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### Reviews

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# Reviews

Robert M. Ryan. *The Romantic Reformation: Religious Politics in English Literature 1789-1824*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. ix + 292.

Many books have been written on religion, prophecy, and the bible in Romantic literature (among the more influential: Murray Roston, *Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism*, Faber & Faber, 1965; Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine*, Harvard, 1969; Richard Brantley, *Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism,"* Yale, 1975; Stephen Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church*, Cambridge, 1976; Anthony Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word*, McGill-Queen's, 1985). Although Ryan finds occasion to acknowledge and to cite some of this previous work, his own book stands as a unique and original contribution to the field. He is concerned not with religion in Romantic literature, but — as he tells us in his title and makes apparent at every stage of his argument — with “religious politics.”

In surveying the activities of the reformists, secessionists, dissenters, and nonconformists during the latter decades of the eighteenth and the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, Ryan so clearly documents the persistent tensions of church and state within Britain, frequently punctuated by aggressive upheavals and riots, that he leaves no doubt that it is impossible to talk about religious controversy during the period without giving full attention to the political causality. This is the context that he establishes in his opening chapter and that he continues to implicate in each of the subsequent chapters devoted to major authors of the Romantic period: William Blake, William Wordsworth, George Gordon, Lord Byron, John Keats, Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In his chapters on the writers of the period, he has omitted Samuel Taylor Coleridge and included Mary Shelley. The inclusion of Mary Shelley will be especially welcomed by readers, for Ryan provides an astute reading of the *Creature's* critique of religion and religious hypocrisy, emphasizing how Mary Shelley has pitted the Miltonic against the Godwinian doctrines of order and destiny. The omission of a chapter devoted to Coleridge is problematic: as a writer who began his career as a Unitarian and concluded

it as a reform advocate of the Broad Church Movement, Coleridge was more actively and persistently engaged in the issues with which Ryan is concerned than any of the other authors he includes.

Even though he has not devoted an entire chapter to Coleridge, Ryan explains, reference to Coleridge does indeed occur in every chapter. He has omitted Coleridge, "partly because even a superficial discussion . . . would require disproportionate space, and partly because, unlike the other writers included here, Coleridge came to understand himself primarily as a theologian and only secondarily as a poet or writer of fictions" (10). There is something disingenuous in both excuses. While it is certainly true that a comprehensive study of Coleridge's religious politics would indeed "require another volume the size of this one" (10), Ryan has not assumed the responsibility of providing a comprehensive treatment of the religious politics of any of the six authors whom he does include. Instead, he has been selective, focussing his attention on a specific work: Blake's *Jerusalem*, Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Byron's *Cain*, Keats's *Hyperion* and *Fall of Hyperion*, Shelley's *Hellas*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. He has, therefore, no obligation to provide a comprehensive examination of Coleridge. Nor, in terms of his other chapters, can Ryan possibly believe that to be selective one must also be "superficial" or that one must turn to the later rather than to the early prose, written when Coleridge was most deeply dedicated to his career as a poet. In a note, Ryan cites Morton Paley's "These promised years": Coleridge's 'Religious Musings' and the Millenarianism of the 1790's" (in *Revolution and English Romanticism*, St Martin's, 1990). Paley's essay is by no means superficial, but I can well imagine Ryan, as he has done in his other chapters, bringing the same contextual richness to Coleridge's "Religious Musings" and to his *Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion* (Princeton, 1971). I am not claiming that his book is seriously flawed by his decision to omit a chapter on Coleridge. I am simply saying that such a chapter would have been a grand plus, and that the reasons Ryan gives for the exclusion do not accord with his practice elsewhere in the book.

Although Ryan does not provide the coverage of Coleridge that we might reasonably expect from a book on *The Romantic Reformation: Religious Politics in English Literature 1789-1824*, what he does provide is rich and rewarding. In one of his several self-effacing apologies, he mocks the tendencies of rigorous specialization, asking "Shellyans to bear with this Keatsian while he reminds Wordsworthians what Blake thought about Byron" (11). While Ryan writes with confidence and mastery on all his authors, his chapter on the two *Hyperions* (152-178) is among the best articulated in the book — best articulated because of his thorough familiar-

ity with Keats's letters and with his relationship to Leigh Hunt. Where many of Keats's conservative contemporaries would have placed the Greek worship of mythic gods among the rudimentary pagan foreshadowings of a monotheistic and messianic enlightenment, several thinkers — Edward Gibbon, David Hume, William Godwin — had emphasized the cultivation of mythology within Athenian culture as more humane than was Christianity throughout its formative centuries. Leigh Hunt, whom Ryan acknowledges as "Keats's most influential political mentor," became an ardent advocate "of the superiority of Greek religion over Christian" (154). From Hunt, Keats appropriated "the politics of Greek religion," with full awareness of the implicit polemic against the dictates of the established Church. Ryan weaves his argument deftly in and out of Keats's grand poetry on the Fall of the Titans, relating their overthrow to the national debate following the Peterloo Massacre and the trial of Richard Carlile for anti-Christian blasphemy. In recent years, Nicholas Roe (*Keats and History*, Cambridge, 1995; *Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, Oxford, 1997) is undoubtedly the scholar who has contributed most to the understanding of the politics of Keats's poetry. Ryan's important chapter significantly augments that work by delineating the inseparable and informing religious contexts of those political issues.

In his chapter on Wordsworth as "nature's priest," Ryan achieves a more modest but nevertheless convincing integration of the poetry with the prevailing politics of religious dissent. He has no difficulty in documenting the political engagement, evident in such prose works as the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793) and the pamphlet on *The Convention of Cintra* (1809) as well as in the often impassioned poetic celebrations of the revolutionary cause, from the lines on freedom in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) to the enthusiastic revolutionary fervor of the lines beginning "Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive," published in *The Friend* (1809). In his response as "a Republican" to Richard Watson's "extraordinary avowal of his Political Principles," Wordsworth in 1793 clearly sees religion and politics as inseparable. Ryan endeavors to maintain a sense of subsequent transition and change in Wordsworth's religious politics as he draws upon *The Prelude* (1805) and *The Excursion* (1814). While *The Prelude* still repeats a Coleridgean formulation of "the One Life" and the pantheistic tremulations of "harps diversely framed," in *The Excursion*, previous critics have supposed, Wordsworth has adopted Anglican orthodoxy. Ryan demonstrates, however, that Wordsworth's position is far from orthodox. The four major characters — the Poet-narrator, the Pastor, the Solitary, and the Wanderer — engage in a debate over the nature of true religion and the responsibilities of the church. The Pastor participates as an active member of the clergy;

the Solitary as “an ordained minister of the Church . . . who has abandoned his vocation out of political disillusionment”; and the Wanderer as a believer who claims “an uncanonical ordination by God himself in the great cathedral of nature” (103). It is a mistake, Ryan argues, to understand the Poet-narrator as an accurate spokesman of Wordsworth’s own position. He is, rather, “what we have learned to call an unreliable narrator” (102). Although the Pastor and the Wanderer both endeavor to restore the lost faith of the Solitary, they undermine each other’s arguments. The Wanderer’s pantheistic “natural religion” is idiosyncratic and “sounds at times like traditional deism” (105). The Pastor finds it easier to repeat the platitudes of his faith than answer the questions about widespread poverty and suffering. Ryan locates the discourse of religious dissent primarily in the Solitary, whose arguments have little to do with metaphysical or theological issues. His objections “are moral and political, involving a demand that religion show its relevance to the social crisis of the time” (109).

Critics of Wordsworth’s *Excursion* have seen in the poem a retreat into orthodoxy, and Ryan’s task was to show its conscientious confrontation with the religious disaffection and alienation of the age. In his revisionist reading of Blake’s *Jerusalem* Ryan has pursued the very opposite strategy. Blake’s critics have approached his prophetic works with the assumption that he radically opposes Christian orthodoxy: Northrop Frye described Blake as “a Bible-soaked English Protestant” whose “doctrines come straight out of the New Testament”; Harold Bloom found it more accurate to call Blake “an apocalyptic humanist than a Christian”; Gerald Bentley said that “Blake’s religion is a unique species of the genus Christian, so idiosyncratic as to fall outside the pale of orthodoxy”; Jean Hagstrum denied that “the return of Christ to Blake’s poetry and art” could be considered “orthodox or dogmatic Christianity” (quoted on 45). The assumption that Blake was not orthodox, Ryan argues, has been based on a failure to understand how the standard of orthodoxy, the Church’s Thirty-Nine Articles, were upheld in Blake’s time: “Even a wary Anglican like the older Robert Southey conceded the orthodoxy of most Dissenters: ‘The Methodists of every description, the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists, differ not in doctrine from the Church of England’” (47). Citing Morton Paley’s demonstration of the persistence of Swedenborgian ideas in Blake’s thought even after the ostensible repudiation of Swedenborg in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (50), Ryan goes on to show that the Swedenborgian account of “the divinity of Christ and the Atonement, which so closely resembles Blake’s,” had been accepted as orthodox. Ryan cites the charges of heresy brought against the Reverend John Clowes who had been preaching Swedenborgianism as rector of St. John’s parish in Manchester, charges

which were dropped when the local bishop found Clowe's beliefs fully in accord with the Thirty-Nine Articles (51). Ryan then turns to a reading of *Jerusalem* in which he aligns Urizen with the authoritarian, Luvah with the antinomian, impulses of religion (57) and identifies in Los the endeavor to comprehend the meaning of Jesus, "his identity and his doctrine" (59).

It has long been recognized that, like Goethe's *Faust*, Byron's *Cain* is a dense composite of biblical quotation and allusion. But like Goethe himself, Byron too has been seen as an irreverent pagan who scoffed at religious codes. Byron conducted his literary critique of religion through a language of irony that not only served the purpose of satire, but also engaged the disparities of spirit and body, church and state, heaven and earth, as well as the Calvinism and Deism that were so influential in his own early years. Ryan commences his chapter on "The ironies of belief" by citing Frederick Denison Maurice's defense of the disputed memorial for Byron in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey. Maurice maintained, as Ryan summarizes the argument, that Byron "had made a significant contribution to the religious life of his country," and such works as *Cain* and *Don Juan* "had produced a beneficial spiritual effect in their power to disturb intellectual complacency" (119). In examining the constituent tensions of ambivalence, ambiguity, and paradox in Byron's irony, Ryan dismisses Anne Mellor's chapter on "Byron: 'Half Dust, Half Deity'" in *English Romantic Irony* (Harvard, 1980). Her approach, he concedes, may work well enough on the stylistic level to explain the "self-mocking tendency to revise and contradict himself as he went along," but, Ryan objects, "her account of the ideological basis of artistic irony does not seem especially relevant" to Byron (128). Byron's irony was essentially an existential irony, grounded in the awareness that irony might not, after all, be the appropriate response to the illusion-riddled constructs of reality. For Byron, "the chief irony of religion lay in the confident assertions of believers and unbelievers alike that they had found out the truth" (129).

Just as Ryan had to reevaluate Byron's reputation for irreverence and impiety, he also must address Shelley's stance as self-proclaimed atheist. How can one class as "religious reformer" a poet "whose ideas about reformation usually involved eradication of what most people call religion" (193)? Ryan answers the question by insisting that Shelley's atheism and his avowed contempt for Christianity were largely polemical, and his theological disposition more subtle than may be readily recognized. Ryan justifies this claim by demonstrating the subtleties of religious thought in Shelley's *The Necessity of Atheism*, *The Defence of Poetry*, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, and the *Essay on Christianity*. Turning to the poetry, Ryan gives close attention to *Hellas*, a poem in which Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, con-

sults the resurrected phantom of Mahomet II, who conquered Constantinople in the mid-15th century. Under his curse of wandering through the millenia, Ahasuerus has determined that freedom and progress are vain illusions. Mahomet's phantom arises from the grave to reinforce "the pessimistic theme that the present and future are fated to repeat the past" (214). In the Prologue to *Hellas*, Christ is mocked by Satan, then as the poem begins, by Ahasuerus. Following the Chorus that celebrates the coming of Jesus as "a Power from the unknown God," Ahasuerus, much like the Furies in *Prometheus Unbound*, denies the possibility of any redemptive agency to improve the lot of mankind. Jerome McGann is convinced that *Hellas* concludes with a repudiation of its own great concluding Chorus prophesying that "The world's great age begins anew/ The golden years return." According to McGann, Shelley "'overturms and denies the whole of *Hellas* in the last six lines'" ("The Secrets of an Elder Day: Shelley after *Hellas*," *K-SJ* 15 [1966]: 26). In fact, Ryan answers, the pessimism in the final lines is simply a recurrence of one of two major themes in the entire poem, heard even in the choral celebration of Christ (215-6). A proper understanding of the poem must recognize the struggle "between two competing ideologies, one redemptive, insisting on the possibility of radical alteration in mankind's situation, the other fatalistic, denying the possibility of any significant change in the human condition" (214). The struggle persists. *Hellas* ends with the world still "waiting for a redemption." When one recognizes Shelley's sense of these contrary forces in history, Ryan argues, it becomes meaningless to say that the ending of *Hellas* is pessimistic, or that the ending of *Prometheus Unbound* is optimistic. In both, the ineluctable forces remain locked in a continuing struggle (220).

In *The Romantic Reformation*, Ryan exhibits a thorough command of the politics of religious dissent. He documents the prevailing "religious politics" of the period and shows how the works of six Romantic authors engage the discourse of dissent and reform. This valuable study should not be ignored by future scholars interested in religion, politics, and the Romantic ideology.

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G. Kim Blank. *Wordsworth and Feeling: The Poetry of an Adult Child*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995. Pp. 269.

According to psychiatrist Alice Miller, whose work constitutes an important influence on this study (John Briere, Judith Herman, and Lenore Terr are also cited)<sup>1</sup>, writers who have endured traumas in childhood will necessarily, even compulsively, reenact those traumas in their texts in an attempt to heal their "inner child" and find wholeness (27). For G. Kim Blank, as for other psychologically oriented critics of Wordsworth, the trauma revealed and reenacted in the poet's major writings originates in the early deaths of his parents. But in forefronting the loss of the father, Blank follows David Ellis in changing the focus from that of earlier psychoanalytic critics of Wordsworth, such as Richard Onorato and Barbara Schapiro, who were more concerned with the oedipal and the narcissistic aspects of the interrupted mother-son relationship.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed the most interesting parts of this book are those which speculate on the kind of man John Wordsworth must have been to serve as the representative of a master as selfish, manipulative, power-hungry, and unpopular as Sir James Lowther. The picture of the elder Wordsworth that emerges for Blank is that of a workaholic who managed to provide for his family's material needs — in spite of the fact that Lowther never paid him for his services — but seldom was at home long enough to offer emotional support. Blank surmises that given Lowther's reputation, John Wordsworth's nature, and the birth of five children in six years, the Wordsworths' home life must have been stressful at best (56), and he implies that the early death of the poet's mother may have been at least partly caused by depression (48). The fact that Ann Wordsworth worried about her moody son William on her deathbed, telling a friend he "would be remarkable either for good or for evil" (49), suggests to Blank that even at that early age, William was acting out his inner pain more than his siblings (66-67).

John Wordsworth died of the effects of exposure occasioned by a night spent outdoors in a snowstorm during a December trip for Lowther. By so doing, Blank argues, he caused his son to experience feelings of "guilt, hurt, and rejection — feelings which could never thereafter be resolved directly, but which are expressed indirectly in the *Prelude* "spot of time" about the poet's waiting for his father's team of horses to fetch him home from Hawkshead for those fateful Christmas holidays (60). The lack of a close father-son relationship paradoxically made the loss all the more difficult for young William: "for we cannot say that Wordsworth's relationship

with his father was close or nurturing, which, paradoxically, makes it more difficult to cope with in this particular circumstance of loss" (60-61). Even the cheerful story told by Wordsworth's nephew Christopher in his 1851 *Memoirs*, that John Wordsworth encouraged his precocious son's reading of English literature, does not redeem him in Blank's eyes: John Wordsworth may have given his son poetry, but he withheld the more important gift of his fatherly affection (64).

Blank goes on to postulate a psychic cluster interconnecting "Father/Death/Poetry/Sickness" (65), attributing not only the poetry itself but also the physical illnesses Wordsworth experienced while writing, and the related psychic phenomena of dissociation and withdrawal (218-19), to a combination of somatoform and post-traumatic stress disorders (79). In a powerful summarizing passage, Blank states, "We cannot say that Wordsworth loved poetry. We can only say that he needed it" (65). He sees the "incestuous undertones" (71) of the William-Dorothy relationship, and the deep grief both siblings felt in 1805 at the death of their younger brother John (65), as further expressions of their earlier losses; he summarizes a section on the *Lyrical Ballads* by declaring, "Wordsworth emotionally identified with his mother, but he tended to act like his father" (124); he believes that this split between "feminine" feelings and passivity and "masculine" thought and action begins to be healed in "Tintern Abbey," especially in the final section when the poet turns to his sister (134, 137). Finally, Blank argues that the "philosophic mind" of the "Intimations Ode" brings an end to Wordsworth's self-therapy and thus accounts for the lessening of emotional intensity that many readers have felt in the poetry after 1804-05 (148): the "lost child virtually disappears from Wordsworth's poetry after this point" (214), and "the *Ode* remains . . . the most powerful literary work about recovery in the English language" (221).

Blank is so anxious at this point to declare his patient Wordsworth cured of his childhood traumas that he minimizes the interpretive problem generations of readers have had with the *Ode*: does the poem in fact embody or articulate such an inner liberation, or does the poet just *want* that to happen, or *try* to make it happen, or *claim* to have made it happen? It does not seem necessary to Blank's purpose for Wordsworth to *be* fully cured either here or at any other point; surely no one is ever entirely cured of such psychic pain as Blank claims that Wordsworth experienced, and it might be more effective to argue for a continuing fluctuation of the poet's moods over time. Earlier, equally anxious to forefront Harry Gill's "susceptibility to guilt and punishment" (115), he compares Goody Blake of *Lyrical Ballads* and Margaret of "The Ruined Cottage" as examples of "pure suffering and silent endurance" (114). Blank claims here that Goody "accepts her lot

in life with a kind of benign virtue" (115), when in fact, neither enduring nor silent, she acts most assertively: first she bravely steals twigs from Harry's hedge to keep her own fire going, and then she puts the curse of coldness on him for his greedy, unfeeling selfishness. If Goody represents "feminine"-feeling, and Harry "masculine" rationality, then, Blank could have argued, by acting as she does she brings about, for poet and reader, a healing triumph of feeling united with reason; thus, it seems to me at least, Blank's own thesis would be better served. In short, many of Blank's readings of Wordsworth's poems seem to suffer from their own sort of obsession, dissociation, and withdrawal — driven, as they clearly are, to prove a thesis that would seem more convincing if it were not pushed so relentlessly and blindly. This limitation is only exacerbated by Blank's disingenuous insistence that he is not writing an overdetermined book, as he claims that new historicists, poststructuralists, and even some other psychoanalytic critics do (27-29), but is engaged in what he calls "Process Criticism" whereby "patterns are recognized, but they are not imposed" (37).

At 221 pages, with three appendices containing important material from trauma psychiatrists Briere, Herman, Terr, and others that would more helpfully have been incorporated into his introduction as part of his main thesis, Blank's book becomes far too long, rambling, and repetitive a "process" for what it has to say. It is clear, on the other hand, that conforming to currently accepted paradigms of academic discourse is not part of this critic's agenda. Instead, by repeating over and over that Wordsworth was a real man who had been a real boy who had suffered real pain, Blank is in effect mounting a rear-guard attempt to restore to criticism a faith in, and a respect for, the poet's basic humanity in the face of the deconstructionists, lost in language, who regard such subjectivity as obsolete, and of the new historicists, lost in their hegemonies of time that require them to view Wordsworth as "sexist" or "classist" or "imperialist" Other. Ever since Coleridge's critique in the *Biographia Literaria*, Wordsworth has of course been "restored" to us from time to time; no doubt he will be again in the future at more or less regular intervals. Does he need this? No, but Blank convinces me that we do — and not just because we all would like to publish some more before we perish. One cannot help either sympathizing with Blank's basic human feelings for Wordsworth or wishing he had done a tidier job of expressing them.

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## Notes

1. Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, tr. Hildegarde Hannum and Hunter Hannum (New York: Meridian, 1986); John N. Briere, *Child Abuse Trauma: Theory and Treatment of the Lasting Effects* (London: Sage, 1992); Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic, 1992); Lenore Terr, *Too Scared to Cry: How Trauma Affects Children . . . And Ultimately Us All* (New York: Basic, 1990).
2. Richard J. Onorato, *The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in "The Prelude"* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971); Barbara A. Schapiro, *The Romantic Mother: Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983); Davis Ellis, *Wordsworth, Freud, and the Spots of Time: Interpretations in "The Prelude"* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). More recently David Collings has seen, in the early *Prelude* spot of time about the stolen rowboat, evidence of a masochistic fantasy based on the young poet's combined fear and desire for his dead father (*Wordsworthian Errancies: The Poetics of Cultural Dismemberment* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994], pp. 136-37).

Nicholas Roe. *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*. Oxford: Clarendon-Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 315; 6 illustrations.

Since the publication of criticism on Keats by Marjorie Levinson, Jerome J. McGann, Daniel Watkins, Andrew Bennett, and others, most serious readers would not consider Keats disengaged from social questions. This book explores the conversations Keats's work took part in and suggests that many of Keats's ideas and poems can be fruitfully re-read in terms of their forgotten social context. The author calls his own methodology an "archaeology": "I have sought to return (so far as possible) to the original inflections of Keats's language, image and poetic style" (ix). The author's object is not just to re-historicize a poet who was long considered to be apolitical or ahistorical but to counter the Tory attacks on Keats he thinks have had lasting influence to this day. Though the power of the legend of "Poor Keats" is declining, the myth of Keats's lack of education, lower-middle class up-

bringing, autodidacticism, and immaturity survives. Critics follow "Z" and other Tory foes of Keats when they accentuate his lower-class background. For Roe, this stress dismisses his genuine education.

In some ways this volume does not fully cohere. Two of the chapters, the first and sixth, discuss Keats's primary and professional education respectively; the others place Keats's imagery in its social context. The educational chapters might have been more skillfully dovetailed into their successors. The chapter on Keats and Charles Cowden Clarke is the shortest and perhaps the least interesting; it actually interrupts the discussion of the previous and following chapters. In it, the author spends a good deal of time on the radical literature Clarke transcribed in a commonplace book Roe admits Keats may not have seen.

Roe's educational archaeology is fascinating in its own right. Enfield school was founded by John Ryland, an educational reformer who died ten years before Keats attended the school. When Keats was a schoolboy, the headmaster was John Clarke, the father of his lifelong friend Charles Cowden Clarke. The education Keats had at Enfield was not a typical one for a boy of any class. The library was evidently stocked with books in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and French. Ryland interwove learning and play; his curriculum emphasized wide reading and the natural sciences. There is a delightful depiction of the boys careening around the garden in the orbits of the planets, all the while trumpeting their respective planetary characteristics. Roe ascribes Keats's interest and use of astronomy — as well as the combination of play and work found in the driven composition of *Endymion* — to his training at Enfield. Yet some questions need to be addressed. Though Ryland initially welcomed the French Revolution, his later politics and those of his successor Clarke are not explored fully enough. Roe eagerly ascribes political influence to these men, but his evidence is rather slim. Roe is also sketchy about the role that religion played at the school. He does point out that Ryland's motivation for his educational experiments was Christian: "since he believed in the evidences of God's existence in the created universe, Ryland held learning to be a quest for spiritual understanding" (34). But while Roe eagerly traces Keats's politics and astronomical knowledge to Ryland, he does not question what Keats did with Ryland's religious faith. He only notes in passing that Keats's "Nature" takes the place of God in Ryland's scheme — quite a significant emendation.

Roe ascribes Keats's view of history and the classics to his Enfield training. In his chapter "Cosmopolitics," he writes that Keats understood classical history as progressive in a context of a radical politics that valorized change. Keats's re-writing of Greek myth — a revision that his educated critics despised — came, Roe argues, not out of an ignorance of the tradi-

tion but a deep knowledge and love for it. Keats and Hunt re-imagined a sensuous paganism to counteract the sterile classicism of the aristocracy. The “pretty paganism” that Wordsworth derided in the young poet was not an uneducated appropriation of the dominant classical models but an intelligent response to them. Keats and Hunt transformed British Hellenism from an upper-class exercise to a vivid milieu — hence Keats’s fascination with bowers, greenery, and Greek folk religion. They re-imagined the elitist classical tradition in a way that turned it into a symbol of the political and social involvement of the people. Roe christens the Greek situations of Keats as a “licentious, imaginative response to classical literature” (68). Roe’s discussion of Keats’s paganism — and especially his vision of Keats as a gifted re-reader of the classics rather than blundering misappropriator — is a high point of the book. It aptly evolves from his investigation into Enfield school.

The paganism that Keats’s critics derided described not just literary attitudes but sexual and social ones too. Tory critics were appalled by the sensuality of Hunt’s scandalous (and popular) *Story of Rimini* and Keats’s *Endymion*. Roe unpacks the social resonances of the landscapes that Hunt and Keats used; if paganism was a way of removing the elite’s control of the classical inheritance, pastoral too, as Keats and Hunt represented it, implicated sexual and social democracy. Tory critics dismissed the “cockney school” as “suburban,” a slur on its neighborhoods and social habits. Keats, Hunt, Reynolds, Clarke and their set wrote poetry of sociality — they wrote poems to and for each other, dedicated poems to one another, and sent each other verse letters. This sociality countered the Wordsworthian ideal of the solitary poet writing poems about lone figures against an extensive view.

Not only was the sociality of Keats and his friends “suburban,” the location was as radically social, coming together once again in their praise of the leafy and green. Roe argues that Keats makes use of the “libertarian and mythic associations of the Old English greenwood” in his pastoral (136), and he provocatively reads the exchange of poems about Robin Hood that Keats took part in with his friend John Hamilton Reynolds. Keats corrects Reynolds’s nostalgia in his version of “Robin Hood,” and in this correction Roe sees Keats imagining the future rather than the past. For Roe, Keats’s political imagination prefigures contemporary ideas of a feminized commonwealth of mutual dependence. This final notion counters the author’s stated intention to read Keats’s works “in their original inflections,” but the investigation unearths an early nineteenth-century vocabulary nonetheless.

The sixth chapter of the book investigates the political education Keats acquired along with his medical one as a student at Guy's Hospital. As dresser to William Lucas, Keats witnessed countless surgical operations and attended lectures by the most famous physicians of the day. Roe's examination of the politics of surgery is absorbing. Surgery was dominated by dissenters and political radicals, as hospitals did not require the religious tests of Oxford and Cambridge. The leading lecturers at Guy's — Astley Cooper and John Thelwall — were political radicals. Cooper seems to have taken particular notice of Keats, and Thelwall, a poet, had been imprisoned for treason. Roe suggests that Keats may have seen Thelwall as a pharmacopolitical mentor. The intersection of Keats's medical interests and his poetry is not a new subject, and sometimes Roe succumbs to the obvious. He suggests that Keats's praise of fresh air in "I stood tip-toe" and in his letters shows "sensitivity to the ways in which air affects bodily health. (195)" One does not need a course in surgery to suggest that fresh air may be refreshing. But the discovery of the intersection of Keats's medical training and political education is engaging. Most interestingly, Roe re-reads the place of the well-known bower in Keats poetry. Keats's "space for quiet dreaming" may have a medical genesis as well a political resonance; the bower is a retreat from pain that descends from the praise of the pastoral and greenwood of Keats's early lyrics.

The final chapter, "Lisping Sedition," covers more familiar ground: the accusations of Keats's critics. Susan Wolfson has discussed the feminization of Keats in some detail in a number of essays. Roe examines his infantilization and shows how the incessant depiction of Keats and his verse as "immature" reacted to the perceived political threats of the poet's style and content. Again, Roe pays careful attention to context. Keats's style was seen as too rich and new — a challenge to neo-classical values and the political stances that those values seemed to support. Terms like "licentious" and "unrestrained" marked Keats's verse as breaking linguistic regulations and threatening the regulation of society. Tory journals underlined Keats's youth as a tacit way of attacking his opinions. To insist that Keats's verse was not mature implied that it was not relevant.

With all this background, Roe offers us new readings of "To Autumn" and negative capability in his "Epilogue." Roe suggests that both are far more politically invested than previously thought by establishing new contexts for them. The author wants to show that Keats's praise of Shakespeare's genius takes part in liberal, revolutionary readings of his of plays. Roe does inform us that *King Lear* was not performed for decades because the spectacle of a mad king onstage duplicated the mad king at Windsor rather too closely. But while radical writers praised Shakespeare, didn't moderate and

Tory writers too? Roe's more specifically historically oriented claims can be strained. For Roe, Keats's praise of selflessness references Hunt's attack on the selfishness of George III's ministers. But accusing politicians of selfishness is hardly unique to the early nineteenth century.

Roe does place negative capability in its intellectual context. Negative capability derives not only from the sources — Hazlitt in particular — recognized by Bate, Bromwich, and others — but also from William Godwin. Negative capability both springs from and reacts to Godwin. For Roe, *Political Justice's* idea of the “natural inducement” to sympathy inspired negative capability even as Keats's notion counters the idea of perfectibility and the “mechanism of Godwinian reason” (246). Keats could have gathered his knowledge of Godwin from Charles Dilke. The placing of negative capability in complex opposition and relation to Godwin is instructive.

Roe goes on to defend negative capability as a politically informed strategy that provides an opportunity to comprehend history. Roe interrogates the view of Jerome McGann, who decries Keatsian aesthetics as “escapist.” Roe's intention is well taken. Roe intelligently questions why poetry has to be branded either left- or right- wing. In his own words, there are a “wide range of possible attitudes and responses that intervene between ‘engagement’ and ‘escape’” (250). Roe's attentions question the reductiveness of historical studies in Romanticism. McGann labels Keats's 1820 volume *Lamia* “reactionary.” As reactionary as the Wordsworth or Southey of the period, one wants to ask? Keats's discussion of negative capability occurs in the context of the mere idea of opinions, not just those of his radical friends but of the moderate Coleridge. Coleridge and Dilke serve as examples of the lack of negative capability. Keats seems to have a problem not only with argument but with the desire to form opinions no matter what they are or who is forming them.

Roe's re-reading of Keats's poetry culminates in his stationing of “To Autumn” as a politically invested work. He writes that he wants to “locate the impersonal voice of the poem in relation to contemporary discourse of political and social conflict, so angling the poem that it may be understood as a negatively capable intervention rather than an attempt to escape the period” (252-53). It is a high aim but not an entirely persuading one: Roe seems ambivalent about the extent to which the poem is political. The political reading of “To Autumn” hinges on minor points; Roe notices the word “conspire” in the second line of the first stanza and notes that conspiracy was one of the words used by Tory ministers to frighten audiences and enforce draconian laws. But he does not show how “conspiring how to load and bless” implicates ministerial positions. Roe traces the figure of Autumn in the poem to Ceres, to Hunt's *Calendar*, which interleaved quo-

tations from Shelley and other poets with his own prose commentary, and to Justice, whose figure was carried in banners at the Peterloo massacre. Finally, Roe implies that the mere subject of the poem has a revolutionary meaning; the fall harvest implies the book of Revelation and its reaping of the earth. While autumnal beauty may not escape the discourse of politics, Revelation is an odd text for an unbelieving radical to turn to. Why must "To Autumn," possibly the last poem Keats was physically capable of writing, be an escape or a broadside? Though at one point Roe reduces the poem to a commentary on Peterloo, at others he seems not quite convinced by his own argument. Roe's reading of the final lines reads like a feuilleton: "Keats was always a 'watcher of the skies,' and this most generous of poems concludes with the turning of the seasons, a gathering for departure, and with one of the delighted stares which Cowden Clarke always associated with Keats's intensity of response" (267).

Roe's extensive research has produced a book that is largely, but not absolutely, convincing. Roe does recover Keats from the contexts of disadvantage, so that we see his education as enriching his poetry rather than impoverishing it. He also shows how contemporary critics have swallowed the categories of Keats's Tory adversaries. The author impressively re-stations Keats as a poet of abundance rather than lack. Yet I am not sure he succeeds in re-historicizing Keats as a radical throughout his career. If anything, Roe questions whether a poet must be embedded in politics.

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James Soderholm. *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend*.  
Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996. Pp. xii +  
195; 9 illustrations.

Responding joyfully to Byron's wordplay, James Soderholm's study of "Byromania" (as Annabella Milbanke dubbed it) is lucid and delightfully brief. Its thesis is that the Byron Legend was the co-creation of certain intelligent, literate women readers who strongly influenced and even in a sense "possessed" him by assuming his voice. Soderholm describes his book as "a contribution to the reception history of Byron's works" (5), but it amounts to much more than that. Combing through some little-known

material, Soderholm shows how Byron's dialogues with women were driven on both sides by a desire to keep the Byron mystique in circulation. Carefully examining letters, keepsakes, poems, satires and (in the case of Lady Caroline Lamb) forgeries, Soderholm traces the development of Byron's awareness that he was fundamentally a "made" man — the creature of his readers' imaginations (13). What emerges is a convincing elucidation of the sources and mechanisms of Byron's "glamour" — still powerful two centuries after his birth.

We have heard Byron's story again and again, including anecdotes of Elizabeth Pigot, Lady Oxford, Lady Caroline Lamb, Annabella Milbanke, Countess Teresa Guiccioli, and others of Byron's paramours and casual acquaintances. These women have rarely been treated seriously as literary influences on Byron — except as inspiration for particular female figures. Margot Strickland's *The Byron Women* is one obvious exception to this claim, but a great deal has happened in Byron studies and the world since that book was published (London: Peter Owen) in 1974. Soderholm has capitalized on the additional biographical material with an admirable critical sophistication to make the significant women in Byron's life more real to us. He shows how their literary-amorous responses affected the evolution of Byron's ability to absorb and transform images of himself for public consumption. This symbiotic relation might be epitomized in his famous affair with Lady Caroline Lamb, who "forged" Byron with such accuracy that it scared and angered him — though this was the reverse of her intent. Byron had, however, an earlier acquaintance with a strong woman that prepared him for his later encounters with Lady Caroline and the world of the anglo-continental aristocracy.

Miss Elizabeth Pigot was five years his senior when she met the sixteen year old Byron in 1804. Soderholm challenges the view that she was an attractive but sexually cool figure, suggesting that "perhaps the opposite was true" (19). Her rejection of Byron's flatteries helped the poet to refine his sense of the uses of idealization and of the way poetry engages and reflects readers' desires. Like other female readers, Elizabeth Pigot later tried to make herself the addressee of certain Byron poems, but this does not mean that she succumbed to Byron's "flattering arts." She had served as copyist for many of Byron's early poems and was a cautioning advisor during his infatuation with Cambridge chorister John Edleston. Her level-headed and reasonable sympathy prepared Byron to survive other less happy friendships and liaisons.

Even a young sophisticate such as Byron had become by 1812 could not have been prepared for the adoration lavished upon him after he woke up one morning after the publication of *Childe Harold* and found himself fa-

mous. Soderholm's ambitious second chapter seeks to capture the fall-out from Byron's sudden initiation into the very highest levels of British aristocracy through the agency of Lady Caroline Lamb, whom Soderholm calls "Byron's first full-fledged fan" (41). Calling Lady Caroline a "fan" seems to follow the habit of dismissing her as a serious "subject." But Soderholm asserts the talents of this woman whose literary response to Byron included two novels (*Glenarvon* [1816] and *Ada Reis* [1823]), two narrative poems (*Gordon: A Tale* [1821] and *A New Canto* [1819]), and nearly a dozen songs set to music by Isaac Nathan, for whom Byron wrote the lyrics of *Hebrew Melodies* (1815-16). Soderholm waves off "the highhanded dismissals of biographers and literary critics" (69) and eschews the usual characterizations of Lady Caroline as a nymphomaniac and lunatic. One thinks, for example, of Doris Langley Moore, who described Lady Caroline as a "guileful, tenacious, and vindictive" troublemaker to whom "violations of good taste were irresistible," whose acts of generosity were "perfectly empty" and whose carnal appetites frightened even Byron himself (*The Late Lord Byron: Posthumous Dramas*, Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1961, 230-31). Soderholm focuses instead on her forgery of a Byron letter and the satirical language of *A New Canto*, which brilliantly mocks the Byronic pose of world-weariness: "I'm sick of fame — I'm gorged with it — so full / I almost could regret the happier hour / When northern oracles proclaimed me dull . . ." (quoted in Soderholm 64).

It is, of course, to Lady Caroline that we owe the most famous Byronic epithet: "mad, bad, and dangerous to know" (Lady Sydney Owenson Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs: Autobiography, Diaries, and Correspondence*, 2nd ed., 2 vols., London: William H. Allen, 1863, 2: 200). Cross-dressing, satirizing and effectively adopting the use of Byron's androgynous image-producing machinery, Lady Caroline forged a letter and pretended to use it to steal a miniature portrait of the author in 1813. This symbolic "possession" of Byron by Lady Caroline led to many unforeseen and unhappy consequences for them both. But it also paid literary dividends, especially for Byron, who empathized with and exploited the role of the "ravished" (see *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 12 vols., Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1973-82, 3: 12) and in the process conceived a "hero" for *Don Juan*.

A respect for the literary talents of these Ladies of the Regency pervades Soderholm's treatment of Anne Isabella Milbanke's courtship and marriage to Byron. He demonstrates that Miss Milbanke's poetry — which Byron himself had complimented before he met his future bride — repays our close attention with manifold insights into their attraction and their doomed marriage. The *Hebrew Melodies* clearly influenced their relation-

ship, for Annabella copied out many of the poems and even wrote some responses. Byron's Old Testament themes enticed the "Princess of Parallelograms" into playing "Thyrza" to his heroic poseur, again with sorrowful consequences for both partners but also a poetic payoff. Lady Byron produced "Thyrza to Lord Byron," a typical self-seduction of the type into which many female readers fell after reading the "Thyrza" poems. Eventually, Byron delivered many works born of his difficult days with Annabella: *Manfred*, for example, which Soderholm describes as a "poetic hex" directed against his ex-wife and all who tried "to judge and reform him" (99, 100).

Although he writes rather dismissively about Countess Guiccioli's posthumous renovation of Byron, implying that she always duped herself about his appetites, Soderholm also believes that the Countess became Byron's longest-enduring partner precisely because she combined the fire of Lady Caroline with the ice of Annabella (105). After his death, however, she plagued Byron's spirit in seances, casting him as the medium's dummy. Her presentation of Byron as a spiritualized being with his carnal "flaws" erased is reflected in Soderholm's chapter title, "Unwriting the Body."

Teresa Guiccioli's usurpation of Byron's voice epitomizes the responses of the readers/lovers described here. We see the desire to mimic Byron first in the gentle satiric reproofs of Miss Pigot. The desire then flames out in the forgeries of Lady Caroline. "[S]he will have the credit," Byron fretted at the time, "of being the authoress of all the letters *anonymous & synonymous*, written for the next ten years & the last five. — For aught I know she may have forged 50 such to *herself*" (*Byron's Letters and Journals* 3: 14). After escaping from Lady Caroline and fleeing the reformist agenda of his wife, Byron reshaped his image, allowing himself to be bullied and "saved" by Countess Guiccioli. He fell posthumously into the hands of his former lovers and friends: Robert Dallas, Lady Byron, the Countess, Thomas Moore, Thomas Medwin and the Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, whose "conversations" with the poet provide the matter of Soderholm's concluding chapter. In that conclusion, Countess Blessington emerges as a debunker of Byron's legend whose intention was "less to reform than deform" her more than half-created interlocutor (161). In this chain of forgeries, hers gets closest to the heart of Byron's attraction to women audacious enough not to be impressed.

Soderholm is a nimblefooted writer whose characterizations have punch. He pulls off many fine turns of phrase — as when, for example, he describes the literary and epistolary record of Byron's relations with Countess Teresa Guiccioli as a "comedy of eros" (105). Perhaps there is even at times a superfluity of allusions. The chapter on Countess Guiccioli ends thus:

She found the notes toward this supreme fiction in her mental edition of, one might say, "The Recollected Works of Lord Byron," an edition that completely digested its material. To this volume of memory and desire she contributed her book of automatic writing. The Byron she conjured up — now a Catholic, a sentimentalist, and a speaker of French — became a most unlikely angel in the house. (130)

These quick evocations of Stevens's "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* are separately amusing. Together . . .

One other small point: *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend* refers to its aristocratic female subjects by last name: "Guiccioli," "Lamb," "Blessington," etc. It seems emblematic of the colonizing attitude of American scholars toward British literature of the nineteenth century that these Ladies should be stripped of their titles and spoken of like ballplayers. No doubt that choice was intended as a mark of respect, to place them on a similar footing with their nexus: "Byron." This intent is laudable. In practice, however, it results in a conflation of Lady Caroline (nee Ponsonby) with her husband ("Lamb"), and in such odd moments as this: "During their courtship, Milbanke became more and more beguiled . . ." (82). The forms of address that "Milbanke" would herself have preferred (Miss Milbanke, Annabella, Lady Byron) reflect realities of gender and status we shouldn't try to efface, and this needn't be demeaning or reactionary, as Peter Graham (*Don Juan in Regency England*, UP of Virginia, 1990) and Jerome Christensen (*Lord Byron's Strength*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) have demonstrated.

Soderholm could undoubtedly have written a much longer book, but he has taken the extra time and effort to give us this economical, well-researched, clever and convincing study of Byron's serious relationships with literate and literary women. Soderholm shows that the poet was quite conscious of having lost as well as found his existence in the eyes of the women who had constituted him as "fantasy." In showing that Byron "fed as much on the resistance of women as on their idol worship" (161-62), Soderholm reminds us of the talents and torments of Byron's worthy liaisons, who appear more independent and, in turn, cast a more revealing light back upon that charismatic creature whom so many still desire somehow to possess.

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Stephen C. Behrendt, ed. *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. Pp. 221.

In a letter to his friend John Cam Hobhouse dated April 22, 1820, Byron asked for clarification of the word "radical" which Hobhouse had used in a previous letter; he claimed that "radical is a new word since my time — it was not in the political vocabulary in 1816 — when I left England — and I don't know what it means — is it uprooting?" Byron's confusion calls attention to our tendency to apply new terms and new usages retroactively to earlier historical periods. (The word "Romanticism" itself is an example of this phenomenon.) That Byron was not familiar in 1820 with the use of "radical" as a substantive is indicative of the ever-changing political lexicon during the Romantic era. It seems to me that in 1998 we are in the same predicament as Byron was in 1820; the socio-historical lexicon of scholarship too is ever-changing, and in the last several decades of Romantic studies a great deal of effort has been expended on redefining, delineating and reconstructing the political ideologies and terminology of the era. The precise nature of what we now regularly call "radicalism" and its relation to the field of Romantic Literature is the focus of *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, a new collection of essays edited by Stephen C. Behrendt.

In the Introduction, Behrendt offers the book as a piece of revisionist scholarship, from which emerges

a portrait of a diverse writing community in which elements of the Radical social, political, and economic agenda are articulated and advanced both by writers whose aims are primarily literary and by writers whose principle motivation stems from more immediately politically and socially engaged commitments (23).

The range of theoretical perspectives on the topic is remarkably broad, including psychoanalytical, linguistic, historical, historicist, and reception-based approaches. Logically then, it is a book with multiple goals, high on the list of which is the need "to examine carefully and systematically the historical contexts which at once shaped and were shaped by artifacts of culture"; and requisite for this task is "a willingness to rethink — often dramatically — both our assumptions and expectations about the materials we are considering and the ways in which we are accustomed to think about them" (13). While half of the essays focus on canonical figures such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley, they do so in a variety of ways,

often locating those figures in the context of their contemporaries. The contextualizing fulfills a concomitant goal of the book which is to resurrect and restore the lost radical voices of the revolutionary debate. The other essays explore works and authors that even the most widely read among us must admit are on the periphery of the current (ever-expanding) canon. As Behrendt points out, in times of war the voices of the defeated frequently are lost to history.

In his own essay from the collection, "British Women Poets and the Reverberations of Radicalism in the 1790s," Behrendt points to a nearly universal element of radical poetry: "The stark representation of 'what is' as a way of highlighting the more pressing issue of 'what is *not*' typifies Romantic Radical discourse . . ." (90). This generous and insightful definition covers a great deal of the literature of the period, much of which has been lost, forgotten or simply ignored in the last two hundred years. In mapping out those undervalued and ignored voices of the past, *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press* fulfills Marilyn Butler's landmark call for canonical expansion in *Rethinking Historicism* (Basil Blackwell, 1989). Butler's case, made in the chapter titled "Repossessing the Past: the Case for an Open Literary History," uses Southey as the primary example of a voice "dropped by the curious consensus-making of the 1820s" (72) in favor of other voices that better met the political and social needs of the Victorian canon-makers whose vision of great literature is still largely with us today. Many of the essays which comprise *Romanticism, Radicalism and the Press*, however, seek to excavate from the past voices far less familiar than Southey's. Behrendt's essay in particular is a remarkable and informative work of cultural and literary archeology.

The first two essays focus on the rhetoric of the 1794 treason trials. Thomas Pfau's fascinating "Paranoia Historicized: Legal Fantasy, Social Change, and Satiric Meta-Commentary in the 1794 Treason Trials" draws parallels between the prosecution's rhetoric against the defendants and Freud's analyses of paranoia, concluding that the so-called "treason conspiracy" was in fact a projection of the prosecution's paranoia. In a careful blend of psychoanalysis and late eighteenth-century law, Pfau follows the prosecution's "paranoid mode of reasoning" (38) and the defense's attempts to combat and expose their fallacy through a Freudian lens that casts new light on the topic. In "The Other Fraud: Coleridge's *The Plot Discovered* and the Rhetoric of Political Discourse," Victoria Myers also examines the logic of the prosecution, but through Coleridge's understanding of political linguistics. Her intriguing essay argues that in prosecuting the group of dissenters in 1794 the government was in fact "conflating bill with law and thus forcing the country to take the one speech act for the other" (71).

Together, these two fine essays expose the peculiar logic of the ministerial party.

In "Rhetorical Missiles and Double-Talk: Napoleon, Wordsworth, and the Invasion Scare of 1804," Brenda Banks defends Wordsworth from the familiar charge of apostasy, suggesting that in the French Revolution books of *The Prelude* he had presaged the modern view of Napoleon not as a logical outcome of the Revolution but as an outcome of the European reaction to the Revolution. Her call for a more historically-grounded approach to Wordsworth's necessarily disguised rhetorical patterns is very convincing. Focusing on the role of the British press in Wordsworth's refiguring of his earlier ideals, the essay is an insightful and sensitive attempt to restore the lost "decoder mechanisms needed to break into such artfully disguised speech" (104).

One of the most prolific scholars of the life and career of John Thelwall, Michael Scrivener presents another clear and informative perspective on Thelwall's role in shaping the agendas of the radical press in "John Thelwall and the Press." Thelwall, who unlike Wordsworth devoted less effort to disguising his political ideals, wrote in a variety of different genres (fiction, poetry and prose) for a variety of different audiences (revolutionary activists, middle-class activists and middle-class Radical Enlightenment thinkers with no activist agendas). Scrivener focuses on Thelwall's work with journals, demonstrating how he was able to reach so many people in so many ways without compromising his ideals. Along with his other work on Thelwall, Scrivener's essay will continue the important work of restoring Thelwall's reputation as a central figure of the period.

David Worrall, Kim Wheatley and Stephen Jones also contribute excellent essays demonstrating the immense power wielded by the journals of the period. In reconstructing the political milieu in which important decisions were made on both sides of the debate, Worrall's essay, "*Mab and Mob: The Radical Press Community in Regency England*," expands our understanding of the post-revolutionary phase of the debate by revealing the extent to which radical publishers were spied on in Regency England and how such surveillance affected the publishing industry. In "'Radical Trash': American Emigrants and the *Quarterly Review*," Wheatley examines the writings of British emigrants and their reception in the *Quarterly Review*, which adopted a Miltonic framework to rhetorically cast such authors (Morris Birkbeck in particular) as tainted post-lapsarian figures. Jones' fascinating essay "*The Black Dwarf as Satiric Performance; or, the Instabilities of the 'Public Square,'*" also explores the rich and unstable situation of the Regency by focusing on Thomas Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, "which de-

liberately capitalizes on its own relation to a moment of cultural instability by representing instability back to itself" (204).

In "Demonology, Ethos, and Community in Cobbett and Shelley," Kevin Binfield compares Shelley's inability to move his audience to political action to William Cobbett's success via the rhetorical device of demonology, that is, the construction of "an adequate devil, a personal antitype . . . to build an appropriate polemical style around" (157). It is a strategy most of us are familiar with in the rhetoric of the Tories — George Canning in particular was a master of demonology, and his journal the *Anti-Jacobin* devoted itself almost exclusively to demonizing the "other" through a variety of tactics.

Kyle Grimes' essay "William Hone, John Murray, and the Uses of Byron" describes Hone's opportunistic poem *Don Juan, Canto the Third!* as a microcosm for the struggle between the respectable literary publishers (represented by Murray) and the popular radical publishers (represented by Hone). Grimes demonstrates how "Hone's poem co-opts the comic-Byronic voice and impresses it into the service of popular politics" (193).

The approaches these authors take to their topics are remarkably diverse, but the overall effect of such a juxtapositioning can only be described as fun — a charge rarely seen in reviews. Moving from one essay to the next, in the order Behrendt has placed them, the effect is not one of fragmentation, but rather of a complicated kaleidoscopic cohesion in which Romanticism, Radicalism and the Press are on display from many sides: the official sides, the undersides, the repressed and oppressed sides, and the forgotten sides. Nearly all of the essays force us to rethink the concepts of "high" and "low" art. This welcome addition to the growing body of work on Romanticism and Radicalism will inevitably be, as Behrendt suggests in the Introduction, "unsettling" to some. Perhaps Byron's word "uprooting" describes the effect, as each essay asks us to "revise both our expectations of history and the culturally-conditioned expectations we customarily bring to those acts of interpretation" (28). However, insofar as the essays fulfill Behrendt's goal of shedding light on the "highly context-specific referentiality" (28) of the discourse of the period, this important collection is well-worth the uprooting.

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Monika Greenleaf. *Pushkin and Romantic Fashion: Fragment, Elegy, Orient, Irony*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. Pp. viii+412.

Until quite recently, one of the commonplaces of Pushkin criticism was to argue that the poet's inborn classical instinct enabled him to avoid the "excesses" of Romanticism. D.S. Mirsky, the great historian of Russian letters, insisted that Pushkin be isolated from, even elevated above, the imported literary fashions that prevailed by the 1820s in Russia. Mirsky employed the terms *tochnost* and *kratkost* to define Pushkin's style. These terms refer to Pushkin's elegant precision and impeccable economy of language, and like the poet's style, they elude real translation. The efforts to monumentalize Pushkin into a classic, however, inevitably backfired on the poet. Like the tanks each October on Red Square, Soviet *Pushkinists* rumbled along, flattening Pushkin under the dead weight of their biographical and philological findings. Many of Pushkin's more experimental texts, the late "Kleopatra" tales for example, were tagged as literary anomalies and left out of the corpus. Formalist critic Boris Tomashevsky warned that Pushkin's works were particularly prone to ideological interpretation and should never be read out of context. It is only in the last twenty-five years that Soviet scholars, most notably Lidya Ginzburg and Yuri Lotman, have been able to begin mapping out Pushkin's place within the context of Russian Romanticism, basing themselves in part on their Formalist precursors' highly innovative research. In the United States, some excellent studies stemming from these critics' work have been published, including monographs by William Mills Todd III (*Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, Harvard UP, 1986) and Stephanie Sandler (*Distant Pleasures: Alexander Pushkin and the Writing of Exile*, Stanford UP, 1989).

Monika Greenleaf's fascinating new book goes one step further than previous studies by arguing not simply for Pushkin as a Russian Romantic writer but by attempting to position the poet within the larger discursive field of European Romanticism. Much of the ambiguity surrounding the periodization of Pushkin's work stems from the writer's intriguing authorial subjectivity. Pushkin's speakers do not consistently coincide with the stock figure of the Romantic lyric poet, a role to be played only after Pushkin's death by Lermontov. Pushkin, as so many critics have pointed out, still belonged to the culture of eighteenth-century France, a culture dominated by what William Mills Todd has called an "ideology of polite society" (10). Such an ideology emphasizes the separation of genres and a necessary fluency in all forms of writing. Greenleaf describes Pushkin's persona as that

of a carefully cultivated *improvisatore*, whose polymorphous *oeuvre* gradually alienated readers seeking a more stable lyrical hero. Rather than focusing on Pushkin's "classical" features — his *tochnost* or *kratkost* — however, Greenleaf stresses the more open-ended, characteristically Romantic aspects of his writing — his fragmentariness (*otryvochnost*) and irony. Such an approach allows one to read Pushkin in tandem with other European Romantic movements, and in particular with the project of the Athenaeum group. Greenleaf claims that Pushkin came closer than any other European artist to realizing what the Jena writers prescribed as a poetics of modernity (19).

The open-ended quality of Pushkin's writing, argues Greenleaf, allowed critics, beginning with Belinsky, to read into Pushkin whatever suited them best, thus turning him into a "closed text" (5). Among the more famous or eccentric examples of closure are Dostoevsky's 1880 speech, which transforms Pushkin into a Russian Christian prophet, Nabokov's outrageously excessive annotations to his translation of *Eugene Onegin*, and, as noted above, D.H.Mirsky's reading of Pushkin as a neo-classical poet. In *Pushkin and Romantic Fashion*, Greenleaf seeks to show that Pushkin's distinctive feature as a writer is his *refusal* of closure and that his heterogeneous works are "an endlessly counterpointed exploration of his own individuality" (345). She loosely organizes her approach into four theoretical paradigms or "fashions," including fragmentariness, elegy, Romantic irony, and Orientalism. Because Pushkin arrives relatively late on the European Romantic scene, he is able to master the above elements and syncretize them with indigenous norms. Central to Greenleaf's thesis is the fact that Pushkin never abandons any of these "fashions"; rather, he develops an "elegiac" language to return to and "dramatize the extremes of his various identities" (16).

After giving a brief but useful genealogy of previous Pushkin research in her Introduction, Greenleaf then devotes two chapters to a discussion of Russia within the larger European discursive field. In Chapter One, she addresses what she terms a shared Romantic "deep structure." In other words, Pushkin, who (much like Byron) disliked German and anything even remotely connected to German theory, drank from the same well as the theorists of the Athenaeum project, i.e., from Diderot and Voltaire. She makes a good case for the *salons philosophes*'s proto-irony and penchant for a collective, dialogic style of writing later to be known as the Romantic fragment. As Greenleaf convincingly shows in her readings in the following chapters, Pushkin's irony is as radical as Schlegel's and functions as a "fixed psychic drama" (29), a subjectivity as parabasis around which Pushkin fashions all his creations.

Chapter Two covers in great depth the role of the Greek Anthology in early nineteenth-century Russia, in order to elaborate on Greenleaf's notion of "psychic drama." She argues that Pushkin's so-called "classicism" is in fact a highly self-conscious re-working of the classical fragment through the intermediary of French poets Chénier and Parny. In response to Kukulbecker's polemical question of 1824 — why so many elegies? — Greenleaf hypothesizes that Pushkin "was addicted . . . to elegiac repetition itself" (91). She tries to explain this hypothesis through a slightly murky, over-determined, "psychological-anthropological" (106) reading of the poem "Proserpine" that combines Freud, Lacan, biographic details of Pushkin's Odessa love triangle, and Greek mythology as interpreted by Peter Sacks. In this, as in a few other passages, the argument suffers from an excess of erudition, if such a criticism may be made.

The remaining four chapters apply the above theoretical model to four very different works by Pushkin: the Oriental narrative poems, the historical drama *Boris Godunov*, *Eugene Onegin*, and the obscure, rarely-read "Kleopatra" tales. Greenleaf's varied choice of texts not only gives us insight into the rich multiplicity of Pushkin's creativity, his constant re-fashioning, but also confirms her thesis about an elegiac "psycho-drama" at the core of much of his writing. For example, in Chapter Three on Pushkin's Orientalism, she juxtaposes the poem "The Fountain of Bakhchsirai" (1823) with the prose piece "Journey to Arzrum" (1835) in order to show how the later work inverts its predecessor, returning to the Oriental topos in an ironic gesture that mourns a lost youth while disengaging itself from "an overly crowded, metaphorically predictable" Orientalist landscape (150). The chapter on *Boris Godunov*, Pushkin's remarkable hybrid drama, argues for a representation of subjectivity/history that is contingent, fragmentary, fluid. As a dramatic re-working of Scott, Machiavelli and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Boris Godunov*'s twenty-three short scenes or partial visions place the audience in the role of chronicler, destabilizing the very possibility of a unified narrative, be it that of classical drama or of Karamzin's monumental history of Russia.

Greenleaf's reading of *Eugene Onegin* is the *piece de resistance*, a brilliant, persuasive example of criticism that leaves us wondering how we ever could have interpreted the work differently. The irresistible appeal of her argument stems in part from the fact that theory and biography become so convincingly intertwined within the plot of *Onegin*, whereas in the previous chapters, theory, biography, cultural history and text do not always gel together quite so convincingly. Greenleaf relies less heavily here on theory, employing only a "a mildly deconstructive" (53) critical apparatus, derived principally from Paul de Man. Her approach to irony in *Onegin* is

far more radical than that taken in previous readings, by Nabokov or Lotman for instance. She claims that, as a "novel in verse," *Onegin* subverts both genres: it constantly wavers between poetry and prose, elegy and irony, its plot allegorizing the origin of linguistic creation as well as Pushkin's own poetic maturation. Before the duel, poetic language as figured by Lensky is mocked by Onegin for being inadequate to the full reality of experience. After Lensky's death, however, the lyric "interludes" multiply: Pushkin reclaims and expresses elegiac emotion through Tatiana. The story ends with an elegy for elegiac inspiration itself, as if Pushkin worried that prose writing would dry up his creative powers. De Man's principles of allegory and irony work especially well in Greenleaf's interpretation of Tatiana's letter, which inverts the traditional male writer/erotic subject binary structure, and in her passage on the "little feat" stanzas, in which elegiac and erotic repetition become one and the same. My only gripe with this chapter is that it never cites Russian phenomenologist Sergei Bocharov, whose work on *Onegin* in the 1970s bears interesting parallels with Greenleaf's argument.

The "Kleopatra" tales provide the occasion for elegant closure to a critical narrative that seeks, paradoxically, to free Pushkin from closure. Greenleaf writes that "the 'Kleopatra' tales are the best illustration I know of the idea that 'the self writes to find its own center'"(329); they thus make the most convincing case for Greenleaf's earlier assertion that, of all European poets, Pushkin comes closest to realizing the ambitions of the Athenaeum group. By "Kleopatra" tales, she means the three unfinished stories — "We were spending a night at the dacha," "A Tale of a Roman Life" and "Egyptian Nights" — that Pushkin wrote from 1832 to 1835, which, in their obsessive attempts at framing his "Kleopatra" poem, also re-work texts written at a happier time in Pushkin's life. The "Kleopatra" poem itself is emblematic of poetic inspiration. Greenleaf argues that Pushkin, much like E.T.A. Hoffmann with "Don Juan," turns the society tale into an ironic representation of the poet's declining role in 1830s society. The late "Kleopatra" fragments thus may be read as "historical elegies" that mourn the loss of poetry, as well as Pushkin's identity as a poet. If the poet "fashioned or retranslated his own creative energy, preoccupations . . . [and] individuality into the kaleidoscope array of his 'hallucinatory worlds'"(345), it is always to return to that same lyrical core, the "psychic drama" of loss at the heart of creation.

By inserting Pushkin and Russian Romanticism within the larger discursive field of European Romanticism, Monika Greenleaf's *Pushkin and the Romantic Fragment* does a great service both to Pushkinists and to Comparatists more generally. Although her book is a densely-textured study

that goes into much detail and assumes a certain degree of *a-priori* knowledge of Pushkin, it can nevertheless be used as a fascinating launching point into the poet's multifaceted body of writings. Anyone interested in the fragment, the elegy or the Greek Anthology may benefit from the first two chapters. Hopefully, Greenleaf's brilliant exegeses of Pushkin's work will also persuade Romanticists that Pushkin is a central Romantic figure who needs to be taught in the classroom alongside Goethe and Wordsworth. In her conclusion, Greenleaf lucidly acknowledges that her reading of Pushkin performs its own act of closure. Yet her post-structuralist version of Pushkin helps unravel stylistic and textual questions that went unanswered or ignored until recently. Pushkin the fashioner of *otryvoki* has finally been given his rightful place alongside Pushkin the classical poet, master of *kratkost* and *tochnost*.

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Bénédicte Monicat. *Itinéraires de l'écriture au féminin. Voyageuses du 19e siècle*. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996. Pp. 149.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in the French travel narrative. This can be seen both in the new collections created by French publishers to edit or re-edit travel narratives from the past and in the numerous critical studies of the genre in all its aspects that have appeared during the past few years. *Itinéraires de l'écriture au féminin*, Bénédicte Monicat's study of nineteenth-century French travel narratives written by women, participates in both these literary and critical trends. First, through its ample bibliography of narratives hitherto ignored or neglected, this book makes a not negligible contribution to literary history, in particular to women's literary history and the history of the French travel narrative. Second, as an interpretative work, the study makes a very useful and interesting contribution to French studies, addressing a number of theoretical problems posed by a particular type of writing practice by traveling women, that is, when one category of "Other" writes about yet another. Examining the intersection of colonial and feminine discourses, the study seeks to determine whether female travelers write the "Other" differently than male travelers.

In the first chapter, "Espaces," Monicat identifies the wide range of countries visited by nineteenth-century French female travelers, from the traditionally privileged Italy to Russia, Morocco, Senegal, Brazil and Indochina. This chapter also familiarizes the reader with the many motivations these women had for traveling, either as individuals — such as traveling to pilgrimage sites or spas in the quest for psychic or physical health — or as companions to their husbands, often involved in scientific or colonial expeditions.

Drawing on feminist and post-colonial theory and criticism Chapter 2, "Voyage et Voyageuses," offers an initial interpretation both of travel by women and of the literary practices that result from this activity. Thus following Frantz Fanon, Monicat claims that just as some blacks have attempted to negotiate a system of racial oppression by identifying with whites, French female travelers often rejected their femininity in an effort to empower themselves. In the second half of this chapter, the author offers biographical sketches of a number of exemplary female travelers whose works create, she argues, *one single discourse, a specifically feminine type of travel writing* ("L'écriture féminine du voyage" [45]). These include Adèle Hommaire de Hell, Marie d'Ujfalvy-Bourdon, Jane Dieulafoy, Léonie d'Aunet, Raymonde Bonnetain, Olympe Audouard, Cristina Belgiojoso, Suzanne Voilquin, Carla Serena and Henriette d'Angeville.

In the first part of Chapter 3, "Aborder l'Autre," Monicat studies how the above female travelers represent the "Other" in their narratives showing how, for example, when assuming the role of the colonizer, the female travelers abandon the values of the margin for those of the center. The author also identifies the different types of defense of the colonial enterprise — such as the myth of progress — offered by the female travelers. She then examines how some of the female travelers reject the colonialist enterprise, as when, in a striking reversal, Olympe Audouard refers to the treatment of women in the West as "barbarian."

In Chapters 4 and 5, "Départs: pré-textes à deux et en solitaire" and "Du voyage à l'écriture du voyage," Monicat discusses the types of justification offered by the female travelers in the prefaces to their narratives for their decisions to travel. Alternately, these include an element of defiance ("I will not stay at home as women are expected to do") and of compliance ("I travel because to be a good wife I should accompany my husband" or the more ambiguous "I inherited my father's passion for travel"). These chapters also identify the types of justification given for the decision to commit the travel experience to paper. Here the author contrasts what she calls a "masculine discourse of objectivity," characterized by impartiality, with a "feminine discourse of subjectivity." (88)

In Chapter 6, "Paradoxes des harems," Monicat argues that it is in part by describing domestic space that the female travelers create a travel discourse of their own. Through generous and well-chosen quotations, the author illustrates the two ways harems are perceived by the traveling French women, both as a symbol of degradation of women at the hands of men and as a symbol of liberation from their power. Moreover, Monicat points out that their ability both to visit and describe these privileged spaces to which men had given mythic status confers the female travel writers with a power denied to men, while raising their consciousness with respect to their own social status at home.

Finally Chapter 7, "Par-delà les frontières," examines the dialectical presentation of self that results in the constitution of feminine subjectivity in the travel narratives under study. While some of the women seek to assimilate themselves into typically masculine scientific endeavors, others cultivate their presumed ignorance in order to describe more sincerely the private mores they observe during their travels or else to glory in having met the physical challenges of travel. It is in these latter cases that the author finds traces of a gradual emergence of a feminine subject.

My reservations with respect to this often fascinating and useful study lie in two general areas. First, to my mind, Monicat's arguments would have been more convincing had she better contextualized the travel narratives, placing them more consistently and fully against the backdrop of those written by men. On several occasions an insufficient familiarity with travel narratives written by men has led the author to make unjustifiable generalizations. For example, in Chapter 4 she affirms that the justifications offered by women for their travel writing are characteristic elements of the "feminine writing of travel" ("l'écriture du voyage au féminin" [77]). Although the author asserts that the women's prefaces manipulate the conventional discourse of the preface, she never precisely identifies what this is. In order to make a more convincing argument that these justifications are truly characteristic of the specifically "feminine" writing of travel, it would have been helpful to compare the prefaces of the female writers in question with prefaces written by men, specifically those not recognized as authors. Such an examination would have revealed that although perhaps not true for Chateaubriand, whom the author does mention, it was very common for non-professional male writers to feel obliged to justify at length both the writing and the publishing of their travel narratives. A perception of weakness on the part of the travel writer motivates the justifications, and this weakness has been felt by both male and female authors for whom their travel narratives were often their first and only books. It would thus appear that for previously unpublished writers the justifications included in their

prefaces contribute to the affirmation of the self in general, rather than just to that of the feminine self as the author asserts. It is only against this backdrop of prefaces written by men that the true specificity of preface writing by female travelers can be adequately determined.

Similarly, Monicat accepts without criticism Mary Louise Pratt's assertion that if men's work in traveling was to gather and possess, women's was self-discovery and self-realization (31). While this might have been true of scientists and colonial administrators, it was certainly not true of the majority of male French literary figures who wrote travel narratives, especially during the first half of the century, including, to name just a few, Chateaubriand, Stendhal, Nerval, Gautier and Flaubert. For many male travelers no less than for their female counterparts, the goal of travel was the discovery of an interior universe as much as of an exterior one.

My second reservation lies in the paradoxically ahistorical quality of much of the study. Monicat states her desire to examine what brings these women together in time and space: the act of writing their travels. However, in so limiting the scope of her study, she denies the profound temporality implied in the writing of women's literary history. Inattention to temporality is in evidence, for example, in Chapter 2 where female travelers are not considered in chronological order, nor are the works to be studied ever identified in the text with the date of their publication. In order to identify the narrations, place them in historical order and determine whether there was any evolution in women's subjectivity during the course of the century readers must make their own lists gleaned from the bibliography and then refer to it during the reading of the rest of the book. This atemporality is again seen when lists are given of male travel writers in no particular order, chronological or other (2, 22 57, 114).

Moreover, by taking the feminine ("le féminin") as the source of cohesion for the travel writings examined, the author's study ignores cultural differences that mark the early, mid and late decades of the century. "Woman" and the "Feminine" are essentialized in a way that ignores aspects of cultural history, such the difference in women's access to formal education, especially scientific education, during these different periods. Is "Woman" and the "Feminine" the same in the 1830's as in the 1890's? The author does not address this question. Without a consideration of the cultural conditions from which these narratives grew, the relative contributions of these female writers cannot be fully understood.

Similarly, what the author calls the "masculine discourse of objectivity" (88) is again perhaps more a reflexion of a particular late nineteenth-century *Zeitgeist*, dominated by science and philosophical positivism, than of the particular sex of the writer. After all, a century earlier many late eigh-

teenth-century males wrote "sentimental voyages." Rather than establishing a strictly sex-based distinction, perhaps it would have been more helpful to make a gender-based distinction the heart of the study. This would have allowed for the fact that at different historical periods and in different contexts, values or practices often associated with women, such as sentiment or a need for self-justification, are frequently assumed by men.

Sometimes the lack of familiarity with travel narratives written by males and the lack of a nuanced historical analysis or perspective combine to lead the author to overinterpret. Thus, when in 1862 Blanche de Rivière asks to be pardoned for "the disagreeable self that is inevitable in this type of narrative" ("le désagréable MOI inévitable dans un récit de ce genre" [114]) it is likely that her request was less determined by her status as a woman than by the fact that during the second half of the century, when scientific modes of knowledge were strongly valued, the subjective was linked with an out-of-vogue Romanticism. This interpretation is supported by the fact that male travel writers also found subjectivity to be problematic during the final decades of the century, as when in the preface to his *Sensations d'Italie* (1892) Paul Bourget asks pardon for the presence of his "hateful" self in his travel narrative in terms very similar to those used by Blanche de Rivière.

In sum, the tendency to discuss these travel narratives in a generic and cultural and historical void has somewhat limited the author's ability to determine with true precision the particular character of the female traveler's discourse. However, these reservations aside, through her often subtle interrogation of the texts under study, Bénédicte Monicat, has shed new light both on the subjectivities of nineteenth-century French women and the modalities of their written expression, thereby making an important contribution both to women's history and to the history of writing practices in France in general. Furthermore, by bringing to light a group of texts hitherto ignored or neglected the author invites others to continue her interrogation of this rich corpus.

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