860).

Like an Ann Radcliffe novel, Brooks places his exploration of the Gothic Revival within a narrative frame which uses the Gothic Revival as a way of examining history. Whether it is the garden ruins of the eighteenth century, that at the same time discover history, and make it up, or Frankenstein's monster that is an 'outcast of history and nature (p.126), Brooks constantly makes us aware that Gothic Revival is a dialogue with the past – that 'foreign country'. History, Brook reminds us, is nowadays repackaged as heritage, but it is still being revisited in the form of Gothic Revival whether it is in popular culture such as Gothic Punk, or Disney theme parks.

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Morton, Timothy. *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 282. ISBN 0 521 77146 3. £40.

Only one word describes Timothy Morton's *The Poetics of Spice*: spicy. Like an exotic dish, this book is both enticing and overwhelming. This is a book about luxury, richness, sensation, and enjoyment. It is also about entrapment, contradiction, and guilt. Most of all it is about food, what it does to us, and how we in turn represent it.

The poetics of spice is derived from myriad sources: histories of consumerism, deconstruction, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and a cornucopia of historical sources. Armed with such concepts as the remark and the *pharmakon*, Morton characterizes spice as the embodiment of desire, the empty core of longing at the heart of the capitalist enterprise. Spice is *the* fantasy substance. It supplies every want and every cure. But there is never enough. It always leaves you wanting more. Spice is both a drug and a form of currency, as indeed tobacco was in the seventeenth century. Brought into the literary realm spice becomes a metaphor for metaphor, a key which is it at the same time a mystery.

Morton provides copious examples from across the cultural and historical spectrum, from ancient philosophy to contemporary film, from Renaissance cartography to the latest ambient techno-pop. At the centre of these is the literature of the long eighteenth century, especially Romantic literature. Without doubt, the main strength of this book is the nuanced readings of Milton, Dryden, Thomson, Darwin, Seward, Smith, Coleridge, Shelley, Hunt, and Keats. These readings begin with the 'trade wind topos', images of perfumed winds and spicy intoxicants in eighteenth century literature that both refined and refuted imperialism. These discourses share

divided loyalties to aesthetic richness and puritanical disgust. Satan's journey through chaos, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, is saturated by orientalist delights, both restorative and sinful. Satan is a 'drug merchant, a pusher' (61). But Eden is also described as a garden of profuse and magical abundance. Eve is a victim of false advertising. The chapter explores the ways various writers deluded themselves into advertising capitalist delight even as they exposed its potential harm.

The middle chapters read important Romantic texts from the perspective of the poetics of spice. 'Place settings' deals with the ways spice embodies consumerism. Regarded by both capitalist and anti-capitalist authors of the period as effeminate and dangerous, the poetics of spice was also employed to justify and invent the healthy masculine economy. The result is 'an asymmetrical relationship between fantasy and reality in which both are related and yet retain their identity, in a kind of emulsion' (p. 123). The reading of stanza 30 of Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes* is the high point of the book, proving how in tune the Cockneys were to the slippery zones of identity, gender, mind, and body. 'Blood Sugar' considers Southey's and Coleridge's attacks on the slavery as instanced of Romantic anti-consumerism. Coleridge is concerned, Morton contends, less with the injustice of slavery itself than with the metaphorical character of the commodities produced by slaves.

The book concludes with 'ambience,' the most intriguing concept in Morton's aesthetics. Ambience is 'embodied space'. It eschews the distinction between something and nothing and glories in the fantastic materiality of metaphor, sentiment, and 'heightened' experience. Ambient poetry creates a 'sense of potential: something is "about" to happen, but there is yet no label or concept for this' (p.222). It evokes the possibility of meaning, but does not name it. Ambient poetry is hyper-capitalist, outside the realm of 'normal' productive behaviour celebrated in the Protestant Ethic, but also within it, embodying the core of desire that motivates that ethic in the first place.

Those who want to use Romantic naturalism to advocate anti-globalization and environmental consciousness will be frustrated by Morton's readings. The utopian ideals of domestic bliss, essential truth, and individual freedom are products of the capitalism they oppose. 'If we read Romantic poetry more carefully, it discloses its complicity. *And that is not intrinsically "bad"*: it is, in fact, what enables a critique to be staged' (p. 208). The key to ideological resistance, Morton seems to be saying, is self-reflection. It involves embracing the *literary* character of literature in the full register of creativity and imagination within consumer culture rather than in the service of it. Yet, if *The Poetics of Spice* is to serve as a source of political advocacy, then it needs to be clearer about where its agency comes from. Morton wants us to resist the capitalist injunction to 'Enjoy!' but there is little indication that this is possible. Perhaps he is just being honest. To some extent we are all deluded. And that is a difficult pill to swallow, no matter how good it tastes.

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**Helen Thomas, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 332. £40. ISBN 0 521 66234
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Considering that between 15 and 20 million people suffered abduction, enslavement, or premature death as a result of the slave trade, and that calls for its abolition -

described by Wordsworth as ‘a nation crying with one voice’ - energised political debate during the Romantic period, it is surprising that, until recently, the subject has so little interested literary scholars. This is despite a rich and varied literature composed both by familiar figures of the literary world and by lesser-known writers, some of whom had personal experience of the horrors of slavery. *Romanticism and Slave Narratives* is one of a small but growing number of critical works to engage with this material and, in this case, to establish a relationship between ‘transatlantic’ slave narratives, and the literature of British Romanticism traditionally seen as mainstream.

The book is in two parts, which focus on Romanticism and slave narratives respectively. The important concept that unites both is the ‘discourse of the spirit’, which Thomas argues unites spiritual autobiography and slave narrative with the self-consciousness – and self-absorption – characteristic of Romantic literature. Given the importance of this idea, it is confusing to have to read over 50 pages before reaching a definition. Then, Thomas’s first example, the narratives of the Methodist prophet, Joanna Southcott, by Thomas’s own confession, remains ‘detached from any direct interrelationship with abolitionist demands’. (p. 59) Likewise, Thomas’s reading of John Newton’s *Authentic Narrative*, shows how Newton’s spiritual autobiography prefigures aspects of slave narratives in its self-consciousness, but, unlike later abolitionist writing, ‘remains severed from a discourse proclaiming the needs of others’. (p. 69). This dichotomy is not present in Cowper’s *Task*, she argues, which presents a fusion of spiritual narrative and abolitionist critique: Thomas’s close reading reveals that slavery permeates rather than punctuates the text. In the chapter ‘Romanticism and Abolition’, Thomas observes that the ‘discourse of the spirit’, was used by Romantic poets for local and immediate self-examination, but by slave narrators to describe ‘a process by which the slave’s former cultural self was redetermined within the parameters of Christian ideology and expression’. To substantiate this important point, there is an extremely good extended reading of the contribution made by canonical Romantic writers to the abolition debate. However, despite passing discussion, Thomas does not show us clearly and precisely how slave narratives informed the writing of these Romantics, if at all. The short discussion of John Stedman’s *Narrative of a Five year’s Expedition, Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* is a turning point. The book, famously illustrated by Blake, seems to hold the key to a direct relationship between the Romantic poets and a self-representation immersed in colonial discourse. Thomas’s reading of this extraordinary text is deft and sure, demonstrating its hybrid nature and its strange affinity with spiritual autobiography. By contrast, the examination of legal and pseudo-scientific justifications for racism that follows, while detailed and informative, seems to lack insight.

The second part of the book commences with a short theoretical chapter but, following an absorbing discussion of African religion - essential to a study that reads narratives by Africans as spiritual discourse - the real business begins with a reading of the early slave narratives. This shows precisely how these texts, through their cultural and linguistic hybridity, developed a ‘convergence of spiritual discourse with demands for racial and socio-economic liberation’. (p. 200) In what is by far her best chapter, Thomas shows that Phillis Wheatley’s participation in the ‘discourse of the spirit’ existed alongside a subtly discernible critique of slavery, expressed in the interplay of the themes of memory and imagination, and captivity and release, both spiritual and physical. These themes, later major topics for the Romantic poets, permeate Wheatley’s writing and serve as an act of cultural recollection, in defiance

of the slave system that sought to erase the cultural memory of Africans in the New World. Thomas's discussion of Olaudah Equiano's use and subsequent abandonment of the conversion narrative form is rewarding and will be read with interest by the burgeoning ranks of Equiano scholars around the world. She does not, however, take account of recent research casting doubt over Equiano's African nativity. The book concludes with Robert Wedderburn's *Horrors of Slavery* (1824). Wedderburn's discourse is shown to 'enigmatically converge' with Blake's but this brief return to Romanticism is not sustained. Instead, Thomas successfully shows that Wedderburn's extraordinary and inflammatory texts drew on the 'bicultural tactics' of Wheatley and Equiano to reach their 'volatile climax'.

Every book has its silences. In *Romanticism and Slave Narratives* it is not hard to notice the absence of Quobna Ottobah Cugoano: a former slave, a servant to the artist Richard Cosway - as Thomas several times notes, a friend of Blake - and the author of an important slave narrative and spiritual autobiography, *Thoughts and Sentiments*, published in 1787. Cugoano's absence is surprising given his undeniable participation in the 'discourse of the spirit', his uncompromising abolitionism, and his proximity to one of the key figures of English Romanticism. Yet despite this omission, and despite the slow start to the book, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives* is an important work that both illuminates and problematises the relationship between Romanticism and the slave narratives that, often, were read far more widely than the now canonical work of the Romantic poets.

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**Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception*.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. 397. £35. ISBN 0 19 818710 6.**

As its title clearly signals, Lucy Newlyn's *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* is fundamentally concerned with revising Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*. Newlyn offers 'a new reading of Romanticism by reversing the temporal direction of Bloom's model of influence ... Far from being oppressed by the burden of the past [she argues] Romantic writers were intensely preoccupied with the combined threats of modernity and futurity. This preoccupation can be discerned not only in their ambivalent and sometimes hostile reactions to the growth of literacy, the reading-public, and the rise of criticism... but also in their more intricate and occluded devices for pre-empting misinterpretation' (p. x). The ambivalent relationship of Romantic poets with an emergent reading public, coupled with an acute awareness of their own status as both authors *and* readers, generates what Newlyn terms 'the anxiety of reception'. It is the aim of *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism* to highlight authorial attempts to theorise the role of readers and define the limits of 'interpretative freedom' (p. viii), and to uncover the ambiguities which authorial anxiety about reception produces within a range of Romantic-era texts.

As part of her investigation of the dialectics of writing and reading in this period, Newlyn's remarkably rich and wide-ranging study takes in battles along generic and gender lines (as in the association of women readers with the novel), struggles between critics and poets about the relative values of poetry and prose, debates in the campaign for reform of copyright legislation, and the relationship of the spoken and written word vis-à-vis a poetics of reception. Wordsworth and Coleridge

receive sustained attention, but space is devoted to authors as diverse as Barbauld, Hazlitt, Hannah More, Peacock, and Isaac D'Israeli.

The 'anxiety of reception' is explored in three 'case studies' on Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Barbauld. For Wordsworth and Coleridge, fear of the dissolution of authorial power activates a range of defensive strategies (textual and material) in relation to readers and reception. Coleridge's solution to his anxieties involves a 'contractual undertaking' between author and reader in which the reader temporarily cedes power to the author in order to enter into the spirit of the poetry (p. 105). The 'model readers' figured in Coleridge's texts 'are not active proponents of interpretative liberty, so much as mediators between interpretative freedom and authorial rights' (p. 89). By comparison, Wordsworth's solutions are 'less theorised, more improvisatory' (p. 92), generating a discrepancy in how the reader is imagined in his poetry and prose.

Barbauld's poetry, according to Newlyn, emphasises the 'powers of sympathetic identification' as a means to draw readers into a 'fellow feeling' with the author (p. 155). Barbauld's willingness to enter into an intimate, sympathetic dialogue with readers meant that she 'successfully mediated between alternative spheres of reception' (p. 141), adopting a variety of modes of address to suit different audiences. Although Barbauld displayed an 'acute sensitivity to audience expectation' (p. 139), her career was 'seemingly unruffled by anxieties about reception' (p. 164). Newlyn, however, does not fully account for why Barbauld might have moved more easily across the reading/writing divide than Wordsworth or Coleridge, or why she (or any of the women authors discussed in the chapter 'Feminizing the Poetics of Reception') were seemingly less troubled than their male counterparts by the threat of a mass readership and the commodification of literature.

Inevitably, Newlyn argues, the authorial tactics designed to maintain the power of the author highlight instead the power of the reader, thus confirming the very anxieties such strategies were meant to resolve. Newlyn treats this double-bind sympathetically, but never uncritically. Authors' use of select 'coterie audiences' as a means of gauging and managing reception often backfired when privately sympathetic readers turned post-publication critics. One of the most stimulating chapters ('Competition and Collaboration in Periodical Culture') demonstrates how defensive, and often elitist, methods for combating the anxiety of reception left authors such as Wordsworth open to parody by their contemporaries.

Newlyn persuasively argues that the creation of literary texts is inseparable from an author's conception of how—and by whom—their texts were read. Yet in breaking down the boundary between reading and writing, Newlyn seems to collapse reception entirely into production, with the result that 'reception' becomes an increasingly attenuated concept as this study progresses. Newlyn also occasionally blurs the distinction between different types of reception. The 'lesson' Wordsworth 'chose to learn' from a negative review, for example, was that 'the public could be relied on not at all' (p. 94). It isn't entirely clear whether Wordsworth or Newlyn is deliberately conflating critics and the public here.

Reading, Writing, and Romanticism is not intended as a study of reader response, but it might have been useful to provide some examples of the interpretative activity of general readers. As it stands, we are never allowed a perspective on the basis for the 'anxiety of reception' from a position outside the closed circle of author-critic commentary. While her methodology aims 'to bridge materialist and idealist approaches to the reader' (p. x), she never displaces the idealist concept of the reader existing largely as the author envisions him/her within the text. Ultimately, the image

remains of a reading public as shadowy and anonymous as Coleridge and Wordsworth imagined it.

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Philip J. Connell, *Romanticism, Economics and the Question of 'Culture'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. 338. £40, ISBN 0 19 818505 7.

Unlike many historicizing books on Romanticism, Connell's book 'does exactly what it says on the tin'. The 'economics' of the title is not treated as a trope or metaphor, but refers to the work chiefly of Malthus, but also of Bentham and Ricardo as well as that of more ephemeral figures, and the strategy of the book is to examine the relationship between their ideas and various key Romantic moments and groupings: the writing of *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, the Hunt circle, and Southey's later conservatism and imperialism, as well as, more generally, the Romantics' interest in education.

One of Connell's key aims is to reveal the ambivalence and complexity of the Romantics' attitudes towards political economy, something which is demonstrated by the evidence he marshals that Coleridge's and Wordsworth's reaction to the first version of Malthus's *Essay on Population* was largely favourable, and that their attacks on the second version of the *Essay* should be regarded as attempts to identify themselves with populist pro-war sentiment rather than expressions of any particularly deep ideological disagreement (pp 33-37). The book's conclusion makes it clear that Connell has in his sights not only new historicist claims about the Romantics' essential disengagement from the political life of their time, but also wider interpretative traditions that have characterized the social criticism of Carlyle and Ruskin as part of a 'Romantic tradition' of opposition to economic reductionism, either to be valorized as a 'radical heritage' by Raymond Williams and the New Left or to be denounced as responsible for British economic decline by historians such as Martin Wiener.

I was left feeling that it might have helped readers to have this underlying polemical purpose to the scrupulous historical contextualizations offered by Connell more clearly signalled from the outset, since the book seemed to change gears rather obviously at the end, but this is perhaps mere carping. What makes the book so rewarding is its marvellously rich and nuanced examination of the evidence for what the Lake School, and to a lesser extent the Hunt circle, thought about economic arguments, and the way this was affected by shifts in political situation and allegiance. This aspect of the book is so thorough that it is bound to be a standard reference for years to come.

Connell starts so many highly suggestive arguments that it is hard to know in a review which to select. One which is bound to be influential is his convincingly set out claim that the rather neglected Book XII of the 1805 *Prelude*, often regarded by critics as a mere supplement to the arguments against Godwinian abstract reason in Book X, was in fact intended by Wordsworth specifically as a critique of Malthus (p 44). Another tantalizing point made by Connell is that Shelley's attack on political economy in *A Defence of Poetry* is not in fact aimed either at Malthus (whom Shelley regarded as a follower of Paley) or at Bentham - Connell's detailed presentation of the friendly terms which existed between the Hunt circle and Benthamite utilitarians makes some critical rethinking of the nature of Shelley's and Hunt's radicalism a

necessity (pp 212-215). A more general feature of Connell's argument, which also deserves to be influential, is the way he draws attention to the theological dimension of Malthus' arguments, and to the importance of the Christian and Tory economic discourse of figures such as Whately and Chalmers, which forms a context within which *The Excursion* and Coleridge's political writings can be seen as engaging with economics from a 'liberal Tory' perspective, rather than rejecting economic thought wholesale. Connell also makes some interesting comments on the way the Romantics draw on economic discourse in order to characterize the new print culture, although this aspect of the book is less developed.

The book's concentration on presenting the evidence for how leading Romantics interacted with the economic discourse of the period has perhaps a downside, in that there is not a great deal of contextualization of economic arguments within contemporary philosophical/theological positions. In particular, since Connell himself stresses the theological context of Malthusian economics, it would have been good to see more consideration of the interplay between economics and theology, on which little work appears to have been undertaken since the publication of Oliver Boyd Hilton's impressive, but by no means definitive, study *The Age of Atonement* in the late eighties. A greater element of contextualization might have helped Connell's argument, since current scholarly understanding of Romantic period economic discourse is biased towards the liberalism of Ricardo and the Edinburgh reviewers, as he himself admits. Connell's laudable attempt to counter the automatic identification of Romantic period economics with free-market liberalism seems to call for a wider project, which would present the early nineteenth century conservative intellectual context, within which the economic discourse of Whately and Chalmers, and arguably, as Connell has shown, Wordsworth and Southey themselves, is embedded.

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Mary Jean Corbett, *Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 228. Price: £37.50 (\$59.95). ISBN 0 521 66132 3.

In this wide-ranging study of 'Liberal English fictions about the English-Irish relation' (p. 4) in the period following the 1801 Act of Union between Britain and Ireland, Mary Jean Corbett traces the ways in which nineteenth-century discourse about the Union often figured it in terms of gendered tropes of marriage and familial relationships, and how the writings of authors as diverse as Edmund Burke, Anthony Trollope, Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill worked to legitimate the Union and unravel its implications for both Irish and English national identities.

The strength of this work lies in its uncovering of a variety of representations of 'Irishness' in English writing of the mid-Victorian period. As Corbett rightly points out, the study of Ireland in English fiction (in particular amongst Victorianists) is a neglected area in the fields of both 'Irish' and 'English' studies. *Allegories* goes some way towards addressing the scholarly gap between studies of Ireland in the nineteenth-century novel—which tend to focus primarily on Irish novels—and recent studies of English fiction that concentrate on linking England's imperial endeavours to the development of English national identity, but which pay scant attention to the place of Ireland both within the empire and in these formulations of 'Englishness'.

Chapters three, four and five of this work—dealing with Victorian ‘condition of England’ novels, Trollope’s writings on Ireland, and the cultural and economic theories of Arnold and Mill—are especially useful in highlighting the importance of Ireland and the Union in formulations of English identity and the development of the English novel. These three chapters ably demonstrate how English authors explained Irish otherness as either racially ‘given’ or as historically and culturally determined. *Allegories* is particularly illuminating on the subject of the cultural work performed by representations of the Irish working classes in England in novels such as Gaskell’s *North and South* and Kingsley’s *Alton Locke*, both in making sense of mid-century Irish-English relations and in consolidating an English national identity that could transcend the conflicts within England between capitalists and the working classes.

The first two chapters, however, are less original in discussing the rhetorical and narrative strategies employed in the writings of Burke, Edgeworth and Owenson to ‘merg[e] or marry’ Irish and English identities in order to incorporate Ireland fully into ‘a national or imperial whole’ (p. 44). Corbett examines how *The Absentee* and *The Wild Irish Girl* resolve ‘questions concerning the legitimacy of English rule in Ireland’ at the level of personal and familial relations, arguing that these questions are ‘raised and ultimately foreclosed by the workings of the intercultural marriage plot’ (p. 54). While Corbett’s interpretations of these key texts are often astute, her arguments would have been improved by extending her reading beyond *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee* and *The Wild Irish Girl*. One wishes that Corbett had been slightly more adventurous in the choice of Romantic-era novels analysed here. Her claims about ‘post-Union fiction’ might have been more convincing had she considered, for example, Owenson’s later national tales, such as *O’Donnel* (1814), which demonstrates a decided unease in its own attempts to ‘foreclose’ questions of the restitution of historical wrongs in Ireland through the device of the marriage plot. Alternatively, a discussion of ‘English’ fiction that represented Ireland in the early nineteenth century might have provided a counterpoint to her readings of Edgeworth and Owenson, and enabled her to ask more interesting questions about how English authors attempted to reconcile their Irish and English readers to the Union in its immediate aftermath.

Corbett asserts that her approach ‘historicises’ nineteenth-century fictional discourse about Ireland by reading novels alongside contemporary political and economic writings, but occasionally she fails to provide an adequate sense of the place occupied by these representations of Irishness in a larger historical and cultural context. Corbett’s work does little to expand our understanding of the actual historical moment of the Union and the variety of cultural and political meanings attached to it in both Britain and Ireland. As a symptom of this absence of a fuller historical picture of Irish-English relations, it is notable that there is no substantial discussion of the movement for Repeal of the Union of the 1830s and 1840s. Neither does Corbett fully engage with the issue of how the Anglo-Irish identity of Burke, Edgeworth and Owenson influenced their particular views of the Union, and whether their Anglo-Irishness produced a demonstrably different understanding of the Union than that shown by the authors of the ‘liberal English fictions’ subsequently examined.

Corbett persuasively argues that ‘the representation of Irishness by English writers does not entirely depend on essentialist notions of national, racial, or cultural difference, or necessarily equate Irish difference with inferiority’, and instead emphasises the ‘dynamic quality’ of those Anglo-Irish and English narratives of ‘cross-cultural contact’ she examines (p. 5). She skilfully charts the ever-changing representations of Ireland’s relationship to England and Englishness, but she does

(perhaps inadvertently) portray the actual relationship between Ireland and Britain as largely stable during the course of the politically, economically and socially turbulent eighty-year period she examines. If the solutions offered by authors such as Trollope and Arnold to the question of how Ireland and England might be reconciled to each other under the Union were varying, Corbett never interrogates why the question itself is rendered so static both in the writings she examines and, ultimately, in her own study.

While it does not have much original research to recommend it, *Allegories of Union* does present some challenging readings of a range of texts, and will be of interest to those working in the fields of Irish literature and Victorian studies.

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David Aram Kaiser, *Romanticism, Aesthetics and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. 154. £37.50. ISBN 0 521 63000 2.

This slim volume presents eminent thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as proponents of an 'aesthetic statism' based on four 'central elements': '(1) the aesthetic sphere, with its essential autonomy and underlying logic of the symbol; (2) individual autonomous subjectivity and its formation (*Bildung*); (3) the enlightenment conception of universal reason; and (4) the political state and its formation'. The author sees the strands of aesthetic, social and political philosophy which he pulls together under the rubric of 'aesthetic statism' as offering possibilities for the reconciliation of individual consciousness and political and social structures. The book's form and style suggests that it may have been constructed from a series of essays and its coherence as a monograph relies on the persuasiveness of this thesis of 'aesthetic statism'. Here, however, is a major problem: while, at times, David Kaiser frankly acknowledges that the term is his own invention, elsewhere he implies, perhaps unintentionally, that the thinkers concerned were themselves consciously working under this rubric and dedicated to its service and even that there exists a 'tradition' or 'lineage' of aesthetic statism (pp. 2-5).

In his Introduction, he anticipates and attempts to forestall likely criticism by arguing that 'aesthetic statism' can only be understood within the 'discourse of modernity' (p. 4). At the same time, however, he acknowledges both that the book does not give a comprehensive account of this discourse and that it approaches modernity itself 'from the specific perspective of aesthetic statism' (p.4). The argument seems unconvincing in its circularity, as does the author's explanation for his selection of certain thinkers from England and Germany in order 'to reveal connections between these theorists of aesthetic statism, connections which would not be evident if these writers were read only within their individual national traditions' (p. 4) We are asked, it seems, to accept the premise of their connection through aesthetic statism as the very ground of a thesis which seeks to establish this aesthetic statism itself.

The reader who, encouraged by the title of this slim volume, hopes to learn much about Romanticism or nationalism may be disappointed. Of the Romantics, only Schiller and Coleridge are given close study and the former, in any case, is a precursor of Romanticism rather than one of its representatives. If the author intends also to include Ruskin and Arnold as Romantics this expands and diffuses the term to such an extent that any residual hope of clarity of focus is lost. As for nationalism it

is, in fact, hardly mentioned. Where it is, it is coloured by a conflation of ‘nation’ with ‘state’ in which the cultural and historical elements so essential to nationalism are subordinated to an emphasis on socio-political theory. This conflation, in turn, leads the author to suggest false dichotomies such as ‘the *opposing* models of culture and the nation/state’ [my italics] (p. 3).

The title (and some of the all-embracing chapter headings) are often misleading in so far as they raise expectations of specific content. However, the book’s juxtapositions of thinkers and ideas widely separated by time and tradition (e.g. Schiller and Adorno) - in particular, its creation of speculative bridges between them - are stimulating and thought-provoking. With a brave disregard for historical order, and having nailed his colours to the mast as one who ‘criss-crosses ... arbitrary boundaries in search of a comprehensive perspective’ (pp. 4-5) the author liberates the ideas of his selected thinkers from their historical context and relationships. Though rather shocking to scholarly propriety, this creates and reveals unsuspected affinities and enlightening insights through comparison and contrast. The leap from Arnold and Ruskin to Adorno and Habermas (chapters. 5-7) may make one feel light-headed, but it is not completely given over to the free-fall of a postmodern perspective. Furthermore, a certain freedom from constraints of academic ‘political correctness’ allows Kaiser to conclude with his own model for the reintegration of individual subjectivity ‘within the concept of the cultural nation’ (p. 136). The book ends a little abruptly at this point and without any expansion of conclusions or summary of the whole. Rather more disconcerting is the lack of any bibliography apart from the references contained in endnotes which are themselves relatively sparse for a work of this nature. All in all, this is a work to titillate the jaded academic palate with theoretical delicacies which stimulate both appreciation and irritation. It is not an introduction to, or exploration of, the main features and fundamentals of Romanticism, Aesthetics or Nationalism.

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David P. Haney, *The Challenge of Coleridge: Ethics and Interpretation in Romanticism and Modern Philosophy*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2001. £ 38. ISBN 0271020512.

This impressive study of the ethical aspects of literary criticism and interpretation is unusual in several respects: firstly in the subtlety and vigour with which it pursues the diverse ramifications of this important but neglected topic; secondly in the detailed connections it makes between Romantic theories and those of modern philosophers as diverse as Jürgen Habermas and Bernard Williams; and thirdly in its author’s willingness to explore the ethical premises and implications of recent criticism with a philosophical depth and incisiveness which resists assimilation to any single ideological position.

The central question of the book is ‘to what extent is ethical action or thought dependent on processes of interpretation, and to what extent does interpretation itself have an ethical component’ – a question highlighted by ‘the deep connection in Coleridge’s thought between the interpretive activity of self-consciousness and its ethical, ultimately theological underpinnings’ (p. 1). Taking issue with the recent fashion for stigmatizing certain Romantics as explicit or implicit adherents of ideologies which cannot now be countenanced, Haney notes that because part of the

modern appeal of Romanticism is the way in which it anticipates our own preoccupation with ‘the otherness of [the] past’, we ‘should not relate to Romanticism in the symmetry of either agreement or critique, because both of these relations place us and them within a system of differences that denies otherness’ (pp. 9-10). McGann and other new historicist critics, Haney argues, are notable for their neglect of the ‘hermeneutic tradition’ linking Romanticism to Gadamer, and particularly of the question of ‘how the horizon of the present can interact with a past that is both the origin of and irreducibly different from that present’ (p. 10). As Haney points out, a notable instance of this ‘antitheoretical bent of much new historicism’ is McGann’s paradoxical faith in ‘at least the attempt at the very historical reconstruction that Gadamer rejects as “Romantic”’ (pp. 12-13) – a faith whose problemat�icity is highlighted by (among other issues) the difficulty of classifying Coleridge ‘according to modern political categories’ (p. 17). ‘The “Tory” Coleridge’, he notes, ‘despised the laissez-faire economics of Adam Smith and presents in *On the Constitution of the Church and State* what would now be seen as a quasi-socialist argument for state-supported education as a corrective to the excesses of privatization’, while ‘even the radical Shelley preferred the social hierarchy of inherited land to the new hierarchy of capitalism’ (p. 17).

Rather than retreating to ‘an unproductive ethics of affirmation or critique’, therefore, Haney argues that we should explore Coleridge’s (and other Romantics’) interest in the ‘ultimately undecided and undecidable issues that haunt thinkers in the twentieth century’ as well, such as ‘the nature of subjectivity ... the ethical implications of interpretive acts, and the relation between imaginative writing and real-world ethical relations’ (pp. 20, 22). This attitude, he writes, involves the method of engaging in a ‘deconstruction’ of Coleridge which parallels Coleridge’s own implicit deconstruction of his own attempts at ‘totalization’ (p. 23), which remain explicitly grounded in the assumption of self-consciousness underlying all acts of interpretation. A central topos for the issues of ethics and hermeneutics which both Coleridge and Haney explore is the recurrent Coleridgean theme of the relation between philosophy and poetry – the latter of which should in Coleridge’s view pursue pleasure as its primary objective, rather than seeking to ‘usurp the office of didactic prose’ (p. 32). As Haney points out, however, this distinction in Coleridge is a notably unstable one, and highlights the difficulty of separating aesthetic from ethical issues which is among the central themes of this study.

While the philosophical breadth and erudition of Haney’s writing present an unusual challenge to most students of both literature and theory, his explorations of ‘the social usefulness of literary study’ (p. xi) present many absorbing alternatives to the familiar models of critical ‘engagement’. Perhaps the most distinctive and endearing quality of his study, however, is its concern with the ways in which an exploration of ‘both the differences and the continuities’ between Coleridge’s explorations of ethics and hermeneutics and our own ‘may help us learn and teach how interpretative and ethical action, while not identical, are connected in ways important to both reading and living’ (p. 262). Haney’s suggestion that ‘an ethically active engagement of imagination’ may prevent the possibly negative social impact of such films as ‘Natural Born Killers’ (p. 162), indeed, shows an idealism and open-mindedness about the functions of criticism and philosophy from which both his and Coleridge’s readers may have much to learn.

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Nicholas Roe, ed. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life* (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 2001). £55. Pp. xvi + 364. ISBN 0 19 818723 8.

Near the end of this volume, John Beer remarks that 'if it never quite does to trust Coleridge, it never quite does to distrust him either' (p. 322). He writes this in connection with the 'Spy Nosy' story, formerly considered apocryphal, and now known to have a foundation in the activities of a government spy. Beer's injunction is a useful one, worth bearing in mind in relation to Coleridge's claims about his desire to warm his mind with 'universal science'. Nicholas Roe as editor, and the fourteen other contributors to this volume, have leaned towards taking seriously the 'universal' aspect of Coleridge's approach to knowledge, and have interpreted the sciences of life broadly, so as to include politics, psychology, and aspects of literary criticism under the umbrella of science.

Neil Vickers takes seriously Coleridge's statement in 'Dejection' that he had resorted to abstruse research, and ties this to Coleridge's brief-lived and mechanistic approach to interpreting experiments on his own sensations and senses. Vickers argues convincingly for the roles of Tom Wedgwood and Erasmus Darwin in the development of these interpretations, and then plausibly suggests that these experiments were undertaken as a reproach to Wordsworth. But it is misleading to accept Coleridge's account of his transformation in these years from a poet to a metaphysician. As others have remarked, Coleridge's account in 'Dejection' of the loss of his poetic faculty constitutes some of his finest poetry.

Politics and political theory were part of Coleridge's conception of universal science, and so belong within the broad framework of the sciences of life. That is the theme of the first section of this book. At least since Temkin's essay 'Basic science, medicine, and the romantic era', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 37 (1963) 97-129, historians have had no excuse for ignoring the political dimensions of the Lawrence-Abernethy debate. More broadly, as Elinor Shaffer demonstrates here, Coleridge in the 1790s was 'in the press of politics and public controversy' (p. 43). Kenneth Johnston makes clear the extent to which poetry and politics were interwoven at the dawn of the Romantic era, and stresses besides how much time and energy Coleridge devoted to the planning Pantisocracy. Joseph Priestley, friend of Republicanism and religious freedom, was a model for Coleridge; perhaps Priestley's laboratory in America was as important as Humphry Davy's friendship in encouraging Coleridge to dream of a chemical laboratory in the Lake District.

In the second section of the book, Peter J. Kitson asks whether Romanticism was complicit in the subjugation of other peoples, and both he and Tim Fulford stress Coleridge's acceptance of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's view that humans belonged to one species, although to different races. Blumenbach saw the Caucasian race as that whence the others were derived by degeneration, a term that Kitson tells us he used neutrally. Technical terms, however, have resonances with non-technical usage, and it is scarcely surprising that, as Fulford shows, Coleridge, in considering the Caucasian race as historically prime, saw other races as morally and physically inferior. Fulford compares Tahitian veneration for the skulls of their ancestors with Blumenbach's dependence on them for his natural history; the comparison is elegant but stretched. McKusick's exploration of Wernerian and Plutonic geological themes in 'Kubla Khan' rightly identifies geological sources for Coleridge's detailed language, but does not stress that Coleridge's achievement here is synthesizing rather than eclectic.

Jane Stabler picks up the prior discussion of Priestley's importance for Coleridge, and makes the insightful suggestion that Priestleyan discussions contributed to Coleridge's poetics more widely than has been recognized. Priestley was a polymath, who extolled the importance of serendipity in scientific investigations, and argued for the political significance of scientific discoveries and instruments – unsound constitutions should tremble before the air pump. Stabler argues that Coleridge's style of enquiry followed the pattern of Priestleyan experiment, and that his politics and his early poetry can be better understood in this context.

Since all the essays so far considered pay attention to context, and make more or less use of historical methods, it is useful to pause with Kelvin Everest in his sketch of 'persistent problems' in the business of historical reading. Historicism does indeed have implications for editorial theory and practice, and his arguments run counter to the approach of the principal editors of the very recently completed editions of Coleridge's *Works* and *Notebooks*. Although, as Everest rightly argues, the power of a text is hard to limit to 'a reconstitution of any one particular reading context', there remains a need for historical understanding of language, if not of a wider context, in arriving at our own reading of any text, poetry or prose. Given the richness of historical insights in many of the chapters in this volume, including John Beer's concluding essay, we can be grateful for their lively admixture of historical reading.

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Kathleen Lundeen, *Knight of the Living Dead: William Blake and the Problem of Ontology*. Selinsgrove and London: Susquehanna University Press/Associated University Presses, 2000. Pp. 180. £30. ISBN: 1 57591 041 1.

This is a puzzling book. In the Introduction, Kathleen Lundeen makes much of Blake's 'paranormal experiences' (p. 16) and provides a brief discussion of the movement of spiritualism, quoting Conan Doyle, but in fact has almost nothing further to say about them, other than at one point (pp. 57-8) providing a kind of compendium of received wisdom on the 'visions' and then returning to the point near the end (pp. 155 ff.).

Instead, the book has four chapters, all of which seem to have on rather different concerns. The first, 'Border Skirmishes in Blake's Word-Image Art', sets out quite a clear and productive typology of Blake's different visual/verbal modes, hinging in part on the 'materiality' of the word and the consequences for foregrounding and backgrounding verbal and visual motifs, to the point where, as in the celebrated pencil drawing 'Study of Hebrew Characters in Human Form', the breach between the two collapses altogether. But Lundeen then tries to apply this to 'The Tyger' in an analysis which adds very little to the already existing mass of work on 'The Tyger' - with the exception of a sentence, which still continues to baffle me, in which she refers to 'a free prey of signifiers' (pp. 46-47). The tiger is, perhaps, closer at hand than we had thought.

The second chapter, 'Urizen, Milton, and the Problem of Forged Identity', appears to follow from what has preceded only in that it makes play of the notion of 'framing' (as, indeed, any analysis of *The Book of Urizen* must). The third, 'Disappearing Boundaries in Prophetic Geography: *America, Europe, Jerusalem*', contains, in my view, the most original and interesting work in the book. There is a

brief but excellent passage on uses and re-uses of the biblical story of the burning fiery furnace in *America* (pp. 111-12) and, later, a singular and fascinating assault on the phenomenon of what Vincent De Luca has memorably referred to as Blake's 'wall of words'.

Essentially, what Lundeen does here is to seek to set these rebarbative passages (the lists of the names of counties in *Jerusalem*, for example) not only, as is conventional, in a biblical context, but also in the context of Heidegger's philosophy and in particular of the high value Heidegger places on tautology and the consequences for the linguistic status of the proper name. Following Derrida, she notes that 'proper names have an anomalous character; since they are untranslatable, they do not belong to the mainstream language' (p. 131). Lines like 'We live as One Man; for contracting our infinite senses/We behold multitude; or expanding; we behold as one./As One Man all the Universal Family; and that One Man/We call Jesus the Christ' she sees as expressing the philosophy behind tautology (p. 130), culminating in 'the sublime tautology 'every thing exists'', which in turn very reasonably reminds her of such Heideggerian formulations as 'things are, and human beings, gifts, and sacrifices are, animals and plants are, equipment and works are': 'Though one expects some metaphor to complete each of these statements', she says, 'the subjects themselves are the unspoken predicates' (p. 122).

Having been intrigued by this argument, I was therefore completely taken aback by the beginning of the fourth chapter, in which Lundeen claims that 'as I have argued in the previous chapters, Blake's spiritualism is not a quirk in his system of thought' (p. 138), because I could not - and cannot - see the connection, and neither can I find in the book any specific justification for using the term 'spiritualism' - which is, after all, highly historically specific - at all. This fourth chapter, 'Eluding the Border Patrol through Transparent Art', does again, however, contain some interesting if unrelated critical thinking, especially on those illustrations and pictures which appear to contain scenes seen through - or in some cases obscured by - other scenes. One of the key examples Lundeen looks at is 'Satan, Sin and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell' among the illustrations to *Paradise Lost*, where the figure of Death is partly transparent: 'Blake's transparencies', she suggests,

are equivalent to the deconstructive manoeuvres of placing a text in quotations marks or under erasure. Such gestures are, in Derrida's words, 'modalities of "avoiding" which come down to saying without saying, writing without writing, using words without using them'. They allow a portion of a text to exist as an absent presence, or, more accurately, they dissolve the boundary between absence and presence. (p. 153).

It is at this point, when Lundeen situates Blake between Heidegger's insistence on the 'presenting' powers of language and Blanchot's contrary emphasis on the ways in which words make things absent, that one begins to see why the notional 'problem of ontology' has been included as part of the book's title.

On the whole, however, I found this a strange and unsatisfying book. It was, perhaps, always unfortunate to hold out the promise that there was - or will be - anything further to be said about Blake and the 'paranormal'; it seems to me that if that could have been stripped away, the book would have been more coherent. Certainly one of Lundeen's great strengths is that she tries honourably to attend to the visual and verbal arts without reducing each to the terms of the other - although, as she at one point ruefully observes, this is a struggle that, because of the entrenchment

of the word, the visual cannot win. But I thought that throughout the arguments there were themes that could have been expanded, both in visual/verbal terms and also as a further approach to the 'problem of ontology': for example, Lundeen quotes Poulet's memorable comment that 'a work of literature becomes (at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends) a sort of human being' (p. 32); this, it seems to me, is the kind of remark with which much more could have been done, and presumably it also brings us within striking distance of the book's main title. For I was left with a question about the title - or perhaps even several. Who, or what, *are* these 'living dead'? Are they Blake's visionary interlocutors, or are they figures from the Prophetic Books? And, witty though the title may be (and at the risk of seeming pedantic), what *is* the connection with the lurching zombie forms of George Romero's 1968 film (if that is the intended referent)? As at other points in the book I felt uncertain of the connections - intrigued by some of the details, but confused by the far from 'transparent' larger picture.

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Keith Hanley, *Wordsworth: A Poet's History* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001 Pp.264. £40 ISBN 0 333 91883 5.

Professor Keith Hanley will be familiar to many Romantic scholars as director of the Wordsworth Centre at Lancaster University, and editor of the definitive *Annotated Critical Bibliography of William Wordsworth* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995). In this new book, Hanley argues that the poet's self-representation in his verse is related to 'the trauma of language acquisition in infancy, reawakened by his mother's early death', which, he says, was reactivated again by the French Revolution. Hanley's approach involves 'Lacanian psycho-linguistics and literary Oedipalism to historicise Wordsworth's peculiar kind of control in terms of the theory of Michel Foucault'.

Such a point of view undoubtedly yields some new and perceptive interpretations of Wordsworth's verse, most notably in the chapter entitled 'Describing the Revolution' (pp. 113-149). Hanley also makes several useful thematic comparisons to the works of other writers such as Shakespeare, and perhaps most interestingly, George Eliot. Unfortunately, the vocabulary with which Hanley presents his views, and the excessively vigorous application of the theories upon which they are based, tend to create the impression that the poet under discussion was some sort of haunted neurotic.

Wordsworth is clumsily deposited on the analyst's couch, and in the very worst tradition of 1970s psychobabble, his oeuvre is subsequently reduced to a lifelong attempt to exorcise the dark Oedipal ghost supposedly lurking in his subconscious. Thus, all manifestations of power appearing in his poetry (of which too many are cited to list) are represented to us as a 'phallus'. Apparently, language itself is a phallus when manipulated in Wordsworth's hands. Similarly, references to the slightest setback or disappointment in his verse reflects a 'castration'. One hesitates to criticize such an approach by resorting to mockery and ridicule, but the result of Hanley's application of Lacan to Wordsworth's poetry borders on parody. Moreover, the author's heavy-handed use and repetition of this psycho-sexual terminology has a tendency to subdue any metaphorical character it may have had, bestowing upon it instead the strident tone of an *idée fixe*.

Attempts are made to cloak these dated platitudes with a veneer of clinical respectability by the use of such patently inappropriate phrases as 'Wordsworth's psychological case history' (p. 150). A truer indication of the author's lack of familiarity with matters genuinely rational and scientific is betrayed by such solecisms as his reference to the 'electronic' (instead of electric) telegraph during the early nineteenth century (p. 195).

As the author notes in his Introduction (pp. 1-2), an amateur sleuth taking a 'ham-fisted' interest in the seamier aspects of Wordsworth's life (illegitimacy, incest, and many tragic deaths) might find much to raise false suspicions about the poet's true character. Recognising that such an approach is open to comic distortion, Hanley nevertheless maintains that the possibility remains suggestive of Wordsworth 'capitalizing on and finding a kind of empowerment in the losses of those around him'. This would be fair enough. Wordsworth did, after all, famously write 'the child is father of the man'. But one cannot help but feel that this wise observation on the poet's part owed more to an appreciation of the value of experience, rather than to the relentlessly sustained Oedipal and phallic interpretations imposed by Hanley upon virtually everything Wordsworth ever wrote or did.

Lacanian and Freudian literary critics would do well to bear in mind that, like all theory based on essentially unprovable conjecture, the hypotheses upon which they base their work are highly vulnerable to the vagaries of fashion. Professional clinical opinion of the theories Hanley so uncritically adopts has long since moved on, and in any case, was never anything like as enthusiastic, or as intensely applied, as it has been (and for some reason, still is) in the world of literary studies. Lacan's heterodox interpretation of Freud was always highly controversial, whilst Freud's own aetiological speculations were too problematic and inconsistent ever to achieve any lasting degree of consensus.

Pseudo-scientific studies such as Hanley's merely presume to retrospectively medicalise the experiential aspects of a text, unjustifiably transforming an absent poet into an imaginary patient, and doing so with no more authority than that of a quack. One hesitates to regard such a laboured presentation of flimsily opinionated assumption as 'research'. Alan Richardson conveys a much more convincing, relevant, and informative image of Wordsworth as a poet attuned to the emerging 'biological psychology' of his own times (as expounded by Cabanis and Erasmus Darwin) in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

One minor redeeming feature of Hanley's style is that his belief in his approach is at least strong enough for him to use the jargon of psychoanalysis in a straightforward manner, with none of the self-conscious parenthetical explanations and qualifications of terminology that litter so many post-modernist critiques. Apparently, Freud never uttered the caveat frequently attributed to him, to the effect that: 'Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar'. Even so, psychoanalytical lit-crit such as this may lead lovers of poetry to wish that he had.

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***John Clare: New Approaches* (ed.), John Goodridge and Simon Kövesi.
Nottingham: John Clare Society, 2000. Pp. xxiv + 264. Pb £7. 95. ISBN 0 9522541
6 .**

This is an impressive and timely collection of essays written by new Clare scholars and by senior scholars new to Clare. It would be unwise to attempt to schematize such a fresh and diverse range of responses and methodologies but main constellations of interest emerge. The emblematic icon of Clare's cultural 'innocence' is addressed and interrogated from several grassy knolls. In addition, Clare's positioning as a 'monoglot genius', is contested by incisive readings foregrounding the intertextuality and discursive richness of his work.

Paul Chirico examines the ineradicable conflation of history, economics and politics in Clare's reading of the land as a repository of cultural texts. He also points to the skill with which Clare 'deploys various poetic voices and inhabits various literary conventions in the act of undermining them' (p. 97). Cathy Taylor's comparative exegesis uncovers a resonant palimpsest of influences in Clare's 'Don Juan A Poem'. Aside from Clare's obvious homage to Byron's *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold*, Taylor detects many further allusions to Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Whether Clare had read Tasso in translation (as he had Dante), or absorbed his knowledge vicariously through Byron, is of less importance than the emergence of an extensive cultural heteroglossia that quite explodes the notion of naïf rusticity. Bridget Keegan adds further fire to the debate on 'natural genius' with an insightful study of Clare's self-figuration as a 'marvellous boy' in the Chattertonian mould: 'Clare self-consciously placed himself squarely in this lineage of adolescent, unlettered, critically-acclaimed genii' (p. 69). Keegan cites Clare's posthumously published poem, 'The Fate of Genius', in a powerful critique of readerly hypocrisy and critical condescension towards the 'artless' ingénu trapped in a posture of ignorance. As Keegan argues, there is no bliss in untutored genius, only frustration and pain.

The issue of self-figuring is extended by Jonathan Bate in a compelling essay on Clare's biographical presentations. Himself a biographer of Clare, Bate examines the contradictions, partiality, and strategic obfuscations of previous projectionists. Against conventional opinion, Bate finds strengths and imaginative truth in Frederick Martin's dramatic inventions that elude recorders of supposed 'bare facts': 'brisk dismissiveness caused by moral embarrassment is characteristic of the Tibbles' *Life* in all matters related to drink and extra-marital sex' (p. 8). Thus, in the Tibbles' biography, Clare and Betty Sell enjoy a 'heedless [frolic] at Stamford fair', in Robinson and Powell, they indulge in a 'heedless [flirtation]'. Bate proffers a 'vulgar' yet convincing alternative.

Richard Cronin heeds Tom Paulin's description of Clare as 'both the poet of place and displacement' in his analysis of Clare's social alienation and the paradox at its core: 'unlanded and uneducated', he is out of place amongst the wealthy; literate and gifted, he is estranged from the rural poor. Like Gerard Manley Hopkins, Clare is 'a poet of familiar things', yet is everywhere confronted by strangeness—notably the enclosure of formerly free land, but also, as John Barrell notes, the usurpation of language by an alien 'squad of pointings', and the forced enclosure of the literary landscape through the laws of copyright. Cronin concludes his piece with 'I Am', Clare's most *unheimlich* poem, and one which Hopkins copied into his diary in a mood of 'despondency' and 'worthlessness'. A sense of the uncanny affixes to the lives of both men; each condemned 'to seem the stranger'. P.M.S. Dawson presents a less sympathetic pairing in his study of Clare and Keats, linked by a shared editor, but otherwise disparate. Dawson argues that Clare was relatively untainted by the egocentric, 'dominating and exploitative attitudes to the natural world' ascribed to Romanticism, but was nevertheless fully alert to their cultural deployment. Clare wryly dismisses the Pathetic Fallacy: 'if his mistress happen to smile why then all

nature is told to be gay & flourishing these are the expanses of fancy & in poetry they are all very well but nature is not so changeable she cares as much for the poets invocations [sic] & his mistress as the weather does for an almanack (Peterborough MS A34, p. R14). Implicit here is Clare's conviction that elaborate fanciful excursions, are 'all very well' in the work of *other* poets, but not in his own. Bob Hayes draws on his major archival study of Clare's correspondence to prove Clare's need for artistic credence and to situate him within a complex social network out of which the poems issue as collaborative cultural products. Clare's 'true sublime' is 'truth to nature'—by that the work lives or is lost—but Hayes amply demonstrates that Clare turned to a sounding-board of friends, editors and advisors to test out the emotional and factual verisimilitude of his work. Hayes therefore maintains that the text is not the sole, spontaneous manifestation of an isolated consciousness, but an expression of social history that is made *more* interesting by the 'corruptions' and editorial interventions that offend textual purists. Mina Gorji also deposes the myth of the exiled solitaire in favour of a more connected, pluralist Clare, arrogating the right to roam discursive fields as an expression of resistance against enclosure. Gorji cites examples of Clare's poetic imitations, use of pseudonyms, 'forgeries of the 'old poets'', and manifold intertextual allusions, as evidence of his 'hostility to the discourse of originality'. He emerges as a bold, transgressive bricoleur, to whom no 'path [is] stopt'. Alan Vardy's exposure of 'the aesthetic and political terms of Clare's patronage' and the provocative issue of Taylor's editorship is less cheering. Vardy identifies the crushing cultural forces that compromise Clare's utterance, yet Taylor's subtle feints and casuistical special pleading demonstrate that he too is 'forced to please'. Taylor's manipulation of Clare's persona beneath the great Wordsworthian shadow draws uncomfortably close to 'idiot boy' imposture, though the guise of fool may have enabled some of Clare's 'discontented stanzas' to slip the net of censorship. Stephen Colclough picks up the voice of radical discontent in Clare's more explicitly political poems, including a 'lost' work— 'Labour and Luxury', and a fragment of text 'Thy eye can witness more than others'. The declamatory voices of labour heard here are conflicted and various, yet issue from a collective position far removed from the solipsistic interiority of 'I Am'. One can only wish that the gag of patronage had been loosed more often: 'While they die gorg'd like beasts in clover/We die for wants of bread' (p. 78). The power of Clare's anger is reiterated by Valerie Pedlar, whose diligent deconstruction of editorial swaddling, enables the emergence of a resistlessly vigorous figure. Clare's disillusionment caused him to feel 'an alien in a strange land' (p. 30), but he lives on, claims Pedlar, 'by the 'vivid spark' of Old Testament vengefulness'.

In the final essay, Simon Kövesi traces aural complexities, and scatological puns in both Clare and Byron to reveal Clare's 'staggering' cynicism reaching 'high bile-mark' in his equation of 'trade of selling cantos' with prostitution. The autonomous lyric impulse has less chance of survival in Clare's diseased transactional wasteland than romantic love. Poets and whores are equally subject to material circumstances—not born but made, sold, and degraded by market forces. Clare's self-disgust is palpable in the bitter pronouncements of his later years, so too is his deeply defensive misogyny, and the evidence of Kövesi's convincing study exposes fault lines of instability in masculine Romantic poetry regarding authorship, ownership and self-representation that remain unhealed.

In a paradigm of added value, co-editor John Goodridge, appends his chronological survey of Clare criticism, 1970-2000, to the volume, thereby offering an invaluable research tool and a fascinating graph of the development of Clare

studies. The addition of this important collection of erudite and energetic essays can only add inspiring substance to present and future interest in a writer whose ‘central concerns, increasingly concern us all’.

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E.J. Clery and Robert Miles (ed.), *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook 1700-1820*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. xii + 306. pb £14.99. ISBN 07190 4027 2.

One need not be privy to too specialist a knowledge of late eighteenth-century Gothic in order to appreciate the playful sense of wit with which E.J. Clery and Robert Miles have approached their editorial undertakings in *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook, 1700-1820*. For as the diligent curators and meticulous editors of a selection of documents deemed relevant to an informed historical reading of eighteenth-century Gothic, Miles and Clery have rather self-consciously employed the fictional convention of the ‘found’ and circumspectly ‘edited’ or ‘translated’ ‘Gothic’ manuscript as a guiding metaphor for their own scholarly endeavour. However, unlike the sense of forgery which lies at the heart of most Gothic fictional examples, the particular manuscripts (or fragments thereof) to which Miles and Clery turn their attention here are historically authentic. Furthermore, and in a spirit that defies the villainous Gothic process of occlusion or encryption, these documents are generously offered up to the broader scholarly community as the crucial textual sources upon which so many of its own claims to historical sensitivity are increasingly coming to rely. It is in this gesture, of course, that much of the anthology’s value lies, for in *Gothic Documents* the editors ostensibly succeed in retrieving from the archive or crypt a number of eighteenth-century documents which would otherwise prove elusive or even figuratively dead to both the student and the more experienced researcher of the Gothic alike, thus revivifying and rendering more accessible (as possibly only Ioan Williams’s now out-of-print *Novel and Romance: A Documentary Record, 1700-1800* before it had done) a range of invaluable critical resources and the important scholarly debates contingent upon them. What comes to mind here, for example, are inclusions such as Ann Radcliffe’s essay ‘On the Supernatural in Poetry’ (1826), several abstruse yet significant eighteenth-century texts detailing the distinctions between the novel and romance forms, as well as an impressive collection of contemporary responses to so far-ranging a selection of Gothic texts as *The Recess*, *The Monk*, and *The Castle Spectre*.

Furthermore, insofar as it extends its interests well beyond the 1790s into the so-called ‘Gothic renovations’ of the early nineteenth century, *Gothic Documents* broadens the margins of Williams’s classic edition by at least twenty years and provides a hitherto largely *undocumented* account of some of the labyrinthine turns that would be taken by the Gothic in the years subsequent to its heyday. In this respect, the publication certainly fulfils its own expressed intentions of bringing together, in the convenient form of the sourcebook, material which might be of interest to both the student and the more specialist Gothic researcher alike. While some of the selected pieces, even by the editors’ own admission, do to a certain extent rehearse some of the standard ways of approaching late eighteenth-century Gothic, the inclusion of such well-known critical material is not only necessary for what Miles and Clery in their Introduction moot as a richer historical appreciation of the form, but

also offset by the inclusion of a number of other less predictable selections. But of course, what Miles and Clery's intelligent utilisation of the trope of the Gothic document also necessarily implies is that they, like the counterfeit and counterfeiting fictional editors before them, court the circular, hermeneutical return of subjective interpretation, even in the place of a self-professed attempt at impartial archival scholarship and empirically neutral historicism.

In trying to circumvent this, the editors desist from superimposing onto the selected material their own interpretative meanings, and restrict their brief commentary on each of the included pieces to the provision of useful historical detail and informed factual information. But of course, that these attempts at empirical integrity are necessarily undercut by the subjective movements of critical interpretation is reflected in the thematic arrangement of each of the six chapters: 'Supernaturalism: religion, folklore, Shakespeare'; 'Gothic origins'; 'The Gothic aesthetic: imagination, originality, terror'; 'Anti-Gothic', 'Gothic and revolution' and 'Gothic renovations' respectively. While such a means of organising the material does in certain strong senses recall some of the most inspired work of each of the two Gothic readers-turned-editors, the return of the interpretative frame is an inevitability of which Miles and Clery are all too aware. Furthermore, given that the trope of the Gothic document playfully figures as the guiding metaphor for the work, the editors cannot but negotiate the various gaps, holes, tears and lacunae with which the fictional Gothic manuscript becomes synonymous. In these terms, Miles and Clery's Introduction concedes to the incompleteness of their own edition – it excludes, for example, an account of Gothic sensibility, changing perceptions of the passions, and some of the possible ideological inflections of Gothic architecture. At certain moments, moreover, the editors circumspectly render their own gaps in the selected manuscripts, largely through choosing the material deemed to be most relevant or useful and omitting some of the particular writer's more prolix digressions; at other times, the incompleteness of the original texts themselves leaves the Gothic manuscript characteristically lacking at its most crucial narrative moment. But the gaps in and of the documents in this edition are not only born of a certain logistical necessity, but also point forward, in an anticipatory fashion, to a possible second volume of this valuable edition mentioned in passing in the Introduction. Like the original readers of the Gothic, our appetites have been whetted and, like any Gothic passion, will until then only continue to grow.

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Peter J. Kitson (ed.) *Placing and Displacing Romanticism*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2001. Pp. 248. £45. ISBN 0 7546 0602 3.

Many readers of the *Bulletin* will have very positive memories of the 1995 BARS conference (ably and enthusiastically organised by Peter Kitson) out of which the present volume of essays has developed. The title of the conference (and, subsequently, the book) was designed to enable participants to think both literally and metaphorically about the ways in which 'romanticism' has been 'placed' and 'displaced' during the last two hundred years. As a result of this, the scope of the present collection ranges widely. In addition to essays on canonical poets such as Wordsworth (Paul Sheats, Lucy Newlyn and Tim Fulford), Blake (Angela Esterhammer) and Keats (Michael O'Neill and Thomas MacFarland), there are also

contributions that focus on writers who are less obviously part of the canon. Thus Lynda Pratt writes on Southey, Philip Martin on Clare and Michael Scrivener on Thelwall. There are two complementary essays on panoramas (by Philip Shaw and Michael Charlesworth), two essays which explicitly address the relationship between romanticism and national identity (Lynda Pratt and Mary Anne Perkins), a discussion of the poetic precursors of *Lyrical Ballads* (John Williams) and a concluding consideration of romantic cannibalism by the editor himself.

At the same time as it displays such variety, however, the collection also demonstrates an underlying general coherence which is brought about by a tacitly shared critical agenda. As Peter Kitson suggests in his introduction, most of the work gathered here can be seen to represent either an explicit or implicit engagement with the excesses of a 'new historical' criticism which, in its desire to locate texts within history, sometimes placed greater emphasis upon the discovery of textual omission than upon an historically-informed analysis of the actual words produced by the writer. The two opening essays on Wordsworth are both explicit in the ways in which they deploy what Kitson terms 'a fresh critical stance of engaged formalist writing' (p. 14). Arguing against an interpretation of 'The Ruined Cottage' offered by Jerome J. McGann in *The Romantic Ideology*, Paul Sheats re-discovers through close reading of the text a Wordsworth who is socially engaged and alert to the material conditions of Margaret's hardship. Tim Fulford, in a wonderfully nuanced account of a later poem, 'The Haunted Tree', persuasively demonstrates that even the more self-evidently conservative older Wordsworth wrote poems which directly responded to contemporary political, social and cultural concerns. Through a detailed contextual reading of the poem, Fulford shows how 'The Haunted Tree' intervenes within traditions of landscape poetry to offer 'an anti-Byronic anti-Regent redefinition of the sexual politics of the Burkean sublime' (p.45). In a similar vein, but from a slightly different perspective, Philip Martin takes issue with David Simpson's use of John Clare's poems on 'gypsies' as an 'authentic' counter to the 'inauthenticity' of the Wordsworthian account. In Martin's reading, Clare's poetry is seen to have a far more complex relationship with literary traditions than Simpson's argument would seem to suggest.

All of these essays reveal a critical practice which Kitson defines as 'combining the virtues of a new critical close analysis with an awareness of political and social meanings' (p.14). One of the many strengths of this collection is that this attention to the political and social brings with it a wealth of information about the contexts in which literary texts emerged and with which they engaged. Philip Shaw, for example, offers a very suggestive reading of Southey's verse romance *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo* in relation to the use of observation towers on the battlefield itself and in terms of the contemporary fashion for panoramic entertainments. The panoramic view in Shaw's account is both empowering and alienating, leading to a complex situation in which 'Southey, like Napoleon and Wellington, becomes subject to panoramic fantasies of self-aggrandisement and paradoxical self-abnegation – fantasies that question the very systems on which they depend' (p.121). Michael Charlesworth approaches the panorama from an art historian's perspective and provides an account which traces its development from military use to public entertainment before considering its influence on the visual arts in particular. Through an analysis of paintings by, amongst others, Turner and Manet, he develops an argument which suggests that romantic artists began to exploit the vertical axis in their work to counter the panorama's control of the horizontal: 'What is at stake in the opening up of this vertical, measureless dimension, is therefore a different type of

knowledge, and so of understanding, than that purveyed by the panorama' (p.143). Both essays are generously illustrated and, I am sure, will become required reading for anyone wanting to work on this fascinating area. Similar claims can be made for Peter Kitson's lucid and engaging account of the representations of cannibalism in the period's literature. Kitson combines a wide-ranging survey of both contemporary material and recent critical approaches with sensitive close reading of passages of representative texts including Southey's *Madoc* and Byron's *Don Juan*. His accounts, whilst necessarily constrained by the space available in a short essay, are extremely suggestive and, although they work towards general insights about the use of imagery drawn from 'barbaric' practices to comment upon 'civilised' culture, they never sacrifice local complexity to a reductive general argument.

Each of the essays included in this volume makes an engaged and engaging contribution to our understanding of the ways in which 'romanticism' can be placed within 'history'. Taken together, as Kitson suggests, they also demonstrate a broad critical consensus which allows the collection to offer a snapshot of important elements within contemporary romantic studies. If there is a hint of critical discord within the volume, I suspect it is to be found in the two essays on Keats which, to quote Kitson, discuss the poet's 'resistance to social and political readings' (p.12). The other essays in the volume build upon the work of new historicists even if they modify it; these essays on Keats, on the other hand, reject such critical approaches as a misguided point of departure. The essays themselves are valuable, Michael O'Neill in particular offers an extremely sensitive reading of Keats's self-conscious treatment of the 'aesthetic' within his poetry (an argument developed in more detail in O'Neill's *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem*, Clarendon: Oxford, 1997). Perhaps the point which emerges is that, despite recent studies by Nicholas Roe and others, more work needs to be done on the ways in which an appropriate appreciation of the 'aesthetic' qualities of Keats's work can be accommodated within a criticism which emphasises social and political meaning.

Both in its entirety and in relation to its individual components, this book is a very welcome addition to current work on the romantic period. More than simply a record of a past conference, this volume comments on the present state of our discipline and, perhaps more importantly, suggests new directions for us to pursue.

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Grevel Lindop (General Editor), *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*. 7 vols. Volume 1: *Writings, 1799-1820* (ed.) Barry Symonds. Pp. xl + 403; Volume 2: *Confessions of an English Opium Eater 1821-1856* (ed.) Grevel Lindop. Pp. xii+378; Volume 3: *Articles and Translations from the London Magazine, Blackwood's Magazine and Others 1821-1824* (ed.) Frederick Burwick. Pp. xii+461; Volume 4: *Articles and Translations from the London Magazine; Wallador, 1824-1825* (ed.) Frederick Burwick . pp. x + 534; Volume 5: *Articles from the Edinburgh Saturday Post 1827-1828* (ed.) David Groves. Pp. xiv + 419; Volume 6: *Articles from the Edinburgh Evening Post, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and the Edinburgh Literary Gazette* (ed.) David Groves and Grevel Lindop. Pp. xii+415; Volume 7: *Articles from the Edinburgh Literary Gazette and Blackwood's Magazine 1829-1831* (ed.) Robert Morrison. Pp. Xii + 397. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000. £550. ISBN 1 85196 518 1 (set).

Thomas De Quincey's significance as a writer of 'impassioned prose' and as an influential commentator of the Romantic period and beyond has become much greater in recent years. Possibly the move to history of Romantic period criticism of the 1980s has given his work an added importance in its recognition of De Quincey's concern with theories of economics and as well as his obsessive concern with opium and the East, very attractive to current critics of colonialism and race. So too De Quincey's idiosyncratic concerns with women and the death or disappearance of key female figures in his life has attracted critics of Romantic representations of gender. Always a wonderful subject for Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytical readings with his theories of the palimpsest of the human mind, his notion of associative 'involution', and his postulation of the inner Dark Interpreter, as well as serving as a target for the undergraduate fascination with opium dreaming and altered states of perception, De Quincey would seem to have everything necessary to be a central Romantic period figure. If De Quincey never seems to have quite made this move to centre stage part of the reason must relate to the difficulty of obtaining the authoritative texts of his huge but fragmented oeuvre. In later life, De Quincey famously told George Gilfillan that his collected works was 'absolutely, insuperably, and for ever impossible'. It was something not 'the archangel Gabriel, nor his multipotent adversary, durst attempt'. It is of course something Grevel Lindop and his team of distinguished De Quincey scholars have attempted and have almost now achieved with their *Collected Works* in the Pickering Masters series. Whether their efforts are to be classed as Satanic or angelic must be depend, I suppose, on how we regard their subject's work. Certainly the impression one begins to receive from these volumes is less that of an isolated and idiosyncratic thinker, but of a man deeply immersed in the currents of the thought of his own time and much more representative of the period than one might have first expected.

Lindop in his excellent and informative 'General Introduction' to the volumes accepts that 'completeness' is an 'unattainable ideal' in the context of collecting De Quincey's works, but he argues convincingly that the Pickering and Chatto edition bears 'some meaningful approximation' to this ideal. Previously De Quincey scholars and Romantic generalists have relied almost exclusively on David Masson's 1889-90 edition of De Quincey's writings in fourteen volumes (soon and sadly to be relegated from the open space of the shelves to the dark, basement stores of many university libraries). Masson's edition, as many have pointed out, excluded much of De Quincey's important published writings (writings for the *Westmorland Gazette*, articles for the *Edinburgh Post*, the novel translation and review, *Wallador*, the political essays for *Blackwood's* 1840-44 and so on) as well as his unpublished writings (most notable the *Diary* of 1803, which was, of course, then undiscovered and unavailable). Masson also cut, repunctuated, rearranged, retitled and bowdlerised his subject's writings.

This edition includes all the uncollected De Quincey discovered since Masson's time. The contents of the first seven volumes to be published are listed above, along with their individual editors, from which one gets some idea of the formidable task, which has so far been accomplished. The aim of the present edition is to present 'all De Quincey's known writings with the exception of personal letters and legal documents' (I, p. xi). It is the editors aim to include all De Quincey's identifiable manuscripts but also 'the bulk of his unpublished writings' (I, p. xii). The edition thus includes De Quincey's articles from the *Westmoreland Gazette*, his *Diary* of 1803, his contributions to the *Edinburgh Saturday Post*, his political articles from *Blackwood's Magazine*, and the full text of his review of and remarkable translation

of *Wallador*, a German imitation of Scott. Additionally the edition contains a large body of manuscript materials.

This material is presented in a chronological sequence, each item receives an introductory headnote, explanatory notes printed at the end of the volume and a textual collation providing variants from manuscripts and published versions revised by De Quincey. The editorial convention of Pickering and Chatto to print the earliest published version of an author's lifetime is conservatively adhered to in this edition, though items, such as *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, which De Quincey extensively rewrote and revised are given, where possible, in both versions. Items are also printed chronologically in their published (or unpublished) order thus giving a sense of De Quincey's development. The consensus among reviewers and Romantic scholars seems to me that the editors' textual conservatism is welcome in this case, though opponents of editorial 'primitivism' might mount a different case. Certainly this would seem to be the most apposite strategy in De Quincey's case. Unlike the Cornell Wordsworth or the Bollingen Coleridge, all editorial matter either prefaces or follows De Quincey's text, giving the edition a greater sense of reader friendliness and ease.

The editorial work for the volume is authoritative and scrupulous, as one might expect from the team of scholars employed. Grevel Lindop presents an expert discussion of De Quincey's importance, proposing him as 'the most influential of all early nineteenth-century English prose writers' (I, p. xiii) as well as proving a succinct and informative overview of De Quincey's life, writings, and intellectual milieu. Lindop details the astonishing range and suggestiveness of De Quincey's writings as well as the modulations of tone, ranging from the comic to the malicious and from the poignant to the tragic well displayed in the volumes as a whole. This edition is a truly daunting and impressive achievement. Just a mere browse through its pages stuns the reader by displaying a wealth of De Quincey undiscovered by all but the most serious and dedicated of his scholars. It is bound to make the life of Romantic critics much easier and, I think, enhance De Quincey's presence in other Romantic period criticism generally. It presents us not just with new, revised and authoritative editions of familiar but problematic texts (and volume 2, Lindop's edition of the *Confessions* has received much merited praise) but also with a wealth of material on a vast diversity of subjects on which to comment and explore. This edition will become the standard edition for reference and all serious academic libraries will need to purchase the full edition which is now due for completion in December 2002.

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Graeme Stones and John Strachan (ed.), *Parodies of the Romantic Age*. 5 vols. I: *The Anti-Jacobin* II: *Collected Verse Parody* III: *Collected Prose Parody* IV: *Warreniana* V: *Rejected Articles*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999. £395 (\$650). ISBN 1851964754.

'There were two kinds of parodies' said William Hone at his trial for seditious and blasphemous libel in 1817, 'one in which a man might convey ludicrous ideas relative to some other subject; the other where it was meant to ridicule the thing parodied'. This was an important distinction for Hone: he knew that if he could convince the Guildhall jury that his anti-ministerial pamphlet *John Wilkes's Catechism* belonged in the former category he would have to be acquitted, for the prosecution's case against

him depended on the assumption that a satirical use of the forms of the Christian religion must also constitute an attack on its content. Hone vehemently denied this, energetically insisting that the target of his satire had been political not religious. Not only that, he quoted numerous examples of scriptural parody – works by eminent statesmen and clerics from the seventeenth century onwards – in which religious texts had been pastiched in order to convey a moral or political message. Was it not highly significant, he argued, that the Foreign Secretary George Canning had not been brought to court on a blasphemy charge, despite having regularly indulged in scriptural parody in his youth (as a contributor to the *Anti-Jacobin*). Such double standards exposed the political motives behind the prosecution's case: how else was one to interpret the fact that of all English parodists he alone was to be singled out for punishment?

Hone's successful defence against this charge was a great triumph for English liberty, but it was also something of a coup for parody itself, which emerged from the trial with its dignity considerably enhanced. The only problem from our point of view is that while Hone was certainly right to draw attention to the long history and pedigree of parody, he was less successful in his central distinction. One of the leading characteristics of parody has always been its resistance to such simple definitions; it has always been something of a slippery creature. Less respectable than neo-classical imitation, but more serious than burlesque, not so much a form in itself as form's perennial parasite, it has seldom adopted a clear or straightforward relation to its literary 'host'. Sometimes its interest in ridicule is deadly serious, as in the political satire of the *Anti-Jacobin* or the radical squibs of Hone himself, where the object is quite literally to parody its 'original' out of existence. More often it hovers somewhere between tribute and travesty, as in the many contemporary parodies of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Once removed from the dust and heat of high politics, an air of fake rebellion surrounds it. Its characteristic attitude is one of subversiveness and subservience combined. As the early writings of Canning, Frere and Austen remind us, there are good reasons for thinking of it as the adolescent form *par excellence*.

In their admirable new five volume anthology *Parodies of the Romantic Age* John Strachan and Graeme Stones have given a vivid demonstration of the many different registers open to parodic writing, from high polemic to frivolous throwaway. They have also shown a keen awareness of the wide variety of attitudes that parody can adopt towards its 'original'. It is a rich and interesting collection in this respect, full of fascinating comparisons and contrasts, startling juxtapositions and delightful surprises. The anthology opens, appropriately enough, with a volume devoted to the *Anti-Jacobin*, a powerful example of the way in which parody can be mobilised for political ends. There then follow two volumes of miscellaneous verse and prose parody, which offer a detailed survey of the general field. The final two volumes contain full reprints of two of the most brilliant collections of the age: William Deacon's *Warreniana* and P.G. Patmore's *Rejected Articles*. Both of these works count as real discoveries, not only on account of the literary quality contained within them, but also because of the new light they shed on the literary culture of the late Romantic period. There is a wide variety in the size of the extracts in this set (some texts are reprinted in their entirety, others only in very small chunks) but the editors have organised their material so well, and edited it so thoroughly, that there still remains a strong sense of unity and proportion about the whole. Partly this is because they have supplied a mini-preface to each extract, placing it firmly within its polemical context, and relating it closely to what has gone before. Partly it is a result

of their excellent scholarship – the footnoting throughout is extremely rich and detailed, painstakingly elucidating the many contemporary allusions and cross-references.

A number of debates run through these volumes. The role of parody in high politics is one. The status of parody as a literary form is another. Was parody a sign of literary sophistication? Or was it actually a rather low and facile form of wit? Theoretically, so the editors say, it had a low status in the Romantic period. Such was the value placed on originality and high seriousness by the leading figures of the period that they were bound to see parody as a degraded and derivative form. In practice, however, it had quite a central place in the literary culture of the early nineteenth century, as this anthology helps to show. It grew up alongside the emergent forms of the age – the gothic novel, the lyrical ballad, the Byronic lyric – feeding off their novelty and notoriety for its own ends. But its role was not solely parasitic; it did also have a serious cultural function to perform. In the absence of a formalised discourse of literary criticism parody was one of the most effective means of assessing the cultural meaning and value of literary innovations, of teasing out their implications, of testing their grounds. This might help explain why so many of the parodies of *Lyrical Ballads* are so detailed and intense.

Something intriguing happens to parody in the 1820s. William Deacon's splendid *Warreniana* (1824) is a series of spoof advertisements for Robert Warren's blacking written in the style of several of the most famous authors of the day (Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron among them). It follows on from the example set by Warren himself, who ran a highly successful advertising campaign in the newspapers of the day, making brilliant use of verse parody to popularise his own particular brand of boot polish. It is an interesting connection: Warren's blacking ads represent an important moment in the history of modern marketing; Deacon's *Warreniana* builds on this to say something very suggestive about the periodical culture of the 1820s and its tendency to 'commodify' literary style. Something similar is going on in P.G. Patmore's equally accomplished *Rejected Articles* of 1826, a series of periodical essays written in imitation of the leading prose stylists of the age (including Lamb, Cobbett, Hazlitt, Wilson and Jeffrey). In this work Patmore uses parody as a means of literary critique: his character study of Hazlitt starts off as an entertaining imitation of *The Spirit of the Age*, but soon develops into a full-blown critical essay – the one contemporary portrait that Hazlitt would never have been able to write. In both *Warreniana* and *Rejected Articles* we can see Romantic parody coming of age; the aim is no longer cheap ridicule but something far more subtle and complex. Deacon's Cockney parody of *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* is a gentle satire on the Byronic persona, a skit on Cockney provincialism and also a powerful and moving poem on the vanity of the modern metropolis. It is a significant piece of work in its own right, and it breaks down Hone's critical distinction completely.

The scholarship contained in these volumes is very impressive; the imagination that has gone in to some of the selections hardly less so. The two miscellaneous prose and verse volumes are full of delightful surprises. Sometimes the definition of parody is deliberately stretched, as if to show what a protean form it really is. For example, the infamous 'letter from a friend' from the *Biographia Literaria* is included in the prose volume as an example of Coleridgean 'self-parody'. For the most part, however, the parodies are of the more conventional kind, which is not to say that the particular examples chosen are not endlessly striking and/or surprising. I might have anticipated the appearance of Baron Munchausen and Jane Austen's *Love and Freindship*, but I could not have predicted Richard Barham's

delightful satire on London University, or Samuel Smith's brilliant parody of *The Excursion*. There are many things to enjoy in this collection, but there are also a number of things that scholars working in the period are likely to find extremely useful. There is a full reproduction of Lockhart and Wilson's *Chaldee Manuscript*, for example, with extensive biographical notes. There is also the original source of Byron's famous *Don Juan* manner, in the shape of a comic narrative in ottava rima by John Hookham Frere. Taken together, these volumes offer an admirable insight into the stylistic self-consciousness of the age. They also throw out many interesting suggestions regarding the role and status of comic writing at this time. I am sure they will be enthusiastically welcomed by armchair readers and research scholars alike.

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Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (General Eds.), *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion, 1770-1835*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001. 8 vols. Vol. 5, *Africa*, ed. Debbie Lee. Pp 441; Vol. 6, *India*, ed. Indira Ghose. Pp. 336; Vol. 7, *Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Nigel Leask. Pp. 412; Vol. 8, *South Seas and Index*, ed. Peter J. Kitson. Pp 445. £350. ISBN 1 851 967214 (set).

The appearance of volumes 5 to 8 completes Chatto and Pickering's outstanding *Travels, Explorations and Empires* series. The four volumes published last year covered North America, the Far East, the North and South Poles, and the Middle East; the new volumes cover, in turn, Africa, India, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the South Seas. The format remains the same. Long extracts from Romantic-era travel narratives, and related writings, are given in facsimile; each individual text is ably introduced, footnoted and provided with an up-to-date bibliography; each region as a whole receives an excellent, if sometimes brisk, introduction outlining the key historical contexts for the material that follows. There are still no maps, but this is a minor cavil when set against volumes which bring together, and make easily accessible, both the landmark texts relating to a given region – in the case of Africa, for example, the accounts of James Bruce and Mungo Park – and a fascinating array of less familiar writings: missionary tracts, shipwreck and captivity narratives, contemporary reviews and surveys of the state of travel literature, and much else besides.

En masse, the full eight volumes of *Travels, Explorations and Empires* effect a remarkable circumnavigation of the vast continent of Romantic-era travel writing – an undertaking in its own way as ambitious and heroic, if less dangerous, as the literal circumnavigations recounted in the collection. Yet with the journey done, we are justified in asking – as some commentators in the Romantic era were wont to ask – just what has been proved by the long voyage?

Surveying the whole collection, and the ninety or so texts sampled within it, the following seem the most important lessons to be gleaned from *Travels, Explorations and Empires*. First, the prodigious energy exhibited in the 'Voyages and Travels' genre in the Romantic era. This is not just a question of the number of travel texts being published in this period, although this alone is an important fact about Romantic literary culture that we are prone to forget. Rather, it is more strikingly a matter of the awesome, often bewildering diversity manifest in the genre. The panoptic viewpoint enabled by *Travels, Explorations and Empires* reveals eighteenth-

and early nineteenth-century travel writing to be a protean genre which requires, if we are properly to get to grips with it, a rethinking of many modern assumptions regarding travel and travel literature. Here are travellers who seem to our eyes to cut exuberantly across modern disciplinary and generic boundaries. Here, equally, are texts which could be understood at several different levels, giving rise to a variety of different readings – for as *Aiken's Annual Review* declared in 1805, 'every class of [reader], from the mere loungeur, to whom reading is only a creditable kind of idleness, to the philosopher, who derives from books the materials of useful contemplation, is almost equally interested in the faithful narrative of the traveller'. *Travels, Explorations and Empires* makes apparent the diverse appeal and plural dimensions of Romantic-era travel writing, its plethora of styles and sub-genres, attitudes and ideologies; what is more, it demonstrates also the considerable discursive energy expended in this period in writing *about* all these different sorts of travel writing.

Travel writing, then, was both site and source of fertile debate in the Romantic period. Two further points, not easily reconcilable, arise from this insight into the sheer fecundity of the form. The first regards the organisational principles and institutional pressures which sought to order and direct the energies of British travellers and travel writers. To scan these eight volumes, and within each volume to chart the evolution of travel texts over the sixty or so years of Britain's 'imperial meridian', is to perceive with great clarity a tightly-knit network of individuals and agencies – Sir Joseph Banks, John Barrow, the Admiralty and so forth – increasingly engaged in processing the globe for British intellectual, commercial and literary consumption. From one perspective, this network was awesomely successful and efficient as it helped to bring into being the great Victorian empire; from another perspective, however – and this is the second, somewhat contradictory point thrown up by this collection – it is also clear that this increasingly dominant, and more-often-than-not domineering, ideology was far from being the only attitude espoused in British travel writing. *Contra* the impression that some scholars give, over-reliant perhaps on a monolithic conception of the British Orientalist and scientific enterprise that derives from the otherwise admirable work of Edward Said and Mary Louise Pratt, these volumes reveal the discourses of travel, colonialism and empire to be internally riven. The British engagement with the wider world, in the Romantic era at least, must be understood as a polyphonic rather than a monologic affair. And the diverse voices recorded here show that neither British global supremacy, nor the unpleasant racial attitudes that so often accompanied that supremacy, were foregone conclusions. Here are travellers who were vulnerable, and reliant on the kindness and local knowledge of indigenous peoples; here too, refreshingly, are travellers often willing to give generous accounts of foreign cultures.

As all this should suggest, Romantic-era travel writing is of great interest in its own right, on both historical and aesthetic grounds. That said, however, the fascination of the genre, and the usefulness of *Travels, Explorations and Empires*, increases still further when one brings the documents collected here into contact with what remains the principal interest of most Romanticists today, the canonical literary texts of the age. The volume-editors of *Travels, Explorations and Empires* do an excellent job in identifying the many exchanges – running in both directions – between the traditionally 'minor' genre of travel writing and the more highly regarded 'imaginative' literature of the period. In so doing, they demonstrate the striking extent to which the major Romantic authors, Wordsworth, Coleridge *et al*, were immersed in travel writing, and in the debates which were being thrashed out in travel writing. An older style of scholarship thought simply in terms of 'source-hunting' as it explored

these links. Recognising the full range and richness of Romantic-era travel writing, however, we perceive a more complex and more intimate dialogue taking place between Romantic literature and the supposedly lesser genre from which it so habitually borrows – and in this regard also, *Travels, Explorations and Empires* provides an invaluable resource for all those interested in the literary culture of the Romantic age.

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