

SHERLOCK That a Body, suppose of five or six feet long, should be concealed under the least crum of Bread; these and such like are the manifest Absurdities and Contradictions of Transubstantiation; and we know that they are so, because we know the Nature of a Body, and know that such things are a contradiction to the essential Properties of a Body.

COLERIDGE Indeed? Were I either Romanist or Unitarian, I should desire no better than the admission of Body having [its 'being' not in the 'perceiving'], and really subsisting, [the thing itself], as the supporter of its accidents. At all events, the Romanist declaring the accidents to be those ordinarily impressed on the senses [appearances and sense-impressions] by Bread and Wine does at the same time declare the Flesh and Blood not to be the [noumena], so called, but the [things in themselves]. There is therefore no contradiction in the *terms*: however *reasonless* the doctrine may be, and however unnecessary the interpretation on which it is pretended. I confess, had I been Luther, I would not have rested so much of my Quarrel with the Papists on this Point. I cannot agree with our Arminian Divines in all their ridicule of Transubstantiation. The *most* rational Doctrine is, in my Judgement, the ['we have faith in the thing, we do not understand the means']. — Next to that, the doctrine of the Sacramentaries, that it is ['a sign under the name of a thing'], as when we call a picture of Caius *Caius*. — But of all the remainder, impanation, consubstantiation, etc I confess that I should prefer the Transubstantiation of the Pontifical Doctors.

It would have been worth traversing thus far to come upon the delightful word, 'impanation', which is a way of suggesting that Christ's Real Presence is embodied in the bread while denying that any of the original substance had been destroyed.

However, there is much more than that. Coleridge at once uncovers the unnecessary distinction Sherlock makes between 'substance' and 'matter', and gives him a way out of his worries concerning Transubstantiation. A happening, such as Transubstantiation, may occur, even though those who perceive this may be unable to explain the phenomenon. The real difference between them is that Sherlock is proceeding by reason and Coleridge by faith — he has his own personal conception of Divinity akin to that of Swedenborg, also catechized (pp. 403–74) in this volume. Indeed (see p. 627), Coleridge declares that knowledge of the Deity is not within the sphere of the understanding.

Of course, it is this blithe acceptance of the spiritual that brings about the difficulties rendering Coleridge such a figure of fascination for non-philosophers. His difficulties mostly transpire from being so committed a Christian. He reacts (see p. 419) almost with violence to Swedenborg's belief that repentance is not possible after death. Coleridge's own dependence upon opium is in his mind when he speaks of the horror with which he contemplates his being denied Heaven through inability to change his way of life on earth.

How much more palatable existence could have been for Coleridge if he had been capable of imagining a universe that made sense without God! He was unable to conceive himself the victim of an addiction that was a physical matter, open to alleviation by a medical science more advanced than any to which he had access.

Without the attempt to define, by various means, an Entity which he admits to be indefinable, we should not have the Coleridge that we know. F. R. Leavis, (*Scrutiny*, ix) complained that he was constantly reminded of the gap between the great critic's rare gift and his uneven performance. That is about the only constant to be found in Coleridge. So far from seeking to extract some generalized norm or ideal, the reader should be glad of such *aperçus* as those he comes across while traversing this tormented but multifarious range of works.

Philip Hobsbaum

*Romanticism and Postmodernism*. Ed. by Edward Larrissy. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xii + 238 pp.

*Shelley's Fiction*. By Phyllis Zimmerman. (Los Angeles: Darami Press, 1998), 629 pp.

Just as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries resonated with apocalyptic warnings of the end of an old way of life, postmodernist philosophers in our own times have long been proclaiming 'the end of history'. A strong millennial feeling is at large that the next big idea may be just around the corner. There is certainly such an underlying tone of reflection running throughout *Romanticism and Postmodernism*.

This collection of essays arose from a conference in 1992 at the University of Warwick, and sets out to examine the apparent persistence of the legacy of Romantic thought which may be detected in twentieth century culture. In his introduction, the editor, Edward Larrissy, declares his hope that the essays will be read 'in the light of' certain aspects of current critical thought. This is largely the case, though regrettably, any illuminating wisdom that may have shone from one or two of the contributors lies thoroughly obscured behind clouds of circumlocution and the impenetrable jargon of a certain type of contemporary literary criticism.

One of the most interesting essays is John Fletcher's *The Persistence of Gothic* (pp. 113–40), which examines the capacity of that macabre and fantastic genre to adapt itself in a secular and enlightened world. The essay includes an assessment of the 1971 Hammer horror film *Hands of the Ripper*, which is compared to the early nineteenth century cheap editions of expensive three-volume gothic novels. Fletcher not only evaluates the film's use of psychoanalysis in the plot, but also considers its relationship to concepts of modernity and feminism.

In his chapter *Teleotropic Syntax in Ashbery and Wordsworth* (p. 86–97), Geoff Ward raises the point that reading the two ideologies of the book's title in the light of each other can be a help to understanding both. It is often the case, he says, that we read Romantic texts haunted by a nagging doubt that their originally intended meaning struggles to reach us from too distant a history. Our ability to reconstruct the sense of the author's intentions with any confidence is hampered by our tendency to project the values of our own age upon what effectively becomes a *tabula rasa*. As Ward so elegantly puts it; '... the occluding weight of the past falls like the shadow of a guillotine blade across the page'. And yet, he continues, doubts must be raised as regards any perceptions of 'otherness' of the past. Romantic texts themselves contain



references to meditating minds where otherness and recognition bud inside each other. Such instances are even more prominent in Symbolist poetry such as that of Beaudelaire, which leads Ward to observe;

It may be that Romantic and contemporary poetry seem newly close because, given the waning influence of Eliot and Pound, and the rising importance of Ashbery, it is now Symbolism rather than High Modernism which works as a bridge between the early nineteenth century and today.

In Chapter 7, entitled *Virtual Romanticism*, Fred Botting draws interesting parallels between the crises faced in Europe two centuries ago and those presented by contemporary cultural change. 'Romanticism structures the way that subjects in the present present the present to themselves', he notes (p. 99). This is demonstrated in both utopian and dystopian representations of present-day cyberspace;

... on the one hand, what might be called Luddite humanism recoils in horror from the encroachment of the machine on what is seen as human and natural; on the other, scientific humanism celebrates new technologies as the materialisation of powers previously only imagined Romantically. (p. 100)

One problem that runs throughout the book is that of definition. As Marjorie Perloff notes in her essay *Postmodernism — fin de siècle*; 'We cannot ... come to terms with Postmodernism until we decide what modernism was'. (p. 194) Indeed, Romanticism too is a word whose meaning is much contested. This has led many of the contributors to litter their essays with apologetic explanations, and irritating modifications and qualifications of terminology. Geoff Ward sensibly opts to steer clear of this problem by using the term 'present-day' rather than 'postmodernist', noting that just as Keats or Byron would not have understood the modern term 'Romantic', so it would not be helpful to assimilate everything that chances to happen currently into a catch-all term (p. 217). This option was not, of course, open to all of Ward's colleagues. But in their use of the terms, however, some of their arguments came very close to being rendered meaningless by hopelessly nebulous and overlapping interpretations.

Upon finishing the book, I could not help but think that much of what I had read was fashionable opinion, and thus likely to have a very limited shelf-life. Perhaps a better place for such ephemeral material would be on an academic website or the pages of a journal, rather than between the expensive covers of a hardback book.

One work definitely belonging in cyberspace — the natural home of conspiracy theories — is *Shelley's Fiction* by Phyllis Zimmerman. The contention presented in this curious book is that works such as *Frankenstein*, *Valperga*, *Mathilda*, and *The Vampyre* were all written entirely by Percy Shelley, rather than by those persons usually regarded as being their authors.

Many people would probably concede that there may be some genuine debate over the level of Percy Shelley's involvement in the creation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. For most of us, this would go no further than the difference between him being credited as either the editor or merely a minor collaborator. Phyllis Zimmerman takes things much further, however, proclaiming him not only to be a prolific and

anonymous writer of fiction, but also (along with Jane Austen) one of 'the two greatest novelists of the early nineteenth century'. (p. 584)

With 585 pages of densely packed and copiously annotated text, there is certainly no shortage of argument in this book. But when it comes to depth, Ms Zimmerman's reasoning is very much on the shallow side. Despite the most sustained and tenacious efforts, her assertions are superficial and unconvincing. They often depend upon the flimsiest of parallels being drawn between passages in the novels under discussion, and aspects of Percy Shelley's life, his known work, and (using ludicrously circular logic) the other 'unacknowledged' works which she attributes to him. In this way, Victor Frankenstein's observation of an oak tree being struck by lightning is, according to Zimmerman; '... related to blasted trees in *The Wandering Jew*, *Zastrozzi*, and *Alexy Haimatoff*' (p. 131–32). The oft-told story of Shelley blasting a tree stump at Eton with gunpowder and a magnifying glass is also cited here. Such general comparisons are boldly presented to the reader as 'proof' of her theory, with no support other than Zimmerman's groundless belief that the vaguest resemblance implies an unmistakable connection.

Another regularly used tactic is her tendency to populate the texts under her scrutiny with figures from Percy Shelley's past by highlighting even the slightest similarity between them and various fictional characters. A typical example of this is her assertion that *The Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff* — a work hitherto attributed by the world to Thomas James Hogg — is; 'filled with characters who resemble people important to Shelley'. (p. 54) A number of people such as William Godwin, Harriet Grove, and Dr James Lind are then listed. No-one would dispute that there are certain features held in common by these real people and some of the characters in the novel. But nor would any sensible person make the glib assumption that predictable descriptions of a 'Venerable sage' which might be used by any author to create a character mean that; '... William Godwin as well as Dr James Lind enters into the portrait of M. Gotho' (p. 17), and that this, in turn, denies Hogg's authorship.

In an effort to underline her controversial views with evidence other than textual analysis and comparison, much of her theory also hinges upon attempts to discredit key letters written by members of the Shelley circle. This necessitates the most convoluted and acrobatic twists of interpretation. Inevitably, Zimmerman also expresses her doubts as to who actually wrote the letters. Such efforts are every bit as dubious as the other tactics employed by this author.

At the end of the book, she is persistent enough in her theory to list the disputed novels in the bibliography as being merely 'attributed to' Mary Shelley, Dr Polidori, Thomas James Hogg, and others, whilst in the index the contested works are listed without any authors' names attached at all.

What, we might ask, could Percy Shelley's motivation possibly have been for such a grand literary deception as this? Zimmerman suggests several impulses that she imagines might have achieved this; a mixture of his delight in a hoax and the fact that he 'believed in serving others', his 'desire to write for friends' would make him feel



'virtuous and superior', and his talents as a dramatist gave him 'the capacity to project himself into many roles', she says (p. 12–13). Quite.

Unable to attract the interest of a reputable publisher, Ms Zimmerman has promulgated her own work under the imprint of one of the 'vanity' presses. The book lacks any biographical detail about the author, nor is there any mention of academic qualifications that might have bestowed some authority on her thoughts. Any impression of endorsement that might have been given by the list of distinguished British and American scholars that appears in the acknowledgements is instantly dispelled by the disclaimer attached to one name — due, it can only be presumed, to that person's wise insistence on being publicly dissociated from the author's opinions.

At least the acknowledgements also provide a hint that the author is not above the odd moment of self-deprecation, however. Dedicating the book to her husband, she wryly notes that he; '... helped in every way, but did not write it'.

Christopher Goulding

*Parodies of the Romantic Age*. 5 Vols. Ed by Graeme Stones and John Strachan. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999).

'Wordsworth's nursery ballads inspire me with an uncontrollable itch of parodying them.'

John Clare, 1821

In the opening stages of *Pride and Prejudice*, Caroline Bingley pretends to be shocked by Mr Darcy, and confers with Elizabeth Bennet on how they might punish him. 'Laugh at him', Elizabeth suggests provocatively, and when Caroline replies that such an attempt would be 'to laugh without a subject', Elizabeth pushes the ironies of her insight even further: 'Mr Darcy is not to be laughed at! ... That is an uncommon advantage, and uncommon I hope it will continue, for it would be a great loss to me to have many such acquaintance. I dearly love a laugh.' Elizabeth's ability to laugh both at herself and Darcy is an impulse that in the Romantic era is most commonly associated with Austen and Byron, but with few others. Like Caroline Bingley, we have tended to take very seriously indeed the claims of egotism, gloomy *hauteur*, and what Darcy calls 'a real superiority of mind'. Yet as Graeme Stones and John Strachan demonstrate in their fine new five-volume collection of *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, the impulse to mock such claims was pervasive throughout the period and beyond, and provides fascinating insights into everything from political partisanship to the distinctive features of some of Romanticism's most familiar voices. *Parodies of the Romantic Age* contains some curious inconsistencies, but it impressively fills a gap. 'Perhaps no one will believe in anything in the shape of a joke from me', Shelley noted after finishing *Peter Bell the Third*, yet he was only one of many who used parody to expose the passions and absurdities of the age.

The new edition covers a good deal of ground. It begins with a stimulating Introduction by Stones in which he argues for the vitality and variety of the parodic tradition. 'Romanticism', he observes, 'grew up inseparable from the emulative arts'

(I. p. xiv), and he threads his way from 'Chatterton's spoof medievalism', 'the chameleon Keats', and 'Byron's self-deflating postures' to the more recent theoretical manoeuvres of Bakhtin and Margaret Rose. He concludes that parody is perhaps best thought of as 'ironic imitation' which 'must both reflect and reflect upon the source', and which 'subverts the monolithic, the dictatorial, and the overblown' (I, p. xxxiii, p. xxxv, p. xli). The rest of volume one, edited by Stones, contains the poetry and the best of the prose parodies from the weekly pro-government *Anti-Jacobin* newspaper, complete with a useful 'Table of Attribution'. Volume two (by Strachan) is a broad selection of verse parody, and includes Coleridge's Higginbottom sonnets, Hamilton Reynold's *Peter Bell. A Lyrical Ballad*, and a selection from Byron's *Beppo*, as well as fine but less familiar material by Peacock, Thomas Hood, Thomas Moore, and Catherine Fanshawe. Volume three (by Stones) is a kind of companion to volume two, and features a selection of prose parody by Austen, Walter Scott, James Hogg, Charles Lamb, William Beckford, and several others. The final two volumes (both by Strachan) are new editions of long-neglected books. William Frederick Deacon's *Warreniana* (1824) purports to contain enthusiastic endorsements of Robert Warren's famous blacking (that is, boot polish) by many of the leading writers of the day, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, and Leigh Hunt. P. G. Patmore's *Rejected Articles* (1826) poses as a collection of contributions discarded by the most eminent periodicals of the day, most notably *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and Cobbett's *Political Register*.

The edition demonstrates the ubiquity and diversity of the parodic impulse throughout the Romantic era. Parody was an effective weapon in the armoury of both the political right and left. *The Anti-Jacobin* was founded in 1797 to rally support for William Pitt's Tory government, and flung revolutionary rhetoric back at radicals like William Godwin and John Horne Took in a series of brilliant poetic imitations that finally scotched English enthusiasm for the French Revolution. Pitt himself both commissioned and contributed articles, and repeatedly taunted that 'steady Patriot of the World alone,/The Friend of every Country — but his own' (I, p. 272). Twenty years later *Blackwood's Magazine* quickly established itself as a potent Tory mouthpiece with an endless series of spoofs, caricatures, satires, and squibs, all of which combined malice and wit to bludgeon down radicals and celebrate Legitimacy. 'The Chaldee Manuscript' launched the magazine, with its mock-Biblical language and its allegorical attack on Whig enemies in the fictional guises of birds and beasts (III, pp. 99–118), while William Maginn's vicious lampoon of Shelley's *Adonais* — 'Weep for my Tomcat! all ye Tabbies weep,/For he is gone at last!' — catches the tone of the magazine's truculent social animus (II, pp. 317–22). The political left, however, in true parodic fashion, gave as good as it got, and perhaps most notable here is William Hone's bitter 1817 anti-government satire, *The Late John Wilkes's Catechism of a Ministerial Member*. When 'Lick Spittle' is asked 'who gave you this Name?', he replies, 'Mr Sureties to the Ministry, in my Political Change, wherein I was made a Member of the Majority, the Child of Corruption, and a Locust to devour the good things of this Kingdom' (III, p. 193). Such outspokenness quickly landed Hone in the