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## EDITORIAL

*Anthony Mandal  
Maximiliaan van Woudenberg*



DESPITE AN EXTENDED HIATUS, *Romantic Textualities* is back, and much has been happening behind the scenes over the past three years. Although we have continued to publish new material since the last issue in the form of book reviews and blog posts, we're delighted that the journal is now back with our longest and most comprehensive issue to date. To meet our ambitions for the journal, we are in the process of refreshing our editorial team: in the first instance, this has involved the appointment of Maximiliaan van Woudenberg (Sheridan Institute of Technology) as co-editor of *Romantic Textualities*, who joins Founding Editor, Anthony Mandal, and Associate Editor, Nicola Lloyd, in moving the journal forward in new directions over the coming years. Maximiliaan has been a regular contributor to the journal over the years, writing a number of articles and reviews, and more recently a series of blog posts on transatlantic gothic fiction. As one door opens, another closes: following five years of diligent work, our Reviews Editor, Katie Garner, will be stepping down from her role as of this issue. The editors would like to thank Katie for her commitment in meeting the often demanding logistics of arranging book reviews from our international cohort of scholars.

Firstly, we are pleased to publish a special issue on *Four Nations Fictions by Women, 1789–1830*, by guest editor Elizabeth Edwards. The focus of Liz's research is on literary recoveries, textual editing, archipelagic critical approaches, and the history of women's writing. Her books include a critical anthology of Anglophone Welsh verse entitled *English-Language Poetry from Wales 1789–1806* (University of Wales Press, 2013) and *Richard Llwyd: Beaumaris Bay and Other Poems*, published in 2016 by Trent Editions in their *Poetry Recoveries* series.<sup>1</sup> The current issue draws on selected articles from the conference on *Four Nations Fictions by Women* convened by Liz in 2013 at the National Library of Wales. For fuller details, see her introduction to this special issue (pp. 11–20). In addition, the essays are supplemented by a report by David Buchanan on the *Popular Romanticism* online archive, an open access resource of 800 print artefacts for the study of print and reading in the Romantic period that explores what and how people read, and how this material changed over time (pp. 119–30). Finally, Issue 22 carries eleven book reviews on a range of subjects, from Erasmus Darwin to Sara Coleridge and from the historical novel to Napoleonic theatre (pp. 131–59).

Secondly, *Romantic Textualities* is celebrating its twentieth anniversary, which is marked by its relaunch with a new web interface that brings it up to date. Launched during the infancy of the World Wide Web in 1997, *Romantic*




*Textualities* began as *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text*. At a time when blogging was still an incipient, esoteric practice, and initially envisaged less a journal than an online newsletter, *Cardiff Corvey* provided regular updates to scholars about the collaborative bibliographical work that was taking place between the newly founded Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, Cardiff University and Projekt Corvey at the University of Paderborn. Our activities at the time emerged from the work of Professor Peter Garside and the late, and much missed, Prof. Rainer Schöwerling in preparing the second volume of *The English Novel, 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in Britain and Ireland* (OUP, 2000). *Cardiff Corvey*, founded by Garside and Anthony Mandal, then a doctoral student at Cardiff, published its first issue in August 1997, and featured an article that highlighted key statistical findings about fiction between 1800 and 1829 that drew on the bibliographical work underpinning *The English Novel*. This internationalist perspective began to draw attention from international scholars who proposed submissions relating to their own research, thus transforming *Cardiff Corvey* into a peer-reviewed journal, which despite its focus on bibliographical and editorial work had a global reach, and issued articles as well as reports.

By 2005, it was clear that the title *Cardiff Corvey* inadequately captured our broader remit, thus leading us to rebrand the journal under the present title, *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1830*, and adding regular reviews of books relating to Romantic print culture and textuality. Since its inception, the goal of *Romantic Textualities* has been to support the dissemination of research through open access (at a time when ‘open access’ was dismissed as little more than vanity publishing), by acting as a forum for the discussion and study of Romantic literature, textuality, bibliography, book history and print culture. Following the journal’s commitment to open access and interactivity, the current issue showcases a newly designed interface, search engine and tagging; items published from the current issues onwards will also be assigned a persistent DOI (Digital Object Identifier). We are also honoured to announce that *Romantic Textualities* is now published as one of the founding journals of the recently established Cardiff University Press.<sup>2</sup> As part of its core values, Cardiff University Press follows a ‘diamond’ model of open access, publishing material at no cost to either its readers or its authors. We look forward to a fruitful relationship with the Press in the coming years.

Another recent innovation is the integrated use of social media as part of the *Romantic Textualities* platform, through its Twitter feed @RomText and most significantly through its blog. Since its inception a few years ago, the blog has featured rolling content consisting of nearly seventy posts from a wide array of international contributors at various points in their academic careers. The blog has fostered much discussion about Romanticism, global literature and print culture dynamics, with topics including global Romanticism, *Frankenstein* and *Fantasmagoriana*, gothic bluebooks and chapbooks, and the silver-fork novel—to name a few—as well as an entire category dedicated exclusively to ‘Teaching Ro-



manticism', which has passed its twentieth post. Please visit our blog to find out more. Why stop at reading?—Feel free to contribute to the discussion and add your own thoughts on Romanticism, either through the comments feature or by proposing your own posts.

Much is already in motion for the next issue, scheduled for publication early next year, and we have some exciting announcements to make shortly regarding new developments in the journal. As always, we welcome submissions: please visit our see our Instructions for Authors (pp. 165–67) for more information. 

## NOTES

1. See <[www.wales.ac.uk/en/NewsandEvents/News/CAWCS/Richard-Llwyd-Beaumaris-Bay-and-Other-Poems.aspx](http://www.wales.ac.uk/en/NewsandEvents/News/CAWCS/Richard-Llwyd-Beaumaris-Bay-and-Other-Poems.aspx)>.
2. See <<http://cardiffuniversitypress.org>> for more details.

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# FOUR NATIONS FICTION BY WOMEN, 1789–1830

## Introduction

*Elizabeth Edwards*



IN MARY SMIRKE'S 'BETGELLERT BRIDGE' (Figure 1), a woman in a blue cloak leads a small child by the hand. Backs to the viewer, they are heading southeast along the bank of the River Colwyn in Beddgelert, in the foothills of Snowdon. It's a summer scene: the trees are in full leaf, the river looks low, and sunlight throws shadows behind the two figures. The copper-rich bulk of Mynydd Sygun rises sharply ahead of them.



FIG. 1. MARY SMIRKE, 'BETGELLERT BRIDGE, CARNARVONSHIRE',  
AQUATINT ENGRAVING (C. 1808), NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES.

Smirke is not well known in her own right, but painting was in her blood: her Cumberland-born father, Robert Smirke, was a Royal Academician who was in turn the son of an itinerant painter. She had some success as a landscape artist and copyist, and exhibited her work at the Royal Academy between 1809 and

1814.<sup>1</sup> Her Beddgelert picture, reproduced here as an 1808 engraving, was probably produced just before this period, as part of a series of six topographical views of North Wales. The remaining five depict the castles at Conwy and Caernarfon, Valle Crucis Abbey just outside Llangollen, and two more scenes structured around bridges—Pont Aberglaslyn, southwest of Beddgelert, backed by another blue-grey mountain, and the gentler ‘View near Caernarvon’.<sup>2</sup> Smirke’s *Six Views in North Wales* is a stylish set of images but none of the others matches the narrative pull of ‘Betgellert Bridge’. Oblivious to the viewer behind them, diminutive and fragile against the landscape and buildings, Smirke’s pair of figures bring not just vitality but an element of inscrutability to this image. Who are they—a mother and her daughter perhaps? Where are they going—over the bridge or down the road beyond the left edge of the frame? What will the rest of their day bring in this part of turn-of-the-century Wales, in which regional seclusion was increasingly giving way to the tourist trail? Might there more to say about the artist, Mary Smirke?

A parallel train of thought, loosely applied, made ‘Betgellert Bridge’ the starting point for ‘Four Nations Fiction: Women and the Novel, 1780–1830’, an exploratory conference on genre, place and Romantic-period women’s writing, held at the National Library of Wales in 2013. As the questions above suggest, the composition of Smirke’s Beddgelert picture thematises gender and place, in a suspended or incomplete arrangement that in turn allows geographical and critical peripheries to come into focus. This collection of articles, which results from ‘Four Nations Fiction’, is similarly structured around the intersection of place with gender in terms of two vibrant research fields: the archipelagic or four nations turn within literary studies and the still-expanding map of Romantic-period women’s writing.

The 2013 conference was partly prompted by the appearance in quick succession of a number of extended studies of women writers, among them Anna Seward, Elizabeth Hamilton, Joanna Baillie and (more surprisingly) Margaret Holford Hodson, who had formerly occupied more peripheral positions in criticism of the period.<sup>3</sup> Writers who might once have been allotted a single chapter (at best) in a wider account now seemed capable of sustaining critical narratives in a new way. During this time, Andrew Monnickendam showed that writers usually marked as minor figures could be productively reinterpreted as a group, as in his account of Mary Brunton, Susan Ferrier and Christian Isobel Johnstone in relation to the Scottish national tale.<sup>4</sup> Also around the same time, developments in genre-focused criticism, such as Fiona Price’s work on historical fiction, were establishing the key role of women writers in inventing and defining whole areas of literary activity in the period.<sup>5</sup>

The interval between the conference and the publication of the following papers has seen further exciting shifts. A changing sense of the period’s reading public, with a particular focus on gender, can be seen in recent and ongoing work in several fields, including periodical culture, popular fiction and travel writing. Jennie Batchelor’s recently completed *Lady’s Magazine* project (‘Understanding the Emergence of a Genre’) shows this long-running periodical encompassing the whole of contemporary society from fashion to domestic economy, news and

politics, and literature of all categories.<sup>6</sup> As documented in its wide-ranging blog, the project opens up ongoing questions about authorship, reception and remediation that have implications far beyond the study of magazines. New attention to popular fiction, meanwhile, is likely to reshape critical narratives about the novel in the period. Recent research on the prolific Minerva Press novelist ‘Mrs Meeke’, for example, has identified her as part of the Burney circle: Elizabeth Meeke was Frances Burney’s stepsister, and turns out to have surpassed Walter Scott as the most productive novelist of the Romantic period.<sup>7</sup> Critical and editorial work-in-progress on travel literature, from infrastructure to coasts, in manuscript (a much-neglected area of the genre) as well as print, highlights the experience and construction of place in the period in ways that do not always or explicitly involve allegories of nation.<sup>8</sup> As Mary-Ann Constantine shows in her essay included in the following collection, there is more to be said about the ways in which movement structures contemporary novels, as protagonists and plotlines travel within and around the British Isles especially.

Perhaps not coincidentally, all three of the areas detailed above redefine middlebrow territory as worthy of serious study, in forms of reading and writing that represent ‘an essential element of women’s authorial experience’, as Amy Culley has recently written of life writing (itself another currently expanding literary category).<sup>9</sup> The broad context sketched above has been accompanied and furthered by continued efforts to edit and reissue novels, or by offering them, often for free, in digital formats, which have transformed the availability of many rarer titles.<sup>10</sup> The reissue of lesser-studied works, such as Lady Morgan’s *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys* (edited by Julia M. Wright for Broadview in 2013), Mary Brunton’s *Self-Control* (edited by Anthony Mandal for Pickering & Chatto in 2014) or Jane West’s *A Gossip’s Story* (edited by Devoney Looser, Melinda O’Connell and Caitlin Kelly for Valancourt Books in 2015), have moved these novels and their creators into new zones of reception and criticism. So much so, that the crucial role played by scholarly editing in the recovery of women’s writing over the last two to three decades, has itself become the subject of critical reflection, as in Amy Culley and Anna M. Fitzler’s forthcoming *Editing Women’s Writing, 1670–1840*. But as literary canons continue to be contested and reconfigured by new readings and editions, where should we be looking next, and why?

In a recent special issue of *The Eighteenth Century*, Devoney Looser argued for the need to see new connections within and configurations for the period, whether in the form of writers who are today less read than they once were (Catherine Hutton, Jane West, Mary Brunton), or new dialogues with and/or patterns of reception for the figures we now identify as most canonical within the period, particularly Jane Austen.<sup>11</sup> Both of these directions are strongly represented in this collection, in close readings of the largely forgotten fictions of Mary Barker, Ann Julia Hatton (‘Ann of Swansea’) and Anna Eliza Bray, as well as Catherine Hutton, in Scottish negotiations of metropolitan English radicalism, or in the first account of the reception of Wollstonecraft in Wales. And some of the shifts outlined above—towards magazine culture, popular fiction or travel—come into

particular focus via the writers and works mentioned above. Mary Brunton's *Self-Control*, an overnight sensation on its publication in 1811, is a case in point, moving as it does between the Scottish Highlands, London and eventually Canada, though publishing successes on this scale (*Self-Control* was reissued throughout the nineteenth century) will inevitably not reduce down to any easily defined set of criteria. In the course of the novel, Brunton depicts not just an internally divided Britain but a divided Scotland via her Gaelic-speaking central figure, Laura Montreville.<sup>12</sup> Yet this work is not exactly a national tale, nor a novel of ideas. Nor does the label of evangelical fiction, which *Self-Control* picked up virtually from its first appearance, fully explain its hybrid status as realism meshed with romance, or account for its eroticism or violence, as Anthony Mandal has pointed out.<sup>13</sup> But the capacity of this work, and others like it, for taking on contemporary moral or political questions in something other than a highbrow form often opens up through approaches to place. The bestselling Jane West's 1799 novel, *A Tale of the Times*, presents Scotland and Wales as spaces in which to test out competing models of national belonging. Catherine Hutton, who 'has remained almost completely absent from the historical record' in a way that does not reflect her reputation in her own time, explores the changing literary marketplace, the boundaries between genres and forms (fiction, travel, the letter, the essay) or the development of realism, partly through fictional journeys.<sup>14</sup>

The four nations or archipelagic approach that defines this special issue emphasises the multiple nations and regions within the British Isles, as a series of comparative, overlapping or imagined spaces. Reflecting this multiplicity, collections such as Sheffield Hallam University's *CW3: Corvey Women Writers on the Web* database, or Cardiff University's *British Fiction 1800–1829: A Database of Production, Circulation & Reception* abound with titles that reference places in Britain and Ireland (as well as continental Europe), and which are set anywhere from the middle ages to the present day.<sup>15</sup> Even a brief look through these databases' long lists of unfamiliar works featuring 'Caledonian Sirens', 'Romance in Wales', as well as a host of national and regional markers among the moral tales and historical fictions, reveals the Romantic-period novel as perhaps unexpectedly constructed around domestic space—though it can obviously be impossible to tell where a novel is set from the title alone. Ann Julia Hatton's final novel *Gerald Fitzgerald: An Irish Tale* (1831) clearly signals location, but there's no hint in the title of her 1821 *Lovers and Friends: or, Modern Attachments* that this is essentially a Lake District novel.

Evolving out of earlier forms of romance and travel, eighteenth-century fiction is of course a fluid genre. But in a period of empire and war, and constitutional change both within Britain and Ireland and on a global scale, fiction then as now offered real and relevant ways of representing lived or imagined experience. Elements of place, mobility, nation and identity feature strongly in these representations, while the emergence of the national tale as a means of voicing competing cultures and resistant perspectives in the later part of the period is by now well understood. As the articles in this collection show, categories of region and na-



tion repeatedly arise in narratives that depict physical movement in terms of plot, or that move ideologically or conceptually across the internal borders of Britain and Ireland. And yet these novels of nation/s are—as in the case of *Self-Control* above—not usually, let alone exclusively, national tales in the sense that Ina Ferris has defined it, as a form that ‘takes national manners for its subject’ or ‘articulate[s] the grievances of a small people’.<sup>16</sup> As Penny Fielding points out in her account of Dorothea Primrose Campbell’s 1821 Shetland novel, *Harley Radington: A Tale*, such works were created in the wider context of a form of national or regional novel that was still emerging, and still aspiring to generic distinctiveness.<sup>17</sup> A host of contemporary fictions inflected by nation, region, historical horizons or the gothic, some of which are discussed here, join *Harley Radington* in demonstrating the provisional and heterogeneous quality of the Romantic national tale, and beyond that the form of the novel in general.<sup>18</sup>

This wider body of work has not been extensively studied. But building on the work of Devoney Looser, Jennie Batchelor and others, this collection of articles aims to contribute to an emerging new landscape of Romantic-period women’s writing. What might this landscape be like? The inclusion of writers such as Jane West and Mary Brunton may mean recovering and perhaps rethinking more of the conservative or evangelical fiction popular in the first years of the nineteenth century—work recently begun by Anthony Mandal.<sup>19</sup> It may involve identifying new directions within travel writing, antiquarian writing, or the miscellaneous forms of the national tale and historical novel, especially those by lesser-known writers. It may mean engaging more widely with work issued by publishers of popular fiction, or with the place of prose fiction in periodical outlets, or in manuscript form—all areas currently under research.<sup>20</sup> As a means of retrieving a number of little-known authors and novels, the articles brought together here focus on the ways in which geography offers women writers structuring principles, plot devices, polemical points of entry, access to real or symbolic orders, or to recognisable aesthetic discourses—often simultaneously.

This collection’s guiding framework of four nations fiction emphasises literary and cultural exchange throughout. The following articles present, for example, the figures of Mary Wollstonecraft or Robert Bage filtered through the prism of Wales. They explore negotiations of Irishness or Englishness across contemporary novels and other art forms: Jane Austen in relation to Regina Maria Roche or Thomas Moore. They discuss the distribution, perception and representation of boundaries, limits and restrictions in the period, from politics, social convention and religion to women writers’ often uneasy relationship with the concept (and consequences) of publication. They open up new themes, such as the role of infrastructure in national fiction or the connections between antiquarian knowledge and the form of the novel.

In the first of these articles, Mary Chadwick takes a transnational perspective on the little-known Mary Barker to reveal a formally and conceptually noteworthy novelist. In Chadwick’s account, Barker’s *A Welsh Story* (1798) features as an experimental novel, ‘an exploration of lives lived according to the Wollstonecraftian



principle of sound, rational education' (p. 22). As this quotation will suggest, Chadwick's article addresses a gap in the British reception of Wollstonecraft, in a careful and sustained tracing of the overlaps between Barker's novel and Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication*. Though acknowledging that 'Barker is not idealistic enough to suggest that the country is immune to the spread of metropolitan values' (p. 32), Chadwick argues that in this novel Wales (specifically Glamorgan in South Wales), defined by its distance from London, represents a microcosm of the ideal British state: a benevolent, enlightened space in which women may become citizens of a rational society, or in which to stage 'a [...] "REVOLUTION in female manners"' (p. 32).

Whether they agreed with her or not, few of Wollstonecraft's contemporaries ignored her. The second article in the collection, by Yi-Cheng Weng, moves from Wollstonecraft as exemplar to object of satire, in the still 'not yet fully acknowledged' work of the Scottish novelist Elizabeth Hamilton (p. 37). Weng draws out Hamilton's Scottish context as crucial in her construction of a conservative, Christianised moral philosophy for women in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800), a novel that sets the themes of education and rational reflection to very different purposes from those of *A Welsh Story*. As in Barker's novel, however, dialogues based on place feature strongly in this work, which sets up a London-Edinburgh opposition in order to contemplate competing models of social theory, manners and morals. Weng's discussion also brings out the nuanced quality of fiction written by women in response to contemporary politics, recognising Hamilton's novel as part of a slower and longer paper war than the one usually associated with the 1790s, in which the form of the novel was part of a wider battleground for political and cultural authority.

Articles three and four, by Nicola Lloyd and Andrew McInnes respectively, shift attention to Ireland and England, via two of the more canonical figures within this collection: Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) and Jane Austen. However both articles bring new, and place-driven, perspectives, in Lloyd's close reading of Owenson's little-discussed novel *O'Donnel* (1814) and McInnes's analysis of *Emma* (1816) in relation to a particularly spectral form of Irish gothic that emerges in part from Austen's use of material whose meanings may be less immediately recognisable to modern readers than they were to contemporary ones. Building on the work of Claire Connolly, Lloyd's article investigates the representation of Irish space and infrastructure in *O'Donnel* to show how geography 'becomes a site of cultural anxiety in the Romantic national tale' in both local and wider contexts (p. 53). The concept of improvement is central to this analysis, which illustrates the tensions between the notion of improvement-as-incorporation—as a threat to Ireland's identity—and improvement as a necessary element of modernity and progress. Lloyd shows how Owenson's perception of the ambiguities around the debate prompts a new realism within her work, in a new form of national tale that 'offers a fuller engagement with the contemporary context of Irish improvement in the post-union period' (pp. 56–57). For Owenson, Lloyd argues, the conflict between politicised and aesthetic experiences is overwhelming, and points

towards the conclusion that the cultural history of Ireland cannot be mapped by an imperial system of improvement: instead, progress ‘can only emerge from within Ireland itself’ (p. 63).

Questions of perspective and cross-cultural conflict also lie at the centre of Andrew McInnes’s study of *Emma* (1816), a novel sometimes described as a kind of English national tale. McInnes, however, demonstrates that *Emma* almost invisibly derives considerable energy from disavowed Irish dynamics. His reading of this work identifies an othered Ireland as a force that threatens to fracture the tight-knit English identity Austen’s novel celebrates. Mapping out a gothic geography on *Emma*’s margins, McInnes shows that the novel’s intertextual relationship with *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), a popular gothic romance by the Irish novelist Regina Maria Roche—little-known today but a strong contender for the most four nations of all Romantic-period novels for its Wales–London–Ireland–Scotland plotline—and also with Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, complicates and arguably compromises its prevailing mood and message by articulating unspeakable desires, and silenced histories.


Numbers five and six return the focus to Wales, in accounts of two writers who deserve further study: Ann Julia Hatton (‘Ann of Swansea’) and Catherine Hutton. Both were long-lived, wide-ranging writers: Hatton (who was a younger sister to Sarah Siddons) as a poet, librettist and author of some fourteen novels, and Hutton as an editor, novelist, travel writer and journalist. The Worcester-born, Atlantic-travelling Ann Hatton’s reinvention of herself as ‘Ann of Swansea’ was, as Jane Aaron points out here, ‘an unusual move in any epoch’ but it was ‘virtually unprecedented’ in the early years of the nineteenth century (p. 78). In this article, Aaron traces first the emergence of Hatton’s politically radical, proto-feminist and Welsh identities—the first of these sharpened by her experiences of 1790s America—and then her fictional representations of Wales. Like Barker’s *A Welsh Story* before it, her first novel, *Cambrian Pictures* (1810), links Welsh locations with ‘a harmonious state in which the inhabitants are at one with nature’ (p. 82), in opposition to an English gentry class that embodies corruption and avarice. Her later novels, though, register more complex views. *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* (1816) is a biting *roman-à-clef*—with a manuscript key—that satirises the fashionable, socially-aspiring inhabitants of Swansea (‘Gooselake’ in the novel) on the South Wales coast. And yet Hatton clearly remained invested to some extent in the notion of Welsh exceptionalism, as in her 1822 novel, *Guilty or Not Guilty*, which revives some of the ‘native virtues’ that structure *Cambrian Pictures*. In that novel, Aaron notes, Hatton depicts Welsh women as freer and hardier than their English equivalents, who are more often than not confined to prison-like urban existences intolerable to the ‘mountaineer [...] pure and honest’ (p. 83).

Hatton’s opposition of Welsh liberty and English confinement forms the central theme of Catherine Hutton’s second novel, *The Welsh Mountaineer* (1817), discussed here by Mary-Ann Constantine. Constantine shows that as a travel writer, Hutton (sometimes drawing on Thomas Pennant’s landmark *A Tour in Wales*, published between 1778 and 1783) registers an open-minded ‘curiosity

about Welsh culture and history', in precise and dynamic accounts of being on the road (p. 92). How far it might be possible to chart changing technologies of periodical publication and of travel on the form of the novel perhaps remains to be seen, but this article makes a start by tracing the close relationship between Hutton's firsthand experience of the home tour and its fictionalised forms in her three novels. As Constantine shows, travel and fiction are mutually reinforcing in Hutton's writing career: the travel narratives confirm that her 'profoundly utopian view of Wales as a space of physical freedom for women' in her novels is 'not only a literary trope, and should be taken seriously' (p. 97). To draw connections across individual works and across the period, Hutton's fiction also synthesises several of the themes discussed above, from Ann Hatton's polemically idealised Wales to Mary Barker's endorsement of Wollstonecraft. Hutton's 1819 novel *Oakwood Hall*, which is subtitled 'including a description of the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and a part of South Wales', depicts Wollstonecraft as a 'daring and ardent' pioneer: an enduring touchstone for women writers still feeling their way along the boundaries identified and challenged by her.

The final essay in this collection, by Diane Duffy, explores a different set of limits and boundaries for women writers, at the very end of the period discussed here. Duffy's piece offers the first modern critical account of the Devon-based Anna Eliza Bray, whose fictional, historical and biographical works on subjects ranging from local legends to the life of Handel—amounting to more than twenty volumes in total—brought her popular success in the mid-nineteenth century. Duffy focuses on Bray's negotiation of the literal and formal spaces of writing, and the effects of place or location on her construction of a fictional mode that could also accommodate political history, antiquarianism and topography. Like Catherine Hutton, Bray emerges in this article as an informed and intrepid figure, willing to confront boundaries physically (as in her antiquarian fieldwork) and in her writing life. Duffy argues that Bray aimed to represent 'the private face of public history' in novels that weave family documents (letters, diaries) into works that are also framed by scholarly prefaces and footnotes (p. 107). But fashioning an English national tale with the capacity for memorialising regional history and tradition in the new world of the United Kingdom was also, Duffy suggests, top of Bray's writerly agenda: nostalgia and elegy characterise her regional romances, in a distinctive fusion of antiquarian enquiry with Anglican loyalism.

Anna Eliza Bray's long writing career offers one route to determining the role of a region or locality in the nineteenth century's new age of union. But emphasising place also creates entry points for writers who have not benefited from the recovery project of recent decades, and which remains particularly uneven in terms of differences of language and nation. There are signs, however, that novels known until now only as titles on database lists will receive new attention. Currently underway, for example, is *The Cambridge Guide to the Eighteenth-Century Novel, 1660–1820*, edited by April London, which will be simultaneously published in print and online (the print version is expected to run to 10 volumes). This work—the most ambitious and comprehensive to date—will provide critical summaries

of fictions from the period at all stages of reception, from the canonical, such as Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), to the currently emerging, such as Jane West's medievalist *Alicia de Lacy* (1814), to the unknown, as in Sarah Lansdell's Welsh-set *The Tower; or, the Romance of Ruthyne* (1798). The challenge from that point onwards might be to move from this kind of bibliographical work, expansive (and hugely welcome) though it will be, to more qualitative and interpretive accounts—a position to which the articles in this collection aspire. 

## NOTES

Professor Harriet Guest warmly supported the 2013 conference on which this collection is based. Harriet's pioneering work on women's writing of the long eighteenth century will be directly and indirectly felt in several of the articles in the following collection, which is dedicated to her with gratitude and respect.

1. Tina Fiske, 'Smirke, Robert (1753–1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <[www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25762](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25762)> [accessed 13 Mar 2016].
2. Aquatint engravings of Smirke's *Six Views in North Wales* are held in the collections of the National Library of Wales: see e.g. 'Conway Castle' <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conway\\_Castle\\_\(1133139\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conway_Castle_(1133139).jpg)>.
3. Claudia Kairoff, *Anna Seward and the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Claire Grogan, *Politics and Genre in the Works of Elizabeth Hamilton* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Judith Bailey-Slagle, *Romantic Appropriations of History: The Legends of Joanna Bailie and Margaret Holford Hodson* (Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012).
4. Andrew Monnickendam, *The Novels of Walter Scott and his Literary Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Monnickendam notes at the outset of his discussion that 'giving the three novelists critical independence' produces 'a more complex and diverse picture of their writing' (p. 1).
5. Fiona Price (ed.), 'Romantic Women Writers and the Fictions of History', special issue of *Women's Writing*, 19.3 (2012), and *Reinventing Liberty: Nation, Commerce and the Historical Novel from Walpole to Scott* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2016). See also *Reading Historical Fiction: The Revenant and Remembered Past*, ed. by Kate Mitchell and Nicola Parsons (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
6. For 'The *Lady's Magazine*: Understanding the Emergence of a Genre' Leverhulme-funded research project and blog, see <[www.kent.ac.uk/english/ladys-magazine/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/english/ladys-magazine/)>.
7. Simon Macdonald, 'Identifying Mrs Meeke: Another Burney Family Novelist', *Review of English Studies*, 64 (2013), 367–85 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgs141>>.
8. Some sixty previously unpublished tours of Wales and Scotland—including familiar figures such as Hester Piozzi and Jane West, as well as those unknown to us beyond their handwritten home tours—will be published online as part of the AHRC-funded research project 'Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour (1760–1820)' <<http://curioustravellers.ac.uk/en/>>.
9. Amy Culley, 'Women's Life Writing in the Long 18th Century: A Critical Survey', *Literature Compass*, 12.1 (2015), 2 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12201>>.
10. See e.g. Chawton House's *Novels Online* series <[www.chawtonhouse.org/?page\\_id=55488](http://www.chawtonhouse.org/?page_id=55488)>.

11. Devoney Looser, 'Introduction: Jane Austen and her Contemporaries', *The Eighteenth Century*, 56.2 (Summer 2015), 147–49 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2015.0017>>.
12. Juliet Shields addresses the internally divided nature of eighteenth-century Scotland, and its effects on the development of a distinctively Scottish form of the national tale, in *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745–1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).
13. See 'Introduction', Mary Brunton, *Self-Control*, ed. by Anthony Mandal (London and Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. xiii–xliii.
14. Cheryl A. Wilson, "'Something like mine": Catherine Hutton, Jane Austen, and Feminist Recovery Work', *The Eighteenth Century*, 56.2 (Summer 2015), 151 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2015.0010>>.
15. See, respectively, <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/corvey/>> and <[www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/](http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/)>.
16. Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 50.
17. Penny Fielding, 'Genre, Geography and the Question of the National Tale: D. P. Campbell's *Harley Radington*', *European Romantic Review*, 23 (2012), 593–611 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2012.709797>>.
18. Fielding observes that '[t]he national tale is eclectic in its generic relationships, mixing motifs from sentimental and courtship novels, and growing up alongside the historical novel with which it exchanges ideas, themes and tropes' (*ibid.*, p. 599).
19. Anthony Mandal, 'Evangelical Fiction', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: English and British Fiction, 1750–1820*, ed. by Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 255–72.
20. See, e.g., Emily C. Friedman, 'Manuscript Fiction in the Archive', *18th-Century Common* (June 2016) <[www.18thcenturycommon.org/manuscript-fiction-archive/](http://www.18thcenturycommon.org/manuscript-fiction-archive/)>.

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# MAKING SPACE FOR WOLLSTONECRAFT

## Mary Barker's *A Welsh Story*

Mary Chadwick



AS JANE AARON OBSERVES, as a setting for novels of sensibility and domestic fiction, Wales ‘could prove attractive to the Romantic radical, disillusioned by the restrictions and artifice of contemporary English culture.’<sup>1</sup> This certainly appears to be true of Mary Barker (1774–1853) who published the almost forgotten *A Welsh Story* in 1798. As its title suggests, Barker’s text is an example of ‘Wales-related fiction’, Andrew Davies’s umbrella term for the fashionable Romantic novels which set some part of their narrative in Wales and which contain ‘a degree of Welsh interest sufficient to draw meaningful and workable conclusions about how Wales, its people and culture were viewed by the author and received by contemporary readers.’<sup>2</sup> Jane Austen’s burlesque of the genre in ‘Love and Freindship’ demonstrates its popularity and notable examples include Anna Maria Bennett’s *Anna; or, Memoirs of a Welch Heiress* (1785) and *Ellen, Countess of Castle Howel* (1794), Charlotte Smith’s *Emmeline; or, The Orphan of the Castle* (1788) and Elizabeth Hervey’s *The History of Ned Evans* (1796).<sup>3</sup> Throughout her novel, Barker focuses on female education and its effects on young women, and on the necessity of sincerity and integrity rather than artifice and deception in men’s and women’s dealings with each other, themes which are key also to Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Here, I read *A Welsh Story* alongside the *Vindication* as I argue that Barker utilised the radical potential which the imagined space of Wales offered her in order to create a fictionalised vision of Wollstonecraft’s depictions of, and idealistic hopes for, British society.

Insofar as Barker is known today, it is as a friend of Robert Southey, whom she met in Portugal in 1800 and who described her as ‘a very clever girl, all good humour and a head brimful of brains’. On their parting, Southey lamented the loss of ‘one companion to whom every serious thought might be freely communicated.’<sup>4</sup> Baptised in Staffordshire in 1774, by the 1790s Barker had become companion to a local MP, Sir Edward Littleton, who encouraged her to publish *A Welsh Story*. She moved between London, Bath and Staffordshire in the early years of the nineteenth century before Sir Edward died, in 1812, leaving her an income of £200 a year. Barker moved to the Lake District where she lived in the lodge house of Greta Hall, the Southey’s home, and socialised with the Lake Poets and their families. With William Wordsworth, she published *Lines Addressed to a Noble Lord* (1815) in which the two writers satirised and attacked Lord Byron. By 1819, still liable for rent on Greta Lodge and having built a new house, Barker



dealt with pressing financial problems by leaving Britain to stay with relatives in Boulogne.<sup>5</sup> Here, in 1830, she married a Mr Slade Smith, twenty years her junior and professedly quite smitten. Barker's friends appear to have been anxious about the match and her biographer, David Bradbury, writes that in 1833, 'Mary's husband seemed to be trying to prevent her from communicating with her friends, and seldom let her out of his sight.'<sup>6</sup> She spent much of the last period of her life in France, where she died in 1853.<sup>7</sup>

Barker's maternal grandmother lived in Glamorgan and it is in this county that she set *A Welsh Story*.<sup>8</sup> The narrative follows sisters Charlotte and Euphemia Llewellyn, raised in Wales, and Lady Cecilia Margam, who moves from London to Wales when she inherits her mother's estate, through courtships and domestic dramas to marriage and motherhood. Many of the female-authored Wales-related novels published during the Romantic period follow a particular pattern in which a naive heroine or hero leaves the secluded Welsh space of their childhood for some well-documented experiences of metropolitan life. Their virtue and fortitude are tested before they are rewarded, frequently on the very final pages, with financial security and marital bliss. In a departure from the norm, however, Barker sets the majority of her novel in Wales and marries off her main characters by the beginning of the third volume. Bradbury suggests that in this final volume she 'betrays her readers and it all begins to fall apart' as the novel descends into 'a series of loosely-linked short stories (plus one undiluted essay).'<sup>9</sup> I argue that this shift in tone, allied with the alterations made to the generic conventions of Wales-related fiction, enables a reading of *A Welsh Story* as an exploration of lives led according to the Wollstonecraftian principle of sound, rational education, productive of women possessed of real virtue and reason.

Barker does not refer directly to the *Vindication*. In the wake of the publication, in the same year as *A Welsh Story*, of William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of the Rights of Woman* (1798) Wollstonecraft, who had died in 1797, was the subject of attacks from the conservative press. Claudia L. Johnson suggests that '[n]o woman novelist, even among the most progressive, wished to be discredited by association'.<sup>10</sup> As Anne K. Mellor observes, however, 'Whether they endorsed her views or contested them, very few women writers of the time ignored them.'<sup>11</sup> In 1798 and 1799 Mary Hays, Priscilla Wakefield, Mary Robinson and Mary Anne Radcliffe published 'treatises' which, to different degrees, were 'inspired by Wollstonecraft's revolutionary philosophy and intent on continuing her legacy.'<sup>12</sup> Amongst female novelists, Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800) and *Belinda* (1801) by Maria Edgeworth lampoon advocates of 'Rights for Women'. Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (1804) offers a more nuanced consideration of Wollstonecraft's ideals, as does Frances Burney's *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814).<sup>13</sup> Although there are no outright references to the *Vindication* in Barker's novel, it demands to be added to this body of female-authored texts. Further, it offers a 'four nations' perspective on responses to Wollstonecraft's work. Isabelle Bour and Eileen Hunt Botting have recently investigated Wollstonecraft's reception outside Britain, in revolutionary France



and nineteenth-century Europe and America.<sup>14</sup> Despite the surge of interest over the last two decades in archipelagic readings of British literature and the recovery of authors, texts and voices from the peripheries of eighteenth-century Britain, there have been few considerations of the ways that Scottish, Irish or Welsh readers and writers responded to Wollstonecraft's ideas. By focusing on the ways in which Barker's text may be read in relation to the *Vindication* this article begins to address that lack.

In the *Vindication* Wollstonecraft argued that '[t]he conduct and manners of women [...] prove that their minds are not in a healthy state, for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty.'<sup>15</sup> Lacking rational education, British women were enervated, superficial beings who were denied autonomy. In consequence, they attempted to gain power over men by deceitfully feigning weakness and obedience with the result that 'their character is degraded, and licentiousness spread through the whole aggregate of society' (p. 107). Wollstonecraft imagined 'Utopian dreams' in which 'woman will be [...] the friend of man', women's 'rationality' would be 'proved', and men and women would enjoy 'the free use of reason' in a society which had no need of 'cunning and dissimulation' (pp. 181, 111, 105–07). More realistically perhaps, she recognised that

[m]en and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in. [...] It may then fairly be inferred, that, till society be differently constituted, much cannot be expected from education. It is, however, sufficient for my present purpose to assert, that [...] every being may become virtuous by the exercise of its own reason. (p. 89)

For Barker, Wales represents a space where the soil is not so rich as to preclude feminine 'strength and usefulness' and where 'cunning and dissimulation' might be dispensed with in favour of Wollstonecraft's 'conception of the world in which men and women would cease to *appear*; they would *be*.'<sup>16</sup> Over the course of *A Welsh Story*, Barker constructs an idealised community in Wales which, although not immune to metropolitan vices, offers a space in which society may 'be differently constituted'. By the 1780s, as Caroline Franklin notes, still lacking a capital city, 'Wales had become shorthand for a refuge, a feminine space far from urban sophistication.'<sup>17</sup> Barker draws on this longstanding opposition between corrupt cities and virtuous rural retreats in her depictions of the encounters between the Llewellyn sisters, unaffected young women brought up in Wales, and men and women from English and Irish cities who are characterised as worldly, shallow and artificial. On inheriting her mother's Welsh estate, fashionable young Lady Cecilia Margam leaves London, fully intending 'to set Wales in a blaze'. Lady Cecilia is the vehicle for Barker's inclusion of a range of stereotypical signifiers of eighteenth-century Wales: she expects her lap dog will chase the 'nanny goats', for example, and anticipates having great fun using 'hideous masks' to scare the superstitious locals. Barker further displays her familiarity with affairs in and common public perceptions of Wales through the unusual inclusion of a female antiquarian.

Lady Virgilia-ap-Howel demonstrates the widely-recognised Welsh trait of pride in family pedigree, being able to trace her ancestors back to Boadicea and Howel Daw [*sic*].<sup>18</sup> As Andrew Davies observes: 'Antiquarianism is used to good effect' in the novel, serving 'as a yardstick against which one's commitment to national and cultural identity is gauged'.<sup>19</sup> Heinously, Lady Cecilia misremembers the name of her illustrious forebear '*Nest, daughter of Justin-ap-Gweregant-ap-Cadifer-ap-Collrum ap-Tagno*' and uses portraits of her ancestors as targets when practising her archery (*WS*, I, 67–69, 119–20). The 'process of cultural rehabilitation which sees her gradually integrate herself into society and turn her back on fashionable society' demonstrates Lady Cecilia's worthiness of her Welsh inheritance and of a place in the community of rational, virtuous families seen in Barker's final volume.<sup>20</sup>

In common with many Wales-related novels, Barker includes characters who travel to or have links with all four nations of Britain.<sup>21</sup> She refrains, however, from giving the usual lengthy depictions of characters' experiences of metropolitan life in favour of importing corrupting influences into Glamorgan for comparison with and rejection by the Llewellyns. Three such influences arrive in Wales with Lady Cecilia in the form of Mrs Gunnings and her two daughters. Immune to the transformative powers of Barker's rural Welsh society which prompt Lady Cecilia's metamorphosis 'from a fine lady to a rational being' (III, 2), these characters exemplify the pernicious effects of fashionable education. The family's move to Wales is as much a result of Mrs Gunnings' identification of Mr Llewellyn, a worldly MP and gambler who spends the majority of his time in London, as her second husband as the young ladies' friendship with Lady Cecilia. Determined to marry off her future stepdaughters as quickly as possible to prevent them jeopardising her plans, as '*a woman of the world*' Mrs Gunnings concludes 'that girls who had been *brought up in total ignorance, who knew nothing of life, and had never seen any body*, would be very fortunate in captivating any man of tolerable respectability, and very happy in being introduced to the world' (I, 156). Throughout her text, Barker contrasts the Llewellyns' appreciation of their distance from and ignorance of metropolitan culture with the Gunnings' more worldly conceptions of ignorance, their love of 'society' and their attitudes to relationships between the sexes.

Sylvana Tomaselli identifies as a key theme of both *Vindications* Wollstonecraft's condemnation of the artifice which she perceived to characterise British society, particularly as it affected gender relations.<sup>22</sup> Barker's own rejection of falsity and coyness in favour of honesty and integrity is demonstrated in *A Welsh Story*. It is also apparent in a letter which she wrote to the radical Welsh bard Iolo Morganwg in 1798, when her novel was in press, complimenting him on his *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral* (1794). Barker had been told that Morganwg was 'a horrible Jacobin' and she informs him that she is unable to approve such a character.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, responding to Morganwg's statement in the preface to *Poems* that 'if any sentiment or trait in my very humble productions should procure me some friendship [...] my happiness will be very much increased', she offers him hers:

which, though it comes from a woman, and a young one too, will, I am bold to say, never merit the censure which but too often apply to

professors of friendship and female ones in particular. In this respect, I can only trust to your candour, believing however that you will consider that a woman who is capable of the charms of genius sufficiently to reverence and love all who possess it, and to despise the vulgar scrupulosities of her sex, will not abate the zeal which led her to wish to be acquainted with a man who so singularly possessed it.<sup>24</sup>

When read alongside *A Welsh Story*, the ‘vulgar scrupulosities’ of the female sex appear to relate directly to the ‘rank affectation’ which Wollstonecraft identifies as the outcome of a young woman’s adherence to the over-refined proprieties and ‘system of dissimulation’ (*VRW*, 181) prescribed by John Gregory in his *Father’s Legacy to his Daughters* (1761). In response to Barker’s comments on his Jacobinism Morganwg observes that he ‘long ago adopted [Quaker] principles, excepting the frivolous minutiae of thee and thou &c.’ before laying out over several pages his political sentiments including his opinions on universal suffrage: ‘my ideas are I believe very [no]vel, but they are considerably assertive of the rights of ladies. [Let] this, madam, put you in a good humor. My ideas go not the length of [Mrs] Wolstoncraft’s but implicated, if not active, rights your sex, madam, have [in] [m]y opinion a just claim to.’<sup>25</sup> Morganwg makes the same assumption in his letter as I do here, namely, that Barker was familiar with and approved of Wollstonecraft’s work.

Like many readers of the *Vindication*, the *Analytical Review* considered it to be ‘an elaborate *treatise of female education*’; the reviewer suggested that ‘[i]f the bulk of the great truths which this publication contains were reduced to practice, the nation would be better, wiser, and happier than it is upon the wretched, trifling, useless and absurd system of education which is now prevalent.’<sup>26</sup> Roxanne Eberle observes that the *Vindication* ‘begins to enact [its own] agenda’ as Wollstonecraft encourages women to ‘learn to “imagine” themselves as simultaneously rational, physical, and spiritual beings in order to resist the degrading cultural forces intent upon constructing them as frivolous, beautiful, and soulless bodies.’<sup>27</sup> Barker participates in a very similar project, stating that her characters are intended to ‘serve as useful examples of error, or objects worthy of imitation’ (I, 152–53). Although my main focus here is the influence of the *Vindication* on Barker’s text, her depictions of the early education enjoyed by the Llewellyn sisters appear to owe a debt to Wollstonecraft’s *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788). Rebecca Davies writes of Mrs Mason, the woman who begins to reform two damaged girls in *Original Stories*, that ‘in assuming rationality in her young female charges’ she ‘presents a feminist reimagining of the maternal role’ demonstrating her ‘social responsibility through her shaping of more autonomous future generations of women.’<sup>28</sup> The governess who educates the Llewellyn sisters in the wake of their mother’s death and their father’s disinterest resembles Mrs Mason in being ‘a woman qualified to train the infant mind [...] who considered that it is the natural privilege of a human being to be governed by its own reason.’ (I, 9, 190)

Although intelligent, virtuous and charitable, Euphemia is prevented by ‘constitutional weakness and timidity’ (I, 195) from truly benefiting from her governess’s precepts and she submits to her father’s sale of her and her dowry into marriage with the disreputable Captain Wilson. Drawing on the widely-used doubling technique of comparing two sisters, Barker writes that Euphemia ‘wanted that resolution which Charlotte possessed, to perform what she was thoroughly convinced was so, whether others considered it as such or not’ (I, 195–96). Charlotte’s resolution and her rational approach to the events of the narrative mark her out as the product of a system of education based on Wollstonecraftian principles and Barker flags the novelty of a female character who acts ‘according to the dictates of reason’:

Some of our readers, we fear, will think, that to make a philosopher of a young woman [...] is a little unnatural; to which we can only reply that they had much better read no more of this story [...] If they expect to find Charlotte Llewellyn act as girls usually do act, they will be disappointed; if they wish her to act so, they will be disgusted. (I, 168)

Through Charlotte, Barker demonstrates the truth of Wollstonecraft’s assertions that ‘women must develop “independence of character” and take action rather than merely “play-act” appropriate social behaviours’ and spotlights the crucial role which education plays in their ability to do so.<sup>29</sup> When her father declares that she must either marry the buffoonish but wealthy Lord Oakley or leave his house, Charlotte departs. Barker comments that she ‘must absolutely sink under, or rise superior to all earthly misfortune. Charlotte had a soul which did not permit her to do the former; and a mind so controlled by reason, that she speedily did the latter.’ (II, 105) Unable to find security with a female friend in England, or on Captain Wilson’s estate in Ireland, she accepts an offer to accompany a new acquaintance and her husband as they travel to the East Indies. In a diary later sent to a friend, Charlotte states that, as she sailed away from her ‘native country’, ‘Reason resumed her reign, I became cheerful and resigned, if not happy [...] the inestimable value of a good education [...] caused me to find, even in the most hopeless situation, duties to perform and employments to exercise my mind.’ (III, 33–36) Barker removes Charlotte from her family and neighbourhood to illustrate, in contrast to Euphemia, who pines into ill health during her time in Ireland, that she does not, in Wollstonecraft’s words, ‘stand still’ (*VRW*, 143) but draws on the resources and pragmatism instilled by her governess to overcome challenging circumstances.

In her education, as in many aspects of her character, Lady Cecilia is initially cast as a stark contrast to the Llewellyn sisters. Typifying the fashionably educated, wealthy young lady who from childhood has ‘been made the weathercock of [her] own sensations’ (*WS*, I, 145), she was

[c]onsigned to the care of a most accomplished French governess [until] her Ladyship chose to be her own mistress [whereupon] Masters of the first fashion, as well as governesses of the first respectability, attended [her] constantly, with whom she merely reserved the

privilege of learning just as much as was pleasant to herself, and of obeying none of their instructions but what she thought proper and just, according to the humour she might be in; the effect of which, her actions must declare. (I, 6–7)

Lady Cecilia's actions do indeed declare the effects of her education. At the beginning of the novel she 'torments [...] half the poor fellows' in London and although she cannot abide playing at cards she spends lavishly, rouges and gossips (I, 24–29). Over the course of the text, however, it is made clear that her 'errors proceeded from neglect in her education; that she possessed much native good sense, and so many native virtues, that, if they had been properly cultivated, might have qualified her for a very useful and shining member of society' (I, 276). Her move to Wales and the influence of her friendship with the Llewellyns enables Lady Cecilia to develop the strengths in her character in order, in the third volume, to achieve and to exercise that 'mental activity so necessary in the maternal character' (I, 275). Barker includes two other fashionably-educated young women, the Gunnings sisters who accompany Lady Cecilia when she removes from London to Wales, who do not undergo similar transformations. The younger, Miss Emma, is described as 'a *very genteel young woman*' possessed of 'a good person, a fashionable dress, a perfect knowledge of French and Italian [...] and a *stylish* manner of dancing, talking, and laughing' (I, 160). In the course of her education, however, her potential to become a sensible and a rational woman was neglected: 'not one of the many governesses by whom she had been *instructed*; from Mrs. Prim to Madam Sophister, ever mentioned [the] idea of employing her own reason to guide her actions' (I, 161). Even more than Lady Cecilia's, the education of the Gunnings sisters corresponds to Wollstonecraft's depiction of a system under which 'the cultivation of understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment' (I, 91). Barker's didactic ends would not be served if she were to cause all of her female characters cast off the ignorance and frivolity imposed by governesses employed by fashionable parents but, in its distance from London, she paints Wales as a space in which young women may be educated according to rational principles and in which 'native good sense' may be cultivated.

Having introduced her young female characters, Barker develops her narrative by importing a party of potential husbands into Wales from London. In Wollstonecraft's imagined utopia, as Tomaselli notes, men and women 'would be one with themselves and devoid of the elaborate masks which polished society demanded of its members' and as she explores their attitudes to courtship and marriage, Barker draws a pointed contrast between Charlotte and the polished Miss Gunnings.<sup>30</sup> Characters, male and female, who privilege appearances, artifice or 'seeming' over nature or 'being' are condemned throughout *A Welsh Story*.<sup>31</sup> On his wife's death, the London-based Lord Glendarran 'deprived himself of the consolation of [his children's] endearing caresses, till a superb mourning coach was built to convey them, in short, nothing could excel the *visible* respect and regret which [he] bestowed on the memory of his wife' (I, 5–6; my italics). Of the fashionable matron Mrs Gunnings, Barker writes that 'the despicable insignificancy



of her understanding, and the malignancy of her disposition, were so disguised by cunning, and glossed over by courtesy, that [...] no one would discover that she was a vile, artful, intriguing woman' (I, 153). And Captain Wilson, who wins Euphemia and her dowry as a result of her father's poor luck at cards, is mistrusted by Charlotte who observes that 'it is impossible to get his sincere opinion of any thing, for he seems to consider it a sin to speak truth, and always to be studying to disguise himself [...] everything he does and says, wears an appearance of deceit' (II, 65).<sup>32</sup> Charlotte, like Barker herself, is shown to despise the 'vulgar scrupulosities', the artificial manners, proprieties and 'starched decorum' (*VRW*, 179) which young women were encouraged to adopt. When Charlotte meets her brother's friend, Mr Greville, for example, she scrutinises him with searching looks rather than casting at him 'those pretty, timid glances, which ladies, who are upon their preferment, know so well how to direct in their dealings with mankind' (*WS*, I, 164). When a gentleman falls in love with her during her time in Ireland, she 'treated him with the sincerity which I had been taught to admire and which my own reason leads me to practise' (III, 20–21). Barker brings together her own and Wollstonecraft's responses to male-authored texts which aimed to guide the behaviour of young women. Paraphrasing Wollstonecraft's own quotations from and rebuttals of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's and John Gregory's works, she gives a clear illustration of the influence which the *Vindication* had on her novel.

Wollstonecraft's attitude to Rousseau was ambivalent; 'half in love with him' and 'indisputabl[y] a Rousseauist', she nevertheless includes in the *Vindication* a 'quarrelsome' critique of his ideas about gendered education and its results.<sup>33</sup> Her 'caustic commentary'<sup>34</sup> on the section of *Émile* (1762) devoted to 'Sophie, or the Woman' draws attention to its author's assertion that a woman should, with manipulative deceit, 'exercise her *natural* cunning' over her husband by acting as 'a coquettish slave' and that, when educating girls, 'obedience is the grand lesson which ought to be impressed with unrelenting rigour' (*VRW*, 94). Barker constructs a conversation between her heroine and Miss Gunnings which builds to Charlotte's emphatic rejection of the 'cunning and deceit' practised by wives who wish to manage their husbands in this manner. Commenting on 'modern philosophers and reasoners' who have argued 'themselves into such wrong beliefs, and such erroneous opinions, that they quite *subvert* the order of nature', Miss Gunnings recalls that she had 'heard a very sensible woman say that she never could, *literally*, obey any man for ever!' Charlotte's approving reply causes Miss Gunnings to ask, in disbelief, if she shares this 'sensible woman's' feelings. Charlotte's response—'if I am so happy, if ever I do marry, as to find a man who is obedient to reason, I can easily be obedient to him' (*WS*, II, 23–25)—chimes with Wollstonecraft's declaration, as she outlines her 'Utopian dreams', that 'I love man as my fellow; but his sceptre, real, or usurped, extends not to me, unless the reason of an individual demands my homage; and even then the submission is to reason, and not to man' (*VRW*, 107). Further, it demonstrates Barker's support for Wollstonecraft's call for boys and girls 'to pursue the same studies together' in order to 'shut out gallantry and coquetry' and to produce rational human be-

ings.<sup>35</sup> Charlotte's ability to obey her husband would result from the fact that, as equal citizens both educated to think for themselves, they would share a common understanding of reason, thereby reducing the negative impact, on both partners, of the gendered hierarchy of eighteenth-century marriage.

Miss Gunnings, however, states that 'a woman must seem to obey her husband in every thing, and then in reality she will rule him' (*WS*, II, 28), an argument which follows Rousseau's assertion that 'it is by her superior art and ingenuity that [woman] preserves her equality, and governs [man] while she affects to obey' (quoted in *VRW*, 164). As the conversation becomes increasingly heated, Barker blends Wollstonecraft's arguments against Rousseau with her criticism of and response to Gregory, both of whom 'have contributed to render women more artificial, weak characters, than they would otherwise have been' (*VRW*, 90). Rejecting Gregory's advice to young women, that they be constantly on their guard lest their behaviour fall short of what would render them 'most respectable and most amiable in the eyes of my own sex',<sup>36</sup> Wollstonecraft writes, '[w]omen are always to *seem* to be this and that—yet virtue might apostrophize them, in the words of Hamlet—Seems! I know not seems!—Have that within that passeth show!' (p. 181) In response to Miss Gunnings' animadversions on the abilities of wives to acquire authority over their husbands in the Rousseauist style which Wollstonecraft decries—through deceit, cunning and 'outward obedience' (p. 87), Charlotte exclaims:

*I know not what is seem!* [...] I don't understand such dissimulation [...] I should despise treating the man I ought to love and honour, like a fool, worse than that; and of pretending to be a slave in order to become a tyrant. I intend to pay my husband a higher compliment than to think it necessary to rule him – and to preserve too genuine a respect both for him and myself, to wish to deceive him.

(*WS*, II, 27–29)

Barker reproduces Wollstonecraft's reference to *Hamlet* here and, once again, Charlotte's vocabulary is distinctly similar to that of the *Vindication*. Wollstonecraft argues that the 'artificial weakness' assumed and fostered by women 'gives birth to cunning' and that by 'playing on the *weakness* of men' and 'obtaining power by unjust means' women 'become either abject slaves or capricious tyrants' (*VRW*, 78, 111, 117, 248). As a result of the principles instilled by her governess, at a geographical and philosophical remove from the fashionable world which expects and accepts that women will don 'elaborate masks' to meet artificial standards of propriety and decorum, Charlotte represents a product of Wollstonecraft's hoped-for 'revolution in female manners' (p. 117).

Unlike the majority of Wales-related novels, which end with weddings, Barker follows her characters through the early years of their marriages. Like Wollstonecraft, she considers the long term effects of the different types of female education described throughout her text. In doing so, she adapts the conventions of her genre and it is in her third volume especially that the radical, rather than the comic, potential of Wales comes into clear focus. Bradbury's suggestion that



Barker 'betrays her readers' in the third volume of *A Welsh Story* by shifting from the frequently witty commentary on education and its effects which characterises volumes one and two to a miscellaneous collection of didactic essays is not wholly misplaced.<sup>37</sup> The final volume is less cohesive and less engaging but it seems to me to represent the conclusion of Barker's reformist project as she dramatizes the attitudes to marriage and motherhood produced in women who from youth, in the case of the Llewellyns, or from early adulthood, in the case of Lady Cecilia, have internalised and acted upon principles of reason, sincerity and an appreciation of the 'indispensable duty of a mother' (*WS*, III, 231). In Barker's fictional Glamorgan, as in Wollstonecraft's 'ideal British state, well-educated women, possessing both well-developed reason and feeling, marry good husbands who help them fulfil their duties as "affectionate wives and mothers"',<sup>38</sup> aware that 'by reforming themselves' they might 'reform the world' (*VRW*, 117) through their shaping of the next generation.

With Charlotte still in India, the third volume begins six years on from the end of the second with a focus on Lady Cecilia, who is the wife of Sir Henry Llewellyn and whose metamorphosis 'from a fine young lady to a rational being' is demonstrated in her commitment to her five children. Much of the first part of this volume consists of extracts from Charlotte's diary and letters exchanged between the sisters-in-law. '[I] begin to find,' Lady Cecilia writes,

that all the pleasures of the world are nothing compared to the love and society of such a husband and such children as I am blessed with. [...] [For their] sakes I am striving to correct every error which I discover in myself, that I may be capable of assisting their father, from whom I derive all the knowledge I possess, to lead them into the path of wisdom and rectitude. (*WS*, III, 2, 54, 56)

Euphemia, happily married to Lord Margam after Captain Wilson's death in a duel, is relegated to the supporting cast in this volume although we are told that she is also 'the joyful mother of children'. Able 'to enjoy domestic pleasures [and] rejoice in the happiness she experienced' she looks 'with complacency on that hour when the pleasures or the pains of this world would be alike unimportant' (III, 6). The rewards of the next life are here made apparent in Barker's text just as they are in Wollstonecraft's.

In India, Charlotte meets and marries the governor of Bombay, a man who possesses 'uniformity of conduct' and 'rectitude of judgement'; in being 'arrived at a period when his character and wisdom is ascertained [...] the object of his choice is that of his constant affection' (III, 61–62, 64). In this description, presented in the context of the happiness to be found in marriage to a man older than herself, Charlotte's desire that her husband be obedient to reason is shown to be satisfied and she too turns her attentions to raising a large family. As the *Vindication* develops, Wollstonecraft increasingly 'privileges the educational duties of the mother to demonstrate female rationality' and to argue for improved education for young women.<sup>39</sup> The 'first duty' of women, she writes, 'is to themselves as rational creatures, and the next, in point of importance, as citizens, is that [...] of

a mother [...] it would be as wise to expect corn from tares, or figs from thistles, as that a foolish ignorant woman should be a good mother' (pp. 235, 290). Charlotte's sentiments and vocabulary continue to echo Wollstonecraft's as she writes to Lady Cecilia of her belief that


'As mothers, our endeavours to preserve our own happiness, become not only rational, but obligatory, as including that of our children. [...] How people of sense can deny the utility of women acquiring knowledge, I know not, for I perceive that it requires the most profound degree to be either a good wife or a good mother.' (*WS*, III, 70, 80)

Tomaselli argues that for Wollstonecraft, 'the family was [...] the means to social and individual redemption [...] it made or broke public-spiritedness (or, conversely, selfishness)'.<sup>40</sup> This mode of thinking is evident in Barker's conception of an ideal community but to drive her point home, she includes a portrait of the marriage of a selfish (and childless) woman. In the second volume of *A Welsh Story*, Miss Gunnings serves as the vehicle for Barker's rejection of Rousseau's prescriptions for female cunning and deceit in the management of men. The depiction of her marriage to Mr Greville bears distinct resemblances to Wollstonecraft's characterisation of a union between a man and the type of woman produced by Rousseau's teachings: 'The man who can be contented to live with a pretty, useful companion, without a mind, has [...] never felt the calm satisfaction, that refreshes the parched heart, like the silent dew of heaven,—of being beloved by one who could understand him.' (*VRW*, 171) When the third volume begins, Mr Greville is 'in that state of hopeless misery' brought about when a man finds 'himself deceived in the object to whom he is irrevocably united, and all his projected schemes of happiness totally defeated' (*WS*, III, 148–49). While the Llewellyns and Lady Cecilia are content to remain in Wales, far from metropolitan life, Mrs Greville demands to go to London. There, she spends increasing amounts of time with Lord Oakley before, predictably, becoming his mistress. Barker maintains that 'silence is the best comment' on this state of affairs, asserting that the 'knowledge of the wise and the good' (III, 161) will allow them to judge appropriately of Mr Greville's feelings and his wife's actions. Barker's readers, familiar with both Rousseau and Wollstonecraft, would easily trace in Mrs Greville the development from a young woman who had 'only been taught to please' to a wife who finds 'that her charms [...] cannot have much effect on her husband's heart when they are seen every day.' Will such a woman, Wollstonecraft asks, be able 'to look into herself for comfort, and to cultivate her dormant faculties? or, is it not more rational to expect that she will try to please other men; and [...] endeavour to forget the mortification her love or pride has received?' (*VRW*, 96–97) Although not made explicit, Barker's answer is clear.

The secluded location of *A Welsh Story* is significant throughout the narrative as Barker consistently juxtaposes the corrupt 'great world' against her rural, potentially transformative retreat. As her novel reaches its conclusion, the distance of her main characters from London becomes crucial. Barker regularly reminds her readers of their rejection of metropolitan pleasures and society: 'No pleasures

to be found there could increase the happiness of the brotherhood at Glendarran, nor had their wives any inclination to exchange the delight and satisfaction which their daily employments and society afforded, for entertainments which they knew to be vain and fatiguing.’ (III, 230) Barker is not idealistic enough to suggest that the country is immune to the spread of metropolitan values but by the close of the novel she has begun to construct a community guided by the notion with which Wollstonecraft refreshed her ‘fatigued’ imagination, namely ‘that society will some time or other be so constituted, that man must necessarily fulfil the duties of a citizen, and that [...] his wife, also an active citizen, should be equally intent to manage her family, educate her children, and assist her neighbours.’ (VRW, 236) The Llewellyns, the Margams and the Leslies live in such a way as ‘they imagined they could be most useful to the state’:

In their own improvement, in the education of their children, and in studying to promote the welfare of all around them, they found constant as well as pleasing employment; and were firmly convinced that the purest earthly bliss consists in the consciousness of an active performance of social duties, and a diligent cultivation of domestic happiness. (WS, III, 233–34)

In her focus on female education and its effects, Barker makes clear that the ability of both men and women to be guided by reason is crucial to the achievement of the goals that she shares with Wollstonecraft. Mitzi Myers states that ‘[t]o argue for women as rational beings—educable, self-disciplined, self-dependent—is, in historical context, something of a radical claim.’<sup>41</sup> Barker makes exactly this claim in her Wales-related fiction. In *A Welsh Story*, she demonstrates that men and women may resist the artificial and licentious manners spreading throughout Britain and portrays a model of an alternative, ‘newly constituted’ society, based on a Wollstonecraftian ‘REVOLUTION in female manners’ (VRW, 292) and education, as being within reach. 

## NOTES

1. Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 35. I am grateful to Rebecca Davies for her feedback on an early draft of this piece and to Chawton House Library for granting me a fellowship and introducing me to Mary Barker.
2. Andrew Davies, ‘“The Reputed Nation of Inspiration”: Representations of Wales in Fiction from the Romantic Period, 1780–1829’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 2001), p. 12.
3. Moira Dearnley, *Distant Fields: Eighteenth-Century Fictions of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), p. xiv.
4. W. A. Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 85. See also Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Packer (eds), *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey* (2009–), in *Romantic Circles* <[www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey\\_letters](http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters)>.
5. David Bradbury’s *Senhora Small Fry: Mary Barker and the Lake Poets* (Whitehaven: Past Presented, 2003) is the only work to focus solely on Barker. Kathleen Jones, *A*

- Passionate Sisterhood: The Sisters, Wives and Daughters of the Lake Poets* (London: Virago, 1998), pp. 216–17.
6. Bradbury, *Senhora Small Fry*, p. 52.
  7. David Bradbury, *Senhora Small Fry (Extras & Updates)* <[www.pastpresented.ukart.com/barkerextra.htm](http://www.pastpresented.ukart.com/barkerextra.htm)> [accessed 4 November 2014].
  8. As far as I am aware, the novel was not reviewed and it has received little critical attention since. See Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales*, pp. 47, 61; Bradbury, *Senhora Small Fry*, pp. 4–5; Andrew Davies, 'Reputed Nation of Inspiration', pp. 82, 120–21; Jan Fergus, 'The Professional Woman Writer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), p. 7.
  9. Bradbury, *Senhora Small Fry*, p. 4.
  10. Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. xxiii.
  11. Anne K. Mellor, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and the Women Writers of her Day', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 141.
  12. Roxanne Eberle, *Chastity and Transgression in Women's Writing, 1792–1897: Interrupting the Harlot's Progress* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 57–58.
  13. Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750–1835* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 83. See also Tara Ghoshal Wallace, 'Rewriting Radicalism: Wollstonecraft in Burney's *Wanderer*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 24.3 (Spring 2012), 488.
  14. Eileen Hunt Botting, 'Wollstonecraft in Europe, 1792–1904: A Revisionist Reception History', *History of European Ideas*, 39 (2013), 502–27 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2012.725668>>; 'Making an American Feminist Icon: Mary Wollstonecraft's Reception in US Newspapers, 1800–1869', *History of Political Thought*, 34 (2013), 273–95; Isabelle Bour, 'A New Wollstonecraft: The Reception of the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and of *The Wrongs of Woman* in Revolutionary France', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36 (2013), 575–87 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1754-0208.122020>>. On the translation of Wollstonecraft's work into French and her afterlife in Europe see Laura Kirkley, 'Maria, ou le malheur d'être femme: Translating Mary Wollstonecraft in Revolutionary France', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2014), 239–55 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1754-0208.12206>>.
  15. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. by Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 74. Further references will appear parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation *VRW* where necessary.
  16. Sylvana Tomaselli, 'The Most Public Sphere of All: The Family', in *Women, Writing, and the Public Sphere: 1700–1830*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Clíona Ó Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p. 239.
  17. Carolyn Franklin, 'The Novel of Sensibility in the 1780s', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: 1750–1820*, ed. by Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p. 171.
  18. Mary Barker, *A Welsh Story*, 3 vols (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1798), 1, 25–28, 212. Further references will appear parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation *WS* where necessary.
  19. Andrew Davies, 'Reputed Nation of Inspiration', p. 121.
  20. *Ibid.*

21. Jane Aaron, 'A National Seduction: Wales in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing', *New Welsh Review*, 27 (Winter 1994), 31–38; Franklin, 'Novel of Sensibility', pp. 169–70; Janet Sorenson, 'The Novel, the British Nation, and Britain's Four Kingdoms', in *The Cambridge History of the English Novel*, ed. by Robert L. Caserio and Clement Hawes (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 163–79.
22. Tomaselli, 'Most Public Sphere of All', p. 244.
23. *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg Volume II: 1797–1809*, ed. by Geraint H. Jenkins, Ffion Mair Jones and David Ceri Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 45–6. I am grateful to Mary-Ann Constantine for bringing this letter to my attention.
24. Iolo Morganwg, *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral*, 2 vols (London: Nichols, 1794), I, xxii; *Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, p. 46.
25. *Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, pp. 51, 56. The use of 'thee and thou' is common to both Wollstonecraft and Barker.
26. Quoted in R. M. Janes, 'On the Reception of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 39 (1978), 294 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2708781>>.
27. Eberle, *Chastity and Transgression*, p. 27.
28. Rebecca Davies, *Written Maternal Authority and Eighteenth-Century Education in Britain: Educating by the Book* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 73. See also Mitzi Myers, 'Pedagogy as Self-Expression in Mary Wollstonecraft: Exorcising the Past, Finding a Voice', in *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Shari Benstock (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1988), pp. 192–210.
29. Eberle, *Chastity and Transgression*, p. 22.
30. Tomaselli, 'Most Public Sphere of All', p. 244.
31. Mary Catherine Moran considers Wollstonecraft's use of the term 'nature' in 'Between the Savage and the Civil: Dr John Gregory's Natural History of Femininity', in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 10–12.
32. As Wollstonecraft points out, the education and demeanour of soldiers may be compared to those of fashionably educated young ladies.
33. Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp. 73, 85–86.
34. Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p. 87.
35. Barker, *Welsh Story*, II, 23–25; Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, pp. 260, 264.
36. Gregory quoted in Moran, 'Between the Savage and the Civil', p. 11.
37. Bradbury, *Senhora Small Fry*, p. 4.
38. Eberle, *Chastity and Transgression*, p. 28.
39. Rebecca Davies, *Written Maternal Authority*, p. 64; Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, p. 243.
40. Tomaselli, 'Most Public Sphere of All', pp. 249, 254.
41. Myers, 'Pedagogy as Self-Expression', p. 197.

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‘SHE HAD RECOURSE TO HER PEN’  
Radical Voices in Elizabeth Hamilton’s  
*Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*

Yi-Cheng Weng



The public, that part of it, at least, with whom novels form the great portion of amusement, is infinitely obliged to [Elizabeth Hamilton] for this admirable exposition of Godwinian principles, and the more so, for having given it in the form of a novel; for the same means by which the poison is offered, are, perhaps, the best by which their antidote may be rendered efficacious. It will in this shape find its way into the circulating libraries of the country, whence is daily issued such a pestiferous portion of what are termed enlightened and liberal sentiments.

—*Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (1801)<sup>1</sup>

*THE ANTI-JACOBIN REVIEW* was warm in its praise of Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, her second novel, published in 1800. The review writes that Hamilton’s ‘admirable exposition’ of the new philosophical principles ‘in the form of a novel’ rendered *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* worthy to be classified as ‘the first novel of the day’.<sup>2</sup> It regards Hamilton as an exceptional case among ‘female writers of the day [who are] corrupted by the voluptuous dogmas of Mary Godwin [Wollstonecraft], or her more profligate imitators’, and aligns her with Hannah More, one prominent conservative dubbed ‘the most unexceptionable female writer of the times’ by *The Anti-Jacobin Review*.<sup>3</sup> These remarks reflect wider negative views of novels in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, among them Vicesimus Knox’s sense of the age as ‘more corrupt than the preceding’ due to the widening market for fiction, and Charles Lamb’s description of popular novels as ‘scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public’.<sup>4</sup>

Like most commentators of this period who saw novels as a ‘complicated drug’ and were quick to characterise them as precipitating the degradation of society, Elizabeth Hamilton was aware of the perceived danger posed by novels to the growing reading public.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, she perceived the novel as a medium through which to communicate with her audience, and delineate her ideas of femininity, domesticity and religion. However, her outspoken ridicule and caricatures of contemporary radicals in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* ‘did not extend into the blanket condemnation of whiggish radical and liberal politics’, but presents a more complicated case when placed in the context of the early nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>



Our understanding of female writers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been significantly revised by a growing body of scholarship in recent decades.<sup>7</sup> My investigation of Hamilton's novels aims to add to the existing scholarship on conservative writers, and to complicate our understanding of the much-neglected Hamilton, whose published work remains underappreciated and her influence, I believe, not yet fully acknowledged.<sup>8</sup>

In her 2010 *Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment*, Pam Perkins locates Hamilton within Edinburgh philosophical and literary culture, illustrating the capability of women writers for producing polemical and ambitious works and for participating in contemporary political debates. The first book-length monograph devoted to Hamilton appeared shortly afterwards, in 2012, by Claire Grogan. While Grogan examines Hamilton's literary output across a wide range of genres, this article will mainly focus on Hamilton's second novel *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, with other examples obtained from her other works and contemporary writings. I will situate her fictional representations of radical principles within the trajectory of the gradual decline of radical voices from the mid-1790s onwards, as a part of my wider project exploring women writers' divergent response to political and social disputes in the novel form in this period.

Jon Mee has suggested that '[t]he world of literary relations, including those between writers and their readers, and between readers and texts, was broadly construed in terms of a conversation of culture'.<sup>9</sup> Exploring Hamilton's fictional representations and caricatures in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* involves an investigation of the novel form and its capacity to deliver and influence social and moral values in this period—a capacity that can transform reading experiences into action, from the public sphere on the one hand to private domestic surroundings on the other. By the early nineteenth century, fear of the potential dangers posed by novels was widespread, and observations about the mass consumption of novels were well documented in contemporary writings. In 1805, Hugh Murray argued that novel readers 'seek only for amusement, and wish to find it without trouble or thought'.<sup>10</sup> In addition, he maintained that novels provide only 'false views of human life', 'inspire fantastic and visionary expectations' and generate in readers 'a disposition to choose the plan of conduct which leads to extraordinary adventures, rather than that which true wisdom points out'. Similarly Knox, writing in 1779, noted that 'the great multiplication of Novels has probably contributed to [the age's] degeneracy', for they were allowed to enter private domestic life, to 'pollute the heart in the recesses of the closet, inflame the passions at a distance from temptation, and teach all the malignity of vice in solitude'.<sup>11</sup> According to these views, novels almost imperceptibly influence injudicious and inexperienced readers, '[leading] the fancy through a beautiful wilderness of delights' and '[filling] the heart with pure, manly, bold, and liberal sentiments', which are 'perfectly well adapted to the young mind'.<sup>12</sup> These remarks suggest that readers were likely to indulge in wishful fantasy and imaginary utopia, and that such speculations were reinforced by novels. Accordingly, it is this 'predominance of imagination over reason' that rendered the novel 'a source of cultural and social

anxiety', and further engendered the frequent association between women and novels, which was seen as degrading morality and inflicting social conflicts.<sup>13</sup>

These radical utopias lay at the centre of the anti-Jacobin attack. In an atmosphere of political turmoil and social crisis, and amid a sense that decisive changes were necessary and imminent, anti-Jacobin writers reaffirmed the value of history and experience. In the preface to his anti-Jacobin novel *The Vagabond* (1799), George Walker denounces Jacobin reformers and their radical imaginations:

[M]any self-important reformers of mankind, who, having heated their imaginations, sit down to write *political romances*, which never were, and never will be practical; but which, coming into the hands of persons as little acquainted with human nature, the history of mankind, and the proofs of religious authenticity, as themselves, hurry away the mind from common life into dreams of ideal felicity; or, by breaking every moral tie (while they declaim about morals), turn loose their disciples upon the world, to root up and overthrow every thing which has received the sanction of ages, and been held sacred by men of real genius and erudition.<sup>14</sup>

Conservative novelists like Walker were not merely creating fiction, but were carefully culling progressive ideas from their radical contemporaries that 'never will be practical', and integrating these 'imaginings' into the composition of their fictional narratives to produce parodies of new philosophical ideas. The attack focuses on radicals' failure to distinguish fact from fiction and theories from realities in their often emotional arguments, attempting to suggest that radical principles are dangerous and misleading to an extent that even 'radicals themselves are unable to grasp the distinction between the real and the illusory'.<sup>15</sup> Following this vein, the aim of conservative commentators is to present radical principles as whimsical and subversive in nature, likely to be falsely adopted, and liable to destroy all fair domestic and public values.

Examples demonstrating the impracticality of new philosophical principles can be found in Hamilton's three-volume *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800). This novel is presented as half-destroyed and found by a pseudonymous editor Geoffrey Jarvis in the drawers in his lodging. Convinced that 'to expose that [evil] tendency [in works] to the unsuspecting, and to point it out to the unwary, is an office of charity, not only innocent, but meritorious', Jarvis subsequently submits the manuscript to George Robinson, the renowned London publisher who saw the publication of many Jacobin works in his time.<sup>16</sup> The novel centres on three main characters—Bridgetina Botherim, Julia Delmond and Harriet Orwell—and describes how each of them are influenced by the new philosophy respectively. The novel warns readers of the dangerous consequences of following revolutionary radicalism, through a series of events characterised by social disgrace, sexual forwardness, abandonment, elopement, familial destruction and premature death.

In *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, Hamilton candidly satirises William Godwin, a central voice within radical thought, and his intellectual circle, in particular Mary Hays. *The Anti-Jacobin Review* explicitly pointed out the close

affinity between Mary Hays and Bridgetina Botherim: 'Part of it we offer to our readers as an excellent imitation of that vicious and detestable stuff which has issued from the pen of M—y H—s'.<sup>17</sup> Hamilton's contemptuous caricature of Hays is undeniably explicit: as the *Anti-Jacobin* put it, 'the whole character of Bridgetina so strongly resembles that of this impassioned Godwinian, that it is impossible to be mistaken'. Bridgetina is portrayed as an ardent follower of Godwinian principles who 'never read[s] any thing but novels and metaphysics' (p. 38). This is partly attributed to her mother Mrs Botherim, who takes delight in observing Bridgetina's intellectual performance, and neglects to correct her flawed judgement and improper behaviour. The result is that Bridgetina enjoys the company of and freely converses with other New Philosophers. In *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, Bridgetina frequently parrots William Godwin's ideas in *Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (1793), and employs his principles to justify her behaviour—openly declaring her love to Henry Sydney (who does not return her feelings), and wilfully pursuing him to London. Since she is 'never accustomed to pay any attention to the affairs of life, and ignorant of all the manners and habits of society' (p. 279), her own perceptions and interpretations of the new philosophical ideas are often presented as whimsical and erroneous. When questioned about the impracticality of her theories, Bridgetina justifies her treatment and understanding of these principles by arguing that her 'scheme [...] is too extensive for any but a mind of great powers to comprehend. It is not bounded by the narrow limits of individual happiness, but extends to embrace the grand object of general utility', which is 'beyond the comprehension of a vulgar mind' (p. 222). Her reading of and unquestioned enthusiasm for the new philosophical ideas, in this sense, only serves 'in a purely self-serving manner' that has no real use in society.<sup>18</sup>

Julia Delmond, another of the novel's central figures, perhaps named after the sentimental protagonist in Rousseau's notorious *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, also embraces the new philosophical ideas. Unlike Bridgetina, she seems to accept these ideas instantly without any reasoning at all, for she considers herself 'so much wiser than the rest of the world' (p. 87). Her unquestioning acceptance of radical ideas is partly due to her limited education and the influence of her dotting father Captain Delmond, who is reminiscent of Mrs Botherim in terms of their misplaced confidence in their daughters' wisdom and abilities. It is with this confidence that Julia is 'a being of a superior order' that Captain Delmond allows her to manage her time and to pursue knowledge 'with a free command of all the books which either the private collections of his friends or the circulating library could furnish' (p. 85). Although she reads 'with pleasure books of philosophy, history, and travels' (p. 85), Julia shows a particular appetite for novels, finding 'a pleasure still more poignant in devouring the pages of a novel or romance in her own apartment' (pp. 85–86). Bridgetina and Julia's unsupervised reading of novels and limited understanding of abstruse theories later lead to their misfortunes in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*.

Based on her construction of the new philosophers in this novel, Hamilton is able to show that “‘things as they are’ [can] go horribly wrong under the direction of individuals betrayed by their haphazard reading of novels and political theory’.<sup>19</sup> Julia’s undisciplined novel reading produces a ‘wild and ungoverned imagination’ that is ‘paramount in her breast’, and prevents her from ‘the investigation of truth [for it] had no longer any charm’ (p. 86). Thus, her sentiment and imagination are nourished against the cultivation of her judgment, and Julia becomes engrossed in her own chimeras with the result that ‘in vain’ can ‘her reason revolt at the absurdities’ in radical theories. In this respect, she is seduced both by her own unsupervised, uncritical reading and by the villainous philosopher Vallaton’s artful eloquence and interpretation of the new philosophical theories. This is made clear in a scene in which Julia is rendered practically speechless when Vallaton attempts to talk her down by illustrating the concept of parental tyranny:

The false views in which things appear to your understanding is truly to be regretted. And so you are indebted to this gentleman, because, forsooth, *in the hateful spirit of monopoly, he chose by despotic and artificial means to engross a pretty woman to himself.* [...] Was it not because he believed himself your father, that he thus provided for you? In what a contemptible light does philosophy teach us to view this prejudice? [...] *In a state of equality, it will be a question of no importance to know who is the parent of each individual child. It is aristocracy, self-love, and family pride, that teach us to set a value upon it at present.* And for this offspring of aristocratic prejudice, this selfish affection which your father had for you because you were *his*, and not the offspring of some other man, haply more worthy than himself, he is entitled to your duty and your gratitude! Mistaken Julia! I wish you would exert the energies of your mind, to conquer prejudices so unworthy of your understanding. (p. 92)

In this speech, key Godwinian terms are italicised for the reader by Hamilton, and annotated by a footnote which explicitly indicates that quotations are from Godwin’s *Political Justice*. Here Vallaton alludes to Godwin’s idea that the institution of marriage is ‘a system of fraud’ and ‘the most odious of all monopolies’, and his view of self-love, notoriously set out in *Political Justice*.<sup>20</sup> Vallaton illustrates what he considers ‘a glaring proof of the most odious selfishness’ (p. 92) by referring to Julia’s father. Julia, unable to respond to the forceful eloquence conspicuously displayed here ‘with her heart palpitating with various contending emotions’, is ‘[a]bashed at the conviction of her filial weakness’, and finally fails to utter her own defence (pp. 93, 92).

Julia’s ability to respond to and resist Vallaton’s radical ideas is stripped away by her limited comprehension. In this respect, Julia is completely deprived of voice and agency and thus is liable to surrender to Vallaton’s elopement plan when he contends that the act of elopement is ‘a duty of a very serious nature’ (p. 236) later in this novel:

Has it not been to demonstration proved, that the prejudices of *filial duty*, and *affection, gratitude to benefactors*, and *regard to promises*, are the great barriers to the state of perfect virtue? These obstacles to perfection it is the glory of philosophy to demolish, and the duty of every person, impressed with a sense of perfectibility, to remove.  
(pp. 235–36)<sup>21</sup>

In his arguments Julia now sees 'the grand effort of a noble mind, that rose superior to the vulgar prejudices of an ill-constituted society' (p. 236), so eventually agrees to elope with him. Despite Vallaton's persuasive eloquence and Julia's flawed judgment, it is noteworthy that she is ruined partly by her own desire to be considered radical and to some extent avant-garde. This leaves Julia receptive to the new philosophical ideas, which in part imply that 'denying revelation is but one step towards the state of perfection to which the human mind is so speedily advancing' (pp. 87–88). Therefore, by agreeing to their elopement, Julia considers herself setting 'an example of moral rectitude, by throwing off the ignoble chains of filial duty' (p. 236), and contributing to promote the happiness of the public.

As Miriam L. Wallace reminds us, 'education and persuasion are central content elements of [the novels of the 1790s], with erroneous education as important as good education in driving the narrative'.<sup>22</sup> Hamilton's fictional representations of Julia and Bridgetina creates a space for the exemplary character of Harriet Orwell, as well as indicating her own response to radical theories of the 1790s. In *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, Harriet is presented as an amiable, careful, considerate and modest heroine. Readers learn that Harriet possesses 'so little [...] of the prying spirit of curiosity', and that 'so easily could she controul the feelings of her well-regulated mind' (p. 151). This sets Harriet drastically apart from the radical Julia and Bridgetina. Harriet's admirable qualities can be attributed, at least partly, to her being a committed Christian and her firm adherence to religious principles. In a scene when she reasons with Julia about the power of Christian faith, Harriet argues for God's 'immutability' to 'fix as well as to exalt our virtue':

Our reason far from shining with unvaried lustre, is perpetually liable to be obscured by passion or prejudice, we cannot, therefore, always trust to its decision; but when we are in the constant habit of referring our actions to the judgment of a Being whose moral attributes are unchangeable, the clouds of passion and prejudice are dispelled, and reason again shines forth with steadiness and vigour. (p. 164)

Harriet's remark is determinedly founded upon her religious faith, and her belief in the power of the 'Divine standard' (p. 164) to refrain passions from leading to 'the most egregious mistakes' (p. 165). Unlike Bridgetina and Julia, Harriet has, in the words of her aunt, been 'early instructed in the necessity of submitting the passions to the authority of reason' and 'ha[s] learned to control the throbbing tumult of the heart, when it beats for selfish sorrows' (p. 188). Therefore, even when Harriet 'beam[s] with a superior expression of delight', that delight is so well 'regulated by the transcendant delicacy of her mind, that it require[s] a delicacy similar to her own to read its full extent' (p. 74). These qualities allow her always



to judge 'by the eternal rules of impartial truth and justice' (p. 188). Even before she perishes, Julia regrets that

If, like them, I had been taught to devote the actions of every day to my GOD; and instead of encouraging a gloomy and querulous discontent against the present order of things, had employed myself in a vigilant performance of the duties of my situation, and a scrupulous government of my own heart and inclinations, how very different would my situation now have been! (p. 383)

The importance of Christian faith is a common theme in Hamilton's works. In her first novel *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), Hamilton shows how atheism, which was 'purveyed to the middle classes by Godwin and to the lower classes by Paine', may render domestic women morally impure through the example of Miss Ardent.<sup>23</sup> In a similar way, in *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina, Wife of Germanicus* (1804), the fall of Rome is attributed at least partly to the lack of a firm Christian religion, while Agrippina's lack of a firm religious faith engenders her misery. It can be seen that, in Gary Kelly's words, 'Christian virtues are equated with those conventionally ascribed to women, and society is envisaged as a family'.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, a lack of religion undermined the 'ideological defence against the passions and ambition of [the] time [...] and thereby unintentionally contributed to the decline and fall of [the] country'. In *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, Hamilton appeals to the power of religious faith in defiance of new philosophical ideas, and to the possibility of employing religion in the cultivation of women's rationality, further making worthy Harriet the opposed counterpart to the irrational Bridgetina and Julia. However, as Pam Perkins notes, 'Harriet and her quietly unexciting virtues will seem all the more pallid and dull by force of contrast with Bridgetina' and she also 'fades into the background even in contrast with Julia'.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, in her juxtaposition of these three heroines (or anti-heroines), Hamilton presents 'a model of three different versions of feminine intellectual pursuits, and [...] suggests that it is the dispassionate intellectualism of Hume (at least in his role as a historian) that offers the best model for women of literary tastes'. This can be seen in the scene when Henry Stanley visits the Orwell family. Harriet, who has already 'performed every domestic task, and [...] regulated the family economy for the day', is engrossed in listening to the Scottish philosopher David Hume's *History of England* (1754–62) read by 'a little orphan girl she had herself instructed' (p. 73). Hamilton clearly thought highly of Hume and his historical writings, if not so much his philosophical ideas.<sup>26</sup> Placing Hume's *History of England* in the hands of the virtuous and judicious Harriet does more to affirm the respectability of Hume's work and celebrate the 'dispassionate' tone of historians, than to underline Hamilton's links with the Edinburgh intellectual circle and the Common Sense Philosophy illuminated by her mentor Dugald Stewart.<sup>27</sup> In so doing, Hamilton to some extent sought to enlist her philosophical connection with Scottish philosophers in order to validate her own assumptions and integrate moral philosophy in her characterisation of Harriet's committed religious beliefs.



In the fictional character of Harriet, Hamilton is able to illustrate her appeal for the cultivation of the female mind and places it on a firm Christian foundation.

Hamilton's treatment of the fallen heroines in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* diverges greatly from that of other anti-Jacobin novelists. In many anti-Jacobin versions of the seduction of women, innocent heroines are prone to be attracted by the courtly manners and cogent eloquence of their villainous seducers, and eventually abandoned by their family and deprived of emotional and economic securities. Their own errors and sexual indiscretions can only be atoned for through either permanent outcast from society or premature death. One pertinent example featured in the conservative Jane West's novel *A Tale of the Times* (1799), in which the protagonist Geraldine is seduced by the villain Fitzosborne, who is characterised by his unbridled lust and adherence to libertine values. Although Geraldine is portrayed as a woman of firmness and with great mental strength, such that even a man as experienced as Fitzosborne 'had never yet encountered the resistance of a firm superior mind' as hers, his unrivalled eloquence proves to be too great to be conquered in the end.<sup>28</sup> After she becomes a fallen woman, Geraldine recognises that 'judging from what is known, the world is right in its renunciation of me. No rules are prescribed for my future conduct, except seclusion, repentance, and death'.<sup>29</sup> Geraldine's fall is portrayed as an irrevocable one, and she is doomed for the severe consequences it invokes. However, it is important to note that, unlike West, Hamilton does not portray an irredeemable fate for her heroines, at least not for both of them. It is Julia who exemplifies the typical fallen heroine beguiled by her own imaginations and judgments, and who, eventually abandoned by the villain, breaks her parents' heart, becomes an outcast of society, and can only atone for her mistakes through death. Unlike her treatment of Julia, Hamilton takes a different view of Bridgetina, enabling her to recognise her erroneous behaviour and to redeem her previous errors. This is channelled through Julia's final words:

Ah, Bridgetina! could I indeed impress you with a sense of what my mind now feels, I should not die in vain. [...] What, my Bridgetina, are the fruits of the doctrines we have so unhappily been led to embrace? *In me you behold them!* In vain will you exclaim, in the jargon to which we have been accustomed, against the *prejudices of society*, as if to them were owing the load of misery that sinks me to a premature grave. Ah! no. Those prejudices, against which we have been accustomed so bitterly to rail, I now behold as a salutary fence, which, if I had never dared to overleap, would have secured my peace. [...] it was my own pride, my own vanity, my own presumption, that were the real seducers that undid me. [...] Go home to your mother, my Biddy; and in the sober duties of life forget the idle vagaries which our distempered brains dignified with the name of philosophy. (pp. 382–83)

Although in the end, Julia's transgression proves too great to be ignored or even redeemed, Hamilton allows Julia to impart her experience and changed attitudes

to Bridgetina. This move arguably reveals her tolerant position on indiscretion, and provides an alternative rendering of the trope of the fallen women.

The necessity of cultivating women's intellect in order for them to become rational thinkers is highlighted here. Hamilton's belief therefore unexpectedly aligns with that of the pioneering feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, who argues that like men, women 'must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in'.<sup>30</sup> Hamilton's characterisation of Godwinian figures illustrates the ways in which the blurring of fact and fiction bewilders readers and obscures their immature judgement. This concern is also articulated by Clara Reeve in the preface of her *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, the Natural Son of Edward Prince of Wales, Commonly Called the Black Prince* (1793):

Many attempts have been made of late years to build fictitious stories upon historical names and characters; the foundations were bad, and the structures have fallen down. To falsify historical facts and characters is a kind of sacrilege against those great names upon which history has affixed the seal of truth. The consequences are mischievous; it misleads young minds eager in the search of truth, and enthusiasts in the pursuit of those virtues which are objects of their admiration, upon whom one true character has more effect than a thousand fictions.<sup>31</sup>

These remarks underline her uneasiness that the failure of such attempts may risk misguiding injudicious readers. Thus, Reeve intends to provide the 'young and ingenuous minds [not] yet uncontaminated by the vile indolence, effeminacy, and extravagance of modern life and manners' with a work that can 'entertain their minds without corrupting their hearts'.<sup>32</sup> She believes that

[i]f reflecting upon these faint sketches of illustrious characters should stimulate a few readers to imitate those virtues they can admire; [...] if surveying both with candour and impartiality, they should select the good and reform the evil—this will be a noble reward for the labour and industry of the author:—then will she take leave of the public with the sentence of the Roman actor:

Valete et Plaudite!<sup>33</sup>

Reeve aims to cultivate readers to become rational thinkers themselves who can exercise judgement to point out the inadequacies of flawed discourses. This conception was clearly shared by Hamilton, who argues for the necessity for readers, in particular female readers, to cultivate their own intellect in order to reach more mature judgements. It is with this intention that Hamilton takes 'recourse to her pen [...] to restore that intellectual vigour which the whole course of their present mode of education tends so effectually to destroy' (p. 252).

It is also noteworthy that Hamilton's response to the abuse of radical principles was constructed in the context of the philosophical principles of Revolutionists in the late eighteenth century. As David Simpson reminds us, there were noticeable transformations in French Revolutionary thought in the course of the 1790s. His observation about the French Philosophers and the development of their rational

thought leads to his argument that 'it was the Jacobin revolt *against* rational system that accompanied and sponsored the most violent phase of the Revolution in 1792 and 1793'; Rousseau, one of the most notorious emblems of sensibility and radicalism, was then 'invoked as the apologist not of rational perfectibility but of natural virtue and spontaneous emotionalism'.<sup>34</sup> According to Simpson, it was during this time that 'France transferred its national imagination from an excessive worship of reason to an equally excessive celebration of sensibility'. Therefore, when 'the middle ground of common sense and gradual evolution was imaged as unavailable' to them, the radicals started to behave as 'sentimentalists, rakes, and libertines'. This wild enthusiasm for sensibility provided their anti-Jacobin counterparts with a vantage point from which to write against the excessive expressions of emotions and sentiments in radical writings, and was taken negatively especially by some female writers of the 1790s as morally deficient.

In addition, what is also noteworthy is that references to and representations of Godwin's ideas in this novel are often presented as fragmentary. Although Godwin's principles are quoted substantially in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, they constitute only part of the dangerous principles delineated in the novel. As M. O. Grenby reminds us, 'literary anti-Jacobinism [...] did not think of itself as waging a war against ideas, but against a more worrying menace still—the absence of any guiding principle whatsoever'.<sup>35</sup> By putting the ideas as 'a set of non-principles cobbled together to give the most flimsy of theoretical bases to the desire of malicious individuals to act as they liked without restraint or compunction', these individuals become 'part of the heritage of new philosophy, irrespective of what their philosophy might have been'. Here Grenby contests the notion that anti-Jacobin novels 'were designed to counter some specific protagonists and tenets of the new philosophy'. Instead, he argues that these 'tangential' quotations from radical texts is one method anti-Jacobin novelists used not only 'to attack new philosophy whilst never actually engaging in debate on its ideas and issues' and 'construct new philosophy in its most vulnerable form', but perhaps most importantly, to 'forge an alloy of new philosophy which they then contorted to fit their own purposes'.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that these citations are, to some extent, embellishments employed chiefly to enhance readers' empathy by identifying fictional characters with radical dangers. In her reply, written on 13 March 1797, to the accusations made by Mary Hays that Hamilton's first novel *Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* carried out a satirical attack on her, Hamilton claimed:

In my opinion it is a strange sort of a compliment you pay your friend Mr Godwin, in taking it for granted that he has made a monopoly of all the absurdity, and extravagance in the world; and that it is impossible to laugh at any thing ridiculous without pointing at him.<sup>37</sup>

Grenby's observation helpfully reinforces my previous argument that Hamilton's primary intention is not to discuss or revolt against the new philosophical ideas themselves, but to reveal the threat underlying these principles when presented to the injudicious and unwary reader. This also signifies, I think, that Godwin and his radical principles serve only as the pretext for Hamilton's attack on Jacobin

radicalism in this novel. Hamilton's reply, quoted above, further backs up this supposition that her disparaging quotations in *Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* were not designed to counter individual radicals; what underlies such apparent caricatures is her aim to highlight and later to castigate the follies of their principles.

Only a few years after this quarrel, in 1800, Hamilton published *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, and launched an even more comprehensive satirical attack on her radical contemporaries, Hays in particular. The purpose of her ridicule is elucidated in the novel:

Of the keen weapon of ridicule, it must be confessed, [Hamilton] has not been sparing. Were there the least appearance of its having been pointed by personal prejudice towards any individual, I should certainly advise you to consign the work to everlasting oblivion; but it is opinions, not persons, at which the shafts of ridicule are in the present work directed. (p. 36)

Two years later, in the second volume of her *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education* published in 1802, Hamilton defends again her satirical writing in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*. She writes in a note that she is

apprehensive, that many who have been amused with the fiction which she at that time made the vehicle of her sentiments, have failed in drawing the inferences from it, which it was her wish to have rendered obvious. [...] Those who are incapable of general reasoning, think it impossible to draw genuine pictures of human character but from particulars. They are, therefore, for ever hunting after the originals from which such pictures must, in their opinion, have inevitably been drawn; and thus they lose the advantage that might have been derived from making proper inferences.<sup>38</sup>

Readers who insist on identifying the individuals satirised in this novel, contends Hamilton, run the risk of failing to give proper attention to her arguments about 'the utility of abstraction' and 'the fatal consequences arising from the incapacity for generalization'.<sup>39</sup>

In a personal letter written to one Dr S— in September 1802, Hamilton laments that 'so very few people read with any other view but that of amusement, that the hope of being useful must be confined within very narrow limits'.<sup>40</sup> Underlying this passage are Hamilton's views on women's education, which were greatly influenced by the educational theories of Dugald Stewart, Edinburgh professor of moral philosophy and also mentor of Hamilton, who argued for 'the need for women's education to enable them to fulfil their social obligations and to contribute to the progress of society as a whole'.<sup>41</sup> In fact, it was also Stewart who 'encouraged [Hamilton] to resume the idea' of composing *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina*, for he believed that the characters were 'so well adapted' that they would make a strong case for her enlightened educational principles.<sup>42</sup> Although here Hamilton's nineteenth-century biographer Elizabeth Bengier is referring to Hamilton's 'philosophical application of history and biography' in composing *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina*, these remarks reveals her enlightened under-

standing of the mind.<sup>43</sup> The improvement of mind, she believes, can be achieved through the cultivation of reason and judgment. This is also suggested in the following passage that prefaced *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*:

it appears to me to have been the intention of [Hamilton] not to pass an indiscriminate censure on the ingenious, and in many parts admirable, performance, but to expose the dangerous tendency of those parts of his theory which might, by a bad man, be converted into engine of mischief, and be made the means of ensnaring innocence and virtue. [...] The ridiculous point of view in which some of the opinions conveyed to the young and unthinking through the medium of philosophical novels, is exhibited in the character of Bridgetina, appears to me as an excellent antidote to the poison; [...] Upon the whole, I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion, that in publishing this work, you will deserve the thanks of society. (pp. 35–37)

This account of the novel recognises the ways in which Hamilton illustrates the consequences of being ignorant of the new philosophical ideas, and appeals directly to readers for a fair judgement of the impracticality and dangers lurking behind libertinism.

Such a view of *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* prefigures Maria Edgeworth's 1816 obituary, 'Character and Writing of Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton', in which she sees Hamilton's intention as 'to expose those whose theory and practice differ; to point out the difficulty of applying high-flown principles to the ordinary but necessary concerns of human life; and to show the danger of bringing every man to become in his own moralist and logician.'<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Hamilton skilfully displays the threat brought by contemporary novels and conveys her anxiety to the reader through her fictional representations in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*. Her intention is fully illustrated in one of her letters:

By most of the pious people and pious writers I have met with, the imagination is treated as a sort of evil spirit, that must be exorcised and laid at rest; but in my opinion, it is very impious, and surely very ungrateful, thus to treat the first of blessings, without which judgment will be but a sour old maid, producing nothing.<sup>45</sup>

In this respect, it can be argued that through the discursive space provided by the novel form, she was able to challenge and destabilise political radicalism in the early nineteenth century, and more importantly, to pass this message to her audience in an effective manner. This point speaks to what Perkins claims as Hamilton's 'cultural importance', which, as implied in Edgeworth's obituary, is founded upon her 'graceful evasion of the supposed dichotomy between proper femininity and a desire for a public intellectual or literary life'.<sup>46</sup> What Hamilton does is to negotiate a discursive space for herself, and to shed light upon the gendered conventions of public participation, which infiltrated almost every level of political life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Such a strategy obviously received positive responses from contemporary readers, as *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* went through two editions during the first year


of publication, and as her biographer Benger records, Hamilton received 'a most pleasing testimony in a letter from a young woman [...], who confessed she had detected herself in Bridgetina, and instantly abjured the follies and absurdities which created the resemblance'.<sup>47</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The point that women writers in the Revolutionary period were concerned about contemporary political and social issues is explicitly made by Charlotte Smith in the preface to her novel *Desmond*. Writing in 1792, Smith remarks that 'But women it is said have no business with politics.—Why not?,—Have they no interest in the scenes that area acting around them, in which they have fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, or friends engaged!'<sup>48</sup> My investigation of *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* has developed a sense of the complexity of anti-Jacobin women writers' thought, and revealed a much more complicated and accommodating literary strand lying behind the work of individual woman writers of this period. Although there are distinctive differences between women writers of this period, regardless of either their radical or conservative approaches, the diversity of their views does not seem to override their shared concern for the improvement of women's education in general. A considerable number of literary works on female manners and education were published during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) and Catharine Macaulay's *Letters on Education* (1790). The epistolary form Hamilton employed in *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education*, so frequently seen in late eighteenth-century works, provides her writing on women's education with 'the veneer of private sociable discourse', and it influenced later women writers who were 'varied in their political and social views', such as Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, Hannah More, and Jane West.<sup>49</sup> When placing Hamilton in the context of the cultural and literary prominence of women writers in this period, she may seem far from unique in articulating her concerns. However, as this study demonstrates, she reconsiders women's roles in both domestic and public discourses and challenges the disparate and uneven standards for women's education and for the cultivation of female intellect.

A closer inspection of Hamilton's presentation of the new philosophical ideas and the ways in which these ideas may bewilder unwary and inexperienced readers reveals 'a new discursive strategy' which is 'capable of capturing the loyalty of readers and, through them, securing the authority of the state', as employed in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*.<sup>50</sup> This notion helps advance our understanding of how women writers in the period produced and shaped their literary production whilst negotiating a space between their private and public duties and expectations, and enables us to better understand the reworking of the new philosophical ideas in anti-Jacobin novels in the early nineteenth century. Conditioned by the atmosphere of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Hamilton's characterisation of contemporary radicals and the new philosophy in *Memoirs of*



*Modern Philosophers* allows her to educate her audiences through her presentation of radical principles and reaffirmation of the importance of Christian religion in sustaining domestic and national peace. This is pertinently shown when Edgeworth wrote in an Irish paper that Hamilton 'does not aim at making women expert in the wordy war', but 'she has not, on the other hand, been deceived, or overawed, by those who would represent the study of the human mind as one that trends to no practical purpose, and that is unfit and unsafe for her sex'.<sup>51</sup> 

## NOTES

1. *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 7 (1801), 375.
2. 'New Philosophy' is a term used to describe British support for French revolutionary principles in general.
3. *Anti-Jacobin Review*, pp. 39, 374, 376.
4. Vicesimus Knox, *Essays, Moral and Literary* (London: Dilly, 1779), p. 185; Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia, to Which Are Added Letters, and Rosamund, a Tale* (Paris: Baudry, 1835), p. 207.
5. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols (London: Cadell & Davies, 1799), I, 34.
6. Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750–1810* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 329. For Guest's discussion of Hamilton's sense of the 'neutrality of middle-class women's domestic situation', see especially pp. 328–34.
7. See e.g. Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790–1827* (Oxford: OUP, 1993); Norma Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters* (London: Pimlico, 2004).
8. For scholarship that focuses on conservative discourses in this period, see e.g. M. O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005); Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790–1832* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010); Lisa Wood, *Modes of Discipline: Women, Conservatism, and the Novel after the French Revolution* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003).
9. Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p. 207.
10. Hugh Murray, *Morality of Fiction; or, an Inquiry into the Tendency of Fictitious Narratives, with Observations of Some of the Most Eminent* (Edinburgh: Mundell & Son, 1805), p. 40.
11. Knox, 'On Novel Reading', in *Essays Moral and Literary*, pp. 68, 70.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
13. Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, p. 13.
14. George Walker, *The Vagabond, a Novel* (London: G. Walker, 1799), pp. ix–x.
15. April London, 'Novel and History in Anti-Jacobin Satire', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 30 (2000), 74 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3509243>>.
16. Elizabeth Hamilton, *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, ed. by Claire Grogan (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 35. Subsequent quotations are from this edition, and are given parenthetically in the text. Jacobin works published by George Robinson include William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), *Enquiry*

- concerning the *Principles of Political Justice* (1793), *St Leon* (1799), and Mary Hays's *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796), among many others.
17. *Anti-Jacobin Review*, p. 371.
  18. Grogan, 'Introduction', in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, p. 20.
  19. April London, 'Radical Utopias: History and the Novel in the 1790s', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 16 (2004), 798 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecf.2004.0045>>.
  20. William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, 2 vols (London: Robinson, 1793), II, 849–50. See especially the chapters 'Of Co-operation, Cohabitation and Marriage' and 'Of Self-Love and Benevolence'.
  21. Also see Godwin's *Political Justice*, especially the chapter 'Of Justice'.
  22. Miriam L. Wallace, *Revolutionary Subjects in the English 'Jacobin' Novel, 1790–1805* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2009), p. 25.
  23. Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, p. 141.
  24. *Ibid.*, p. 273; see also pp. 269–74 for a more in-depth discussion on *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina*.
  25. Pam Perkins, *Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 91–92.
  26. Mark Towsey notes that Hamilton 'treated Hume's skeptical philosophy with utmost severity' in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*—see "The Book Seemed to Sink into Oblivion": Reading Hume's *History* in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer*, ed. by Mark G. Spencer (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), p. 94.
  27. In Maria Edgeworth's obituary of Elizabeth Hamilton, which was widely printed in several magazines in 1816, she praises Hamilton as an established and successful writer of fiction, but remarks that 'her claims to literary reputation as a philosophic, moral, and religious author, are of a higher sort'. See Edgeworth, 'Character and Writings of Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 119 (1816), 624. Karen O'Brien and Pam Perkins both locate Hamilton in the history of Scottish Enlightenment. See O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); Perkins, *Women Writers*.
  28. Jane West, *A Tale of the Times*, 3rd edn, 3 vols (London: Longman, 1803), II, 272.
  29. West, *A Tale of the Times*, pp. 328–29.
  30. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), p. 86. See especially chapter 2: 'The prevailing opinion of a sexual character discussed'. Wollstonecraft is treated rather favourably in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*.
  31. Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, the Natural Son of Edward, Prince of Wales, Commonly Called the Black Prince*, 3 vols (London: Hookham & Carpenter, 1793), I, xx–xxi. Gary Kelly further observes that 'Reeve's preface signals her old Whig allegiances by quoting [Plutarch's] justification for applying history to contemporary political events in order to rouse patriotic spirit in national crisis'—see 'Clara Reeve, Provincial Bluestocking: From the Old Whigs to the Modern Liberal State', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 65 (2002), 119.
  32. Reeve, *Sir Roger de Clarendon*, I, xxi.
  33. *Ibid.*, I, xxi–xxiii.
  34. David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 76.
  35. Grenby, *Anti-Jacobin Novel*, p. 75.

36. Ibid., pp. 76, 78.
37. Letter from Elizabeth Hamilton to Mary Hays, 13 Mar 1797, Pforzheimer Library, MS 2210; quoted in *The Idea of Being Free: A Mary Hays Reader*, ed. by Gina Luria Walker (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2006), p. 313. This quarrel between Hamilton and Hays is also recorded in Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, p. 143. Also see Gina Luria Walker, *Mary Hays (1759–1843): The Growth of a Woman's Mind* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), especially the third section: 'The Buried Life'.
38. Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education*, 2 vols (Bath: Cruttwell, 1802), II, 452n.
39. Ibid., II, 452.
40. Quoted in Elizabeth Benger, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton. With a Selection from her Correspondence, and Other Unpublished Writings* (London: Longman, 1818), p. 48.
41. O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment*, p. 204. For a discussion on the association between women and history, and the use of history in educating women in the nineteenth century, see chapter 6.
42. Quoted in Benger, *Memoirs*, p. 49.
43. Ibid., p. 48.
44. Edgeworth, 'Character and Writings', p. 623. This obituary was widely printed in 1816, including *The Times*, *Monthly Magazine*, *Monthly Repository*, *Weekly Entertainer*, *Literary Panorama*, *Gentleman's Magazine* and also Benger's *Memoirs of Hamilton*. For the identification of these sources, I am indebted to Jane Rendall's "Elementary Principles of Education": Elizabeth Hamilton, Maria Edgeworth and the Uses of Common Sense Philosophy', *History of European Ideas*, 39 (2013), 613–30, n. 1.
45. Benger, *Memoirs*, p. 141.
46. Perkins, *Women Writers*, p. 63.
47. Benger, *Memoirs*, pp. 132–33.
48. Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*, ed. by Antje Blank and Janet Todd (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), p. 45.
49. See Perkins, *Women Writers*, pp. 61–62.
50. London, 'Novel and History', p. 72. Here, London refers to the close connection between literature and government, as explored by Thomas Mathias in his *Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues*, first published in 1794.
51. Benger, *Memoirs*, pp. 210–11.

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# CANALS, COMMERCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATION IN SYDNEY OWENSON'S *O'DONNELL*

*Nicola Lloyd*



IN HIS 1812 *ACCOUNT OF IRELAND, STATISTICAL AND POLITICAL*, Edward Wakefield declared:

When I hear a strong desire expressed for commerce, and the construction of canals to create it [...] I greatly regret, that the Irish are so blind as not to perceive, that [...] were the people habituated to labour, agricultural produce, manufactures, commerce, a proper circulating medium, the representative of that industry, would all be the happy results of this primary cause.<sup>1</sup>

Wakefield's disparaging comments are typical of discourses of Irish improvement in the years following the 1801 Act of Union. His references to canal construction and agricultural economy underscore the emerging focus on Irish geography in the post-union period, in which the Irish landscape became a contested national body repeatedly inscribed with narratives of possession and dispossession. More notable still is the way that these narratives are frequently articulated in terms of the eighteenth-century physiological discourse of sensibility, emphasising the importance of the 'proper circulating medium' of commerce in order to animate and invigorate the geographical body of Ireland. Narratives of sentiment are also a central component of the Romantic national tale, which sought to address political and cultural conflict through the domestic form of the novel. In its review of Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), the *Critical Review's* bemoaning of the intrusive nature of the author's 'disquisitions on the manners of the Irish' and their tendency to interpose just as 'the tear of sensibility is swelling in the eye of her fair reader at the woes and virtues of the interesting heroine' expresses the disputed nature of the overlap between discourses of sensibility and nationality in the period.<sup>2</sup> This article takes this overlap as its starting point in exploring sentimental formations of nationhood in Sydney Owenson's *O'Donnell: A National Tale* (1814). Owenson's national tale considers formations of geographical circulation in order to provide an extended critique of ascendancy schemes of improvement and narratives of sentimental assimilation. In its focus on the centrality of Ireland's contested geography in schemes of improvement, *O'Donnell* considers the importation and exportation of national and cultural identity in the post-union period. In doing so, it articulates anxieties about the ideological 'mapping' of the

Irish landscape and formations of international sentimental communities that threaten to destabilise and undermine individual national character.

Recent scholarship has emphasised the prominence of Irish geography in fictional and political discourses of the Romantic period. In her study of the cultural history of the Irish novel, Claire Connolly considers the various aspects of geography that shaped constructions of Irish cultural identity, particularly the way that Ireland's natural resources were increasingly revalued in terms of their potential for trade in the period. As Connolly points out, the positioning of Irish geography in this way locates it within an Enlightenment discourse of political economy, which finds its counter in the 'antiquarian' Romantic nationalism that emphasised ancient Irish culture. This creates, as Connolly puts it, a 'relationship between economic necessity and aesthetic value in the context of global power relations'.<sup>3</sup> Geography becomes a site of cultural anxiety in the Romantic national tale, functioning simultaneously as a means of economic advancement and as a symbol of Ireland's complex history and national identity. This is never more apparent than in the emerging tendency in political discourse of the Romantic period to invoke 'Ireland's geographical location as irrefutable argument in favour of Union'.<sup>4</sup> Speeches to the House of Lords in the period preceding the 1801 Act of Union configure Britain and Ireland as 'two sister Islands, not merely contiguous, but lying apart from the rest of Europe [...] in the very bosom and embraces of each other',<sup>5</sup> referring to the Irish channel as merely 'that sea which now separates us only from friends'.<sup>6</sup> The sentimental and familial imagery employed in these speeches implies a reciprocal sympathetic bond of shared interest but, as Connolly points out, geography was just as frequently used as an argument against union. She cites an article from the Irish newspaper *The Northern Star* which emphasises the "dangerous tho' narrow sea" and declares that "Nature by its situation points out, that [Ireland] should be an independent state, and that both islands may be united under one head: they are still separate bodies, each possessing its own heart and its own members".<sup>7</sup> These discussions of union in terms of the sentimental body politic offer a neat demonstration of the troubled relationship between Ireland and England as 'united' or 'separate bodies': for Ireland, union with Britain had the potential to engulf it both physically and culturally.

The sentimental configuration of Britain and Ireland as 'sisters' or 'friends', 'never disposed to quarrel',<sup>8</sup> reflects what Evan Gottlieb identifies as the formation of 'sympathetic Britishness' in the Romantic period. He argues that the politics of feeling consistently emphasised the politics of union, suggesting that 'the discourse of sympathy, as developed by the Scottish Enlightenment and then deployed and disseminated by a variety of writers was central to this new identity' of Britishness.<sup>9</sup> This sympathetic construction of Britishness is frequently underscored by a focus on the potential for commercial activity to unite culturally disparate groups through the circulation of civility. Eighteenth-century commercial rhetoric frequently adopted the physiological analogy of the body politic of sensibility to denote circulation in trade and commerce was seen as possessing the capacity to effect a sentimental reformation of society, as the benefits of capitalism led to im-

proved standards of living and refined taste and manners. As Markman Ellis puts it, '[c]ommercial activity [...] is the legitimate activity of the ardent sentimentalist, since to aid communication, and to increase circulation, is to reform manners, and disseminate virtue'.<sup>10</sup> This communication and circulation is closely linked to the vast modification of the transport infrastructure in eighteenth-century Britain as part of widespread industrial and agricultural reform. Canal construction had begun to create new geographical links owing to the increased demand for commercial transportation: in England, a commercial network in which major ports linked with inner counties through rivers was supplemented by canals providing connection to major industrial and agricultural regions, thus facilitating both a nationwide market economy and a process of sentimental reform.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Richard Whitworth, MP and canal designer, argued that the 'rude and unpolished behaviour [of the lower orders of society] will be altered and soothed into the most social civility and good breeding by the alluring temptations of the beneficial advantage of trade and commerce'.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, major road improvements took place throughout the eighteenth century as the result of turnpike trusts, in which groups of local businessmen and landowners were granted Local Acts of Parliament to raise capital to for the construction or improvement of roads and to charge tolls.<sup>13</sup>

In Ireland it was agreed—among English commentators, at least—that 'to render the remote, mountainous part of the kingdom productive, they must be made accessible, and intersected with roads, that want of which contributes very much to retard the progress of civilization, and industry'.<sup>14</sup> Henry Brooke, Anglo-Irish landowner and author of the novel *The Fool of Quality* (1765–70), had published a tract promoting construction of canals entitled *The Interests of Ireland* in 1759. The work outlines the centrality of geographical communication in facilitating national improvement through commerce, arguing that God created the sea, lakes, rivers and streams as 'Avenues of [...] beneficent Communication' so that 'Man [...] might, in Time, by the Effect of his own Skill and Labour, knit into one Family, and weave into one Web, the Affinity and Brotherhood of all Mankind' through commercial interaction.<sup>15</sup> The unnavigable landscape of Ireland is 'like a Carcass whose exterior Parts are kept warm by outward Applications, while the Heart and Vitals are inanimate, that should naturally communicate both Action and Nourishment to the whole System'.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, 'excellent roads' and 'navigable canals' 'should visit every part [of Ireland]; since by their means every part may convey its natural produce to the centre and *heart* of the whole. National intercourse is like the circulation of the blood in the body; it should extend to its remotest members; and the remotest members should return the fluid to the vital organs'.<sup>17</sup> The landscape in this metaphor wants only the chords or nerves of canals or roads to animate and increase the circulation of the whole system of the body politic. Roads and canals, then, served to bind man to man in a geographical sense, but also to facilitate the transmission of the refined manners and sensibility that were perceived as the eventual outcome of commercial wealth.



The frequency with which the trope of roads and canals appears as an emblem of sympathetic union in eighteenth-century economic and political writing suggests parallels with Romantic national and historical fiction, given their focus on sympathy as a means of national cohesion and their engagement with ideas of historical progress and national improvement. Owenson demonstrates an emerging preoccupation with discourses of Irish geographical improvement in the letters she added to the 1812 edition of *St Clair, or the Heiress of Desmond* (1803). In terms that appropriate contemporary rhetoric about Ireland's geographical potential for trade, the Anglo-Irish protagonist St Clair writes to his father of 'their lakes, more numerous than in any other country in the world of the same extent, so important in a commercial view, affording, as many of them do, within a few miles of the sea, a free navigation'.<sup>18</sup> In this case, however, the improvement of transport links in order to facilitate commerce is represented as a specifically English interest: St Clair tells his father that the Irish are entirely unaware of the geographical merits of their own country, which—in terms that recall Wakefield's condemnation of Irish 'blindness'—are 'unappreciated' and 'unknown by name' (I, 34). The implication here is obvious: the Irish people remain static and rooted in the ancient past but geographical improvement and exploitation of their 'national possessions' (I, 35–36) would set them on the path of historical progress through commerce towards modernity and civility.

Owenson is, in principle, supportive of such schemes of improvement. The need for commercial progress in Ireland is an implicit but central theme in her controversial work of travel writing *France* (1817), in which she, as Benjamin Colbert notes, 'perceived in the example of post-revolutionary France an image of social amelioration among the agrarian peasantry that contrasted sharply with her native Ireland.'<sup>19</sup> This idealised depiction of the French peasantry is consistently associated with geography and transport links. The 'facility of land and water carriage for the transport of its products' allows the development of trade for social improvement, leading to a sentimental tableau of 'beautiful roads, crowded with fantastic groups, vibrating with cheerful sounds' in a 'scene of pleasurable animation'.<sup>20</sup> Owenson's praise of the role of improvements in transportation in aiding commercial activity was satirised in William Playfair's *France as It Is, Not Lady Morgan's France* (1819). Playfair objected to her portrayal of France as 'a modern Arcadia, where the *patriarchal peasantry* live as in the golden age' and argued that the 'terrible will be [the] disappointment' of the traveller who actually visits the country.<sup>21</sup> He condemns Owenson's praise of French transport links, presenting a biting satire of her picturesque description of the public roads in France and declaring that 'the greatest part of the country is too far from the sea-coast to be commercial'.<sup>22</sup> Playfair's suggestion that Owenson's intention in depicting the 'happy life of the peasantry' of post-revolutionary France was to 'excite a desire of imitation, and create discontent in Britain, where people formerly considered themselves more free and happy than in France' is telling.<sup>23</sup> The use of the term 'excite' recalls the eighteenth-century physiological discourse of sensibility but it is the word 'imitation' that is striking here, if we recall Robertson's contention

that imitation and similitude are central to the model of civilised European community.<sup>24</sup> Conservative anxieties about the circulation and redistribution of sensibility are evident in Playfair's narrative: for Britain to experience the potentially democratising and equalising effects of wealth from trade appears to be less than desirable.

If *St Clair* and *France* advocate the improvement of transport links to aid commerce and historical development in Ireland then *O'Donnel* problematises this point by highlighting the uneasy power balance associated with the model of creating an international 'Brotherhood of all Mankind'—to use Brooke's term—based on economic assimilation within the complex power dynamic of Britain.<sup>25</sup> The novel, through its depiction of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy as cosmopolitan travellers, provides an explicit critique of the discourse of Irish improvement prominent in the early nineteenth century and its attempts to address the troubling nature of what Katie Trumpener terms 'closed cultural economies' that persisted in 'resisting improvement'.<sup>26</sup> This process of improvement attempted to encourage imports and exports in both an economic and a cultural sense, opening up the Irish economy and culture to external influences. Contemporary discussions of the improvement process are rooted in the eighteenth-century ideals of benevolent and practical sensibility as a means of erasing difference, as by alleviating economic hardship a sentimental community of equality is created, which is precisely the root of Playfair's anxieties in his criticism of *France*. However, this appropriation of the Irish landscape in the name of improvement is highly problematic. In the words of the Reverend James Hall in his 1813 *Tour through Ireland* the prospect of union and 'amalgamation' with the 'great and powerful state' of Britain elicits a 'horror of annihilation' and 'an alarm for self preservation' in Ireland.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Hall couches this 'annihilation' in specifically geographical terms, stating that the 'small nation is loth to abandon its separate existence, its identity, and be swallowed up as a stream in the ocean': by implication, schemes of improvement that attempt to modify the Irish landscape in order to incorporate it within the network of British political economy have the capacity to overwhelm and engulf Ireland's national identity.

In the preface to *O'Donnel*, Owenson announced a new departure in novelistic style that would focus on the 'flat realities of life'.<sup>28</sup> As part of her newly realistic style, Owenson had initially taken for the model of her hero the historical figure of Red Hugh O'Donnell (1572–1602), leader of a rebellion against English government in Ireland in 1593 and one of the leaders of Irish forces in the Nine Years' War. However, her project of using history to 'extenuate the errors attributed to Ireland' (I, xi) for the 'purposes of conciliation' (I, x) was thwarted by the violence and bloodshed she uncovered in her research: instead, she acknowledged that she had 'advanced [her] story to more modern and more liberal times, and exchanged the rude chief of the days of old, for his polished descendant in a more refined age' (I, xii). This historical transposition had a transformative effect on Owenson's version of the national tale: *O'Donnel*'s vision of a 'more refined age' offers a fuller engagement with the contemporary context of Irish improvement

in the post-union period. The complexities of the novel's plot and its resolution in the marriage union between the cosmopolitan hero O'Donnel and the Irish Duchess of Belmont reflect its explicit political agenda: the promotion of Anglo-Irish conciliation and Catholic Emancipation. The dispossessed national hero O'Donnel is lately returned to Ireland from many years' service in the Austrian army in order to claim his birthright. On arrival, he makes acquaintance with a party of English travellers, which includes the enlightened absentee landowner Mr Glentworth, his opinionated and officious wife Lady Singleton and the sycophantic social climber Mr Dexter. The last descendant of the ancient Tyrconnel dynasty, whose property has been expropriated by the English, O'Donnel's status as a Catholic Irishman renders him disenfranchised and impoverished until his marriage finally marks the restoration of his property and land.

Given its self-proclaimed agenda of promoting Anglo-Irish conciliation, *O'Donnel* is remarkably ambivalent about the possibility of transnational unity. In the novel Owenson is preoccupied not only with the question of Irish improvement that featured so prominently in contemporary political commentary, but with the tendency of these discourses of improvement to appropriate Irish landscape and geography within a discourse of sentimental union. Francis Plowden's description in 1806 of Ireland as a 'shoot from the stem of Great Britain' which 'has brought forth fruit' but 'that, as a separate plant, [...] would bear not fruit for at least an hundred years' without being 'shaded by the British oak' serves as a striking example.<sup>29</sup> With the 'beneficial tendency' of union and the investment of English capital, however, Plowden argues that the feeble Irish landscape would be transformed:

The bogs would be converted into fields covered with smiling harvests; the barren mountains would be covered with cattle; mines would be wrought, and canals would unite the most distant parts of the country; the old sources of wealth would be extended; new ones would be discovered; and the inhabitants of Ireland, now poor, idle, and discontented, would be rendered rich, industrious, and happy.<sup>30</sup>

Discontent and disharmony are subsumed within this sentimental vision of historical progress, which removes political and economic difference and produces—in the words of a commentator in 1801 who sentimentally termed himself 'a true friend to Ireland'—'a spirit of conciliation and affection between the lower and higher orders.'<sup>31</sup> This sympathetic union would, he goes on to state, signal the end of the 'coercive system unavoidably adopted', meaning that 'the one class will get more enlightened and more obedient to the laws, and the other will be more respected and beloved'. Discourses such as this, couched in the terminology of Enlightenment sympathy and stadial historical progress, articulate an uneasy model of colonial power relations. For Owenson, schemes of improvement based on a seemingly benevolent appropriation of Irish landscape that will unify the different 'orders' of Irish society, despite their sentimental proclamations of friendship and familial union, lack a fundamental sympathy with Irish culture.

The character of Lady Singleton epitomises the British Enlightenment ideology of commercial and sympathetic colonial reform. A ‘traveller by *profession*’ (I, 3), she is intent on addressing what she calls the ‘semi-barbarous’ resistance to ‘innovation’ (I, 5) she perceives in Ireland, and on exerting her programme of ‘*radical reform*’ by ‘examining, changing, correcting, and improving’ (I, 8). Her ambitions are wide-ranging: the construction of canals (I, 5, 18, 85) is her primary focus but her plans also extend to renovating roads, enriching soil, cultivating bogs, erecting an aqueduct, establishing a ‘bobbin-lace manufactory’ (I, 213) and building schools. The majority of her schemes are modelled on principles of cultural assimilation or, to use Robertson’s term, imitation: her canal system is modelled on that of Newcastle, the soil enriching has taken place in Derbyshire and the school buildings are based on those of the London-born public education innovator Joseph Lancaster.<sup>32</sup> While her husband Glentworth argues for the benefit of education in fitting a populace for civil duty, his wife goes further, making an explicit connection between commercial progress and educated civilisation: the Irish ‘want nothing but manufactories, commerce, and schools, to be a very clever people indeed’ (I, 213).

Owenson’s depiction of Glentworth—whose name recalls the protagonist of Maria Edgeworth’s *Ennui; or, Memoir of the Earl of Glenthorn* (1809)—evokes the Edgeworthian archetype of the absentee landlord returned to his property in a spirit of paternalistic benevolence. Owenson, however, offers a brutal critique of Edgeworth’s model by investing Glentworth with bounteous liberal feeling but making him entirely inadequate in practice. Visiting his Irish estate for the first time, the ‘liberal and enlightened, benevolent and temperate’ (II, 60) Glentworth is alert to the neglect and dispossession of the Irish people, stating that ‘I have always felt an interest for this country, for which, it has been truly said, “*God has done so much and man so little*”’ (II, 59). His initial condemnation of the inequality in Ireland marks him as a potentially beneficial influence on the Irish people, capable of erasing difference and promoting equality within the framework of sentimental sociability. He argues that the importance of education is ‘to fit us for the enjoyment of *civil rights*, by moulding us to the performance of *civil duties*’ (I, 207–08) and his vision of an improved and civilised Ireland is one of sentimental similitude, a constitution which ‘free from exclusions by equal laws, equal protection, and equal privileges, engages every member of the community in the interests, defence, and preservation of the whole’ (I, 210–11). He is also acutely aware of the implications of political inequality in Ireland, in which ‘ascendancy is claimed by one tribe or cast, over others, subsisting under the same government, [and] there is little chance of internal union’ (II, 212). Owenson’s hero O’Donnel is equally aware of the challenges of union, urging Glentworth not only to break with the tradition of absenteeism himself, but to influence other landowners to do the same:

[R]emain amongst us. Extend your pacificating influence to the utmost verge of your sphere; and encourage by the success of your example our other great English landholders, who draw their ample

revenues from our plenteous soil, to visit, to know, and to acknowledge us.' (II, 60)

This plea envisages a reversal of the cultural assimilation implied by the stadial model of historical progress, in which advanced nations export their polished values to promote civilisation. Here, O'Donnell proposes an exportation of Irish cultural identity to England through Glentworth's influence, in order to encourage sympathy with the smaller nation. His plea also constructs a sentimental economy that merges geography and sympathy, in which the 'revenues' deriving from the 'plenteous' Irish landscape can be traded for understanding and compassion.

Lady Singleton and Glentworth offer a specific model of Enlightenment improvement that links geography and sympathy: in order to for Ireland to develop—or, in other words, to reach the final stage of civility in the stadial model of teleological historical progress—the landscape must submit to external cultivation or, as Lady Singleton puts it, “examining, changing, correcting, and improving” (I, 8). In Lord Grenville's words,

is it not true that whilst Great Britain has gradually advanced in civilization of manners, and in every art, science, and improvement, which can give happiness, honour, and security, to nations and individuals; Ireland possessing the same climate, a fruitful soil, and excellent ports, and a numerous people [...] has nevertheless been at all times involved in comparative disorder, poverty, turbulence, and wretchedness?<sup>33</sup>

Ireland, in other words, lacks the improvements that Britain has undergone and must submit its natural and geographical resources to the same process. In the same way, Owenson's depiction of the Irish landscape is focalised through a discourse of navigation that articulates questions of colonisation in which the failure of the English travellers to construct a democratic politics of union is represented though their inability to negotiate Irish geography.

Lady Singleton, as an experienced traveller, arrives in Ireland equipped with 'maps, gazetteers, and geographical grammars' and 'at once decided on making a circuitous tour by the coast, because somebody else had proposed making the journey shorter by avoiding it' (I, 64), setting in motion a process of meticulous preparation involving 'cutting pencils, pointing compasses, and displaying maps' (I, 76). Connolly makes an important distinction between 'land as map' and 'land seen as landscape' in her discussion of the Irish novel: while maps are deeply enmeshed within networks of power, 'landscape' implies a more romanticised geography.<sup>34</sup> Owenson explicitly locates the English travellers in *O'Donnell* within the politicised context of mapping: their approach to Irish topography is abstract and disengaged and the route of their 'circuitous tour' is entirely arbitrary and completely detached from authentic Irish culture. The party of travellers are blighted by the perceived inadequacies of the Irish landscape from the very start of their tour. The terrain is described as 'a flat and tiresome expanse', populated with a 'treacherous bog', 'deep pools [...] concealed by rushes' and 'deeper ruts covered by moss' (I, 247); the road is 'rudely put together for the mere purpose of



drawing turf, and therefore not calculated to sustain a heavier vehicle than those used for that purpose' (1, 247).

Bent on pursuing the planned route of the tour but 'annoyed by the increasing badness of the rugged roads, or busied in invectives against their overseers', Lady Singleton 'at length became insensible to the peculiar features of the scenery, nor did prospects, however consonant to the fantastic genius of a Salvator Rosa, or the wild and gloomy imagination of an Ossian, compensate the travellers for jolts which almost dislocated' (1, 114). The picturesque qualities of landscape as, in Connolly's words, 'an expanse of territory already conceived in painterly or aesthetic terms', are entirely lost here: the sublime and imaginative qualities of Rosa or Ossian are subsumed within a politicised discourse of improvement.<sup>35</sup> This lack of aesthetic appreciation of landscape is also linked to a lack of sympathy as the travellers become entirely 'insensible': the reality of Ireland—in contrast to their idealised preconceptions—renders them unfeeling and unsympathetic. The 'beautiful inland views afforded by glens and mountains' and the 'romantic promontory of Garron' are matters of indifference in comparison to their own comfort and civility; Lady Florence Grandville declares "'if you have a mind to charm me with a prospect, shew me the chimney tops of our inn.'" (1, 115). While the desire of contemporary commentators was that the geographies of Britain and Ireland could withstand the political turmoil of Europe 'like two rocks in the sea, unmoved and unaffected by storms or tempests', inciting them to 'join heart and hand' in adopting 'kind and even generous measures towards each other', landscape in *O'Donnell* has entirely the opposite effect.<sup>36</sup> The unnavigable geography of Ireland promotes discord and individualism: as the travellers attempt to cross a 'flat and tiresome expanse' of 'treacherous bog' (1, 247), 'they proceeded towards the mountains, in the true egoism of *their cast*; wholly bent on –self-preservation, to the exclusion of every thought for those who followed (1, 248).

Owenson's notes offer a wry commentary on this lack of aesthetic appreciation. After the party have found the Giant's Causeway 'an object of disappointment' and the 'unrivalled phenomena of nature' (1, 239) has failed to charm them, they are restored to imperial comfort at Lough Swilly in the 'large and commodious house'—a 'deserted mansion of an absentee'—occupied by Commodore Grandville, the husband of Lady Florence (1, 239, 241). This house 'united in its prospect all the most romantic features of the most opposite style of scenery; the sea, lakes, and mountains – glens, valleys, and smiling plantations' (1, 241), offering a commodified and abstracted version of the Irish landscape, seemingly designed to charm the travellers. Here, Ireland becomes romanticised and aestheticised 'scenery' for the pleasure of the English spectator, as opposed to a lived and experienced space. In her note, Owenson comments that '[a]lthough the banks of Lough Swilly [...] exhibit many dreary tracts of mountains in a state of the rudest nature', 'some of the most beautiful seats are to be seen in a high state of cultivation and improvement' (1, 241): the travellers are only able to appreciate Ireland in its cultivated state, where its 'smiling plantations' recall Plowden's account of the 'smiling harvests' of an idealised improved Ireland and its 'smiling garden of plenty'.<sup>37</sup> Owenson's



virtual mapping of the Irish landscape in her sweeping topographical scan from the high mountains to the 'low grounds' also maps a trajectory from a 'savage' and uncultivated land to a tamed civility. This recalls contemporary descriptions of the unenlightened Irish people, 'awakened by England from their slumber of savage barbarity and rude nature', linking aestheticised and politicised experience in which Ireland's geography is perceived as part of a trajectory of civilization and historical progress.<sup>38</sup>

A clear sense of the conflict between politicised and aesthetic experience is provided in the scene that introduces the novel's hero, O'Donnel. The iconography of the Irish landscape has, until this point, been remarkably detached from its inhabitants, giving no indication of lived experience outside of the abstracted commentaries of the travellers' *road book*' (I, 177). When, shortly after they have met, the party begin to speculate on his identity, Lady Singleton declares that she believes him to be 'a *surveyor of the roads*, or some sort' (I, 139). Mistaken in this belief, she takes the opportunity to "rate him soundly for the shameful state in which we have found the roads" (I, 140). Opening her diatribe by questioning him about the geological strata of the landscape, she goes on to declare that "your roads are as bad as if you were totally ignorant of the materials with which these shores furnish you to repair them" (I, 141). Lady Singleton's attempt to incorporate O'Donnel within her abstract project of imperial mapping as she endeavours to bring the Irish landscape to order is thwarted by his knowledge of the local geography, which is soon revealed to be far superior to the superficial information Lady Singleton has gleaned from her travel guides and gazetteers.

In her depiction of O'Donnel, Owenson offers a striking conflation of what Connolly terms 'painterly and political perspectives'.<sup>39</sup> O'Donnel is alert to the richness and depth of Irish culture, offering a perspective that integrates topography, geography and history. When the travellers ask him for advice about their intended route, he offers it 'with promptitude; and in detailing the objects best worth attention, unaffectedly exhibited an intimate acquaintance with natural science, and a very correct taste for the picturesque and grand styles in the order of landscape' (I, 176). Mr Dexter's suspicions of O'Donnel's manner of "talking by rote something he has read in a *road book*" (I, 177) captures Owenson's sense of the incompatibility of discourses of navigation in the post-union period. While the English travellers persist in mapping Ireland through a discourse of improvement informed by political commentary and travel writing, O'Donnel provides a genuine sense of an Irish landscape rich with the history of individual lives.


Lady Singleton and Glentworth extol their schemes of improvement in a discourse of historical progress and civility in which the harnessing of the Irish landscape for its natural riches will bring about a process of refinement and civilisation. Yet, their abstracted theories of topographical improvement remain detached from the Irish landscape itself, unable either to navigate it in a practical sense or to appreciate it aesthetically. From the point of view of the English travellers, the 'rude rocks and hanging bridge' at Carrick-a-Rede offer a stark contrast to their theorised experience of Ireland through travel guides, for 'though it would have

afforded a beautiful feature in an imaginary landscape, exhibited a frightful image in a real scene' (1, 221). In reality, the Irish landscape is described as hostile and unnavigable: the coast is rendered 'one vast expanse of massy darkness' and Carrick-a-Rede 'seemed to have been wrenched, by the rage of some elementary convulsion, from the main-land cliffs, and separated from them by a frightful chasm of unfathomable depth' (1, 222). The distinction made by Owenson here between 'imaginary landscape' and 'real scene' captures the tensions inherent to contemporary representations of Irish geography as a picturesque spectacle in travel writing.

The 'light hempen bridge, for the purpose of facilitating the business of the fishermen [...] was not to be viewed without a sensation of dread and horror' by the travellers (1, 223). This depiction of sublime experience is common to travel guides to Ireland, such as this description of Turk Lake in Donegal in which the writer states that to 'behold the lake thus convulsed by a tempest, may become the source of sublime reflections to a contemplative mind, delighted with the spectacle of nature's wildest disorder'.<sup>40</sup> The ideological implications of such narratives are revealing: not only do they contribute to the broader construction of Ireland a land beyond the boundaries of civilisation, but they also represent sympathetic detachment. To experience the Irish landscape as a picturesque spectacle means, as William Williams observes, that the spectator may not 'really "see" through those organizing metaphors of painting'.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps even more disturbing, though—given the importance of sympathetic identification in the process of national union—is that these modes of perception mean that the spectator also fails to feel or, in other words, to sympathise with the genuine plight of the Irish people. Owenson makes this failure of sentiment explicit: while the English travellers delight in sublime sensation, O'Donnel is shown as being in complete harmony with both the landscape and its people. While they see the bridge as an abstracted and aestheticised spectacle, O'Donnel declares that he has 'seen even women and children pass it, in search of birds' eggs and sea-weeds on the opposite rocks' (1, 226–27). Placing these local representatives of the Irish rural economy within the scene reclaims geography from a staged and theatrical abstraction and locates it within an inhabited reality. O'Donnel himself is able to navigate both the Irish landscape and its culture with ease. As he negotiates the 'majestic swell' of the Irish sea (1, 191), rowing them along the coast to the promontory of Benmore, he provides them with a commentary that traverses discourses of architecture, geography, history, ornithology and folklore. On Mr Dexter's objection to a local fisherman as a "savage-looking fellow" and a "filthy beast" (1, 201), O'Donnel demonstrates his knowledge, not only of the landscape and its features, but of the people that inhabit it, declaring that 'so far are they from exhibiting in either, the ferocity of savage, or the rude and uncivilized life, that they are, perhaps, the most courteous peasantry of modern Europe' in their 'natural tendency to civilization' (1, 203). The travellers, it seems, are unable to view either the Irish landscape or the Irish people with the sensibility that permeates their enlightened discourses of taste. They cannot map or navigate the complex

nature of the Irish landscape, peopled and imbued with rich history. In fact, their assertions that improvement will promote union and sympathy collapse entirely when they are confronted with the Irish landscape.

*O'Donnell* charts the tension between Irish geography as a resource for improvement and commerce and as a marker of an Irish cultural aesthetic that must be understood and appreciated. While contemporary accounts suggest that the Irish landscape must be cultivated and improved for the benefit of its inhabitants, Owenson contends that the private interest of the Anglo-Irish in their schemes for modernisation undermines the principles of the egalitarian sentimental international community described in Enlightenment accounts of trade and commerce. In doing so, she raises important questions about the relationship between geography, commerce and historical progress. While the literal practice of importation and exportation may bring about economic benefits to the nation, in a cultural sense it is always compromised by the politics of colonial assimilation.

The discourse of benevolent and sentimental improvement articulated by Glentworth and Lady Singleton is ultimately unable to forge any meaningful relationship to place. Glentworth's attempt 'to become better acquainted with my tenants on this [the Irish] side of the water' (I, 3) is ultimately a failure. In the event of his death (having only visited Ireland once) in the second volume of the novel, his initial potential as a source of active benevolence that might bridge the geographical and cultural distance between Britain and Ireland is unfulfilled: his promised return to Ireland comes in the form of a month-old fragment of his obituary column in a newspaper. This fragment replaces Glentworth's commitment to progress with the bleak announcement of his succession by his son, currently residing within the ascendancy enclave of Christ Church College, Oxford (II, 85). Likewise, Lady Singleton's schemes for improvement are fittingly relocated to the individualistic and sentimental realms of the epistolary form. Her schemes not only represent a lack of respect for custom and tradition that fails to understand and sympathise with Irish culture: they also betray her colonial self-interest. Her desire for a canal which links her husband's estate to the commercial centre of Dublin draws attention to the ways in which the sympathetic rhetoric of reform in Ireland often masked the 'powerful interest, and self-interest', as Katie Trumpener puts it, of the ruling classes.<sup>42</sup> In this way, the Irish landscape becomes colonised and appropriated in a way that subsumes its history and national identity within the imported Enlightenment ideals of civilised commercial modernity. These imported models cannot hasten progress in Ireland; rather, it must derive from a complex process of reconciliation of past and present that can only emerge from within Ireland itself. 

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#### REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

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## 'ENGLISH VERDURE, ENGLISH CULTURE, ENGLISH COMFORT'

Ireland and the Gothic Elsewhere in Jane Austen's *Emma*

*Andrew McInnes*



JANE AUSTEN'S *EMMA* is a novel about secrets. It is about guilt, shame and humiliation. However, Austen's comic mode and irrepressible heroine veil the extent to which *Emma* depends upon occluded plots, forbidden desire and mortification. Indeed, for much of the novel, *Emma* renders these things invisible. Discussing 'seeing nothing' in *Emma*, Ian Duncan quotes extensively from the famous scene in which the Donwell Abbey estate is described as an ideal of Englishness. Walking across Mr Knightley's pleasure grounds, the group of Highbury residents reach a 'broad short avenue of limes':

It led to nothing; nothing but a view at the end over a low stone wall with high pillars, which seemed intended, in their erection, to give the appearance of an approach to the house, which never had been there [...] It was a sweet view—sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive.<sup>1</sup>

Analysing this passage, Duncan describes 'seeing nothing' in the view over Donwell as a Humean 'characterological blankness [...] signify[ing] the gloss of plenty rather than the gape of lack'.<sup>2</sup> Seeing nothing, Duncan argues, articulates:

the ideological theme of a national society constituted upon a harmonious conjunction between a modern economy based on imperial trade and a traditional social hierarchy based on inherited property. 'Nothing' refers not only to the everyday domain of traffic: it also refers, obliquely and metaphorically, to that reality's governing abstraction, embedded in naturalized forms and qualities, English verdure, culture, comfort.<sup>3</sup>

In linking this scene to questions of nationhood, Duncan follows the work of critics such as Lionel Trilling, Susan Morgan and Claudia Johnson, who have all discussed the national significance of events in *Emma*, describing it as a 'patriotic novel', its representation of England as 'idyllic', and arguing for its place as 'the great English novel of the early nineteenth century'.<sup>4</sup>

However, Duncan goes on to link Austen's perspective on nothingness with David Hume's understanding of double consciousness, in which we imagine that objects have a continued and uninterrupted existence outside ourselves but, on reflection, realise that even our own perceptions of things are interrupted and dis-



continuous. Hume describes this philosophical system as the 'monstrous offspring' of imagination and reflection, and Duncan links Hume's ironic scepticism to the rise of fiction in the eighteenth century. What interests me here is the connection between Austen's *Emma* and Humean monstrosity: 'Seeing nothing' means *not* seeing the contradictions between modern capital and inherited property in this vision of national plenty. For Hume, what we see is already conditioned by what we imagine to be there and what we remember being there in the past, a perceptual system which he argues is paradoxical because of the mismatch between imagination and reflection. 'Fiction' develops as a modulating term to avoid these contradictions, both as a coping strategy for everyday life and, significantly, in representations of quotidian existence in the novel. Monstrosity arises, for Duncan, in the realisation that '[o]ur sentimental investment in common life and in the authority of custom is framed by the fitful, uneven knowledge of their fictiveness'.<sup>5</sup> In this article, I want to shift the focus from Austen's idyllic representation of English 'common life' to the place of Ireland in *Emma*, arguing that the monstrous threat posed by England's nearest colony destabilises the 'English comfort' celebrated in the central portions of the novel by confronting readers with the uncanny knowledge of its fictiveness. By focusing on Austen's gothicised representation of Ireland in *Emma*, I argue that she fractures the fragile sense of British national identity developing in the early nineteenth century, presenting Ireland and Irishness as a threat both to British Union and revealing the power relations underpinning English culture.

Ireland remains unvisited and almost invisible in *Emma*. However, the country impacts upon the novel most significantly through Emma's salacious conjectures about the relationship between Jane Fairfax and her childhood friend's new husband, Mr Dixon, an Anglo-Irish landlord. Emma fabricates an unrequited romance between Jane and Mr Dixon (although, she also spitefully wonders whether it has been consummated), leading to Jane's heartbroken decision to flee the Campbells to stay with the Bateses in Highbury. Frank Churchill uses Emma's unkind conjectures to obfuscate his own, real romance with Jane, deploying 'Irishness' as a highly charged term in his double-dealing flirtations with Emma and his actual lover. Austen further alludes to the Irish gothic in Harriet Smith's reading of Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), and Irish Romanticism more generally in Frank's purchase of 'a new set of Irish melodies' for Jane, alongside his secret gift of a pianoforté. The present of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1815) draws attention to Frank's ambiguous performance of masculinity, connecting his sense of disenfranchisement to the Irish Catholic Moore and his poetic cast of heroic failures. Gothic Ireland allows Austen to play with tropes from the gothic more generally in *Emma*, finding a frail, female gothic heroine in Jane; a comic gothic villain in Frank; and a persecutory, oppositional femme fatale in her powerful protagonist. Furthermore, preoccupations with identity, inheritance and the legacy of the past in the present that characterise an Irish gothic writing question the lasting legitimacy of the English Donwell Abbey.

Irish gothic studies have had a contentious critical history over the past twenty years, expanding, challenging and bringing urgency to the field of the gothic generally. Existential questions about the status of Irish gothic as a genre, mode, register, tradition, habitus and/or niche have raged and proved inconclusive. Both Jarlath Killeen's *The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction* and Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie's *Irish Gothics* (both 2014) offer illuminating ways through the thorny sidetracks of theory, with Killeen claiming both 'genre' and 'tradition' as untidy, impure and democratic ways of theorising the Irish gothic, whilst Morin and Gillespie argue for the opening up of the study of Irish gothic literature, stressing *interpretations* over interpretation.<sup>6</sup> In her own chapter in *Irish Gothics*, Morin reads pamphlets and poetry alongside novels to argue for

a cosmopolitan conception of gothic literary production wherein questions of religious background, political affinity, geographical location, and literary genre become subsumed within an overarching cultural practice that fundamentally transcends the normative boundaries usually ascribed to 'Gothic' and 'Irish Gothic' literature.<sup>7</sup>

Morin's ideal of cosmopolitan gothic offers a sightline to my own study of Austen, neither Irish nor generally recognised as a gothic writer. I argue that Austen's realist aesthetic is both constituted and challenged by her banishment of self-consciously gothic elements to the margins of her texts: a textual boundary which is represented as distinctively Irish in *Emma*.

As Killeen argues, 'Ireland as a whole is readily identifiable as a Gothic space in popular culture'.<sup>8</sup> He quotes Darryl Jones's discussion of 'Celtic Gothic' which claims that 'in the ideological rhetoric of horror, Catholics, Welshmen, hillbillies and cannibals are all pretty much the same', agreeing with Jones' analysis of 'the Celt as a kind of counter-Enlightenment figure, and of Celtic lands as zones of the weird, [developing] hand in hand with the emergence of the Gothic novel and the appearance of modern English identity'.<sup>9</sup> Jones himself cites Austen's own comic gothic novel *Northanger Abbey* as a parodic example of this construction of Celtic gothic, quoting Catherine Morland's willingness to yield 'the northern and western extremities' of her own country to the gothic fringe, along with the continental locations—'Italy, Switzerland and the South of France'—indicative of the Radcliffean gothic she is in the process of forgoing.<sup>10</sup> Jones argues that

the carefully constructed eighteenth-century 'British' identity has fractured here, and Catherine's thinking aligns the dangerous, lawless inhabitants of [...] Scotland, Wales, Ireland [...] with their murderous European counterparts, all governed by passions and set in explicit opposition to a stable, lawful, moderate Englishness.<sup>11</sup>

As with Duncan's linkage of *Emma* with Humean monstrosity, I find it telling that Jones connects *Northanger Abbey* with horror. In what follows I argue that *Emma* develops *Northanger Abbey*'s brief foray into Celtic gothic territory by making Ireland the marker of suppressed desires, occluded plots, and instability in the novel. In both *Northanger Abbey* and *Emma*, Austen uses the gothic to express anxieties about Britishness: Scotland, Wales, and Ireland are positioned

as dangerously other, lumped together with the threatening European locations which constitute earlier gothic geographies, to English stability. Moreover, her representation of Ireland partakes of the cosmopolitanism celebrated by Morin, albeit more cautiously, by incorporating allusions to Roche's gothic novel and Thomas Moore's collections of Celtic song alongside Emma's cruel conjectures and Frank's crueller play.

Roche's 1796 *The Children of the Abbey* is one of the gothic novels read by Harriet Smith, but not by her errant lover Robert Martin. The other is Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). Austen uses Radcliffe to play with the relationship between fancy, reason and imagination in gothic fiction, drawing on Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural' aesthetic, in which the seemingly ghostly events in her fiction are given rational explanations, to implicitly contrast the imaginary fears of the Radcliffean heroine with the more confident, if equally misplaced, conjectures of Emma.<sup>12</sup> Whereas, with *The Children of the Abbey*, Austen engages with Roche's shifting representations of space and place in her novel to map a gothic geography for *Emma*, framing her celebrated depiction of Englishness with haunting, destabilising hints of Irish violence.

Regina Maria Roche was a popular gothic novelist from the south of Ireland. Her later novel, *Clermont* (1798) is one of the 'horrid novels' shared between Catherine Morland and Isabelle Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*. Both *Clermont* and *The Children of the Abbey* went through various editions throughout the nineteenth century, proving particularly popular in America, as well as being translated into French and Spanish. There has been a recent resurgence of critical interest in her works, as well as an argument about her religious sympathies, with Maria Purves situating her as unequivocally Roman Catholic and Diane Long Hoeveler, on the contrary, positioning her convincingly as an Anglo-Irish writer sharing the Irish Protestants' ambivalence towards Catholicism.<sup>13</sup> *The Children of the Abbey* follows the disinherited orphans Amanda and Oscar Fitzalan from a pastoral Wales to debauched London, from gothic Ireland to Ossianic Scotland. Travelling the length and breadth of Britain, the siblings must fend off the respective lust and enmity of the villainous Colonel Belgrave, before they are seemingly supernaturally delivered into their inheritance of Dunreath Abbey, and given the happy endings of conventional marriage plots, which otherwise seemed doomed to disaster and misery. Focusing not on the highborn siblings but Amanda's hubristic nurse Ellen, Richard Cronin and Dorothy Macmillan argue that Roche's novel offers Austen's Harriet Smith 'her own reflection not in the heroine of a novel but in one of its humbler characters', in Ellen's decision to shun her former lover Chip in favour of the Reverend Howel, who, like Mr Elton in *Emma*, aims, alternatively and ultimately unsuccessfully, for a relationship with her mistress.<sup>14</sup> Cronin and Macmillan characterise Austen's choice of Harriet's favourite novels as 'tart, witty, not perhaps very kind, but wholly characteristic'.<sup>15</sup> Beth Kowaleski Wallace has also connected Roche's 'positive depiction of a nun' in the novel with Emma's desire to live a celibate life: 'Responding to what can be seen as an idealized life in the convent, Emma might find something to admire

in the independent life that Roche's novel seems to afford the nuns'.<sup>16</sup> I argue that Austen uses Roche's novel beyond either caustic commentary on Harriet's presumptions or Emma's unfocused celibate imaginings to shape her engagement with gothic Ireland in the novel.

The parallels between Harriet and Ellen or Emma and the Abbess aside, there is little to connect *Emma* with *The Children of the Abbey* in terms of plot. Roche's novel meanders through the four nations making up Britain, whereas Austen remains focussed on '3 or 4 families in a country village' in England. Roche divides the action between Amanda's doom-laden courtship with Lord Mortimer, disrupted by Belgrave's attempted seductions, as well as social snobbery and complicated misunderstandings, and Oscar's equally disastrous military career in Ireland. Austen filters most of the action of her novel through Emma's snobbish, matchmaking, imaginative consciousness. Although Roche sides with the Radcliffean aesthetic of the explained supernatural, the conclusion of *The Children of the Abbey* hinges on such classic gothic apparatus as seemingly ghostly apparitions in ruined chapels, imprisoned (step)mothers, and rediscovered wills and testaments. Austen's representation of the Abbey in *Emma* is self-consciously stripped of gothic paraphernalia: Donwell is depicted as a thoroughly modern estate, tastefully avoiding fashionable improvements. Such is the contrast between the two novels that Austen's allusion to Roche's text works to highlight these differences: stability over movement; control over dispossession; management over picturesque decay.

On the other hand, several moments stand out in *The Children of the Abbey's* sometimes unlikely plot. Early on, Oscar is manipulated by Belgrave into lying to his lover Adela Honeywood about a former attachment, displaying a miniature portrait of his sister to prove this fabricated love affair (with an unconscious gesture towards the incest taboo). The confusion over portraiture and the loved object behind it perhaps provides a hint for the muddle about Harriet's portrait in *Emma*. What interests me, however, is the gothic illiteracy of Oscar's behaviour, easily and frustratingly duped by Belgrave's machinations, who uses Adela's disappointment to inveigle his way into her affections, marrying her, and thereby causing Oscar to have a minor nervous breakdown. Oscar, unlike Harriet, or even Catherine Morland, has clearly never read a gothic novel. Another moment, offering a later reflection upon this one, sees Amanda similarly duped by Belgrave and two of her jealous relations, Lady Greystock and her daughter Euphrasia. Amanda is tricked into retiring to Euphrasia's room when she and her mother have gone to a ball. In the bedroom, Amanda is suddenly confronted by Belgrave. Euphrasia returns unexpectedly in the company of Lord Mortimer. Belgrave agrees to hide in the closet, in which he is soon discovered by the jealous Mortimer. Amanda faints, realising she has been set up, gasping, "Oh! I see," said she in the agony of her soul, "I see I am the dupe of complicated artifice."<sup>17</sup> I can imagine Austen smiling at this line, using it as inspiration for the 'complicated artifice' of her own occluded plot in *Emma*; an artifice which dupes not only her main characters but her readers as well.

Beyond this allusion to the Irish gothic of Roche's novel, Austen constructs a gothic Ireland out of Emma's conjectures about Jane's relationship with the Anglo-Irish Dixons, and Frank's flirtatious play with 'Irishness' in his double-dealings with Jane and Emma. Jane's refusal to travel to Ireland with her guardians the Campbells to visit their daughter provides the impetus for her to visit the Bateses in Highbury, inspiring Emma to imagine some sort of illicit relationship between Jane and Mr Dixon. Miss Bates explains that:

'Mrs Dixon has persuaded her father and mother to come over and see her directly. They had not intended to go over till the summer, but she is so impatient to see them again—for till she married last October, she was never away from them so much as a week, which must make it very strange to be in different kingdoms, I was going to say, but however different countries, and so she wrote a very urgent letter to her mother [...]' (p. 195)

Miss Bates's digressive discussion of Ireland reveals more than she understands herself of Ireland's position in the cultural imaginary of Austen's novel. Miss Bates' slip between 'different kingdoms' and 'countries' refers to the recent Act of Union of 1800 between Britain and Ireland, and the strangeness she imagines Mrs Dixon to be feeling alludes lightly to Ireland's gothic accoutrements. Mrs Dixon's urgency provides Emma with the hint of unhappiness she requires in her conjectures concerning Jane's supposed affair with Mr Dixon. Miss Bates continues unconsciously to provide the gossip material from which Emma develops her theory, revealing Jane to have been the couple's chaperone and concluding: "He is the most amiable, charming young man, I believe. Jane was quite longing to go to Ireland, from his account of things". 'At this moment,' Austen adds, 'an ingenious and animating suspicion entered Emma's brain with regard to Jane Fairfax, this charming Mr Dixon, and the not going to Ireland' (p. 195). 'Not going to Ireland' is significant, not only for Emma's conjectures about Jane's decision, but also for Austen's representation of the country in the novel: Ireland remains unvisited, unheard, invisible throughout *Emma*—a receptacle for Emma's imaginative recreation of Jane's mysterious inner life, for Frank's teasing treatment of both women, and for Austen's gothic purposes.

After Emma tells Frank of her suspicions about Jane and Mr. Dixon, he uses them both to obfuscate his own illicit relationship with Jane and as a shared private joke directed against Austen's heroine. Caught staring admiringly at Jane by Emma, Frank pretends to be struck by his secret lover's new hairstyle:

'[B]ut really Miss Fairfax has done her hair in so odd a way [...] that I cannot keep my eyes from her [...] I see nobody else looking like her!—I must go and ask her whether it is an Irish fashion. Shall I?—Yes, I will [...] and see how she takes it;—whether she colours [...]'  
(pp. 260–61)

Frank seems to be cruelly teasing Jane here, although he manages to stand between her and Emma, so that the latter cannot see how Jane reacts. However, his phrasing



'I cannot keep my eyes from her' and 'I see nobody else looking like her!' begins to reveal his true feelings about her.

Later, he uses Emma's Irish conjectures to disguise his own purchase of a pianoforté for Jane. Frank seems to join in the general assumption that Col. Campbell has sent the musical instrument as a gift from Ireland, whilst playing with Emma's imagined romance between Mr Dixon and Jane, at the same time as speaking secretly to Jane of their own romance. He begins by praising his own choice of piano: "the softness of the upper notes I am sure is exactly what he and *all that party* would particularly prize" (p. 181). Emma reads the emphasis on 'all that party' to refer to Mr Dixon, whereas Frank is really talking about his own meeting with Jane at Weymouth. Frank begs Jane to play a waltz like one they'd danced the previous night. Instead, she plays one that the couple had danced at Weymouth: "What felicity," Frank says, "it is to hear a tune again which *has* made one happy!—If I mistake not that was danced at Weymouth" (p. 182). Jane 'looked up at him for a moment, coloured deeply, and played something else'. Frank then praises his own purchase of 'a new set of Irish melodies' for Jane, again pretending to think it is from Col. Campbell:

'He knew Miss Fairfax could have no music here. I honour that part of the attention particularly; it shews it to have been so thoroughly from the heart. Nothing hastily done; nothing incomplete. True affection only could have prompted it.' (p. 182)

Emma reads this as another dig at Jane about Mr Dixon and is surprised by 'a smile of secret delight' 'with all the deep blush of consciousness' on Jane's face, concluding '[t]his amiable, upright, perfect Jane Fairfax was apparently cherishing very reprehensible feelings' (p. 183). Influenced by her own Irish conjectures, Emma gothicises Jane's bodily reactions to Frank's self-aggrandising chatter: blushes and smiles incriminate the secret lover.

Frank's gift to Jane of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, published at intervals between 1808 and 1834, is used by Austen both to comment on Emma's gothic conjectures about Jane and to underscore the romance between her and Frank. One of the *Irish Melodies* from the fourth series of 1811, 'Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye', seems particularly apposite in relation to Emma and Jane. Lesbia's titular 'beaming eye', her 'robes of gold' and 'wit refined' are compared to her disparagement with the speaker's lover, Nora Creina's 'gentle, bashful' looks, her simple, natural attire, and mild artlessness.<sup>18</sup> In the third stanza on Lesbia's wit, the speaker's question, 'But, when its ['wit refined'] points are gleaming around us, | Who can tell if they're designed | To dazzle merely or to wound us?', works as well for Emma's cruel conjectures about Jane's romantic history as criticisms of Lesbia herself. Contrasting Austen's Emma and Jane with Moore's Lesbia and Nora deepens Austen's play with the gothic elsewhere in *Emma*, cementing Emma and Jane's status as eerie doubles of one another.

Thomas Moore's position as pseudonymous satirist, celebrity songster and disenfranchised hero, as Julia M. Wright characterises him, also reflects upon Frank's own status in the novel. Wright argues that Moore adopts various 'styles of



masculinity' over the course of his career, from purveyor of popular, depoliticised national song through a more radical role as satirist to a precursor of the national martyr figure in the Young Ireland movement.<sup>19</sup> She concludes that '[m]asculinity emerges in Moore's overall corpus [...] as a complex negotiation with different audiences in which "attention" can offer an alternative, though not an equivalent, to participation in the nation-state'.<sup>20</sup> Like Moore, then, Frank also performs his masculinity through garnering attention to himself—from Jane, Emma and the other residents of Highbury—because his dependent position otherwise threatens to emasculate him. Austen draws on Thomas Moore as a representative figure of Irish Romanticism in her representation of Frank in order to position him, like Ireland and its gothic accoutrements, as abject.

Finally, in this scene, Jane herself plays with Emma's conjectures about Ireland by playing Frank's favourite Irish/Scottish air, 'Robin Adair', about the relationship between Lady Caroline Keppel and the eponymous Irish surgeon in the 1750s. Austen's use of 'Robin Adair' develops her allusion to *Irish Melodies* earlier in the scene. Both this individual song and Moore's collection partake of the Celtic gothic which, in the English imagination, tends to position Irish, Scottish and Welsh literature as equivalent, and similarly threatening to English hegemony. Like *Irish Melodies*, 'Robin Adair' is also particularly resonant in relation to Frank and Jane's secret romance. Peter F. Alexander argues that Jane's choice of song offers a musical clue to her relationship with Frank, although Emma misreads Frank's admission that 'Robin Adair' is 'his favourite' as referring to Mr Dixon and not himself, in the third person (p. 284). Alexander also reads Robin Adair's refrain—'But now thou'rt cold to me, | Robin Adair'—as 'allusively but aptly foreshadow[ing] much of the suffering, the privation, and the secrecy [Jane] has to endure' for much of the rest of the novel.<sup>21</sup> Suffering, privation, secrecy: even when sharing a private joke with Frank, Jane Fairfax is shadowed by the gothic.

Austen uses Robin Adair to allude to Jane's misery, so that the Irish/Scottish song joins Darryl Jones's 'ideological rhetoric of horror [in which] Catholics, Welshmen, hillbillies and cannibals are all pretty much the same'. Drawing on Jones's argument, I want to read Harriet Smith's encounter with the band of gypsies as an incursion of, if not the Irish, then at least a loosely Celticised gothic into the text. Deborah Epstein Nord explains the gypsies' paradoxical position within the early nineteenth-century cultural imagination via ideas of internal otherness: 'Unlike colonial subjects [...] Gypsies were a domestic or an internal other, and their proximity and visibility were crucial features in their deployment as literary or symbolic figures'.<sup>22</sup> In the context of the novel as a whole, the gypsies make visible the almost invisible threads connecting Austen's English fiction with the Irish Gothic. Austen treats this miniature gothic eruption in the text of *Emma* with characteristic comic deftness. Harriet, suffering from 'cramp after dancing', and abandoned by her more athletic friend, Miss Bickerton, is quickly surrounded by a 'party of gypsies', comprising 'half a dozen children, headed by a stout woman and a great boy' (p. 375). Austen implicitly criticises Harriet and her friend's cowardly response to this group of vagrant children: 'How the trampers might have

behaved, had the young ladies been more courageous, must be doubtful; but such an invitation for attack could not be resisted'. She suggests that Harriet could have managed the children herself, if she had taken a more active stance towards them. Throughout the scene, Austen diminishes the threat posed by the gypsies. Surrounding Harriet, they are 'all clamorous, and impertinent in look, though not absolutely in word' (pp. 376–77). Harriet, 'trembling and conditioning' with the beggars, is saved by the arrival of Frank Churchill: 'The terror which the woman and boy had been creating in Harriet was then their own portion.' (p. 377) Frank brings the fainting Harriet to Hartfield and leaves her in Emma's care.

The incident is treated as trivial by Austen's narrator and most of the residents of Highbury, after the gypsies retreat instead of staying to face Mr Knightley's justice. However, Emma and her nephews are much taken by the adventure, prompting the famous moment of free indirect discourse which describes Emma as 'an imaginiſt':

Such an adventure as this,—a fine young man and a lovely young woman thrown together in such a way, could hardly fail of suggesting certain ideas to the coldest heart and the steadiest brain. So Emma thought, at least. Could a linguist, could a grammarian, could even a mathematician have seen what she did, have witnessed their appearance together, and heard their history of it, without feeling that circumstances had been at work to make them peculiarly interesting to each other?—How much more must an imaginiſt, like herself, be on fire with speculation and foresight!—especially with such a ground-work of anticipation as her mind had already made. (pp. 377–78)

Austen's narration both gives voice to Emma's romantic conjectures here and ironises them: 'So Emma thought, at least' gives us access to Emma's thoughts—her warm heart and unsteady brain—at the same time as indicating that she is more than half-creating the relationship between Harriet and Frank. The focus on language—'could a linguist, could a grammarian'—inscribes the term 'imaginiſt' with a literary quality, which critics such as Michael Williams, Claudia Johnson and Peter Knox-Shaw have argued positions Emma as a writerly figure, directing the living characters in Highbury like a (flawed) novelist. Johnson connects *Emma* to Austen's earlier comic gothic novel *Northanger Abbey* through their joint interest in women's writing and novel reading, arguing that '*Emma*, like *Northanger Abbey* before it, is a caggy celebration of ["female writing and reading"]'.<sup>23</sup> In her entertaining repudiation of the '[t]ransparently misogynist, sometimes even homophobic' bias of earlier criticism of *Emma*, which tends to hold Austen's heroine in moral or psychosexual opprobrium, Johnson links reading and writing to Emma's status as an imaginiſt: 'not only are Emma's attempts to "author" people according to her intentions held at faults, but so are her related efforts to "read" them: Emma is rebuked alternatively as a dominatrix or as an "imaginiſt" or "female Quixote"'.<sup>24</sup> I want to push these ideas further to envision Emma, the imaginiſt dominatrix, as an implicitly gothic figure—'on fire with speculation

and foresight'—drawing on similar characteristics as the imaginative heroines of gothic fiction, in comic vein.

Let's return to where I began, to Mr Knightley's Donwell estate, but now with the spectre of gothic Ireland in mind. The past of Donwell Abbey as a Catholic monastery, divested of its status and wealth by Henry VIII and passed on to the loyal Knightleys, is invisible and unheard in *Emma*. Both Roger E. Moore and Beth Kowaleski-Wallace contrast Austen's idealised representation of Knightley's Donwell estate with General Tilney's more sinister Northanger Abbey. Moore argues that:


Austen stresses her approbation [of Donwell Abbey and its owner] in her choice of allegorical, almost Bunyanesque, names. Mr. Knightley seems a true knight who recognizes and fulfils his responsibilities, a man worthy of safeguarding an abbey's legacy, while Donwell Abbey is a place where the social and economic functions of the old monastery continue to be 'done well'.<sup>25</sup>

Knightley's knightly nature could be read as yet another trace of the gothic in *Emma*. Moore sounds a note of caution at the end of his analysis of Donwell Abbey, situating it as 'an exceptional place' and arguing that 'Austen's repeated praise of the house and the lands [...] almost make them seem unreal or too good to be true'. My reading of Donwell Abbey in relation to the Irish gothic alluded to elsewhere in the novel furthers Moore's sense of the estate's idealised exceptionality. Kowaleski-Wallace reads Emma's review of Knightley's estate late in the novel as analogous to the moment in which Elizabeth Bennet sees Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*. Noting that Emma's vision of Donwell Abbey strives to erase any trace of its history as a monastery, Kowaleski-Wallace argues that the estate represents:

a pacific scene that naturalizes the idea that Donwell Abbey is not just an estate but an ideal, modern social microcosm. Because Donwell Abbey is not given a fictional history of a 'rich endowment', it does not appear to be haunted by former inhabitants. Its dazzling landscape appears to have been drawn purposefully to banish any hints of darker days.<sup>26</sup>

It is my contention that Austen's allusions to the Irish gothic elsewhere in the novel reintroduce hints of darker days throughout the text, questioning not only the legitimacy but the reality of an estate like Donwell Abbey.

The question of inheritance—of central importance to the orphans of Dunreath Abbey in Roche's novel—is only briefly raised in Austen's: concerned about Knightley's imagined romance with Jane, and later Harriet, Emma is scandalised that her nephew Henry faces losing Donwell to Fairfax—or, worse, Smith—interlopers. Austen's narrator offers this acerbic comment on the speed with which Emma forgets these worries upon her own engagement with Knightley: 'It is remarkable, that Emma, in the many, very many, points of view in which she was beginning to consider Donwell Abbey, was never struck with any sense of injury to her nephew Henry, whose rights as heir apparent had been so tenaciously regarded' (p. 498). Henry's inheritance is pushed from Emma's consciousness, as

Donwell's past is banished from the novel. In *Emma*, Austen ruthlessly silences the past, ripping it out of England and transplanting it to a gothic Ireland, which then returns to haunt the margins of the text, threatening a newly established British identity with its own dissolution. 

## NOTES

1. Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Bharat Tandon (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012), p. 408. All further references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the body of the essay.
2. Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 116.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
4. For *Emma* as a 'patriotic novel', see Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 125. Lionel Trilling describes it as 'idyllic' in 'Emma', *Encounter*, 8.6 (June 1957), 59. For *Emma*'s status as 'the great English novel of the early nineteenth century', see Susan Morgan, *In the Meantime: Character and Perception in Jane Austen's Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 50. For a useful overview of treatments of *Emma* as a national novel, see Michael Kramp, 'The Woman, the Gypsies, and England: Harriet Smith's National Role', *College Literature*, 31.1 (Winter 2004), 147–68 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2004.0008>>.
5. Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, p. 123.
6. For Jarlath Killeen's convincing defence of both 'genre' and 'tradition' in relation to Irish Gothic, see *The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2014), pp. 12–27. For Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie's pluralist approach to Irish gothic, see their *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions 1760–1890* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 6.
7. Christina Morin, 'Theorizing "Gothic" in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', in Morin and Gillespie, *Irish Gothics*, p. 16.
8. Killeen, *Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction*, p. 9.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 18–20, for his discussion of Austen and 'Celtic Gothic'.
11. Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History*, p. 19.
12. See my 'Labyrinths of Conjecture: The Gothic Elsewhere in Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Gothic Studies*, 18.1 (May 2016), 71–84, for a more detailed account of Austen's indebtedness to Radcliffe for the comic gothic effects of *Emma*.
13. See Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey*: Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31.1/2 (2012), 137–58, for her account of the debates about Roche's religious sympathies and her convincing positioning of her as riven by ambivalence.
14. Cronin, Richard and Dorothy McMillan. 'Harriet Smith's Reading', *Notes & Queries*, 49.247 (2002), 450.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Beth Kowaleski Wallace, "'Penance and Mortification For Ever': Jane Austen and the Ambient Noise of Catholicism", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31.1/2 (Spring/Fall 2012), 172.
17. Regina Maria Roche, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796; London: Virtue, 1825), p. 293.

18. Thomas Moore, 'Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye' in *The Collected Works of Thomas Moore, Collected by Himself*, 10 vols (London: Longman, 1841), III, 209–10.
19. Julia M. Wright, 'Thomas Moore and the Problem of Colonial Masculinity in Irish Romanticism' in *United Islands?: The Languages of Resistance*, ed. by John Kirk, et al. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 153–65.
20. Wright, 'Thomas Moore', p. 165.
21. Peter F. Alexander, "'Robin Adair" as a Musical Clue in Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Review of English Studies*, 39/153 (1988), 86 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/res/xxxix.153.84>>.
22. Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 3.
23. Johnson, *Jane Austen*, p. 133.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
25. Roger E. Moore, 'The Hidden History of Northanger Abbey: Jane Austen and the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *Religion & Literature*, 43.1 (2011), 74.
26. Kowaleski Wallace, 'Penance and Mortification for Ever', p. 174.

#### REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

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# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE 'NOBLE SAVAGE' IN ANN OF SWANSEA'S WELSH FICTIONS

*Jane Aaron*



WITH HER PSEUDONYM 'ANN OF SWANSEA', the poet and novelist Ann Julia Hatton (née Kemble, 1764–1838) took upon herself a Welsh authorial identity. Born in Worcester, to an English father and Irish mother, Ann's recreation of herself as Welsh, an unusual move in any epoch, was in the first decade of the nineteenth century virtually unprecedented. This article aims firstly to explore, through an introductory account of her earlier life and publications, some of the possible motivations behind her adoption of the pseudonym, before proceeding in the main body of the piece to assess the representation of Wales in her subsequent fictions.

Before she became Ann of Swansea, Ann Julia Kemble, subsequently Mrs Curtis and finally Mrs Hatton, had lived a sensational life of some notoriety. The family into which she was born were travelling players, touring England and Wales with their troupe of itinerant actors. John Ward, her grandfather on her mother's side, had also managed such a troupe; when his daughter Sarah, against his wishes, married one of his players, John Kemble, the young couple broke away in 1761 to run their own independent company. Of their fifteen children, a number rose to national fame on the stage and dominated the theatre of their day. Ann's older sister, born in the 'Shoulder of Mutton' tavern in Brecon, became, as Sarah Siddons, an internationally acclaimed star: according to William Hazlitt, 'the homage she has received is greater than that which is paid to Queens'.<sup>1</sup> Her brother, John Philip Kemble, was a leading London actor and manager of Covent Garden Theatre, while another brother, Stephen Kemble, became director of the Edinburgh Theatre Royal. No career outside the theatre seems to have been envisaged by their parents for any of their offspring who survived the family's difficult early days as itinerant players. While still in childhood, the Kemble infants were expected to contribute to the family business and thrust onto the stage, with Sarah, for example, performing her first major Shakespearean role, as Ariel, at the age of nine.<sup>2</sup> Ann, however, was born with a slight disability: she was lame, which in her family's opinion debarred her from the stage, and thus in effect from full membership of the Kemble troupe. Her education was, she later complained, much neglected, and parental neglect may also have been a factor in her early marriage, at the age of sixteen, to a London actor of the name of Curtis who was shortly afterwards convicted of bigamy. In want after Curtis's imprisonment, and apparently abandoned by a family intent upon establishing their respectability within the precarious theatrical profession, Ann in 1780 took



up a post as a model and lecturer at the notorious Temple of Health and Hymen, run by the quack Dr James Graham in Pall Mall. The Temple sported 'electromagnetic beds', advertised with the promise that their electric currents would have an enhancing effect on sexual and reproductive potency. To her family's mortification, Dr Graham publicly advertised Ann's lectures as those of 'Mrs Siddons' younger sister, Mrs Curtis', and when in 1783 Ann published her first volume of poetry, *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*, she also used her sister's fame in the attempt to attract readers; the author's name on the title page was given as 'Ann Curtis, sister of Mrs Siddons'.<sup>3</sup>

The verses included in this slight volume are far more conventional and pedestrian than their author's life at this period, and express such orthodox sentiments as reverence for the king, George III, and veneration of the British military. 'Belov'd of heaven is he who fills the throne', 'Rever'd Britannia' is told in 'Peace', a poem on the close of the American War of Independence which welcomes British soldiers home as valiant 'Heroes'.<sup>4</sup> Without any apparent irony, the poet refers with satisfaction to the restoration of 'peace' as enabling Britain's continuing expansion and commercial exploitation of its imperial conquests. As 'Commerce again lifts up its late-crush'd head', 'Neptune' will once more 'waft' to 'the wide bosom of the silver Thames' all the wealth of India and 'Arabia's spicy store', and Albion will 'spread thy wish'd-for empire wide'.<sup>5</sup> Little of this restored prosperity made its way to Ann Curtis, however; her *Poems* failed to arouse much interest, and when Dr Graham's Temple also failed, Ann was destitute again. A friend inserted a notice in the press on her behalf informing the public that the impoverished

Mrs. Curtis is the youngest sister of Mess. KEMBLE and Mrs. SIDDONS, whom she has repeatedly solicited for relief, which they have flatly refused her; it therefore becomes necessary to solicit, in her behalf, the benevolent generosity of that Public who have so liberally supported THEM.<sup>6</sup>

In exasperation, particularly after Ann made a desperate and very public plea for help by trying to commit suicide with poison in Westminster Abbey, the Kemble siblings promised her an allowance of £90 per year on condition that she live at a distance of no less than 150 miles from London.

The annuity made Ann marriageable once more, and in 1792 she married a violin maker, William Hatton, and emigrated with him to the United States. In New York, benefitting no doubt from her family's theatrical connections, she was commissioned to write the lyrics for the play *Tammany*, which in 1794 was performed with some success by the Old American Theatrical Company. The milieu in which Ann now moved and wrote was strongly pro-revolutionary and radical, and the politics of the Tammany songs differed significantly from those of the verses she had published in 1783: they portray the Native American chieftain Tammany as a Rousseauesque Noble Savage destroyed by a corrupt European civilisation. 'Before art had moulded our behaviour, and taught our passions to speak an artificial language, our morals were rude but natural', wrote Rousseau in the 1750s: 'Compare without partiality the state of the citizen with that of the

savage [...] you will see how dearly nature makes us pay for the contempt with which we have treated her lessons.<sup>7</sup> In Ann's *Songs of Tammany*, the white man is figured as a corrupt usurper and betrayer, motivated by lust, while humanity and nobility belong exclusively to the Indian. The free life of the nomad, in tune with nature before the white man's coming, is described in Act I, in which 'happy Indians' laugh, dance and play their way through an idyllic existence of hunting and fishing. But Act II sees the attempted seduction and then rape of Tammany's squaw Manana by the perfidious white man Ferdinand, with Manana's violation representing as it were the rape of a continent. Finally, in Act III, Tammany avenges Manana's wrongs before both of them are captured and condemned to death by fire, the victims of a colonising process which they with their last breath defy, proclaiming in Ann's lines: 'Together we die for our spirits disdain, | Ye white children of Europe your rankling chain.'<sup>8</sup>

These radical sentiments were not abandoned by Ann after her return to Britain in 1799, when William Hatton took out a lease on a hotel in the so-called 'Brighton of Wales', Swansea. Why the decision to settle in Swansea? The town was of course outside the 150-miles-from-London perimeter set by the Kembles, on whose annuity the Hattons were still dependent, and as an aspiring tourist destination it also boasted a theatre, but the same was true of many another township in England in which Ann and her husband could have established themselves. That their choice of destination was not an arbitrary decision is suggested by the fact that in less than a decade after her arrival in the town, Ann Hatton had adopted a full-fledged Welsh identity, signing herself 'Ann of Swansea' and retaining the pseudonym throughout the rest of her prolific authorial career. Her motivations for doing so may be traced through the radical themes which recur throughout her second volume of verse, *Poetic Trifles* (1811), printed for 'Ann of Swansea' in Waterford, at that time comparatively easily accessible, given the frequent passages to Ireland from Swansea Bay.

In one of that volume's most significant pieces, the long poem 'Oppression', Ann of Swansea makes her American-influenced principles evident as she asks inspiration's aid in a vital cause:

Oh, muse belov'd! I ask thy sounding lyre,  
Thy melting pathos, thy energetic fire,  
Oh! smiling come, and aid the arduous plan,  
Teach me to vindicate the rights of man.<sup>9</sup>

In 1811, with Britain still at war with revolutionary France, thus to evoke Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) was to proclaim one's allegiance to the more radical wing of contemporary Romanticism. By means of a sequence of verse narratives, the poem aims to bring to light the various ways in which 'Far as the restless waves of ocean roll, | Thy pow'r, Oppression, warps the human soul.' (p. 175) The horrors of the slave trade, that 'Disgraceful blot upon the Christian name', are first versified, and the tale told of an African couple whose lives were destroyed by slavery, the woman violated and her husband killed when he seeks to revenge her (p. 175). Then the poet turns her gaze back to Britain, saying, 'Why should

the muse a foreign realm explore, | Oppression stalks triumphant on our shore.' (p. 185) To illustrate this fact, the next tale is of the devastation wrought by a British landlord upon a tenant farmer whom he imprisons, and his daughter whom he seduces; she is persuaded that her father will be released and that the farm will be returned to them if she acquiesces with his demands, but in this she is deceived. Like the tale of Tammany and Manana, Ann of Swansea's verses also, after 1799, frequently concern vulnerable and defenseless maidens cheated of their virtue by lying violators; her innocent young female victims would appear to represent the subordinated masses, everywhere threatened by oppressive colonial and hierarchical systems.

Before the close of the poem 'Oppression', Ann of Swansea openly refers to herself as having also been the victim of such machinations:

E'en she whose hand now tries the ills to trace,  
That from Oppression goad the human race,  
She, she has known, has mourn'd through many an hour,  
And writhing bent beneath its barb'rous pow'r. (pp. 196–97)

It is her own past history as the neglected outsider not accepted by her family, who was left on its margins to fall from the edge into the hands of a bigamist and an unscrupulous quack, which haunts these poems, and intensifies her identification with the oppressed. Her American experience has provided her with a politicised discourse with which to express this radical theme, a discourse which we would now term postcolonial.

Significantly, further poems included in *Poetic Trifles* present the Welsh nation and its history as also the objects of colonial oppression, violated by rapacious interlopers. In 'Kidwelly Castle', for example, the poet takes upon herself the role of the silenced Ancient British Bard singing the elegy of a lost glory:

Where sleeps the sounding harp, oh, Cambria! tell?  
Which erst thy druids swept with so much art; [...]  
Moulder'd to dust, alas! the minstrels rest,  
To dark oblivion all their songs decreed;  
Whose high wrought themes with ardor fir'd the breast,  
Urg'd the bold thought, inspir'd the gen'rous deed. [...]  
One less energetic now presumes to sing,  
Since proud Aneurim's [*sic*] magic songs are o'er. (pp. 68–69)

Her misspelt reference to Aneurin, a sixth-century Welsh bard, indicates her acquaintance with the antiquarian Celtic revival movement, which since Evan Evans' 1764 edition of *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards, Translated into English* had succeeded in popularising the work of the early Welsh poets. Identifying herself with their cause, 'I pensive lean upon the walls, | That proudly once oppression's menace brav'd', writes the poet, as she proceeds to mourn 'the lib'ral and the brave' Welsh who once 'Nobly repelled th' invaders of their shore' (pp. 69–70). In fact Kidwelly Castle, situated a few miles along the south Wales coast line from Swansea, was built in 1106 by Wales's Anglo-Norman conquerors rather than its native defendants, but the direction of Ann of Swansea's sympathies

are clear for all her historical confusions. Like the Native Americans of *Tammany*, the ‘Noble Savages’ of Wales’s past had also withstood as far as they were able the tyrannous invasion of their land and the destruction of their traditional culture. Radicalised by her American experience, Ann Hatton identifies with both tribes by virtue of her own personal experience of dispossession; she too has ‘writhed’ beneath the ‘bar’brous power’ of oppression, and had the roles of ‘outsider’ and ‘other’ thrust upon her through no initial fault of her own. Such sympathies no doubt motivated her decision by 1810 to inscribe herself into authorial records as ‘Ann of Swansea’.

Those sympathies also can be said to have informed the representations of contemporary Wales in Ann of Swansea’s fictions. Her first public adoption of the pseudonym Wales occurred in 1810, with the publication of her first novel, *Cambrian Pictures*. Its hero, Henry Mortimer, scion of a titled English family but early orphaned, has been reared in north Wales by his father’s friend Sir Owen Llewellyn. In Dolegelly [*sic*] Castle, buttressed by ‘mountains of stupendous height’, Henry has been taught to follow nature’s guide in all his doings, which ill prepares him for the artificial sophistications of the society he later encounters as a Cambridge student. On a visit to an undergraduate friend’s paternal estate in Devonshire, he has the misfortune of attracting the amorous attention of the Dowager Duchess of Inglesfield, and is discomposed by her open flattery:

‘Why I protest,’ said the Dutchess, ‘you blush like a miss just led forth from the nunnery, and exposed for the first time to the rude gaze of man—you must discard this silly practice. A blushing girl is a subject for ridicule in fashionable circles; but a blushing man, mercy on me! He would be the jest of enlightened society.’

Henry laughed and apologized for his *mauvais honte*, said he had but just escaped from the mountains of Wales, and that as yet he had not got his feelings in subjection.

‘O, then you have feelings!’

‘Yes,’ said Henry, blushing still deeper, ‘and I trust they will never be blunted by intercourse with fashionable manners.’<sup>10</sup>

Lord Dungarvon, Henry’s English grandfather, who has previously shown little interest in his grandson, now appears, intent upon persuading Henry to marry the wealthy if ageing Duchess. Spurning him angrily when he refuses to do so on the grounds that he cannot love her and will not sell himself, Dungarvon tells Henry: “Go, sir, return to the mountains where you have hitherto vegetated; hide in the shades of obscurity those notions which in the great world among enlightened people, would be laughed at and despised.” Nothing loath, Henry responds, “I go to enjoy upon the mountains and among the shades the bliss of tranquillity; I leave to your lordship rank and splendid misery.” (I, 123–24) In this novel, Welsh locations denote a harmonious state in which the inhabitants are at one with nature, while the supposedly enlightened civilisation of the English gentry is consistently represented as artificial, corrupt and preoccupied with the acquisition of wealth to the detriment of all natural feeling.

When Henry is abducted by the frustrated Duchess, his story represents an interesting reversal of the expected gender roles, with a young man instead of a woman as the vulnerable prey of the wealthy oppressor. Back in Wales, a young Welsh woman manages to fend off an unwanted suitor of her own by means of another gender reversal. The spirited Eliza Tudor, neighbour and friend of the Llewellyn family, disguises herself as a male and challenges her suitor to a duel in order to prove his cowardice to her father, Sir Griffith. The suitor returns to London much discomfited when her trick is discovered, saying, "Miss Tudor is far too wild for me. The city, big as it is, would not be wide enough for her [...] so she had better stay here among the mountains." "[A]s for marrying Eliza', he now thinks, 'he would every bit as soon tie himself to an outlandish creature from foreign parts; for she was wilder by half than the goats on her own mountains.' (I, 260, 263) Interestingly, one aspect of wild Wales, as it is represented in *Cambrian Pictures*, would appear to be its deviation from the heavily polarised patterns of gender difference expected in more sophisticated English circles. Welsh-reared women, even those of aristocratic birth, are in Ann of Swansea's novels freer to be less feminine, and their menfolk to be less masculine, than their English equivalents, and in its engagement of the reader's sympathies with both Eliza and Henry, the text would appear to approve of this national difference.

Another member of the Dolegelly social circle, Eliza's friend Rosa Percival, is, however, more seriously imperilled by an English visitor. Rosa's father, an English aristocrat, had initially seduced and 'ruined' Rosa's Welsh mother, but had then been persuaded to marry her by the dowry offered by her rich tradesman brother Gabriel Jenkins. Although Sir Edward abandoned both mother and daughter immediately after the marriage, leaving Rosa to be reared in Wales by her uncle, his interest in her is renewed by his friend Lord Clavering's offer of ten thousand pounds for her hand in marriage. Gabriel warns Rosa of her plight, telling her that Lord Clavering

'came here with your father, on purpose to marry you [...] the bargain was made, signed, sealed, and delivered [...] now you must live in London, and spend your days in dressing and visiting, and coaching and carding, telling lies, and pretending to like people to their faces and cursing them behind their backs [...] you must clean forget all your sincerity.' (III, 29-30)

But his warnings are unnecessary, for Rosa says firmly, "Lord Clavering is my aversion," much to her uncle's delight:

'Tol der lol,' sung Gabriel Jenkins [...] 'gad, but this is nuts for me to crack; a mountaineer, as your father calls you, to have spirit enough to refuse a lord; but come along, Rosa, I long to let them see a bit of Cambrian blood, pure and honest, neither ashamed nor afraid to refuse the gingerbread gilding of title [...] your father would have sold you without pity, just as if you had been timber on his estate, to this Lord Clavering, and this noble would have bought you: very

decent proceedings truly, just as bad to the full as if you had been a negro slave in a West-India plantation.' (III, 33)

In 1810, when this book was published, Britain was preening itself on being the world's foremost opponent to the slave trade, the Abolitionists having finally succeeded in their aims in 1807, after two decades of well-publicised campaigning. To equate the situation of Welsh women, and by implication of Wales generally, with the slave question was therefore strongly to emphasise the moral rightness of saying no to the buying up of people and of lands by English wealth and influence. The various intertwined narrative strands of *Cambrian Pictures* together establish the Welsh as 'noble savages' still in modern times beleaguered by the more powerful, amoral English, whose pretensions to a greater sophistication have been acquired, as Rousseau put it, at the expense of humanity and natural feeling.

So powerful are their neighbours, however, and so frail their national boundaries, that many of Wales's less advantaged inhabitants, as represented in Ann of Swansea's fictions, are more vulnerable than Rosa to the seductions of the sophisticated, particularly when they lack their natural defences, the rural mountains. On Swansea's fashionable seafront all is already lost, or so at least Ann of Swansea's caricature of the citizens of Gooselake in her 1816 novel *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* would suggest. The *ton* of Gooselake, would-be social climbers one and all, are as artificial and false in their behaviour as any aspiring Londoner, spending their days jostling for superiority, faking propriety and maligning their neighbours. Their characters are anatomised by the eccentric heiress Lady Elizabeth Plastic, 'whose delight was the development of that character in which the ridiculous was most predominant'; she has travelled from Gloucestershire with friends on 'what she called a quizzing expedition', with the conscious intention of making herself acquainted with 'the great little folk of Gooselake' and reaping 'much amusement from seeing their clumsy attempts at aping the manners and style of dress of herself and party.'<sup>11</sup> A subscription ball in the town affords her ample opportunity to indulge in her favourite sport. A Miss Vellum, for example, 'a person of no little consequence in her own opinion' assures Lady Elizabeth's party 'that the tradespeople of the town knew their distance better than to attempt coming to the subscription-balls and mixing with their superiors.' (II, 79) At this Mr Fungus, another Gooselakeian present at the Ball, is observed to look uneasy; as Lady Elizabeth has already discovered:

he was in the coal trade, and his family, though some of them were wealthy, were all of the plebeian class; to avoid, therefore, any unfavourable construction being placed upon his origin, he considered it necessary, in order to obtain consequence, to tell a few white lies respecting his family and connexions; he also thought proper to boast a college education, though it was well known that his father's numerous family had precluded every advantage of so expensive a nature. (II, 80)

In this he is but representative of the town-dwellers as a whole; Lady Elizabeth, summing them up disparagingly, tells another of the residents: 'your great people



of Gooselake, Mrs Clackit, have mostly made their money in trade, and retired here to figure as gentlemen.' (II, 116)

An 1818 manuscript held in the National Library of Wales, and thought to be written in Ann of Swansea's hand, provides the key to these named Gooselakeians, all of them prominent Swansea townspeople: Mr Fungus was apparently a portrait of Alexander Raby, a local entrepreneur, Miss Vellum a member of the Jeffreys family, solicitors in the town, and Mrs Clackit the daughter of Calvert Richard Jones, a prominent townsman and promoter of local commerce.<sup>12</sup> Some were newcomers to the town, arriving in it as industrial entrepreneurs; others were locals who had made fortunes out of trading with the new communities of the early coalfields, but all have together succumbed to the lure of pretending to a greater degree of sophistication than they actually possess. Ann of Swansea's novel, which was subtitled as *Embellished with Characters and Anecdotes of Well-Known Persons*, is a deliberate caricature of these historical figures, all of them in her account petty snobs without justification; worse still, they also pretend to a greater degree of moral rectitude than they actually possess. Miss Lucretia Marine says of the neighbours she observes at the ball:

'[S]uch girls have no pretensions to mix with us—but the stewards pay no sort of regard to family or reputation.'

'Which I am sure must be very distressing to you, Miss Marine,' rejoined Mrs. Clackit, 'who have been so perfectly correct in every stage of life; I don't wonder that you notice Captain Goggle's conduct; a remembrance of past times ought to influence his attentions, but men are ungrateful wretches!'

At this, Mr Mullins, another member of Lady Elizabeth's visiting party, comments: 'These are dear friends—will closely press each other's palms when they do meet; yet they do delight in cutting gibes, in scandals more venomous than all the worms of the Nile.' (*Illustrious House*, II, 97–98)

In their vices as well as their follies, however, the Gooselake citizens are but aping their more sophisticated 'betters', as Lady Elizabeth observes. "I perceive your little town of Gooselake abounds with all the vices of the metropolis", she says; in Gooselake as in London, "virtuous poverty is shunned like a contagious disease, while affluent vice, though ever so glaring is followed and flattered" (II, 120–21). The townspeople can afford her amusement, however, because they still retain too much innocence to be aware of the manner in which she is setting them up to be ridiculed by herself and her friends. Throughout those chapters from *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* devoted to Gooselake, its inhabitants are exposed as 'too little versed in tonish manners to perceive that her very affable ladyship was taking all possible pains to expose their ignorance and gratify her own passion for quizzing' (II, 96). In a sense, therefore, for all the Gooselakians' deficiencies, it could be said that the most malign characters in the text are not so much the deluded townspeople but their elite visitors, who have constructed and made fashionable the sophisticated corruptions the townspeople ape, only then to scorn them for their attempts at mirroring such vices.

From Ann of Swansea's point of view, however, it would appear that her exposure to the actual contemporary inhabitants of her adopted town had proved disillusioning: Swansea's denizens had not in reality lived up to her initial portrayal of contemporary Wales in *Cambrian Pictures* as peopled with 'Noble Savages' of unsophisticated incorruptibility. Yet, in later novels, she still insistently portrays Welsh characters who though similarly exposed to the lure of an artificial civilisation have managed to withstand it and retain their elevating innocence. In a sub-plot which dominates the fourth volume of her 1822 novel *Guilty or Not Guilty*, a young English gentleman is saved from acquired viciousness by his love for a Welsh maiden who has resisted all attempts to rid her of her natural nobility. Captain Frederick Seymour 'had good natural talents [...] but too early initiated in the vices of his brother-officers and too much noticed by women, his better principles had yielded to the corruption of example—he had become a rake, a gambler, and a coxcomb.'<sup>13</sup> On a visit to Wales he is taken by a friend to the home of one Sir Morgan ap Rees, whose estate is situated not in the highlands of Snowdonia, buttressed by its mountains from invading sophistications, but in Glamorgan, on the banks of the river Taff. For all his propinquity to neighbouring influences, Sir Morgan has yet managed to retain the traditional native virtues; he welcomes his guests 'with that genuine hospitality which in the olden time characterized all the sons of Cambria, from the prince to the peasant, but which now alas! is forgotten, or exists in the hearts of very few' (IV, 133) Seymour watches Sir Morgan's daughter as she joins in the rustic dances which form their entertainment: 'At twelve o'clock the dance ceased, and Laura having with her own hand placed a goblet of wine in that of the harper [...] apologized for having kept him from his rest till so late an hour.' (IV, 136) Her grace and sweetness are a revelation to Seymour, who proclaims:

'This is primeval innocence—all that is beautiful in nature is to be found in Wales—kindness and simplicity in their loveliest forms, hover round me; sure I have never lived till this blessed hour [...] It is the artless manner, the beautiful naiveté of Laura [...] that captivates me; her every word, look, and action seem the unsophisticated impulse of nature.' (IV, 136–40)


This is the language of radical revelation, of new birth, akin to the language of the religious revivalists so potent in Wales during this period. In expressing the conviction that he has 'never lived till this blessed hour' Seymour presents himself as having been born again; his sudden vision of Laura as 'the unsophisticated impulse of nature' has redeemed his faith in human kind and therefore in himself.

But in fact, as Seymour is soon to discover, Laura had been educated in a very different type of culture, in Bath. When her aunt, Winifred Ap Rice, sees her niece affectionately embracing her father in front of their guests, she protests, "after passing six years at the first seminary in Bath, that seat of elegance and fashion, who could possibly believe you would still throw your arms round your father's neck and kiss him, especially before strangers?" (IV, 145–46) Bath, with its various imperial associations, should have taught Laura more civilised values:

“those enlightened people, the Romans, taught their children to be respectful, not familiar” (IV, 146), protests Winifred. But Sir Morgan defends the Welsh against their first colonisers:

‘The customs of the Romans were not to be compared with those of the ancient Britons; the Romans [...] were a very hard-hearted people [...] I am certain there was not one of them to be compared, either for valour or humanity, with the ancient and modern Cambrians.’  
(III, 146–48)

To which Winifred responds by referring to the (from her point of view) obviously superior merits of their later colonisers: “Let the Welch boast their valour and their humanity as much as they please, they are a rude, unpolished people, and still in a state of Gothic ignorance, when compared with the English.” (IV, 148) Neither Roman remains nor English education have proved sufficient, however, to dry up Laura’s flow of natural affection and its spontaneous expression, and it is this freshness which has so restorative an effect on the previously dissipated Seymour.

The sophistications of the contemporary *ton* are, indeed, but a blemish in this text; they have already nearly undone Seymour, who arrived in Wales a debtor and known libertine. Under Laura’s influence, however, as he strives to win her love, he is reformed, and when at the close of the fifth volume he returns to his family in England as her affianced husband he is a new man. It is evident to all his old acquaintance that the captain was no longer ‘the essenced fop they had formerly known, distorted with affectation and grimace, but a fine, interesting young man’ (V, 211). Such is the redeemable influence of the Noble Savage who has consciously recognised the merits of his—or her—bond with nature and can remain true to it in the face of an encroaching destructive artificiality. It was, I suggest, because she saw such potential in Wales that Ann Hatton wished to identify herself with it; the hope of being herself born again from the distortions and humiliations of her own personal history led her to present herself as a reformed Welsh bard—as ‘Ann of Swansea’, though that town itself seems on closer acquaintance to have disappointed her. Unfortunately, no useful National Library of Wales manuscript in Ann of Swansea’s hand providing information as to any real-life equivalents of Sir Morgan ap Rees and his family exists; their portrayal may well be a fantasy, inspired more by the bardic remnants popularised by the Celtic revival than by Mrs Hatton’s actual Welsh acquaintance. But even as such they provided her with a vehicle by which to express her difference from the metropolitan sophisticates of her earlier life and their value systems. Her antagonism against dehumanising oppressions and her empathy with the marginalised, along with the hope that the natural justice of the ‘Noble Savage’ might yet prevail, found creative realisation by means of her adopted Welsh identity. 

## NOTES

1. William Hazlitt, *A View of the English Stage* (1818), in *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: Dent, 1930–34), V, 211.

2. Russ McDonald, 'Sarah Siddons' in *Garrick, Kemble, Siddons, Kean: Great Shakespeareans*, vol. 3, ed. by Peter Holland (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 117.
3. For further biographical details, see Ivor J. Bromham, "Ann of Swansea" (Ann Julia Hatton: 1764–1838), *Glamorgan Historian*, 7 (1971), 173–86; and Jim Henderson, 'Ann of Swansea: A Life on the Edge', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 34.1 (2006), 1–47.
4. Ann Curtis, 'Peace: A Poem', in *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (London: Millan & Rae, 1783), pp. 12–13.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
6. 'Donations in favour of Mrs Curtis, the youngest sister of Mrs Siddons', 1783 advertisement, quoted in Henderson, 'Ann of Swansea', p. 12.
7. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'A Discourse on the Arts and Sciences (1750)' in *The Social Contract* (London: Dent, 1913), p. 132; Rousseau, 'A Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind' (1755), *Social Contract*, pp. 241–42.
8. Ann Julia Hatton, *The Songs of Tammany, or the Indian Chief: A Serious Opera* (New York: Harrison, 1794); rptd in James Henderson, 'An Edition of the Poems of Ann of Swansea (Ann Julia Hatton, nee Kemble, 1764–1838) including Unpublished Material', 2 vols, unpublished master's thesis (University of Glamorgan, 2005), 1, 211.
9. Ann of Swansea, 'Oppression', in *Poetic Trifles* (Waterford: For the Author, 1811), p. 175. Subsequent references are from this edition of the text and are given parenthetically in the essay.
10. Ann of Swansea, *Cambrian Pictures; or, Every One Has Errors*, 3 vols (London: Kerby, 1810), I, 113–14. Subsequent references are from this edition of the text and are given parenthetically in the essay.
11. Ann of Swansea, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House; or, the Peer, the Lawyer and the Hunchback*, 5 vols (London: Minerva Press, 1816), II, 77. Subsequent references are from this edition of the text and are given parenthetically in the essay.
12. See 'Ann of Swansea Manuscript' (1818), NLW MS 23958C.
13. Ann of Swansea, *Guilty or Not Guilty; or, a Lesson for Husbands*, 5 vols (London: Newman, 1822), IV, 127. Subsequent references are from this edition of the text and are given parenthetically in the essay.

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‘THE BOUNDS OF FEMALE REACH’  
Catherine Hutton’s Fiction and her Tours in Wales

*Mary-Ann Constantine*



My dear Mrs Hutton, or My dear Mrs Oakwood, for you are identified in my mind as strongly by the latter name as the former. You will conclude we have read your novel of ‘Oakwood Hall’. We have, indeed, and had the double enjoyment of an agreeable fiction, and an excellent portrait of an ever dear friend. So striking is the resemblance that your visage was, during the perusal, always before me.

—Elizabeth Greathead, 16 May 1820

As I read, I was so engrossed by the subject, and the sentiments appeared so exactly your own, that I expected to see your signature, instead of Jane Oakwood. In reading the *Welsh Mountaineer* I had many such visions before my eyes, yet you were not so completely embodied as it were before one as now. You will laugh at me—but when Margaret wrote to her friend, and mentioned the comforts of your house etc, I found myself at Bennett’s Hill [...] before I recollected that the scene and the friend were imaginary.

—Mrs Lea, Henley, 22 Dec 1819

THESE ARE TWO RESPONSES by friends of Catherine Hutton to *Oakwood Hall*, the third of her three novels, published in 1819. Copied out by the author, they are preserved in the National Library of Wales in a bundle of documents which include extracts of reviews of her novels and a fair-copy of a series of letters written to her brother Thomas during various tours of Wales undertaken between 1796 and 1800.<sup>1</sup> The bundle also contains a transcribed page from the *Monthly Magazine* for 1821 in which, alongside the likes of Hannah More, Helen Maria Williams, Maria Graham, Elizabeth Inchbald, Ann Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth and Amelia Opie, Hutton is listed among ‘twenty four ladies of pre-eminent talents as writers in various departments of literature and philosophy’, and judged ‘[r]espectable as a novelist, powerful as a general writer, and able as a philosophical geographer, as proved by her recent work on Africa.’<sup>2</sup>

Catherine Hutton’s star does not shine so brightly these days, but she is well worth rediscovering.<sup>3</sup> A thoughtful and perceptive writer, her work has direct relevance to current critical debates in women’s writing and ‘four nations’ literature. Her fiction in particular—three lengthy novels in all—explores the possibilities of

female autonomy, often through the topos of travel, and often through characters and landscapes derived from Hutton's own travels, most notably in Wales. Starting from those two enthusiastic and strikingly similar responses to *Oakwood Hall*, this chapter considers how different aspects of Hutton's work, both fiction and non-fiction, seem directly to test the limits of the authorial 'I', a feature which from Mandeville to Chatwin has always been one of the most unstable aspects of the travel-writing genre, but which is also, as Harriet Guest's work has recently reminded us, an endlessly contentious site for female authors of this period.<sup>4</sup>

Cheryl Wilson's recent article on Catherine Hutton explores her work in relation to her now better-known contemporary Jane Austen (who did not, it is worth noting, make the *Monthly's* list of 'twenty four ladies' back in 1821). Wilson is sensitive to the difficulties involved in retrospectively reading other authors of the period through that powerful Austen lens, and notes how relatively unsophisticated Hutton's narrative techniques now seem, with their 'outdated epistolary style', their often 'clunky narratives' and the 'tangential inclusion of extensive travelogues'.<sup>5</sup> It may, however, be useful to look in a little more depth at these 'outdated' forms; particularly the latter. Travel literature, though one of the most popular forms of Romantic-era writing, has been a notoriously difficult genre for criticism to deal with, absorbing as it does so many discourses, continually shifting boundaries and changing tack. In an account of any journey, intimate life-writing or epistolary sociability might give way to observations on natural history, geology, economics, all interspersed with aesthetic appreciation and historical or anthropological reflection. Even within critical accounts of the genre, the British 'home tour' has received less attention than the exotic and culturally controversial explorations of the southern hemisphere or the far east; the European Grand Tour is also rather better studied.<sup>6</sup>

Women travel writers are, for various reasons, little discussed.<sup>7</sup> Though many women went on versions of the domestic tour in the decades either side of 1800, and many wrote about their experiences, their voices form only a small proportion of the wave of accounts published at the time. As Michael Freeman has shown, the two centuries between 1700 and 1900 produced some 1200 written tours of Wales alone (both manuscript and published); approximately two hundred were written by women, but 'only 20 were published during, or very soon after, the life of the authors'.<sup>8</sup> Catherine Hutton was without doubt one of the sharpest, best-informed travellers into Romantic-era Wales, and for that alone deserves our attention; the fact that she makes use of her experience in her fiction, while also choosing to publish her *Tours* in the *Monthly Magazine* raises further interesting questions. With a heightened awareness of the difficulties surrounding a female author who chooses to present herself 'before the awful tribunal of the Public',<sup>9</sup> we can perhaps come closer to understanding some of the issues at stake when a first-person tour narrative is transposed into the fictional setting of a novel—when the 'I' of the traveller on the ground is shifted to a world where 'the scene and the friend' are 'imaginary'.



Catherine Hutton was born to William and Sarah Hutton in Birmingham in 1756. According to her father she

[c]ame into the world before her time and was perhaps the smallest human being ever seen [...] Curiosity led me, when a month old, to shut her up for a moment in the small drawer of a bureau, with all her habiliments; nay, I should have put her in my pocket and shut the lid over her, but through fear of her sustaining some injury.<sup>10</sup>

She grew up with her brother Thomas (three other brothers died in infancy) in a comfortable town house in New Street; the family also built a country house, Bennett's Hill, just north of the city at Washwood Heath. Her father, who was originally from Derby and began life in extreme poverty and hardship, had opened a small bookshop in New Street in 1750, and soon established himself as an important bookseller and paper-manufacturer. He knew several members of the Lunar Society (though was never a member), and published across a wide variety of genres—including, in 1781, the first history of Birmingham ('it is remarkable', he notes in his preface, 'that one of the most singular places in the universe is without an historian: that she never manufactured an history of herself, who has manufactured almost every thing else').<sup>11</sup> The younger Huttons attended the Unitarian New Meeting house where Joseph Priestley preached; Catherine describes his visits to their home, and, like her father, wrote a vivid account of the 1791 Church and King riots, when not only Priestley's house, library and workshop were destroyed, but the properties of seven others—the Huttons amongst them. Both the town house and Bennett's Hill were looted; the latter was burnt to the ground.<sup>12</sup>

Sarah Hutton was seriously ill over a long period, and her daughter, besides caring for her, took on many of the household responsibilities. The family made visits to Buxton in attempts to improve Sarah's health; and in the summer of 1787 they undertook a journey to Aberystwyth, then a small coastal town just beginning to find itself on the tourist itineraries. They would return to Wales several times over the next two decades, notably after Sarah's death in 1796:

My daughter, whose affection and sorrow were equal to mine, lost her health. Her mother and she had been close and intimate friends. This alarmed me. For her recovery we took a journey in July to Barmouth in Wales, which in some measure answered the purpose. The excursion was but melancholy: we had lost a dear companion, who had always been of the party. (*Life*, 225)

Both father and daughter wrote accounts of their various journeys. William's were published as *Remarks Upon North Wales* (1803); Catherine's would appear as a series of 'Letters' published in the *Monthly Magazine* between 1815 and 1818. The manuscript version of the tour is very close to but does not correspond exactly with published 'Letters'—it is freer in tone, less structured and more detailed—but it, too, clearly represents a worked-up version of the original letters addressed to her brother Thomas (which, if they exist, have not yet come to light). In addition to this group of letters, which begin with the 1796 trip to Barmouth, there are three earlier letters, also to Thomas, written in 1787 from Aberystwyth; they appeared

in a later memoir compiled by her cousin Catherine Hutton Beale, and are also likely to have been revised before publication.<sup>13</sup>

*'Enraptured at every step we took': The Welsh Tours*

The Wales that emerges from these accounts is a challenging and exciting place; not surprisingly, given the poignant family circumstances of the first two visits, it is also a place capable of inducing powerful emotions. In a genre already much lampooned for its superficiality,<sup>14</sup> Hutton's tours are remarkable for their intelligent curiosity about Welsh culture and history, and for their interest in the lives of the people she encounters: she displays an open-mindedness which may be attributed to her Dissenting upbringing and her intensive childhood reading (her father wrote of her capacity 'to take in knowledge without instruction [...] she never was taught to read'; *Life*, 392). Her subjects range from the domestic condition of rural labouring-class women—their clothing, food, and daily occupations—to a perceptive discussion of the difficulty of establishing the names of rivers; she also provides a succinct (and accurate) exposition of the rules of Welsh orthography and pronunciation, in order that the language, and particularly the place names, should appear less 'barbarous' to the eyes and ears of English readers. Thomas Pennant is a principal source of historical information, and her comments on his work form an interesting leitmotif to her travels; she is severe, for example, about his inconsistent spelling of Welsh, but acknowledges his unparalleled reach ('no tourist, except Pennant, has seen Wales').<sup>15</sup>

Reading the tours with the novels in mind imbues certain episodes with retrospective significance. Both as a travel writer and as a novelist, Hutton is fascinated by people, and can capture a great deal in a short paragraph:

The beach at Aberystwyth is covered with loose stones; the cliffs are bold, black rocks. Bad as this beach is, we are constantly upon it. Betty, the old sea guide, says we 'walk out of all reason'; but my poor mother is walking for her life. I am careless and happy; I sing to the waves; and twice I have danced at a ball at the Talbot. The first time, having no creature to go with, my mother was so kind as to accompany me. My partner was a clergyman, who would have been my partner for life, had I been so disposed.<sup>16</sup>

This is beautifully light touch: a witty, poignant miniature of time spent at one of the less fashionable coastal resorts, hinting as it does at latent stories, at potential outcomes, both droll and sad. Though stylistically quite different, Hutton shares with her contemporary Jane Austen a gift for shrewd social observation; Harriet Guest has noted her instinct for the niceties of class, the little turbulences that ripple through groups of English visitors who find themselves thrown together at Welsh boarding houses, round dining tables, in a space where normal rules do not quite apply.<sup>17</sup> Many of these types of experiences are replayed by her fictional characters in similar settings; but other moments from the tours resurface more indirectly. Early in the 1796 tour comes a nicely observed piece describing the working practices of a large sheep-farm near Dinas Mawddwy. Hutton is intrigued by

the fact that this wide expanse of open mountain, home to some three thousand sheep, is actually criss-crossed by boundaries:

It is divided into three distinct sheep-walks. The commanding officer of the whole is a man; the acting officers are dogs, of which are kept from 15 to 20. The sheep-walks are divided, not by hedges, ditches or stone walls, but by boundaries, drawn by the eye. Such bounds as these the sheep might easily overleap, and not only trespass upon each other, but upon their neighbours. It is the business of the dogs to take care they do not.<sup>18</sup>

There follows a detailed account of the relay system used to stop the dogs from tiring, and the section concludes with a wry political comment (this is 1796, after all; Britain, and much of Europe, is at war with revolutionary France):

Invaluable would be a breed of dogs that could thus restrain head-strong man within his proper limits! That would bite the heels of every sovereign that invades his neighbour, or instigated other sovereigns to do so!<sup>19</sup>

The entire passage is interesting for its depiction of invisible, and policed, boundaries, in a landscape which evokes boundlessness (no hedges, ditches, or stone walls). The notion of limits, and an interest in methods of controlling behaviour, are characteristic Hutton themes, and will be further examined below.

Undoubtedly, however, one of Hutton's greatest strengths is her ability to describe the business of travel itself. The notorious steepness and narrowness of Welsh roads provide a constant, often amusing, source of concern: of a road in central Wales she notes with dry humour that '[in] most places a horse might have passed us if we had met any such animal; I saw one place where I thought a cat must have climbed the mountain or dived into the river to have done so'.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere the same kind of terrain is described in more detail and certain distinctive preoccupations begin to appear:

The Clifton, our new-found river, ran in a deep bottom, between two ranges of stupendous hills, to Mallwyd, originally Maenllwyd, Greystone, where we now are. Our road was a terrace cut on the side of the northern range, generally fenced with a hedge, now and then without a fence, sometimes on bridges thrown over streams, which poured down from the mountains across our road, and sometimes through them; while, swelled by the rain into little torrents, they tumbled in cascades into the river below. The sublimity of these scenes shook my nerves. The only way in which I could contemplate these towering hills, woody glens, and rushing waters, was on my feet. We sent the servant on with the horses, and walked nearly four miles before we reached Mallwyd, chiefly in the rain, always in the mire; but enraptured at every step we took [...]<sup>21</sup>

This is typically precise in its careful positioning of the traveller in the landscape, with the road literally threading—sometimes under, sometimes over—the many watercourses flowing down from the hillside; typical too is the explanation of

the name Mallwyd—a thoughtful attempt at rendering transparent what would otherwise seem exotic and opaque. But the passage is above all a compelling evocation of movement through a landscape; kinetic, multi-directional, with the downward-moving water, and the forward-moving travellers, and the reader's mental eye sweeping up and down the slope. Particularly interesting here is Hutton's desire to have her feet firmly on the ground. The 1787 journey to Aberystwyth, with her invalid mother, had been made in a 'chaise'—and there too, Catherine notes that they sometimes walked the more difficult sections ('my mother and I choosing to walk over a bridge made of two planks rather than drive through the stream').<sup>22</sup> For the 1796 journey, Hutton was more adventurously on horseback, riding pillion behind a male servant, with her father alongside her. Prefiguring a subject which would reappear in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, the opening letter in this series suggests that her brother Thomas—perhaps considering it to be either unsafe or unseemly—may not have approved of this mode of transport: 'I mounted my pillion, behind the servant, and set out on the romantic expedition of riding into Wales, you said nothing; but your looks threatened me with all sorts of misfortunes.'<sup>23</sup> Hutton is, however, a cautious rider, and frequently prefers to walk: that need to be 'grounded', to be in control of her own destiny, is by no means a unique moment in the tours. She has a real terror of descents, and always dismounts at the tops of hills, though invariably tending to rationalise her decision as for the benefit of the horse. A dramatic example of this occurs on their 1799 tour of Snowdonia, shortly after they leave Beddgelert, on the 'celebrated' road to Tan-y-Bwlch. This 'grand pass' from Caernarvonshire into Merionethshire is, she claims, undertaken by all types of carriages, although the Welsh generally travel on foot and prefer to go a detour along the coast if at all possible:

The summit is a gap between two rocks, and the descent, which begins immediately, made all I had ever seen appear trifling. It is native rock, in steps and ledges; huge stone, in holes and ridges; and so steep, that that it shook my whole frame to walk down, though I leaned half my weight upon my father; and I wondered, as I saw the horses led before me, that it was possible for them to keep on four legs so unequally placed.<sup>24</sup>

The fictional Jane Oakwood, attempting to describe a steep descent from Tawtop in the Lake District, would recall 'the old Welsh road from Pont Aberglaslyn to Tan-y-Bwlch' and confess to feeling 'the same sensation here as there; fear lest the horses should not be able to keep on four legs [...] You may be assured we walked too'.<sup>25</sup> Hutton's response to landscape is intensely experiential; she registers place through her body, sometimes in terms of physical effort ('I have never toiled so hard in any five hours of my life') but also in terms of an emotional responsiveness which has an equally physical effect.<sup>26</sup> Echoing the description of the descent from Tan-y-Bwlch, she writes that 'the view from the hill above Harlech is so stupendous it shook my whole frame': here, though, it is not the walking which agitates her, but the sheer beauty of what she sees.<sup>27</sup> In Snowdonia itself she freely admits

to suffering from what we would call vertigo—a condition which, if anything, enhances the intensity of her responses:

You know I do not hope to climb mountains; for high places are as much forbidden to me now as they were to the children of Israel of old. I look at those which form a chain near this place awe, almost with reverence. There is a fatality attends my designs on the mountains, and such is the impression they have made on my mind, that I sometimes think I should not dare to look at them, if I were there.<sup>28</sup>

As a travel writer, then, Hutton is a persuasive companion: her veracity is the veracity of the body in the landscape, the irresistible truth of the wet petticoat, the muddy boots. Her letters to her brother end with a sprightly diatribe against those who do the standard tour of North Wales in a hurry, muffled up inside their coaches; and who are not themselves brave enough to brave the elements:

Travellers at this rate cannot see Wales. to find out all its beauties, a man must travel on foot; or at least on a Welsh Keffil. He must be acquainted with the Welsh gentry and clergy, and travel with a pass from one of their houses to another. So might he learn what was worth seeing, and where to find it.<sup>29</sup>

'A man must travel on foot'. But travelling on foot or on horseback is not so straightforward for a woman, and that for many reasons. Turning to the novels, we can see that concerns about how women travel, and why, and with whom, form a frequent counterpoint to the plot.

*'The awful tribunal of the public': Wales and Travel in the Novels*

All three of Hutton's novels came out between 1813 and 1819, long after her initial forays into Wales. All are characterised by the inclusion of journeys around Britain, with detailed descriptions of routes taken; there are many, often lightly satirical, scenes in shared lodgings at coastal resorts or spas, where the nuances of class and gender are played out in conversations over dinner. Add to this the fact that all the novels are epistolary, with a first-person 'I' writing long descriptive accounts of their adventures to a dear friend, and one can see why some of Hutton's readers might have had the author herself 'constantly before their eyes'.

Many of Hutton's set pieces draw on her own trips to Buxton, the Lakes and further afield; for the purposes of this chapter, I focus mainly on her depiction of Wales. Her first-published novel *The Miser Married* (1813) is set, albeit with minimal local detail, 'on the banks of the Wye', where the young heroine Charlotte 'Mereval' and her spendthrift widowed mother find themselves assuming new identities in rural exile as a result of debts incurred through an extravagant London lifestyle (the revelation of their real surname, Montgomery, is an important twist in the plot—and, incidentally, evokes the first Welsh town Hutton stayed in, on the 1787 tour). A visit to Aberystwyth is deployed to resolve certain plot issues: as Hutton had observed for herself, this minor seaside resort functions as a space where normal social boundaries may be infringed, both by the accidents of travel (a broken carriage) and by the subtle alterations in the unspoken rules of class.

*Oakwood Hall* (1819) was the third novel to be published, but most of it had already appeared in serialised form in *La Belle Assemblée* magazine between 1811 and 1813 under the title 'Oakwood House'; the sharp and sympathetic Jane Oakwood was thus already an established character by the time the three-volume novel appeared. It is the most discursive and 'tour-heavy' of the three, the third volume opening with a sequence of letters by Jane, describing in merciless guide-book detail a tour of South Wales via Brecon, Newport, Merthyr, Swansea and the Gower, returning via Chepstow.<sup>30</sup> Her disappointingly superficial enumeration of roads taken, views and antiquities admired is occasionally relieved by glimpses of the lives around her, from a sympathetic portrayal of a group of miners carousing in the Lamb and Flag at Newport to a telling assessment of the polluted air around Swansea's copperworks: 'I own I would rather be without copper tea-kettles, and even without copper money, and let the ore rest quietly in its bed, than raise such a poisonous effluvia and inhale it' (III, 6).

One characteristic of Hutton as a novelist is the set piece and often rather stagey 'discussion'—around a dinner table, over coffee in a drawing room—during which different characters voice their opinions on various matters, including, frequently, books. Questions of reading and authorship also form the subject matter of various letters within the novels. *The Miser Married* devotes considerable space to a consideration of the merits of various 'wholly admirable' female authors such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Hannah More and Maria Edgeworth, with the heroine Charlotte Montgomery making an eloquent case for the 'lost' mid-eighteenth-century female poet Mary Jones; as Cheryl Wilson notes, Hutton thus self-consciously positions herself as a female writer (and, indeed, a reader) within a fragile and unpredictable literary tradition.<sup>31</sup> The idea is further pursued in *Oakwood Hall* where during another such discussion Hutton's alter ego Jane offers a boldly positive (and in the context of the novel, decisive) endorsement of Mary Wollstonecraft in the face of more tremulous opposition from other women in the room; I will return to that particular episode later, but it can be noted here that Wollstonecraftian ideas of female liberty and the constraints placed by society upon the female body are openly debated by characters in all three novels.

It is in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, however, that these ideas, and Wales's part in them, are deployed with most structural and metaphorical force. In this novel, the young and spirited Dorothy Penrose travels on horseback (riding solo, but accompanied by the family servant, Jenkin) from her ancestral home in deepest Meirionethshire to London. She has come to visit her spoiled and helplessly inert cousin Lady Latimer, whose husband, appropriately enough, had himself been what Jenkin calls 'one of them towerists'—an aristocratic English visitor on a fishing holiday to the Welsh lakes. The contrast in the lives of the two women is made immediately apparent through the evocation of 'journeys' depicted on an exaggeratedly different scale:

'Dear Dorothy,' said my cousin '[...] certainly your nerves are made of hardened steel! I should have sunk under fatigue and apprehension. Indeed, my removal from my bed to my sofa, and my sofa to



my bed, is a journey that quite exhausts me. You have no idea how weak I am become.<sup>32</sup>

Dorothy's letters home to her grandmother and her beloved cousin Owen chart the adventures of a Rousseauvian innocent abroad, whose clean Welsh ways cut through the nonsense of social mores which keep women prisoners in their own houses. Hutton here gives the familiar trope of Welsh mountain liberty a decidedly Wollstonecraftian twist; much is made of Dorothy's 'naturalness', her energy, confidence and curiosity, even her healthy appetite: "How you devour that sandwich!" exclaims Lady Latimer. "It astonishes me to see you!" (I, 96)<sup>33</sup> Above all, the novel depicts the young woman's freedom to move about at will, unconstrained by notions of when, where and in whose company it might be 'permitted' to do so. One memorable scene has her canter off at dawn to visit London Bridge, without telling her cousin—"who would battle me with custom, decorum, propriety, and a hundred other weapons"; the boundaries of London society are as invisible to Dorothy as those patrolled by the dogs above Mallwyd. Her wanderings through the backstreets contrast with the virtual immobility of rich women paying each other social visits in carriages jammed solid in busy London streets: "You know", says Dorothy innocently, "I never was in a carriage" (I, 8); and later on 'in Merionethshire, where the luxury of a carriage is almost unknown, you know, we are brought up on horseback' (III, 276–77).

The contrast between 'real' travellers and those who move through life boxed-up in carriages is a familiar literary trope—as we have seen, Hutton uses it herself in her criticism of other Welsh tourists, and she may even (there is an echo in Dorothy's declaration above) have known Pennant's wry comment in his *Literary Life* (1793): 'I consider the absolute resignation of one's person to the luxury of a carriage to forebode a very short interval between that, and the vehicle which is to convey us to our last stage'.<sup>34</sup> But Dorothy figured as a free-ranging life force in a world of the living dead may also reflect another literary inheritance, that of the previous generation of 1790s 'Jacobin' novelists, perhaps notably Robert Bage, author of *Hermſprung* (1796), whose unconventional eponymous hero is both a determined pedestrian and a speaker of plain truths—his 'unfashionable frankness', as Harriet Guest puts it,<sup>35</sup> can be attributed to an upbringing not in deepest Meirionethshire but amongst 'aboriginal Americans' (which narratively speaking comes to much the same thing). Hutton certainly read Bage, who was a friend of the family and a business partner of William Hutton's; he was instrumental in helping the family recover from financial collapse after the Priestley riots.

Hutton's is, of course, a romantic and profoundly utopian view of Wales as a space of physical freedom for women, derived from her experiences as an educated woman of a certain social class travelling for leisure. What the travel narratives confirm is that this is not, or not only, a literary trope, and should be taken seriously; Dorothy is constantly, and teasingly, testing boundaries. One should not underestimate the relative audacity of creating such a heroine at the time. The *Monthly Review* found Dorothy Penrose too much to stomach: "The heroine also is rather too undaunted for a young country girl; and her long harangue, vol. i,

p. 194., in a mixed company who seem not to deem her worth notice, is not only bold, but unnatural.<sup>36</sup> This is a neat inversion of the entire thrust of the novel, which stresses again and again the unnaturalness of the women Dorothy meets. The wilting Bridget, described as ‘one of our mountain-plants brought into a stove’, is similarly concerned by Dorothy’s appearance in ‘mixed company’ (*WM*, I, 109), especially on her unconventional journey from Wales: ‘how did you contrive to pass the time at the inn?’ she asks her cousin, ‘I suppose you were not in a public room?’ (I, 192) Even in enlightened Dissenting circles, women self-regulated, knew when to keep quiet: ‘I took care’, wrote Hutton to a friend about attending, as a young girl, the fascinating regular meetings of her father’s circle of friends, ‘*not* to display the little knowledge I possessed’.<sup>37</sup> We should not, then, be surprised to find that the act of publishing her first novel, of exposing herself to the public, evokes a physical response not dissimilar to the effect of the view from the hill above Harlech:

To step forth at once, from the most impenetrable solitude, and present myself before the awful tribunal of the Public, is an effort so great, a transition so violent, that it agitates all my nerves, and, for the present, ‘murders sleep’ (*MM*, ix).

On one level, as Wilson suggests, this is a strategic piece of authorial self-presentation; but I suspect there may be more to it than that. This is a vertiginous moment. To publish is to step across a boundary, a threshold; it is a ‘boldness’ akin to offering an opinion in a room full of men; to riding off into the hills at will. It is not a liberty that can be taken lightly; publication can unsettle and even compromise reputations in ways which mimic (and often tangle with) social responses to sexual impropriety. It is no surprise, then, that Dorothy, wandering unchaperoned in public streets in an undesirable part of town, should end up getting herself arrested and briefly confined to prison. Hutton has created a heroine who exaggeratedly—and often amusingly, since the tone throughout the novel is witty rather than sentimental—embodies Wollstonecraftian qualities of female liberty in a world criss-crossed by the invisible boundaries of society.

One further way to explore the notion of boundaries in Hutton’s writings is through her depiction of relationships between men and women. All three novels are striking for their representation of marriage as a struggle for control, from the miserly Mr Winterdale and Charlotte’s scheming mother, to Lord Latimer and Bridget, locked in a kind of mutual degeneration; even Jane Oakwood’s visit to South Wales throws up the brutal little cameo of a local landowner who replaces his wives with prostitutes as the mood takes him, until one of them rebels (*OH*, III, 28–29). Owen’s fitness to be Dorothy’s mate is demonstrated *not* by his loyally accompanying her and protecting her on her travels, but by allowing her the freedom to ride off (effectively) alone and encounter various kinds of danger—emotional (unsuitable suitors, false female friends), physical (wandering through London) or social (Dorothy’s *faux pas* are, inevitably, legion). Should the reader be in any danger of missing this generosity of spirit it is further emphasised in a lengthy coda: after an emotional reunion at the conclusion of her London adventures,

Owen encourages Dorothy to make another—and narratively speaking, strictly unnecessary—journey, this time to Yorkshire, to help Bridget and her husband resolve their marital differences. The novels also pay close attention to pairings of men and women in interestingly non-sexual ways: the middle-aged sister and brother of Oakwood Hall allow each other to breathe and flourish; Jane Oakwood heads up to the Lakes with the younger, just-betrothed, absentminded and desexualized Millichamp; Dorothy and her trusty servant, in close physical proximity, ride safely together all the way from Wales. Absent from this list is the father–daughter relationship which seems to have sustained Hutton herself.

As we have seen, the Huttons produced separate accounts of their many journeys into Wales; in them, almost always, they write as if they were independent travellers. A closer comparison of the two Huttons as travel writers is beyond the scope of this essay; but I would like to suggest that what Catherine got from her relationship with her father, and what she clearly feared to lose in marriage (there were plenty of offers along the way), was the freedom to think and act for herself. An unexpected paragraph in one of the manuscript letters to her brother takes us back to the problem of the authorial 'I', and sheds some light on Hutton's own concerns about her right to express her own experiences in her own words:

Possibly you may wonder at the word *I* and think that I should say *we*, if not *he*: knowing I have a companion whose wish ought to go before my own. If I were to speak in common terms, I should say, my father's only wish is to oblige me. But he has no wish. It is an innate principle of his mind, which operates invariably, before he has time to form a wish. In return, I hope I have another innate principle, which would teach me, without reflection, to avoid everything that might be really disagreeable to him.<sup>38</sup>

This—though far from straightforward—seems to imply an almost utopian version of an affective relationship based on a form of instinctive mutual trust which operates 'invariably' and 'without reflection' (it might even be imagined as a benign, ideal version of those assiduously-policed invisible boundaries above Mallwyd). It adds a ring of truth to the words with which she opens her first published novel, expressing gratitude to her father 'to whose Industry I am indebted for the means of Leisure' and dedicating the book to him 'as I have dedicated my life' (*MM*, vi). Though his first act as a father may have been to briefly shut her up in a drawer, William Hutton appears to have enabled his daughter to expand her own horizons.


*Boundaries and Limits: 'a city not made with hands'*

The apotheosis of Catherine Hutton's fascination with mountains comes in a letter dated September 1800, addressed to her brother from Capel Curig. It begins with the extraordinary line: 'I have fancied Snowdonia a city not made with hands, whose Builder and Maker is God'.<sup>39</sup> The entire letter then is devoted to explaining the layout of this city's 'streets', with the westerly coast conceived as a thirty-three-mile stretch of 'Grand Parade', and Snowdon itself as a 'magnificent temple' in the centre: 'I have bounded my fancied city', she writes, 'by the district of Arfon'; an

'imaginary line' delimits the space described, and a hand-drawn map accompanies the letter, marking the Huttons' route. The piece finishes, rather movingly, with a description of the 'crooked mountain Moel Siabod':

The summit of this last seems easy of access; and, if I could scale mountains, it should be my first. From its top a great part of the city I have been describing; a city beyond the work of mortal hands, and almost beyond the reach of human imagination, would strike the eye at once.<sup>40</sup>

Writing of his daughter in his autobiography, William Hutton noted proudly: 'Whatever lies within the bounds of female reach, she ventures to undertake, and whatever she undertakes is well done.' (*Life*, 392) In her own travels, and in the fiction which draws so heavily upon them, Catherine Hutton seems more precisely to be exploring a place not so much 'within' as right *at* those 'bounds of female reach', and with a fierce curiosity for what might be on the other side—it is hard, in the passage just cited, to ignore that repeated word 'beyond'. And it is here that we return to Mary Wollstonecraft, whose life appeared to many of her readers to epitomise 'the romance of unbounded attachment'.<sup>41</sup> As I noted earlier, Hutton allows the eminently sensible Jane Oakwood to speak admiringly of Wollstonecraft (a move which in itself can be read as testing limits, since the author's reputation, in the wake of Godwin's 1799 *Memoir*, had long been the subject of bitter and anxious controversy). 'Her daring and ardent soul', she declares, 'entertained ideas, and formed a plan, unthought of, unattempted by woman' (*OH*, 1, 154). Hutton, both as author and traveller, clearly belongs with those writers for whom Wollstonecraft became a model of 'feminine strength of feeling endowed with the physicality of sensibility and imbued with its implications of utopian projection or desire';<sup>42</sup> and these are all qualities which can be found in Hutton's writing at its best.

In 1799, the twenty-three-year-old J. M. W. Turner, on one of several walking tours in Wales, produced a series of remarkable watercolours, many of them looking across and down from elevated perspectives in the Snowdonian range—they capture much of the vertiginous excitement of Hutton's descriptions of the same territory.<sup>43</sup> Her mental map of Snowdonia, passionately reconfigured as something akin to the City of Jerusalem from the *Book of Revelation*, speaks volumes about prospects she can imagine, but cannot hope to attain. That the tops of mountains were denied her is deeply poignant. 

## NOTES

Versions of this chapter were given at conferences in Gregynog, Chawton House and Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth; I'm grateful to all who shared ideas and information in response, but particular thanks are due to Michael Freeman and Elizabeth Edwards. As will be evident, this piece owes much to the illuminating work of Harriet Guest, whose *Unbounded Attachment: Sentiment and Politics in the Age of the French Revolution* (Oxford: OUP, 2013) offers a subtle and in-depth exploration of the 'bounds of female reach' in 1790s literary culture.

1. NLW MS 19079C. Most of this manuscript comprises the fair-copy letters of Hutton's Welsh tours (hereafter 'MS Letters'); the two opening extracts come from a separate and incomplete manuscript booklet with pages numbered 17–32 (hereafter 'MS Booklet'), at p. 27 and p. 19.
2. MS Booklet, p. 32; the passage is transcribed from a piece by 'Impartialis' in the *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, 51 (May 1821), 406–07.
3. There are signs that a literary recovery is underway. Her fiction is briefly discussed in Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (eds), *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: English and British Fiction 1750–1820* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 464, 472–75; and more fully by Cheryl A. Wilson in "'Something like mine': Catherine Hutton, Jane Austen, and Feminist Recovery Work", *The Eighteenth Century*, 56.2 (Summer 2015), 151–64 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2015.0010>>. For her wide-ranging correspondence, see Bridget Hill, 'Catherine Hutton (1756–1846): A Forgotten Letter-Writer', *Women's Writing*, 1.1 (1994), 35–50 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/0969908940010104>>. Hutton's *Tour of Africa* (1819–21), a compilation of travel narratives by other writers, has been recently reissued in the series *Women's Travel Writings in North Africa and the Middle East, Part II* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015); her tours of Wales are currently being prepared for online publication as part of the 'Curious Travellers' project: <[www.curious-travellers.ac.uk](http://www.curious-travellers.ac.uk)>.
4. See e.g. Guest's discussion of how Amelia Alderson and Elizabeth Inchbald each managed their public authorial image—*Unbounded Attachment*, pp. 146–54.
5. Wilson, "'Something like mine'", p. 153.
6. This point is made more fully both by Zoe Kinsley in *Women Writing the Home Tour 1682–1812* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 1; and by Benjamin Colbert in the introduction to *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
7. Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 171–73.
8. Statistics from Michael Freeman <<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com>>; for published accounts by women in Britain as a whole, see Benjamin Colbert, *A Database of Women's Travel Writing 1780–1840* <[www4.wlv.ac.uk/btw](http://www4.wlv.ac.uk/btw)>.
9. Preface to Catherine Hutton, *The Miser Married* (London: Longman, 1813), p. ix. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text, with the abbreviation *MM*.
10. William Hutton, *The Life of William Hutton F.A.S.S., including a Particular Account of the Riots at Birmingham in 1791, to Which Is Subjoined the History of his Family, Written by Himself and Published by his Daughter Catherine Hutton*, 2nd edn (London and Birmingham: Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, 1816), p. 139. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.
11. William Hutton, *An History of Birmingham, to the End of the Year 1780* (Birmingham: Pearson & Rollason, 1781), p. vi; the New Street house is at present a Waterstones. For Hutton's wide-ranging literary output see Susan Whyman, "'The pleasure of writing is inconceivable": William Hutton (1723–1815) as an Author', *Authorship*, 4.1 (2015) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.21825/aj.v4i1.1107>>. Whyman is currently working on a biography of William Hutton; I am very grateful to her for correcting some factual details in this piece.
12. According to Whyman (personal communication), there is no evidence that William Hutton (who was sceptical about religion in general) ever officially joined the Unitarians, although the family moved in Unitarian circles. Catherine Hutton's



- account of the riots, written to her friend Mrs André in July and August 1791, appears in Catherine Hutton Beale, *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century: Letters of Catherine Hutton* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891), pp. 71–91. Her father's account appears in the *Life*, pp. 157–217. Felicity James stresses the deliberately anti-Dissent motivation behind the attacks, in 'A Life of Dissent: Harriet Martineau and Unitarianism', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 26 (2010), 80–112.
13. Beale, *Reminiscences*, pp. 43–54. As Michael Freeman has noted (personal communication), Beale's versions of the later letters (for which we have manuscript copies) are quite heavily edited.
  14. For Welsh writers' attacks on the 'Welsh tour', see Hywel Davies, 'Wales in English Travel Writing, 1791–8: The Welsh Critique of Theophilus Jones', *Welsh History Review*, 23.3 (2007), 65–93 <<https://doi.org/10.16922/whr.23.3.3>>.
  15. 'Shrewsbury, Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, 1800': MS Letters, p. 137.
  16. 'Aberystwith August 1787': Beale, *Reminiscences*, p. 51.
  17. Harriet Guest, 'The Welsh Seaside before the Railways', lecture given at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Nov 2013).
  18. 'Mallwyd, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1796': MS Letters, pp 7–8.
  19. *Ibid*, p. 8.
  20. 'Aberystwith July 1787': Beale, *Reminiscences*, p. 40.
  21. 'Mallwyd, July 1796': MS Letters, p. 5.
  22. 'Aberystwith July 1787': Beale, *Reminiscences*, p. 47.
  23. 'Mallwyd, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1796': MS Letters, p. 1.
  24. 'Bala, Sept 16<sup>th</sup>, 1799': MS Letters, p. 100. The dangers of this road are commemorated in a dramatic watercolour by John 'Warwick' Smith: 'Actual occurrence on the steepest ascent of the mountain road between Pont Aberglaslyn & Tan y Bwlch during violent thunder storms which terrified the horses that in consequence they here refused collar' (PD09317), which may be viewed on the National Library of Wales website <[www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/pictures/john-warwick-smith/](http://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/pictures/john-warwick-smith/)>.
  25. Catherine Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, 3 vols (London: Longman, 1819), I, 266. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text, with the abbreviation *OH*.
  26. 'Bala, Sept 16<sup>th</sup>, 1799': MS Letters, p. 102.
  27. 'Barmouth, Aug 7<sup>th</sup> 1796': MS Letters, p. 20.
  28. 'Caernarvon, Sept 13<sup>th</sup> 1797': MS Letters, p. 53.
  29. 'Shrewsbury, Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, 1800': MS Letters, p. 138.
  30. I have not been able to establish if Catherine Hutton actually made a tour of South Wales.
  31. Wilson, "Something like mine", p. 161.
  32. Catherine Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, 3 vols (London: Longman, 1817), I, 92. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text, with the abbreviation *WM*.
  33. This moment is nicely prefigured in the tours. After visiting Harlech castle (riding either alone or with the family servant up the coast from Barmouth in 1796), Hutton notes: 'I sat down on a rock, and ate my sandwich; regretting nothing in this world, but that I could not see Snowdon, here called y Widdfa, or The Conspicuous, whose head was hidden in the clouds.'—'Barmouth Aug 12<sup>th</sup> 1796': MS Letters, p. 21.
  34. Thomas Pennant, *The Literary Life of the Late Thomas Pennant, Esq., by Himself* (London: White, 1793), p. 19.



35. Guest, *Unbounded Attachment*, p. 162. Bage was effectively rediscovered as a novelist by Marilyn Butler, who offers a close reading of *Hermesprong* in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); he appears in Kenneth R. Johnston's *Unusual Suspects: Pitt's Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), and is currently the focus of a PhD being undertaken by Grace Harvey at the University of Lincoln. There is real scope for a much closer comparison of the novels of Hutton and Bage read in the broader context of their social, political and geographical networks.
36. Extract from the *Monthly Review* (1818), copied by Hutton, MS Booklet, p. 26.
37. Beale, *Reminiscences*, p. 8 (my italics); cf. Guest on Mary Robinson: 'when she imagined a mixed society, it was as an unattainable ideal'—*Unbounded Attachment*, p. 86.
38. 'Capel Cerig [*sic*], Sept 18<sup>th</sup> 1800': MS Letters, p. 123.
39. 'Capel Cerig [*sic*], Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, 1800': MS Letters, pp. 126–27.
40. *Ibid*, p. 129.
41. The words are those of William Godwin in his *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; discussed by Guest, *Unbounded Attachment*, p. 5; see also the chapter on 'Remembering Mary Wollstonecraft', pp. 88–122.
42. Guest, *Unbounded Attachment*, p. 96.
43. See e.g. <[www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-snowdon-and-dinas-emrys-from-above-beddgelert-d03651](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-snowdon-and-dinas-emrys-from-above-beddgelert-d03651)>.

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# DOMESTICATING ANTIQUARIANISM AND DEVELOPING AN ENGLISH NATIONAL TALE

## The Early Historical Romances of Anna Eliza Bray

*Diane Duffy*



ANNA ELIZA BRAY was born in 1790 in Newington, Surrey, and began her writing career in 1820 with the publication of a French travelogue.<sup>1</sup> However, I argue in this article that it was not until she remarried and moved to a vicarage on the margins of English society, in Tavistock, Devon, that she could actively pursue her interests as an historian and antiquarian. In addition, I explore how Devon provided Bray with a secure space from which to write, and contend that her regional romances, begun in 1828, provided her with a genre and subject matter through which she could produce a far more politically engaged work: an English national tale. For reasons of space, in this article I focus mainly on the first of Bray's local romances which was published before the end of 1830.

Bray was a prolific writer, publishing two travelogues, a memoir of her first husband, fourteen historical romances and a topographical study of western Dartmoor compiled from her letters to Robert Southey. Many of her volumes ran to two or more editions, and all of this within a period of thirty years. Yet despite her attempts to maintain a literary legacy (she left five hundred pounds in her will to cover the publication of her autobiography and the republication of her collected tales and romances), she is chiefly remembered today for her study of Dartmoor and her novel *The Protestant* (1828)—the former because of its connection with Southey, the latter because of critical responses to the novel that denounced her 'cruel and unfeminine disposition, labouring to incite the Protestants to persecute, and if possible to burn the Roman Catholics'.<sup>2</sup> Such responses highlight the problems Bray encountered as a woman writer when trying to find a space from which to compose a form of political history that included antiquarian studies and topography, all male-dominated disciplines in this period. This emphasis on unfeminine behaviour caused Bray much anxiety as she too explicitly connected political engagement with masculinity: 'I never liked what is called a *political lady*; and never, I trust, deserve a character so masculine or out of place'.<sup>3</sup>

For a woman who wished to stress her compliance with accepted conventions of female behaviour, her venture into these masculine preserves may seem odd particularly because, as Mary Poovey has noted, there are tensions between the self-effacement of a 'Proper Lady', an image which Bray courted publicly, and the self-advertisement of a published woman writer, particularly one who chose to enter the fields of antiquarianism and professional history.<sup>4</sup> As Rosemary Sweet

shows, antiquarian research was traditionally a male discipline because the Society of Antiquaries required records to be academic in their presentation, supported by 'evidential proof. Proper referencing and citation of authorities was crucial'.<sup>5</sup> Bray was acutely aware of that dichotomy, even though an epistemological shift towards the recording of social as well as military and political history had given women, including Bray, an opportunity to write in those male-dominated genres. However, although an opportunity to gain access to this traditionally male preserve had opened up, Bray still needed to find a secure space from which to write her histories; a space from within which she could, as Poovey argues, create 'an expressive self within the behavioural confines of the self-effacing Proper Lady'.<sup>6</sup> That space was initially her own family, as the domestic sphere was traditionally a place from which and about which a woman could write without fear of transgression.

Bray was lucky as all her immediate family had a keen interest in antiquarianism: her brother, Alfred Kempe, was an antiquarian and wrote for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, her first husband was an architectural artist and a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, and her second husband was also an amateur antiquarian. Thus, Bray was both educated and encouraged in the subject of antiquarianism from within the domestic space, and therefore could use her family as a final defence against any charge of transgressive behaviour: she could have argued that she was merely drawing on their knowledge rather than flaunting her own. In a letter dated 14 August 1814, written while on a visit with her mother to Arundel and Bignor, Bray describes to her father (who remained at home) the different architectural styles she recognises, even adding personal comments on the success of their execution: 'The habitable part is *modern Gothic*, [...] but the imitations of Norman Gothic arches and ornaments in the courtyard, are well executed'.<sup>7</sup> Moreover she is extremely critical of the information available to visitors: 'A woman, who performed the office of guide, could not answer a single question [...] and on asking for Mr. Stothard's painted window, we were shown a frightful one by Hamilton—the former they had never heard of, the guide said' (*Memoirs*, 137–38). Considering the nature and depth of Bray's knowledge, it is fair to assume that her questions would be searching and technical. But it is towards the end of this letter that her role as a practising antiquarian is manifested. She describes her attempts to gain access to the Roman pavement at Bignor. The portrayal is typical of Bray's letter writing, displaying a sense of the comic while simultaneously revealing a desire to be taken seriously. She explains that the guide:

stuck as close to me as if she suspected I could carry off a pavement in my pocket: but she need not have feared; for although I did not scruple to purloin a broken fragment of pottery, I have too deep a veneration for these magnificent and ancient remains, to steal the smallest piece of tesara that helps to compose them. She would not let me walk upon any of the pavements for the purpose of examination, although, to awe her severity, I thundered in her ears the name of Mr. Lysons, who is dame Tupper's Bignor king. The name had some effect; and she suffered me to crawl upon hands and knees under

the railing on to the pavement. In this way I made my remarks; and crawling off again, deeply engaged in my subject. (*Memoirs*, 146–47)

Here Bray is displaying an authoritative discourse and knowledge more usually apparent in men.

At the time of writing these were private letters confined to the domestic sphere with, at that point, no expectation of their appearance in the public domain. It is interesting, however, that Bray selected these letters to be included within the memoirs of her late husband, Charles Stothard, published in 1823—the year following his death, her marriage to Edward Bray and her move from London to Devon. Away from the political centre and in the security of a second marriage, Bray clearly felt able to reveal her credentials as an authoritative antiquarian, particularly as the text was presented through the framework of family letters.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence in support of the argument that Bray needed a more remote and secluded space from which to write than London, may be seen in her inability to settle to any form of extended composition during the period of her marriage to Stothard. In 1819, a year after her first marriage, she attempted a novel set at the court of Gaston de Foix, which would reflect the customs and traditions of the chivalric age. Bray includes in the *Memoirs* a number of letters showing the extent of Stothard's help with matters concerning the styles and dress codes of the period: 'The wives and daughters of knights, not possessing property to the value of two hundred marks a-year, were restricted from using linings of *ermine*, or *letice esclaires*, or any kinds of precious stones, unless it be on their heads.' (*Memoirs*, 332) Yet despite his input, encouragement and advice, Bray did not finish the novel until December 1825, over three years after Stothard's death, and only after her move to the vicarage in Tavistock. John Kempe, Bray's great nephew, literary executor and the editor of her *Autobiography*, creates the impression that life at the vicarage was quiet and calm, a retreat from the world and an ideal geographical space because of its seclusion: 'what a picture of tranquil life in that snug parsonage is conjured up' (*Autobiography*, 27). And yet that seclusion could, as Kempe seems to suggest, also mean isolation from the realities of life. However, this atmosphere of easy domesticity suited Bray, for she held a position of social respectability as the wife of an Anglican clergyman, and therefore must have been even more acutely aware of how such a role forced her to maintain a public image commensurate with Mary Poovey's 'proper lady'.<sup>8</sup> If the first way in which Bray managed to avoid transgressing the boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour was by presenting her learning within a domestic framework, then the second was by buying into emerging antiquarian interest in social and cultural rather than political history—and by political history, I mean state politics.

State politics, commerce and military exploits all comprised a male version of national history with which women who wished to be considered culturally conventional, such as Bray, could not allow themselves to be associated. However, the turn of the nineteenth century witnessed what Greg Kucich calls a shift in the 'basic epistemological structures of history', privileging 'the new history of social

and affective life'.<sup>9</sup> Different reasons have been suggested for this shift. Kucich contends that it resulted from the growth of commerce, while Deirdre Lynch attributes it to the French Revolution, which caused relations between the public and private spheres to be 'reconsidered and sometimes renegotiated'.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the reason, or reasons, for this change, the fact remained that by writing within the framework of domestic experience, women could become not just readers of history, but writers, while remaining within the boundaries of acceptable gender codes. Ina Ferris explains how antiquarians often documented a very different kind of historical record, including 'unofficial historical memory [...] song, legend, joke, family tradition [...] letter, tracts, pamphlets and private memoirs'.<sup>11</sup> Such material allowed for the construction of alternative histories; and it was the private face of public history that interested Bray. This interest is reflected in the subtitle of her first historical romance, *De Foix or, Sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Fourteenth Century*, published by Longman in 1826.

Thus, Bray had found a temporal space from which to write: a period in her own lifetime when historical writing was moving towards a union of state and domestic politics. However, the early nineteenth century saw further developments in the field of historical writing, in the form of historical fiction.<sup>12</sup> In his introduction to *Queenhoo-Hall* (1808), Joseph Strutt explains the potential for blending history with fiction, emphasising that such a mixture provides much useful instruction, imperceptibly, to the minds of such readers as are disgusted at the dryness usually concomitant with the labours of the antiquary, and present to them a lively and pleasing representation of the manners and amusements of our forefathers.<sup>13</sup>

Walter Scott completed this text after Strutt's death and, recognising the advantages of presenting history through the medium of fiction, set about writing *Waverley* (1814).

By 1824, then, when she began her first historical romance, Bray had acquired geographical, temporal and generic spaces in which to write. Moreover, the publication of Scott's novels had, as Gary Kelly notes, raised the status of romance to make it 'worthy to enter the emergent institution of "national literature"'.<sup>14</sup> Particularly after the Union with Ireland Act of 1800, there was a rise in the publication of so-called national literature. Maria Edgeworth published *Castle Rackrent* (1800) to coincide with the Act of Union, as she wished to create a record of Irish national character before Ireland, like Scotland, became united with Great Britain. As Edgeworth notes, in this changing modern world, '[n]ations as well as individuals, gradually lose attachment to their identity and the present generation is amused, rather than offended, by the ridicule that is thrown upon its ancestors'.<sup>15</sup> Michael Gamer argues that Scott had a similar agenda when publishing *The Border Ballads* (1802) which, he asserts, were 'antiquarian attempts to reconstruct a local history of the Scottish Border', a way of memorialising a region's history before it became submersed in a larger, all-encompassing identity: Great Britain.<sup>16</sup> Progress, modernisation and change, are cultural conditions which both Edgeworth and Scott

viewed as inevitable, although the desire to preserve a nation's identity suggests regret at the losses union would ultimately mean.

While much has been written about the Irish and Scottish national tale, little mention has been made of a corresponding English national tale, mainly because of England's position as the dominant nation and the centre of government for the newly created United Kingdom. Nevertheless, such a position generally meant that England became synonymous with Britain, a position which is often still apparent today. By 1826, Bray was acutely aware of the potential loss or attenuation of English identity, perhaps more so because of her brother's close connections with the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a publication which Michael Gamer notes highlighted connections between antiquarian traditions and national identity, convincing 'readers that their own local ruins, traditions, and records could validate, revise, or disprove received notions of Britain's origins and identity'.<sup>17</sup>

In her first regional romance, *Fitz of Fitz-ford* (1830), she echoes Edgeworth on the nature of modernisation, but unlike Edgeworth she does not see England's progress into the modern world as either positive or desirable:

Change seems to be the order of everything in this world. And, in spite of all the boasted refinements and improvements of the present age, it is much to be questioned if [...] we have not considerably degenerated from our ancestors. (*Autobiography*, 207)

Thus, Bray embarked on a documentation of English customs and traditions which, she notes, began to decline 'within the walls and about the precincts of the great metropolis' as early as the reign of Elizabeth I, before sweeping 'through all the counties of England'.<sup>18</sup> Katie Trumpener has argued that the 'lasting sense of historical rupture caused by the political and religious developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' prompted antiquarians to begin documenting aspects of English customs, material culture and landscape.<sup>19</sup> Similarly Bray saw the birth of a new Britain as the potential end of 'Old England', 'the England of Elizabeth', as Krishan Kumar describes it, which for Bray appears to epitomise everything English. It is, therefore, not surprising that the first of her novels to document the customs and traditions of Old England should be set in the reign of Elizabeth I.<sup>20</sup>

Situating Bray's work within the framework of national politics and national literature, however, places her in a position at odds with her desire to be viewed as a modest woman, a 'proper lady'. We can see from her work that she found ways of re-inscribing her work within a feminine and domestic framework. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke had unequivocally presented state politics in familial terms:

we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable, and cherishing with warmth [...] our state, our hearths, our sepulchres and our altars.<sup>21</sup>

When Bray began *Fitz-ford* in 1826 she was eager to stress the domestic nature of her work. In her *Autobiography*, she states how her first local romance comprised



‘real family history which, having already been made the theme of tradition, might be employed without impropriety as the foundation of a tale’ (p. 207). Bray’s use of the word ‘impropriety’ indicates that she believed local traditions and family history to be acceptable subject matter for a woman writer.

Moreover, the setting for these romances was her own area, the south west of England, at some distance from traditional centres of power. Home is a particularly important and conflicted concept here, linking location or place with domestic space: home can also denote homeland. Ina Ferris notes how nineteenth-century English reviewers associated the Irish writers Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) and Charles Maturin ‘with foreign rather than domestic genres’.<sup>22</sup> Thus the dual signification of the term ‘home’ as both a national and domestic space makes it easier to discuss national politics through a medium that appears to be dissociated from the public sphere.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, as the new nation is Britain, not England, Bray’s decision to confine herself to a representative region of England, as well as to the Tudor past, would twice remove her work from obvious associations with contemporary national politics, for, as Raphael Samuel observes, England is less political a term than Britain:

England [...] conjured up images of rusticity, chronicles of ancient sunlight. ‘English’ is smaller and gentler than ‘British’, and it has the charm for the historian of the antiquated and the out of date. British was an altogether more uncomfortable term. [...] Its associations are diplomatic and military rather than literary, imperial rather than—or as well as—domestic.<sup>24</sup>

In this context, the term domestic therefore becomes increasingly significant, for, as Trumpener argues, ‘[f]rom *Waverley* onwards, the historical novel describes how war divides loyalties and rends domestic harmony’, a sentiment echoed by Bray in *Courtenay of Walreddon* (1842), and one which she often uses to justify her involvement with state politics and antiquarianism: ‘The great occurrences of the civil wars have become subjects for history, for history I leave them [...] It is a domestic tale that I propose to write’, and in these romances domestic once more takes on a very personal significance.<sup>25</sup> To inscribe her work more securely into the private rather than public sphere Bray sought to blend ‘description[s] of local beauty [with] interesting objects from my own personal knowledge and investigation’.<sup>26</sup> Not only did she obtain information in the form of oral history from her mother-in-law who knew all the local families, their history and legends, and from her husband’s own antiquarian research in the locality, she also visited all the sites described in her romances. In her introduction to *Warleigh* (1834), Bray describes her stay with William Radcliffe and his wife, whose estate the Brays visited during the summer of 1830, and where she was able to make detailed observations on the house and grounds. At Warleigh House, she gained access to private documents kept by William Radcliffe’s uncle, who was ‘somewhat of an antiquary [...] a careful preserver of all the old family deeds, leases, letters, records, etc.’<sup>27</sup> These documents constitute the public face of history, but Bray blends them with alternative histories, personal stories pieced together from family letters,

journals and 'traditional lore' (*Warleigh*, 7). Similar records were made available to her by Lady Trelawny at Trelawne House in Cornwall, where she stayed with her husband in November 1833 while researching *Trelawny of Trelawne* (1837).

The landscape of Devon and Cornwall is rich in history and tradition, as its position on the geographical margins of Great Britain meant that modernisation came late, and that it was therefore was one of the last regions to lose its traditions and customs, thereby providing Bray with a wealth of material for her stories. In her introduction to *Warleigh* she explains:

There is no county, perhaps, in England that abounds more in the traditions of old times and families than that of Devon. These, however, are fast falling into oblivion. The rising generation, who, commonly speaking, are eager to follow in the march of intellect, smile at the legends of their grandmothers; and the elders themselves, who are mostly the living depositories of this kind of lore, gradually sink into their graves; and, with them, too often dies a fund of information which has no written record [...] (pp. 1–2)

Here, Bray is explicitly revealing her conservative, and conservational, agenda, but the written records that she preserves are largely feminised ones: letters and diaries which reveal 'the most hidden feelings, the most secret thoughts and actions of the writers [...] never intended for any other purpose than the silent contemplation of their own minds', personal chronicles of an English way of life and national character (p. 3). Although, as Gerald Newman notes, national character was a 'manufactured national ideal', countless attempts have been made to define it.<sup>28</sup> Newman believes that English national character comprises five specific qualities: innocence, honesty, originality, frankness, and moral self-reliance, Claudia Johnson, however, sees it exemplified by Jane Austen's George Knightley. Johnson maintains that the name 'Knightley' serves as a symbol of England's king, its patron saint and the chivalric ideals of courtly behaviour espoused by Edmund Burke, whose philosophy influenced Bray's writings.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Bray's romances contain a moral element which links them to earlier didactic fiction popularised by women writers.<sup>30</sup>

Although Bray was a great admirer of Scott, and it is possible to note many similarities in the two writers' approaches to historical fiction, there are also significant differences. The first edition of Scott's *Guy Mannering* (1815) was written without any introductory notes; a preface was added later in 1829, probably in answer to his readers' constant speculation concerning the geographical locations and characters in the novel. In this 'Additional Note', with its capitalised subheading 'GALWEGIAN LOCALITIES AND PERSONAGES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUPPOSED TO BE ALLUDED TO IN THE NOVEL', Scott adds impact to the word 'supposed' and stresses the irony of his later comments: 'He must, however, regard it as a great compliment that, in detailing incidents purely imaginary, he has been fortunate in approximating reality as to remind his readers of actual occurrences.'<sup>31</sup> As a male author writing history, Scott had less need to assert his credentials as either an historian or an antiquarian. Bray is much more committed to historical accuracy

than Scott, for as a woman writer she felt the need to establish an authoritative persona through which to narrate her history. She achieves this by adding prefaces, footnotes and endnotes to her work. In the footnotes, she meticulously references all her sources, usually from male-authored histories, while her endnotes explain where, in the pursuit of her romance narrative, she has made alterations to the source material, or how local traditions digress from documented history. Thus, Bray's romance narrative is framed by the voice of an antiquarian/historian that brings an authoritative weight to her writing.

The material for *Fitz-ford* was taken from the Revd John Prince's *Worthies of Devon* (first published 1810). Here, Prince documents the story of Sir John Fitz, an astrologer who discovers that his son's birth is about to take place under inauspicious signs. Unable to delay the birth 'he declared that the child would come to an unhappy end, and undo his family. And it fell out accordingly'. The son, also named John Fitz, first slew 'Sir Nicholas Slanning, of this county, knight, and after that one or two more, he fell upon his own sword and destroyed himself' (*FF*, 412). This story is interwoven with the fate of another local worthy, Judge Glanville who, according to Prince, sentenced his own daughter to death for the murder of her husband and Lady Howard:

famed in her life-time for some great offence, was now nightly doomed to a fearful penance, to follow her hound that was compelled to run from Fitz-ford to Oakhampton Park, between midnight and cock-crowing, and to return with a single blade of grass in its mouth.  
(p. 6)

In her endnotes to *Fitz-ford*, Bray is quick to dissociate herself from aspects of tradition that she views as fanciful, stating that 'all I knew of her was, that she bore the reputation of being hard hearted in her lifetime', and offering some explanation as to how the legend of the hound might be founded on fact. She tells how the Duke of Bedford's hounds were housed in what remained of the Fitz-ford estate: it is, therefore, nothing improbable, that one of them might have slipped the kennel, and ran out as the church clock struck twelve, and so personated, in the eyes of imagination, the terrific spectre of the old tale. (p. 410)

These tales, however, provide a sound basis from which to weave a story of jealousy, love, revenge and religious tension during the reign of Elizabeth I.

While these legends are interesting in themselves, it is Bray's long-running attempt to preserve the records, customs, landscape and material culture of Devon that I wish to discuss in more detail here. Both Scott's *Guy Mannering* and Bray's *Fitz-ford* begin with a traveller who is able to observe and comment with a stranger's eye on the landscape and customs of the region he is visiting. In both cases the travellers are male. Ina Ferris notes that writers adopt this technique in the Irish national tale to create a sense of estrangement, a way of writing against Irish Tour narratives in which the traveller moved abroad and reported his observations in the dominant discourse, thus 'securing the journey by a reassuringly English enunciation'. In the Irish national tale the traveller is an English aristocrat, a supe-

rior observer, but one who finds the dominant discourse without terms to explain Ireland, thus dislocating and destabilising the traveller, and likewise the reader.<sup>32</sup> Horatio M——, in Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) describes himself as a 'tasteful spectator', but finds Ireland disconcerting after being 'dropt by the stage at the foot of a mountain [...] fearing that I had lost my way'.<sup>33</sup> Although the traveller in *Guy Mannering* is an Englishman, a member of the ruling elite, his role is not to destabilise the reader's preconceptions of Scotland. Neither is Bray's traveller, also an outsider—because Jewish in this case—intended to destabilise the reader's preconceptions of the English countryside; his role, she states, is instead to challenge preconceived notions of Jewishness, to 'sketch him [...] as a very different sort of character to that we generally expect to find in a Jew' (*FF*, 411). Moreover Bray models her Jewish traveller, Levi, on a family acquaintance, a German Jew who taught Edward Bray Hebrew, thereby linking the character with her own domestic circumstances.

Bray's style of presentation also diverges from Scott's because of its similarity to a travel guide. She provides accurate geographical descriptions of the region, its landmarks and major towns, which were facilitated by her insistence on visiting each location with her husband. *Fitz-ford* begins by supplying the reader with the exact geographical position of Tavistock, 'towards the western limits of the county of Devon', followed by a brief history and geological description of the area:

If he turns his eye inland, it ranges from height to height, from tor to tor, in unbroken succession [...] If he looks towards the west, the conical eminence of Brent Tor, with its little church perched on the very summit, is seen rising above an extensive plain of high land, and forms a striking feature in the landscape. If he turns his eye towards the coast, far below his lofty stand appears a country, fertile, cultivated, and varied by hills, woods rivers and hamlets that extend as far as the town of Plymouth. (pp. 9–10)

Exact locational deixis is used to place the reader alongside the traveller, thus creating closeness, rather than estrangement between narrator, traveller, and reader—a style Bray adopts in her early travel writing when she takes her mother on a tour of Rouen.<sup>34</sup> This style is very different from Scott's, whose narrator dispassionately records his observations rather than sharing the experience of his travels. In *Guy Mannering*, the Scottish landscape that Mannering encounters on his journey to Kippletringan is also described in detail, but its bleakness and isolation is here used for the more political purpose of showing readers the advantages of a more advanced English society:

a wild tract of black moss, extended for miles on each side and before him. Little eminences arose like islands on its surface, bearing here and there patches of corn, which even at this season was green, and sometimes a hut or a farm-house [...] These insulated dwellings communicated with each other by winding passages through the moss [...] The public road, however, was tolerably well made and safe.<sup>35</sup>

While Bray is equally precise with her description of Tavistock, located 'about three miles from Dartmoor', her additional notes on local beauty spots and places of historical significance in the area read more like a tourist guide (*FF*, 33). By 1823, when Bray arrived in Tavistock, all that was left of the medieval manor of Fitz-ford was a gatehouse which is now, as it was in Bray's day, a landmark of some interest to visitors. The gatehouse with its high frontage and sloping side walls was restored as a square castellated structure in 1871, but the need for restoration clearly illustrates Bray's belief that a record of these historic monuments should be made for posterity. In her romance, Bray provides a clear and detailed description of the house itself, giving the precise orientation of the mansion's aspect: the front faced south and on the eastern side there was a chapel, and its exact distance from the river: 'two hundred yards from [...] [Fitz-ford] house flowed the river Tavy [...] a bridge, still remaining, of three beautifully turned arches [...] crossed the river in that part called Fitz-ford' (pp. 40–41).<sup>36</sup> It is the consistent inclusion of this type of locational deixis that makes Bray's work very different from Scott's, or from contemporary women writers who make a feature of location, such as Ann Radcliffe or Annabella Plumptre.

Bray also assiduously records the physical changes to the landscape wrought by modernisation, changes which she charts by juxtaposing descriptions of the past with the present; a technique that she also adopts in her travel writing.<sup>37</sup> She relates how nothing now remains of the Fitz-ford estate:

but the ivy-grown gateway; nor is it the building alone that has experienced those changes so common to the revolutions of time. Of the noble park that once surrounded the house not a vestige exists; and the gentle eminence on which [Fitz-ford house] stood [...] is now divided by hedge-rows into a monotonous scene of meadow-lands, resembling even in its utmost diversity no other than the variations of a chess-board. (p. 39)<sup>38</sup>

For Bray, the destruction of Fitz-ford house signals the loss of something deeply, historically English, a point supported by her use of the adjectives 'noble' and 'gentle' to describe (aspects of) England's feudal past. Local customs and traditions comprise another element of the 'Old England' that Bray considers in this and other works, but where some of these customs are specific to certain localities, others are national customs that Bray considered to be an integral part of national identity.

Many English customs had been abolished during the Interregnum and it is therefore no surprise that Bray's first novel was set prior to this period. Bray feared that the traditions and legends of England would disappear through neglect, in the wake of empiricism, though the West Country was still, in Bray's view, rich in these dying traditions because of its distance from the metropolis. In her descriptions of Fitz-ford house, with its avenue of stately oaks and elms housing colonies of rooks, she unites landscape with local tradition by explaining how these birds were culled in early spring to 'supply the tables of the great hall with a rarity of Devon, a rook pie, sauced with the rich scald cream of the county' (p. 40). The

demolition of Fitz-ford house and its estate meant that these colonies of rooks no longer had a habitat, and thus the tradition of making rook pie 'to supply the tables of the great hall' declined. However, Bray represents other traditions, such as the May procession, as national rather than local or regional and thus claims a wider political resonance for them. The procession is described through the voice of an antiquarian commentator who disrupts the main narrative with historical details. Readers are informed that the procession, even during Elizabeth's reign, had become extinct in its original form except in Devon, thus presenting Bray's home county as the last bastion of Englishness.

The narrator explains in particular the religious significance of the ceremony, which combines paganism, Christianity, and folklore, the latter being represented by the national folk hero Robin Hood and his band, who follow the May queen and her female attendants. These major figures are in turn followed by the fool, the dragon, and the hobby horse. Later church choristers, known as 'the Latin boys', are singing 'an old English chorus' telling of pagan rituals: 'childhood plucks the yellow broom, | Weaves the wreath, sings with glee | We have brought the summer home', and thus provide a visual representation of the amalgamation of Christianity and paganism (p. 84).

Although Bray explains that such festivals were enjoyed by everyone, therefore creating a degree of social levelling, her focus here is on the 'peasantry', who only feature because of their integral role in keeping customs and superstitions alive. She proceeds to catalogue the May Day traditions, which range from hanging ashen boughs over the doors of dairies to ensure a plentiful milk production, to scrambling for wedding rings in a milk pail (a local variation on catching a bride's bouquet). In addition, by slipping from past to present she is able to chart the changes which have taken place from the festivals of Elizabethan England to their early nineteenth-century counterparts—and her disapproval of these changes is suggested through her Blakean descriptions of them. The folk heroes Robin Hood and Marion have been replaced by milkmaids and chimney sweeps: 'black votaries of foul chimneys [...] triumph[ing] in faded flowers and paper crowns' (p. 32). But Bray is not, like Blake, angry at human exploitation; she is instead mourning the loss of a sentimentalised rural idyll. Her work echoes Rousseau in its romanticised image of rural simplicity and urban corruption, a picture of England which, Jeremy Burchardt argues, was popularised particularly by Wordsworth and only existed in literature.<sup>39</sup> Yet, for Bray, these traditions were at the very heart of English culture and heritage, and her descriptions of their erosion or transformation are deeply elegiac.

Trumpener has attributed this nostalgic longing for a lost age to 'the literature of nationalism'.<sup>40</sup> There is much evidence in support of an idea of Bray's work as national tale: an attempt to define England and Englishness against the new British nation state. Bray believed that English traditions dating from the Middle Ages were passing away, and with them 'the good taste and wisdom of those ages, which in the present day we are too fond of ranking under the clause of general barbarianism' (*FF*, 33). Sweet has argued, however, that during the eighteenth



century idealised views of the past stemming from fears of ‘innovation’ were in tension with Enlightenment perceptions of the past as a ‘period of backward belief and religious oppression’.<sup>41</sup> How far, then, can we view Bray as having a nationalist agenda? Carlton J. H. Hayes points out that nationalism can be defined as


a fusion of patriotism with a consciousness of nationality [...] [which means] a group of people who speak either the same language or closely related dialects, who cherish common historical tradition, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society.<sup>42</sup>

In her autobiographical manuscript, Bray defines herself as an Anglican patriot: ‘I am, I hope, a sincerely loyal subject, and clearly love my country and the state under which I live, and the church into which I have been received as a member’.<sup>43</sup>

By inscribing her politics within a framework of virtue and patriotism, Bray is exploiting a feminine discourse exploited by both conservative and radical women writers. In *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), Hannah More prevails on women to ‘exert themselves with a patriotism firm and feminine’.<sup>44</sup>

For More there is a clear divide between patriotism, which is acceptable for women, and politics, which is not.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, by defining nationalism not as a political movement but as a sense of shared cultural identity, we can consider Bray’s novels as national tales without necessarily viewing her as a radical or transgressive writer. Her conservatism would also reflect Hans Kohn’s belief that the Romantics

established a distinction between state and nation; they regarded the state as a mechanical and juridical construction, the artificial produce of historical accidents, while they believed the nation to be the work of nature, and therefore something sacred, eternal, organic, carrying a deeper justification than the works of men.<sup>46</sup>

It is in this way that Bray was able to write a national tale without seeming to break the boundaries of Anglican loyalism. Bray’s writing suggests that she would have liked the present to return to the past; certainly, in terms of manners, customs, and social hierarchies, although she also clearly realised that change was inevitable. Her version of the national tale thus preserves for posterity a sense of what she believed it was to be English. 

## NOTES

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- Price, "A Great Deal of History": Romantic Women Writers and Historical Fiction', *Women's Writing*, 19.3 (2012), 261.
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  6. Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), p. xi.
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  8. Poovey, *Proper Lady*, p. xi.
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  11. Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 217.
  12. See Price, 'Romantic Women Writers', pp. 260–61.
  13. Joseph Strutt, *Queenhoo-Hall, a Romance: And Ancient Times, a Drama, in Four Volumes* (London: John Murray; and Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1808), p. 2.
  14. Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790–1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 177.
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23. Miranda Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order 1740–1830* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 153; and Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 191–203. Johnson argues that Austen's *Emma* was directed from the private sphere of the family to the national public sphere by its redefinition of masculinity and femininity.
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29. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, p. 201.
30. Lisa Woods, *Modes of Discipline: Women, Conservatism, and the Novel after the French Revolution* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003) argues that didactic fiction had declined in popularity after 1815, and that Bray, like Scott, adapted her fiction to reflect this change in the consumer market.
31. Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, vol. 2 of *The Waverley Novels*, Centenary Edition, 25 vols (Edinburgh: Black, 1886), p. xix.
32. Ferris, *Romantic National Tale*, pp. 19, 51.
33. Sydney Owenson [Lady Morgan], *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale*, ed. by Kathryn Kirkpatrick (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 19.
34. In her *Letters from Normandy*, Bray's mother seems ever present as a companion whom she addresses directly: 'turn with me towards Mount St. Catharine, and there look around you' (p. 33).
35. Scott, *Guy Mannering*, p. 1.
36. Bray would have been privy to accurate descriptions of the place as her father-in-law used to kennel his dogs there.
37. See Bray's recreation of the siege of Hennebon in *Letters from Normandy*, p. 231.
38. Here, Bray is referring to enclosures; see John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Hammersmith: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 626.
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45. For a discussion of the connections between religion and national identity, see Emma Major, *Madam Britannia: Women, Church and Nation 1712–1812* (Oxford:

OUP, 2012). Major emphasises in particular the 'sheer extent and range of modes of belonging offered by ideas of protestant nationhood' (p. 8).

46. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (1944; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. xxviii.

#### REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

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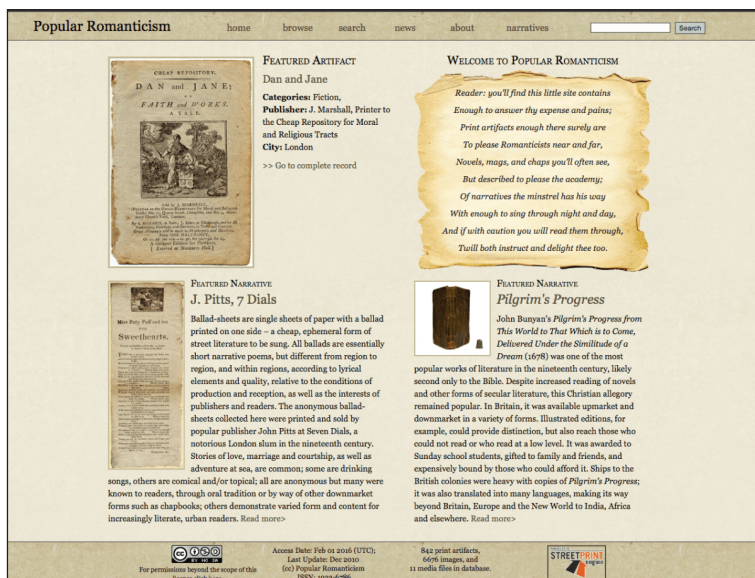
# POPULAR ROMANTICISM

## Report on an Open-Access Resource

David Buchanan



*POPULAR ROMANTICISM* (<http://poprom.streetprint.org/>) is an open access online resource for the study of print and reading in the Romantic period. The following questions are of central importance: What did people read? How did people read? How did such things change over time? How can this be described? The archive includes bibliographic description and select images for over 800 print artefacts: about 250 artefacts from a previous project site called *Revolutionary Romanticism* (mostly ballad-sheets, garlands and chapbooks) and over 500 others added since 2009. It includes a wide range of document types: notices, announcements and receipts; the ballad- or story-sheet; the garland of songs; the chapbook; the pamphlet novelette; the magazine or newspaper containing fiction; the weekly or monthly 'number' or portion of a book; the volume-form literature anthology; the single- or several-volume fictional work; and the multi-volume collection of novelists, poets and/or dramatists. Users can search the archive by author, publisher, date, place of publication, document type and a variety of other categories. The site also includes fifteen multimedia 'narratives' to further describe the production, dissemination, and reception of popular print in the Romantic period. The following is a brief description of some of the research directions.



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**Categories:** Fiction,  
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To please Romantics near and far,  
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But described to please the academy;  
Of narratives the minstrel has his woy  
With enough to sing through night and day,  
And if with caution you will read them through,  
Twill both instruct and delight thee too.*

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J. Pitts, 7 Dials  
Ballad-sheets are single sheets of paper with a ballad printed on one side – a cheap, ephemeral form of street literature to be sung. All ballads are essentially short narrative poems, but different from region to region, and within regions, according to lyrical elements and quality, relative to the conditions of production and reception, as well as the interests of publishers and readers. The anonymous ballad-sheets collected here were printed and sold by popular publisher John Pitts at Seven Dials, a notorious London slum in the nineteenth century. Stories of love, marriage and courtship, as well as adventure at sea, are common; some are drinking songs, others are comical and/or topical; all are anonymous but many were known to readers, through oral tradition or by way of other downmarket forms such as chapbooks; others demonstrate varied form and content for increasingly literate, urban readers. Read more >>

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John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* from *This World to That Which is to Come, Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream* (1688) was one of the most popular works of literature in the nineteenth century, likely second only to the Bible. Despite increased reading of novels and other forms of secular literature, this Christian allegory remained popular. In Britain, it was available upmarket and downmarket in a variety of forms. Illustrated editions, for example, could provide distinction, but also reach those who could not read or who read at a low level. It was awarded to Sunday school students, gifted to family and friends, and expensively bound by those who could afford it. Ships to the British colonies were heavy with copies of *Pilgrim's Progress*; it was also translated into many languages, making its way beyond Britain, Europe and the New World to India, Africa and elsewhere. Read more >>

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### 1. *Print became a part of everyday life*

Some could afford to read upmarket poetry, novels and encyclopaedias, others only downmarket chapbooks, garlands and ballad- or story-sheets. But other common forms of ephemeral print were increasingly important to the way people from all walks of life communicated with each other and managed their affairs. They could enable accountability, communication and organisation, as well as security, hope or amusement.

Receipts enabled a record of financial transactions and a sense of accountability. They also tell us much about what people were up to, what they valued, supported or prioritised. For example, receipts from the Parish of St John at Hampstead, Middlesex reveal contributions to the repair of highways, the prosecution of war and support of the poor; and information about property taxes and everyday expenses, including servants, carriages and windows, as well as expenses for lighting and patrolling the town. Receipts could also say something about systems of risk and reward, investment and accumulation, or perhaps scheme and plunder, as with lottery tickets. Insurance documents indicate a different sort of interest in and means of achieving investment and security. Some describe insurance for houses and other buildings, goods, wares and merchandise, and ships in harbour, in dock or while building from loss or damage by fire, including costs (assurances on lives were also available).

Announcements in the form of a single sheet with print on one side were easily distributed or posted. They could be used to outline rules and regulations, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace and order. Announcements and advertisements also enabled public communication of events or opportunities; it was an important form of disseminating information, particularly effective in more densely populated urban communities. Passers by read such signs individually or to a group, which might include those unable to read. In these and other ways, notices for meetings also helped people to connect, organise and work or socialise together.

The screenshot shows a website interface for 'Popular Romanticism'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'home', 'browse', 'search', 'news', 'about', and 'narratives', along with a search box. The main content area is titled 'NARRATIVE' and 'Everyday Print'. It contains a paragraph of text describing the historical significance of receipts. Below the text is a grid of small thumbnail images of various historical documents. A larger, detailed view of a receipt is shown, titled 'PARISH OF ST. JOHN, HAMPSTEAD, MIDDLESEX.' The receipt text includes details about a contribution to the repair of highways. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information, a Creative Commons license, and a 'STREETPRINT' logo.



In these and other ways, ephemeral print enables a better understanding of print culture broadly defined, as well as the practices of everyday life in the Romantic period.

2. *Print helped people to get on in life*

This was no less true of ephemeral forms of fiction such as ballad-sheets as it was of upmarket works of philosophy, history and literature. *Popular Romanticism* contains more than fifty such artefacts printed and distributed in the infamous Seven Dials slums of London from about 1802 to 1820. All ballads are essentially short narrative poems, but different from region to region, and within regions, according to lyrical elements and quality, relative to the conditions of production and reception, as well as the interests of publishers and readers. The content of ballad-sheets, as such, was wide ranging.

Traditional folk tales were common, many of which concern love, marriage and courtship, or adventure and risk; but many other ballad-sheets used new material adapted to contemporary circumstances, local populations and urban settings. The latest hits of the stage could be used to attract interest among those unable to afford a seat at the theatre. The name recognition of popular contemporary writers helped to sell new material. Street ballads could be topical, providing a form of news to compete with the more expensive newspapers. They could also be political or religious, often in a satirical manner that enabled a combination of amusement and instruction.

The screenshot shows the 'Popular Romanticism' website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: home, browse, search, news, about, narratives, and a search box. Below the navigation is an 'Advanced Search' section with input fields for Authors, Category, Publisher, and City, along with a 'Search' button. To the right of the search fields is a 'Navigation Tips' box. The main content area displays a table of search results with columns for Title, First Photo, Authors, Categories, Location, Publication Date, Date Created, and Date Updated. The table lists several ballad-sheets, including 'The Musical Butcher', 'The Sky Rocket', 'Caleb Quotem; Or, Jack of all Trades', 'Cold Winter is Past', 'Steady She Goes', 'Ground for the Floor', 'By varied arts how often has your Maid...', 'She's Off With Another', 'Paddy's Description of Pizarro', and 'Begone Dull Care'. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information, a Creative Commons license, and a 'STREETPRINT' logo.

TITLE	FIRST PHOTO	AUTHORS	CATEGORIES	LOCATION	PUBLICATION DATE	DATE CREATED	DATE UPDATED
The Musical Butcher			Fiction, Humour		1820	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:05
The Sky Rocket			Fiction, Verse		1790	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/05 02:42
Caleb Quotem; Or, Jack of all Trades			Fiction, Verse		1802	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/23 02:40
Cold Winter is Past			Fiction, Verse		1802	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:25
Steady She Goes			Fiction, Verse		1802	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/23 02:41
Ground for the Floor			Fiction, Verse			2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:07
By varied arts how often has your Maid...			Fiction, Verse		1830	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:07
She's Off With Another			Fiction, Verse		1805	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:07
Paddy's Description of Pizarro			Fiction, Verse		1802	2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:07
Begone Dull Care			Fiction, Verse			2009/08/26 00:41	2013/08/04 21:08

The variety of ballad-sheets available, their popularity and the social value of being able to read them would have provided a strong incentive to achieve literacy. It is very likely that ballad-sheets played a significant role in the expansion of

literacy and reading in the early nineteenth century, long before the 1870 Education Acts in Britain. Read individually and sung to or with others, ballad-sheets were an important form of expression, communication, education and socialisation. Self-expression and group recognition were likewise furthered by the use of ballad-sheets to decorate living and social spaces, pasted on walls or ceilings in homes or pubs.

### 3. *Traditional forms of communication were adapted to modern times*

Ballads were collected for upmarket print collections such as Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Joseph Ritson's *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads, Now Extant, Relative to that Celebrated English Outlaw* (1795). Many of the best-known poets of the Romantic period imitated and adapted the traditional ballad form, including William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the collection *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (1798) and Walter Scott in the long narrative poem *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). Students of Romanticism will recognise these names and works, and they will likely be familiar with chapbooks, but they may be less familiar with the 'garland', a small book of ballads usually eight pages in length and printed cheaply on thin paper with a woodcut on the cover and a binding composed of string (if it was bound).

Outside of London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne was a centre of popular print in England throughout the Romantic period, offering chapbooks, broadsides and songbooks of various sorts to meet the needs and interests of downmarket readers. The ballads collected and printed as garlands in Newcastle upon Tyne were intended for local, working-class people. The paper of a garland is thin, the ink is light or uneven and the woodcuts often do not seem relevant to the story. There is no elaborate binding of full calf leather with gilt lettering upon the spine—suitable for the drawing room or library. Despite the prevalence of universal folk and romance tales, some of the ballads are also localised, with specific references to the Yorkshire region or to Yorkshire people. Proximity to the Scottish border clearly also impacted content, with references to Highland Mary or the Tweed, not to mention the use of Scottish dialect. Contemporary events were also recognised. Garlands aimed to entertain, but in a way that mattered to local readers.

However comical or entertaining, garlands could also be political in several instances and ways. First, in that they portrayed working-class people. Second, in that they addressed the realities of working-class life. Third, in that they took on national subjects from a working-class perspective. And fourth, in that they were produced for and made accessible to working-class people. Ballads printed as garlands participated in the complex transition from feudal and agricultural community to the industrial and capitalist modern state. Garlands met the needs of downmarket readers in Newcastle and elsewhere by combining traditional storytelling and cheap print to address contemporary issues in a way that was known and appealing.

Popular Romanticism [home](#) [browse](#) [search](#) [news](#) [about](#) [narratives](#)

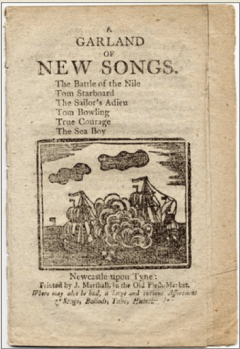
NARRATIVE

**Garlands in Newcastle**

1. To England's towers of oak farewell,  
No more for me shall be unfurd  
The canvas in the gale so swell,  
The ocean is no more my world;  
Yet there life's earliest years I fearless pass'd  
A sea-boy on the high and giddy mast.

Thus begins *The Sea-Boy*, printed by J. Marshall, in the Old Flesh-Market, one of six ballads in *A New Garland of New Songs* published at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1798.

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A Garland of Songs - Battle of the Nile

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#### 4. Popular forms changed over time

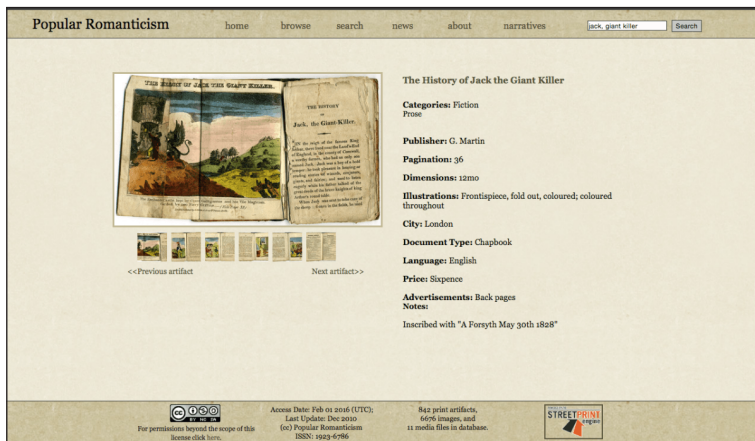
Chapbooks were the popular pamphlets of the poor. Similar to ballad-sheets and garlands, they began as a sort of printed folklore. Early popular stories disseminated by travelling salesmen or *colporteurs* included secular adventure narratives such as *Jack, the Giant Killer* and *Robin Hood*. They had the quaint woodcut illustrations, but displayed a broader scope than the ballads; they retold old romances and fairy tales, ancient battles, superstitions and riddles, interpreted dreams, foretold the future, etc. Later chapbooks varied considerably in content, theme and language; they were often adapted from popular novels for specific audiences and political purposes.

Most chapbooks were 8–32 pages in length and sold for as little as a halfpenny and usually for less than sixpence, thus making them widely available to the working classes. They were available in the city and the countryside, often available at fair or market days. The established downmarket price point, or threshold of profitability and affordability accepted by publishers and purchasers, was sixpence. The price of chapbooks ranged from a halfpenny, like ballad- or story-sheets and garlands, to a shilling.

Chapbooks were used for different purposes. The Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts, for example, a Christian, middle-class organisation, attempted to target downmarket readers with religious conduct literature by capitalising on the longstanding popularity of the chapbook. New versions of chapbook classics, as well as adaptations of old and new novels, for example Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Scott's *Waverley, or 'tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), were popular. Even at the lowest prices, significant variation in chapbook form is apparent.

Writers and publishers adapted to and furthered increasing demand for literature by diversifying formal and thematic resources, and by manipulating the

format and price of downmarket options. A typical chapbook is a short, secular, plot-driven tale accompanied by woodcuts featuring key moments and figures in action. Later, publishers altered the form and content to attract or increase readership. Covers could be blue or yellow, and the type and woodcuts (or engravings) of higher quality. Coloured covers became more common after about 1810, when publishers attempted to distinguish new chapbooks (i.e. new versions or adaptations of new works) from old-style chapbooks. For example, a penny chapbook adaptation of a Scott novel might be similar to a traditional version of *Jack, the Giant Killer*, but another sold for 6d or 1s would likely be longer (i.e. 32–52 pages), printed on better paper and might include decorative borders, coloured covers and high-quality illustrations. Such differentiation in format, content, and price enabled increased fragmentation of the print market, which helped to identify and create new readerships.





5. *Formal manipulation and wider dissemination went hand-in-hand*  
*Robinson Crusoe*, for instance, was published as *The Wonderful Life and Surprising Adventures of that Renowned Hero, Robinson Crusoe* (1813), a chapbook from Ross's Juvenile Library. *Robinson Crusoe* (1830) is only eight pages and similar in appearance to the Ross edition, except for the yellow covers. *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1818), on the other hand, is a 170-page book covered in marbled boards with morocco (usually goat) leather down the spine and probably sold for several shillings.

New novels were expensive, but they were also made available to readers in many forms. Circulating libraries rented novels by the volume, which made expensive new novels more accessible to middle-class readers. Similarly, the price of novels decreased as part of collections of a single author, for example the novels of Scott in 48 volumes from 1829–33 (each volume 5s), or selected works of various authors, such as Bentley's Standard Novels (each novel 6s). Novels were also sold in parts and numbers, serialised in magazines and newspapers, and adapted as chapbooks.



The pamphlet novelette was another innovation that increased circulation. It was usually an abridged or adapted version of a novel sold at a price (6d) available to the working class. Out-of-copyright novels such as Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788), and new middle-class novels that sold for 10–30s or were otherwise available at circulating libraries, became available in this format. Weekly or monthly 'numbers' or 'parts' of a book helped make some modern fiction available to downmarket readers complete and unabridged. *The Mysterious Marriage, or, the Will of My Father* by Catherine G. Ward, for example, was serialised from 1824–26 as part of a series of 'Original Novels and Romances embellished with engravings'. Magazines and newspapers also frequently included fiction in verse and prose, depending on the format, content, objectives and readership of the periodical.

Popular Romanticism    home    browse    search    news    about    narratives    The Mysterious Marriage    Search

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**THE MYSTERIOUS MARRIAGE, OR, THE WILL OF MY FATHER**

**Authors:** Ward, Catherine G.

**Categories:** Fiction  
Romance

**Conduct:**

**Prose:**

**Novel:**

**Year:** 1826

**Date Details:** Serialized

**Publishers:** George Virtue, Ivy-Lane, Paternoster-Row; Bath-Street

**Paginations:** V.1 (f.1, [f.]-28) [see notes]

**Dimensions:** 22.3 x 14 cm

**Illustrations:** Frontispiece for most volumes

**City:** London ; Bristol

**Document Type:** Pamphlet

**Language:** English

**Printer:** C. Baynes, 13, Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

**Advertisements:** V.1 Front inside cover 'G. VIRTUE'S | CATALOGUE OF PERIODICAL WORKS'. Back inside/outside cover 'VIRTUE'S CATALOGUE OF NEW PUBLICATIONS'. Advertisements on back cover of each succeeding volume.

**Binding:** Paper cover, string stitching.


**Edges:** Trimmed

**Prices:** Sixpence

**Edition:** Cover 'Twelfth Edition, with new Plates.'

**Notes:**


V.10, 21–26 missing: every volume separate title-page; This is a serialised novel. Pagination in full: V.1 (f.1, [f.]-28); V.2 (59–92); V.3 (53–76); V.4 (77–100); V.5 (101–124); V.6 (125–148); V.7 (149–172); V.8 (173–196); V.9 (197–220); V.11 (245–268); V.12 (269–292); V.13 (293–316); V.14 (317–340); V.15 (341–364); V.16 (365–388); V.17 (389–412); V.18 (413–436); V.19 (437–460); V.20 (461–484); V.27/28 (659–645, attached V.1 from 1804 pages disordered).



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### 6. Every cover tells a story

Bindings for chapbooks and pamphlets were used to hold together the pages of a single work that was not constructed to last and meant for the working classes. Part or full leather bindings could serve as a means of preserving a text for posterity, protecting against frequent use (sometimes including chapbooks or collections of ephemeral literature), or providing distinction. Cover design was used to differentiate downmarket and upmarket works. Publishers employed colour, decorative design, and higher quality illustrations to cater to or create new markets for pamphlet fiction. Book covers could be practical or lavish, depending on taste and budget, the perceived value of the work, the social standing of the purchaser


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**NARRATIVE**  
**String to Morocco**

11. Cover design: decoration

The poems of Bernard Barton clearly meant something to somebody; a single-volume book of poetry would be expensive (~50s.), and this volume is bound in full calf and intricately decorated. Such upmarket works could be highly prized and socially useful: the value attached may be internal, as in a beloved book; or it may be external, located in the value others attach to the object, as in a mantle or 'coffee table' book that reflects the tastes, interests, social position, and economic standing of the owner.

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POEMS

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and the intended use of the book, involving gilt and/or blind engraving; various colour schemes; different forms of marbling for the boards; quarter, half or full leather; which could be made of calf, goat or other types skin; and cloth binding (later). Covers indicated different material, cultural and social valuation of copies of the same work; they also reflected and contributed to the diverse print market of the Romantic period.

### 7. *The market for children's literature exploded*


Increasing urban populations and greater emphasis on literacy, reading and education among the middle classes fuelled the production of literature specifically aimed at children (or their parents). Literature produced for or read by children in the Romantic period included fiction and non-fiction, poetry and prose, chapbooks, picture-books, novels, magazines and more; it was available upmarket and downmarket; it could be entertaining, it usually intended to instruct and it sometimes did both. During a period of changing attitudes to parenting and childhood, expansion of the print industry and increased attention to literacy, reading and education, literature for children enabled a means of shaping the tastes, habits and

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**NARRATIVE**  
**Lessons for Little Learners**

1. Increasing urban populations and great emphasis on literacy, reading and education among the middle classes in modernizing nineteenth-century Britain fueled the market for children's literature. The end of perpetual copyright in 1774, which enabled the downmarket diversification of the print market, and advances in print technology, especially towards the end of the Romantic period when stereotyping, the iron press and the steam press took hold, were other important factors. Popular publishers such as John Harris, who succeeded John Newbery in London, were quick to capitalize on the situation with works such as *Sister's Gift, or the Naughty Boy Reformed* (London: Harris, 1804), which was 'Published for the Advantage of the Rising Generation', but was also of Harris's Juvenile Library and thus part of a larger commercial strategy. Priced at only one penny, this chapbook is an example of the downmarket expansion of print markets, in this case aimed not only at the working classes but designed for children (or parents).

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SISTER'S GIFT, OR THE NAUGHTY BOY REFORMED

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interests of young readers, and possibly of improving their chances of getting on in life. Religious organisations and popular publishers recognised and furthered the growing consumer market for children's literature by creating works differing in presentation, content, format and price throughout the period.

### 8. *Travel literature was one of the most widely read genres*

The weighty works of travel writers were largely available to upmarket readers due to their high cost, although the cheaper pocket-sized editions that began appearing in the late eighteenth century and the lengthy excerpts from new travelogues featured in periodicals made the genre more widely available. Travel literature was a complex genre intended both to instruct and to entertain. The content of travelogues appealed to a broad range of interests and was easily and frequently adapted to meet the changing tastes of the public. Ethnographic description, antiquarian examination, scientific observation and cataloguing of sites were interspersed with aesthetic contemplation, personal reflection, political polemic, humorous or sentimental anecdotes, poetry and gothic tales. The Romantic period witnessed a gradual separation between literary and technical travel writing; guidebooks emerged in the early nineteenth century to address the practical concerns of an increasingly mobile middle class, while the literary travelogue became less concerned with the mechanics of travel and increasingly emphasised introspection and the operation of the imagination.

Popular Romanticism    home    browse    search    news    about    narratives     Search

NARRATIVE

### Home and Away

5. *The Panorama of the World* (London: R. Miller, 1829) is another example of travel literature for children. The text is constructed as a series of conversations meant to entertain the young reader and to impart practical information about various areas of the world. The numerous illustrations are typical of this form, intended to visually engage children who may or may not be able to read. Taylor includes illustrations in his text so that "young brothers and sisters all see, / Although they can't read, they're so small!" (Screens in Asia vii).

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THE PANORAMA OF THE WORLD

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### 9. *Popular reading took many different forms*

Anthologies, collections, cabinets, encyclopaedias and portfolios reflected the varied interests of downmarket readers. *The Portfolio of Amusement and Instruction in History, Science, Literature, and the Fine Arts* (1829), for example, included 'original essays, biographical memoirs, historical narratives, topographical descriptions, novels, tales, anecdotes, select extracts of modern authors, poetry, original selected, the spirit of the public press, discoveries in the arts and sciences, domestic hints of utility, &c.' Such collections enabled the careful selection of 'classics' or

useful works intended to amuse and instruct. Changing attitudes to parenting and childhood, expansion of the print industry and increased attention to literacy, reading and education led to anthologies aimed at a juvenile audience. Many adults were also interested in a general knowledge of upmarket or 'standard' literature, indicative of an interest in upward mobility and the importance of social status.

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**THE PORTFOLIO OF AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION, IN HISTORY, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE FINE ARTS &c.**

**Categories:** Fiction  
Non-fiction

**Anthology / Collection**

**Year:** 1829

**Date Details:** Last issue dated July 4, 1830

**Publishers:** Printed and Published by J. Duncombe, 19, Little Queen Street, Holborn; and Sold by all Booksellers in Town and Country

**Pagination:** vi, 362p.

**Dimensions:** 21.3 x 13.5 cm

**Illustrations:** Engravings and woodcuts

**City:** London

**Document Type:** Book

**Language:** English

**Printers:** J. Duncombe, 19, Little Queen Street, Holborn

**Sellers:** Sold by all Booksellers in Town and Country

**Index:** [iii]-vi INDEX TO VOLUME VI.

**Other Content:** vi 'EMBELLISHMENTS.'

**Prices:** 3d. per issue as noted on each cover (not collected)

**Binding:** Red (spine) and brown (corners), half calf. Front and back marbled board. SPINE: [gilt-tooled] (decorative design) | (wavy lines) | [lines] | THE PORTFOLIO | [lines] | (on black calf) | (wavy lines) | [lines] | VOL. VI. | [lines] | (on black calf) | (wavy lines) | (decorative design) | (wavy lines) | (decorative design) | (wavy lines) | (decorative design) | (wavy lines) | (decorative design) | (decorative lines).

**Marginalia:** Trimmed

**Notes:**  
Full title: THE PORTFOLIO OF AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION, IN HISTORY, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE FINE ARTS; CONTAINING ORIGINAL ESSAYS; BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS; HISTORICAL NARRATIVES; TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTIONS; NOVELS; FALES; ANECDOTES; SELECT EXTRACTS FROM MODERN AUTHORS; POETRY, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED; THE SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC PRESS; DISCOVERIES IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES; DOMESTIC HINTS OF UTILITY, &c. &c. &c. ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVINGS AND WOOD CUTS. VOL. VI.

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10. *Many forms of religious literature remained popular*


For example, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that Which Is to Come, Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream* (1678) was one of the most popular works of literature in the nineteenth century, likely second only to the Bible. Despite increased reading of novels and other forms of secular literature, this Christian allegory remained popular. In Britain, it was available upmarket and downmarket in a variety of forms. Illustrated editions, for example, could provide distinction, but also reach those who could not read or who read at a low level. It was awarded to Sunday school students, gifted to family and friends, and expensively bound by those who could afford it. Ships to the British colonies were heavy with copies of *Pilgrim's Progress*; it was also translated into many languages, making its way beyond Britain, Europe and the New World to India, Africa and elsewhere.

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NARRATIVE  
***Pilgrim's Progress***

1. Bunyan's oeuvre of 58 works contains five of longer fiction, seven verse collections and 46 non-fiction writings, including sermons, a catechism, and many pamphlets. The allegorical tale *Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which is to Come, Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream* (1678) was by far the most successful. As Bunyan scholar Robert Greaves writes, "*The Pilgrim's Progress*, twenty editions of which had been published by 1695 and at least 1300 by 1938, has been remarkably successful." The title-page of the earliest edition in the *Popular Romanticism* database, printed for W. Johnston at the Golden-Ball in St. Paul's Church-Yard in 1748, states that it is the twenty-seventh edition, a figure that may not be reliable, but is indicative of the tremendous reproduction that began well before the Romantic period.

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THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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## II. *Popular publishing was a specialised endeavour*

The firms of Harvey & Darton and W. Darton were two of the most prolific publishers of popular literature in the Romantic period. William Darton Sr, Samuel Darton and William Darton Jr all specialised in children's literature but also published jigsaw puzzles, poetry collections and other works of social, scientific and religious interest. The Darton family was proficient in all aspects of the printing and publishing business. They were flexible and skilled enough to produce books, chapbooks and collections using stereotyping, collective publishing, innovative pricing, and high-quality illustrations by popular authors who could write entertaining stories that offered useful knowledge. While the Dartons' sustained focus on children's literature throughout their careers is indicative of the genre's burgeoning popularity in the nineteenth century, it is also a reflection


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NARRATIVE  
**The Darton Family**

1. Harvey and Darton was a printing, publishing, engraving, and bookselling firm co-owned by business partners Joseph Harvey and William Darton Sr. Harvey and Darton was formed in 1791 when Harvey became Darton's partner in the printing business. Subsequently, James Harvey (Joseph Harvey's brother) became a partner in the printing firm in 1805 and Samuel Darton (William Darton Sr.'s son) joined the publishing house in 1810. William Darton Sr. died in 1819, Joseph Harvey retired in 1833, Samuel Darton died in 1840, and James Harvey retired in 1841. The firm itself continued to exist for five years after the Harveys' retirement, finally closing down in 1846. Harvey and Darton specialized in a variety of areas related to the book trade, specifically printing, publishing, engraving, and bookselling. The firm concentrated on children's books, although—due to the owners' adherence to the Quaker religion—it also printed and published anti-slavery literature and various political and religious tracts.

*The Poems of Robert Bloomfield* (1821; 125pp., 13.7 × 8.5 cm) is of interest for several reasons. As noted on the title-page, it is a stereotyped edition. It is also the shared product of a group of publishers, a practice not uncommon in the Romantic period. The publishers listed are 'Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown; Baldwin, Cradock and Joy; Harvey and Darton; G. Cowie and Co.; J. Booker; and Edwards and Knibb.' The 'Darton' in this case is William Darton Sr.'s son, Samuel Darton.

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THE POEMS OF ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, VOL. II. RURAL TALES AND WILD FLOWERS

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tion of their Quaker values. The dedication of the Society of Friends to moral reform and social regeneration manifested itself in a variety of causes, including an active interest in the rearing and education of children. The influence of the Dartons' religious context is evident both in their choice of publications and in the particularly reformist tenor of the literature published by their firms. Broadly targeting a predominantly middle-class readership, their publications contributed to shaping the values of Britain's dynamic middle-class culture.

### *Conclusion*

Underlying the shift from collection and description to the addition of multimedia narratives was a desire to use *Popular Romanticism* to tell stories, and in turn, to offer more accessible ways to enter into the history of print and reading. While developing a valuable tool for scholarly research, the primary aim was to make the site more useful in educational settings, and particularly in courses on literature of the Romantic period. Since 2012, I have used the site in several related ways: by assigning the reading of particular artefacts, categories and narratives in courses on nineteenth-century literature; and by overseeing the work of graduate students on the writing of new narratives. To supplement the addition of materials and narratives, work in progress includes an index of useful terms, a print chronology, a list of further reading and learning modules intended for classroom use. A forthcoming site redesign will add social networking to further communication and collaboration. 

### REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

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## BOOK REVIEWS



Jeffrey W. Barbeau, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 248pp. ISBN 978-1-1373-2497-9; £57.50 (hb).

JEFFREY W. BARBEAU'S LATEST PUBLICATION, *Sara Coleridge: Her Life and Thought*, is the most recent work in a burgeoning field of criticism on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's daughter. Barbeau's study follows on from Peter Swaab's collections of her poetry (*Collected Poems*, Carcanet Press, 2007) and prose (*The Regions of Sara Coleridge's Thought*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), as well as biographies by Bradford Keyes Mudge (*Sara Coleridge: A Victorian Daughter*, Yale University Press, 1989), Kathleen Jones (*A Passionate Sisterhood: The Sisters, Wives and Daughters of the Lake Poets*, Constable, 1997) and Katie Waldegrave (*The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge*, Windmill Books, 2013). This recent wealth of publications indicates the fascination that Sara Coleridge's life is beginning to generate, but Barbeau's study goes beyond the biographical. Here, Sara's biographical details are used as a way of exposing the nuances of her complex literary and theological thought. Barbeau provides the first sustained examination of Sara as an important nineteenth-century intellectual in her own right.

This study adopts a roughly chronological approach which allows Barbeau to emphasise the impact of Sara's biography on her intellectual development. Nonetheless, that his main concern is the growth of Sara's mind is indicated by the thematic chapter titles, which suggest a guide to Sara's construction of herself as a critic: Beauty, Education, Dreams, Criticism, Authority, Reason, Regeneration, Community and Death. This growth was, inevitably, bound up with her relationship with her father, and, in many ways more importantly, with his publications; Barbeau asserts that Sara was 'the single-most important individual in the preservation of [Samuel Taylor Coleridge's] legacy as one of the great intellectuals in English history' (p. 1). Barbeau demonstrates how Sara's editorial work on her father's writings 'served as a tutorial in her father's thinking and allowed Sara to develop a thoroughly Coleridgean frame of mind' (pp. ix–x). That is not to say, however, that Sara was 'slavishly indebted' to her father's thought (p. 23); in fact, she developed Samuel Taylor Coleridge's system and applied it in innovative ways to the social, political and theological issues of the early Victorian era. Although she 'barely knew' her father, after his death—and especially after the death of her husband Henry, STC's first editor—Sara 'claim[ed] singular authority to interpret his works and [...] privately develop his thought for the needs of a new generation' (p. 70).

One of the problems with Sara Coleridge with regards to modern academic thought continues to be the disparity between her formidable intellectual capa-




bilities and her consistent avowals of a belief that a woman's place should remain in the home or, at least, under the supervision or protection of a male relative (p. 83). Barbeau builds upon arguments put forward by Alan Vardy and Donelle Ruwe, who have suggested that Sara's editorial work allowed her to express her original ideas in a public forum without compromising her belief that women should remain in the private sphere.<sup>1</sup> Barbeau expands upon these previous works by revealing their impact on Sara's (largely unpublished) essays on a diverse range of nineteenth-century thinkers, from F. D. Morris to Wesley and Carlyle. He discovers a writer and thinker who maintained an active social and intellectual engagement with many of the most influential figures of the day in a way which challenges Sara's construction of herself as an intensely private individual.

Nevertheless, Barbeau does not discount or belittle the importance of domesticity to Sara's own systems. In fact, he uncovers the ways in which Sara's employments at home—particularly the education of her children—informed the development of several of her most important ideas. Sara's pedagogical theories, like her later theological ones, reflected her rejection of the commonly-held view that external, contextual influences were the primary factors in an individual's development. Instead, Sara 'envisioned a scheme—for her children and others—that placed the accent on interiority and development *ab intra* (from within)' (p. 31). Barbeau finds this approach reflected in Sara's two autonomous publications, *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (1834) and *Phantasmion* (1837). Sara's collection of didactic poems articulate the importance of subjective perception in interactions with the world; Barbeau perceptively suggests that the problematic poem 'Poppies' 'fits quite well with Sara's view of education' because it demonstrates the importance of private associations on the construction of external objects (p. 42). Similarly, Sara's fairy tale evinces her struggle to 'work out a philosophy of the relationship between the mind and body' (p. 52) and the natural world (p. 63). These works take the poetic systems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey and modify them to suit Sara's own creative intent (p. 35).

Barbeau's most important contribution is his extension of the limited work on Sara's theological thought. Barbeau seeks to 'establish the heart of Sara Coleridge's theological agenda and develop her unique—and previously unrecognized—contribution to the history of nineteenth-century theology' (p. 112). Since Earl Leslie Griggs's damning dismissal of Sara's essay 'On Rationalism', scholars have tended to ignore her contributions to mid-nineteenth century theological debates.<sup>2</sup> Barbeau observes that Sara was in an unusual position for a woman in her time: the advanced education she received in the Southey household stood her in good stead for her later involvement with discussions surrounding the Oxford Movement. Sara's engagements with these debates reveal her capacity for intense and sustained argument in a way which, as Barbeau asserts, would have eluded her father. He singles out Sara's 'doctrine of regeneration' as 'the single-most important idea in Sara Coleridge's literary corpus' (p. 130). Barbeau unpacks this complex theory with extensive reference to contemporary ecclesiastical issues, and indicates how



regeneration affected Sara's intellectual and creative relationships, both with her precursors and contemporaries.

Barbeau concludes that 'one of the most remarkable aspects of [Sara's] life is how much she accomplished through years of depression, physical ailments, and dependence on narcotics' (p. 177). In a similar vein, one of the remarkable aspects of this study is its consistent unveiling of the ways in which Sara's personal troubles of both body and mind, not to mention family relations, were essential to the development of an independent and complex intellectual system. Barbeau convincingly reveals the importance of Sara Coleridge to mid-Victorian literary circles, and asserts the need to re-evaluate her position within nineteenth-century intellectual life. This study, long overdue, demonstrates Sara Coleridge's serious contributions to Victorian thinking. Barbeau establishes Sara as an under-represented key figure, one who deserves more attention as a scholar and thinker in her own right, and outside of the shadow of her more famous father. 

## NOTES

1. See Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge: The Posthumous Life of the Author* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Ruwe, 'Opium Addictions and Metaphysicians: Sara Coleridge's Editing of *Biographia Literaria*', *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism*, ed. by Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright (New York: SUNY Press, 2004), pp. 229–51.
2. See Earl Leslie Griggs, *Coleridge Fille* (Oxford: OUP, 1940).

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Teresa Barnard (ed.), *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 194pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-3745-7; £60.00 (hb).

IN HER EXCELLENT ESSAY ON THE DRAMATIST JOANNA BAILLIE, Louise Duckling quotes Lord Byron reflecting on Voltaire's assertion that "the composition of a tragedy required *testicles*"—If this be true', Byron writes, 'Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does—I suppose she borrows them' (p. 153). One of the striking features of Byron's backhanded compliment is his failure to consider female creativity in its own terms, outside of a distinctly masculinist mode of literary production. The essays in this volume draw upon a rich tradition of feminist scholarship that, in contrast to Lord Byron, has identified and explored what Teresa Barnard terms 'the female view of the intellectual world' (p. 6). Barnard's

introductory essay, co-authored with Ruth Watts, sets out the underlying ambition of this collection, which is to present 'new information about women's experiences of their engagement with male-dominated academic and professional fields in the long eighteenth century' (p. 2). To this end, the essays in this volume explore how eighteenth-century women negotiated and responded to the barriers they faced when encountering male-dominated discourses, institutions and practices.


This theme is exemplified in the chapters by Daniel J. R. Grey and Malini Roy. Grey focuses on the role that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu played in introducing smallpox inoculation to England, while Roy discusses Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished child-rearing manual, 'Letters on the Management of Infants'. These essays share a concern with the way in which women writers worked outside of the increasingly professionalised and male-dominated sphere of medicine; both Montagu and Wollstonecraft drew upon 'practical observation' (p. 28) and 'personal experience' (p. 54) in order to formulate alternative bodies of knowledge. In Montagu's case, the ability to travel famously enabled her to witness smallpox inoculation first-hand during her stay in Constantinople. Elsewhere in this collection, attention is paid to writers who were denied such opportunities, but who compensated by extensive reading and imaginative experience. A case in point is Anna Seward, whose interest in volcanoes is discussed in Teresa Barnard's essay. Despite never having visited it in person, Seward composed a poetic tribute to Mount Etna based upon her reading of Patrick Brydone's *A Tour through Sicily and Malta*. Barnard discusses Seward's poem alongside the work of Eleanor Anne Porden Franklin, carefully tracing how the 'female poetic imagination [...] builds on and complements the scientific deliberations of male travellers and scientists' (p. 34).

Barnard's concern with the role that women writers played in the dissemination of specialised forms of knowledge recurs throughout several essays. A particularly fruitful example is provided by Natasha Duquette's engaging chapter on the authorial strategies that Dissenting women writers employed to publish their theological ideas. The central argument of Duquette's stimulating and wide-ranging essay is that women 'veiled' their 'provocative hermeneutic claims and calls for social action' in 'acceptably "feminine" modes of expression' (pp. 107–08)—a claim that reverberates in Louise Duckling's essay on another Dissenting writer, Joanna Baillie. Duckling convincingly argues that the innovative form of Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* enabled her to 'participate in the medical and philosophical debates of her day' (p. 143).

Duckling's chapter offers a helpful reminder that while women's writing of the period may have served various ideological agendas, it could also be startlingly original and accomplished in aesthetic terms. Kaley Kramer's chapter on Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* bears this out. In a carefully historicised and admirably detailed discussion, Kramer identifies how Inchbald manipulated the generic conventions of the 'Protestant literary form' of the novel to produce an examination of the nature and identity of Catholicism in late eighteenth-century Britain (p. 88). The generic possibilities of narrative fiction are also explored in Imke

Heuer's insightful discussion of Harriet and Sophia Lee's *The Canterbury Tales*. Heuer vividly conveys the aesthetic experimentation of the work, demonstrating how Harriet Lee's disruption of conventional Gothic narratives of inheritance and legitimacy reflected social uncertainty in the wake of the French Revolution.

As this account has suggested, the majority of this volume tends towards women's literary endeavours. A notable exception is presented by Laura Mayer's essay on Elizabeth Percy, 1st Duchess of Northumberland. Mayer presents Percy's introduction of Robert Adam's 'light Gothick' style at Alnwick Castle as a significant engagement with the period's 'emerging picturesque aesthetic' (pp. 133, 130). The essay is particularly attentive to the decline in the Duchess's posthumous reputation—a trend that extends from the nineteenth into the twenty-first century. Indeed, many of these essays self-consciously take up the task of reappraising writers who fell into obscurity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In her essay on Hannah More, Susan Chaplin offers a thoughtful and sensitive consideration of a writer whose significance cannot be denied, but whose politics remain challenging to contemporary feminist criticism. Focussing on More's *Sacred Dramas*, Chaplin's essay offers a lucid account of the complex gender politics that result when More appropriates 'a masculine creative voice' only to articulate her own ambivalent account of the feminine (p. 81).

The essays in this book interweave and enter into dialogue with one another in a particularly satisfying and productive manner—to the extent that the three sections into which they are divided hardly seem necessary (the sections are 'An Engagement with Science', 'Religious Discourses' and 'Radical Women, Politics, and Philosophy'). Overwhelmingly, these essays are united in offering historically detailed and carefully nuanced examinations of their primary sources. My only frustration is that on occasion the relative brevity of these essays means that they can provide only fleeting glimpses of figures about whom one desires to know more (such as Mary Wollstonecraft's former pupil Lady Mountcashell, who reportedly attended university lectures dressed as a man before running a medical practice in Pisa with a male physician). Of course, the positive outcome of this frustration is that it provides the impetus to conduct further research. Similarly, it offers a salutary reminder that the work of recovery is an ongoing endeavour. The essays collected in this book provide a valuable and significant contribution to that process. 

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Melanie Bigold, *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century: Elizabeth Rowe, Catherine Cockburn, and Elizabeth Carter* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 312pp. ISBN 978-1137033567; £55 (hb).

DESPITE THE WIDESPREAD ESPOUSAL OF PRINT CULTURE during the eighteenth century, manuscript circulation continued to be embraced by many writers as a viable and indeed attractive option. Several participants in literary salons across Britain and Ireland, for example, often chose to deliberately disseminate their writing in this form, and much salon correspondence includes discussion of the various merits and implications of such circulation. Acclaimed work on manuscript publication has been conducted since the late 1980s by Margaret Ezell, while Pam Perkins has recently argued, in relation to Scottish writers, that by shifting focus away from print (and individual authorship) we can gain 'a clearer sense of the cultural roles played by eighteenth-century women'.<sup>1</sup> Melanie Bigold's *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century* offers us this clearer understanding, presenting the reader with three fine, well-chosen case studies to illustrate her various arguments.

*Women of Letters* explores the works of Elizabeth Rowe, Catherine Cockburn and Elizabeth Carter, dedicating two chapters to each writer. The book's preface is clear and useful, immediately engaging the reader and carefully delineating the author's various arguments and aims. In addition to Bigold's central theme regarding manuscript circulation, her work is also very persuasive in its engagement with reception history and its efforts to convince us of her chosen authors' significant involvement in the republic of letters, outlining their contributions to various Enlightenment debates. One of the key strengths of Bigold's work is that she offers the reader a more inclusive literary history, providing extensive evidence for a more varied female literary tradition. Early on, Bigold outlines her wish to include women often overlooked in twentieth-century studies. Celebrated in their day for piety, virtue and learning, Rowe, Cockburn and Carter later became neglected, in part due to their chosen subjects, although Carter has experienced significant recent attention due to growing interest in the Bluestockings.

A key element of the work, and one that makes it much more effective, is that it does not simply exclude consideration of print to emphasise manuscript, but rather 'actively explores the interface of the two mediums' (p. xiii). Bigold is quick to signal that the three authors she has chosen are not anxious about print, but instead use different media for various purposes at different moments in their writing lives. The texts chosen for analysis by Bigold are well-balanced offerings of print and manuscript publication and come with very useful summaries. Bigold has undertaken solid archival work, mostly conducted in the Bodleian library and British Library, but also makes good use of online databases, particularly *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* and the *English Short Title Catalogue*, a fact that is clearly signalled throughout, rather than relegated to footnotes. Letter writing is presented to the reader as a valid subject for textual criticism,

and Bigold's engagement with these 'meritorious literary products' is extremely rewarding and informative (p. xiv). Her exploration of Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in death, in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1728) and *Letters Moral and Entertaining, in Prose and Verse* (1729, 1731, 1733) is particularly satisfying, and features sustained discussion of their epistolary genesis, outlining thematic and stylistic continuities between the printed letters and those contained in the letter book of one of Rowe's primary correspondents.

Throughout the book, Bigold meticulously situates her three writers and their writing in their cultural contexts, while the reader is also presented with carefully balanced biographical detail, which supports rather than detracts from the author's arguments. Rowe is placed at the centre of a 'community of writers' interested in religious devotion and ethical philosophy, while Catharine Cockburn is introduced as the 'foremost female philosopher of England's Enlightenment' (p. 145). In a section entitled 'Did women have an Enlightenment?' Bigold responds with a resounding yes. The author makes an impassioned case for the intellectual importance of Cockburn's writing: her interest in reforming education, her role in 'clerical Enlightenment', and her influence on later thinkers, are all proffered as evidence, as Bigold argues that Cockburn participated and shaped Enlightenment thought rather than just benefiting from the writings of others.

As the title indicates, literary afterlives represent another central topic of consideration and this is very useful for those of us who often engage with the (heavily) edited letters of Elizabeth Carter or indeed the 'Queen of the Bluestockings', Elizabeth Montagu. Close attention is given to the print afterlives of these women through their biographies and posthumous collections of letters. The accounts of women's own agency in shaping their literary reception is an additional highlight of the book, as Bigold challenges the common disparagement directed at the women's male biographers, including Mathew Pennington's construction of his aunt Carter. Bigold charts the attempts by all three authors to shape and develop their own personas during their lifetime, detailing Rowe's crafting of a voice and her insistent self styling, Cockburn's complicity in the creation of the image of the retiring scholarly author, and Carter's 'construction of a writing self' (p. 176). She also makes convincing arguments for these authors' control over their posthumous reception. Elizabeth Carter in particular is presented as someone especially concerned with this and Bigold describes her as having 'lived for posterity' (p. 170).

Bigold's work defies any possible misconceptions of manuscript writing as 'unfinished, marginal and tenuous' and instead displays its merits, and reveals the benefits to be gained when one engages with both print and manuscript (p. 103). Bigold's writing style is engaging throughout, and the author's enthusiasm for her topic is evident, such as in the notes of excitement regarding Cockburn's links with Mlle de la Vallière. *Women of Letters* is valuable reading for those interested in the eighteenth century, women's writing, biography, Enlightenment, book history and print culture. The work is an excellent contribution to literary studies and offers

us a clearer understanding of the female literary tradition: one less restrictive and ultimately much more interesting. 

## NOTES

1. Pam Perkins, 'Enlightenment Culture', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: EUP, 2012), p. 47.

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Daniel Cook and Nicholas Seager (eds), *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 316pp. ISBN 978-1-1070-5468-4; £67 (hb).

IN APRIL 2016, a research network dedicated to Authorship and Appropriation was inaugurated during an international conference on the subject at the University of Dundee, where not coincidentally this present volume was also launched. Cook and Seager are leading figures in this initiative, and their collection of essays exemplifies the aims of the network in that it seeks to facilitate scholarship on adaptation by accommodating '[i]n addition to issues of genre, authorship, audience, and influence', also 'afterlives in terms of remediation: the textual (poetry, prose, and playtexts), the performative (film, opera, and theatre), and the visual (caricatures, illustrations, and photographs)' (p. 3). This excellent collection is notable for the range of research interests that it covers and should manage to convince many scholars who do not normally read each other's work that they are all active in one overarching discipline, namely the diverse study of adaptation.

As an alternative to 'adaptation', which because of its overfamiliarity is arguably now too much taken for granted, the metaphor 'afterlife' is repeatedly invoked in order to call attention to 'the *mutual* relations between "versions" of works' (p. 2; my emphasis) without prioritising versions by historical precedence or hierarchies of prestige for their respective genres. The editors and all contributors start from the principle that every adaptation is to some extent an adoption too, and should not only be considered as a citation but also as an autonomous work in its own right. To study adaptations as afterlives is to give equal scrutiny to the older version and the new, taking into account the particular contingencies of genre and publication or performance context for both. This approach, as is acknowledged,



owes much to the pioneering work of Linda Hutcheon, who in her *Theory of Adaptation* (2006) may have coined the term 'afterlife' in the sense that it is used here. However, the range of the genres discussed and the focus on case studies 'aftering' eighteenth-century fiction rather than the already widely studied adaptations of Shakespeare or Victorian novels, makes every essay in this collection a valuable contribution to the field. The contributors are internationally renowned experts on long-eighteenth-century fiction, and readers of *Romantic Textualities* will be glad to find that the book demarcates its period generously, so that there is plenty of room for works from the Romantic era.

The opening essay by Daniel Cook sets the tone, proving that 'secondary authorship is intrinsic to, and often roused further by, familiar eighteenth-century writing' by discussing how famous works by Sterne, the Fieldings and Frances Burney either are the starting points of chains of appropriation or themselves hark back to older texts (p. 37). His overview of the different authorial adaptation strategies that may be discerned in this period, which resulted from inconsistent attitudes towards the ownership of literary production, fittingly lends itself to appropriation as teaching material. Michael McKeon deals in fundamentals as well, tracing the origins of the family romance through psychoanalysis and social history using examples from Richardson, Henry Fielding, Burney and Austen, and ponders in a brilliantly understated coda on what a Freudian perspective on the continuous fascination of the theme of parentage may tell us about literary history. McKeon's suggestion that the entire genre of the novel may constitute the 'afterlife' of the older genre of the romance is intriguing, but especially stimulating is his question (left unanswered) whether, with phenomena as prevalent as this, the recurrence of a given literary commonplace should be considered a historically and culturally contingent 'convention' or a 'universal human motive' (p. 68).

Leah Orr argues that the interest in criminality in eighteenth-century fiction was influenced by popular chapbook abridgements of seventeenth-century picaresque and rogue tales, which could be the 'missing link' between the 'episodic plots and static characters' of the picaresque and the more realistic eighteenth-century novel (p. 86). The brevity of the chapbook forced its 'proprietary editors' (to borrow a term from Cook's opening essay, pp. 23–27) to cut their source texts down to a narrative form that is more similar to that of a novel like *Moll Flanders* (1722), whose exact debt to the picaresque tradition has long been a point of contention. The following essay by Sarah Raff on the echoes of *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) in *Bleak House* (1852–53) can be read in dialogue with McKeon's preceding piece, as it views the relationship of the guardians and their wards in these respective novels as analogues to the ways that Richardson and Dickens as authors seek to assume moral guardianship and affective control over their readers.


Three essays address an aspect of 'afterlives' that is not often linked to the issue of adaptation: the serial or partial dissemination of texts in the periodical press, miscellanies and anthologies. The wide-ranging discussion of the appearance of eighteenth-century novels in newspapers and magazines by Nicholas Seager should

once and for all do away with the persistent literary-historical misunderstanding that the serialisation of fiction starts in the nineteenth century, although in this earlier period it of course had particular characteristics that are examined here as well. M.-C. Newbould explains how the novels of Henry Fielding and Sterne were repurposed well into the nineteenth century in so-called ‘beauties’, anthologies that introduced readers to the work of one or several authors by offering them the most edifying or affecting passages. The rationale behind the selection of these extracts reveals much about the period in which these successful publications appeared. Dahlia Porter provides conclusive evidence for her claim that late-eighteenth-century novelists inserted poems in their prose works in order to ‘cultivate a specific kind of afterlife for fiction in anthologies, miscellanies, periodicals, and other novels’ (p. 153). Whereas previously poetry was incorporated to augment the prestige of the often denigrated novel genre, at the end of the century poems in novels of authors such as Ann Radcliffe may have functioned as an advertisement for the source text when republished in periodicals. In those cases when such poems lost their public association with their source, as happened with poetry abstracted from novels by Charlotte Smith, they could at least bring in publicity for their author.

Several essays focus on cross-medial adaptation. David Brewer reconsiders Catherine Gallagher’s notion of ‘fictionality’ by looking at the eighteenth-century puppet theatre. His entertaining essay contains a lot of original research (on p. 177 the mysterious puppeteer ‘Madame De La Nash’ is identified as ‘most likely Fielding in drag’), but also serves as an accessible introduction to an understudied theatrical genre that was clearly important at the time. Turning to theatre on a grander scale, Michael Burden discusses opera adaptations of four famous novels: *Pamela* (1740), *Caleb Williams* (1794), *Frankenstein* (1818) and *Ivanhoe* (1820). He explains why British audiences were so appreciative of musical productions based on novels, and what kind of interferences in the source texts were deemed necessary to prepare them for the stage. Burden’s account of how the political dimension of the novels by father and daughter Godwin was transformed in their adaptations is particularly fascinating. David Francis Taylor discusses political caricaturist James Gillray’s casting of Napoleon and other public personalities in the 1803 French invasion scare as characters from *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). As Taylor proves, Gillray was not uncritically chauvinist in his ‘patriotic Gulliveriana’ (p. 225), but apart from borrowing his characters from Swift, also imported into his drawings the ambiguity typical of that author.

The following essays by Robert Mayer and Jillian Heydt-Stevenson address the dominant form of cross-medial adaptation of the past century, that of novels for the screen, and both are eminently teachable. Mayer delivers a survey of film adaptations of novels by Defoe, ‘a crucial element in Anglo-American as well as post-colonial Anglophone cultural memory’, appropriated not primarily for the narratives but because they are ‘useful for the collective “permanent rewriting” of both the past and the future’ (p. 248). Heydt-Stevenson suggests a new angle to what must be the most popular subject for adaptation studies (especially among

students), Jane Austen costume dramas, by contrasting the treatment of the notion of ‘happiness’ in the source text and successive film versions. By paying attention to the changing interpretations of this notion and how it is developed through plot structures, she brings to the fore the didactic aspect of the source text and its representations in our age, which is generally resistant to explicit moral instruction. More Austen follows in the closing essay, in which Peter Sabor shows how a piece of Austen juvenilia only published in 1922, the short *History of England* (written in 1791), inspired the history spoof *1066 and All That* (1930) by Sellar and Yeatman.

As the editors suggest, ‘[f]urther studies might move beyond these textual, performative, or visual boundaries to consider in detail the use of fictional works in marketing, tourism, merchandise, and other facets of modern living’ (p. 5). This collection nevertheless succeeds in introducing the state of the art in sundry specialisms relevant to the ‘afterlives’ of eighteenth-century fiction, while delivering fresh insights and hinting at possible further research. 

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Jakub Lipski and Jacek Mydla (eds), *The Enchantress of Words, Sounds and Images: Anniversary Essays on Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823)* (Bethesda, Dublin, Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2015), pp. xxi+250. 978-1-9363-2096-7; £68.95 (hb).

DESCRIBED BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY as ‘the great enchantress of [her] generation’, Ann Radcliffe has long been identified as the author whose work contributed more than that of any other to the popularity of Gothic prose at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet in this new collection of eleven essays Jakub Lipski and Jacek Mydla achieve much more than simply perpetuating the image of Radcliffe as the eponymous ‘Enchantress’ of ruined castles and persecuted heroines. Rather, they have celebrated the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Radcliffe’s birth by assembling a range of scholarship that explores why this term is so applicable to Radcliffe, and which prioritises her identity as a Romantic artist over her status as a writer of popular sensational fiction.

Focusing primarily on Radcliffe’s most famous novels, the collection explores a diverse array of ideas and concepts which are all connected in some way through a shared motif of visual and/or audio imagery. In the first of four sections, ‘Radcliffe and the Language of Aesthetics’, three essays assess the relationship of the major novels to lyrical art forms such as poetry and music. Jakub Lipski begins with a helpful and concise overview of ‘Ann Radcliffe and the sister arts ideal’ that


examines connections between poetry and painting from across all of Radcliffe's narrative fiction. Raising the intriguing question of Radcliffe's 'scanty visual heritage' in terms of images or paintings inspired by her works, Lipski suggests that Radcliffe's true talent lies in 'a poetics of the in-between' that relies on a complex relationship between 'words, sounds, and images' (p. 19). In the following chapter, Alice Labourg develops conventional associations between Radcliffe and visual artists including Salvator Rosa and Domenicho Zampieri, providing a superb delineation of references to such contemporary figures in the only two novels to name specific painters, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797). Completing this section is a long overdue assessment of the centrality of poetry and music as verse forms within *Udolpho* by Joanna Kobot. Although Kobot's assumption that epigraphic quotations fulfil the same function as in-text poems is perhaps a little limiting, much potential for further discussion is illuminated by her assertion that such poetic inclusions operate 'as a kind of generalisation of some aspect of the presented reality' (p. 67).

Diversifying from the main theme, the next section on 'The Radcliffean Identities' commences with an examination of linguistics in *Udolpho* from Thomas Dutoit, which poses an unconventional argument supporting the presence of subliminal authorial signing throughout the text. A range of highly original ideas are presented and passionately defended, although some arguments nonetheless remain unconvincing, such as the suggestion that Radcliffe deliberately chose the names of the 'two most important servants of the novel, Annette and Old Carlo' to provide a 'cryptographic inscription' of her own name within the text (p. 85). Somewhat more convincing is Agieszka Łowczanin's reassessment of *Udolpho* as an integrally proto-feminist work coming in the wake of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In *Udolpho*, Łowczanin claims, 'the prevalent politics of the ignorance women are subject to is additionally translated into the Gothic poetics of mystery' (p. 119). Returning to the broader spectrum of Radcliffe's fiction, a survey of the development of Radcliffean villains (somewhat confusingly referred to as 'black characters') is supplied by Marek Błaszak, together with a summary of aesthetic and literary influences upon these characters.

In the book's third section, the experience of 'Re-Reading Radcliffe' is addressed, a topic implicitly interesting to all of Radcliffe's most dedicated devotees. Jacek Mydła's chapter provides a complex and original examination of Radcliffean terror. Although no definitive conclusions appear to be reached, it does provide an intriguing new perspective on one of the most unique aspects of Radcliffe's writing, her approach to and construction of a sense of mystery. Following this, Joanna Maciulewicz's analysis of *Udolpho* as an 'allegory of reading' presents a more clarified evaluation. Arguing that the 'frequent use of the motif of books' within *Udolpho* is an indication of 'Radcliffe's interest in the effects of the emerging book culture on social order' (p. 167), she assesses the novel in relation to the function of other forms of predominantly female literature including earlier novels and conduct books. Her ultimate conclusion that 'Radcliffe's fiction becomes a manual

of social conduct comparable to [...] novels of manners' provides a stimulating new envisioning of the function of Radcliffe's work within the Gothic canon (p. 171).

Concluding the volume is a diverse range of essays grouped loosely under the title of 'Radcliffe in Context(s)'. Magdalena Ożarska provides some fascinating commentary on the process of authorial composition in Radcliffe's little-discussed travelogue, *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*. Stepping away from Radcliffe's persona as Gothic novelist, Ożarska debates perceptions of gender derived from the text via an assessment of the extent to which Radcliffe's husband may have contributed to this work, and thus also inadvertently addresses a range of scholarly problems associated with identifying dual-authorship. Dariusz Pniewski follows this with an exploration of Polish translations of Radcliffe's Gothic fiction, thus providing a brief glimpse into an area of growing interest in the process of contemporary translation of English texts into other European languages. This spectrum of differing 'Contexts' is completed by a brief discussion of contemporary attitudes towards, and responses to, Radcliffe's Gothic prose by Wojciech Nowicki.

Drawing together an eclectic mixture of new scholarship, *The Enchantress of Words, Sounds, and Images* is an interesting and useful volume. Although in some ways it perpetuates the conventional focus upon Radcliffe's three most famous Gothic novels—*The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian*—there is a substantial attempt to provide new insights into these texts. Amongst the most useful points raised is the suggestion that Radcliffe's Gothic fiction has an educational and morally informative purpose at its core, an idea that, though by no means original, is nonetheless greatly advanced by numerous chapters throughout the book (in particular, those by Łowczanin and Maciulewicz). Whilst this does mean that the contents of the book sometimes stray a little from the 'Words, Sounds, and Images' of the title, it is this very tendency to prioritise less conventional qualities of Radcliffe's works that is one of the volume's greatest strengths. 

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Maureen McCue, *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 204pp. ISBN 978-0-7190-9033-2; £60 (hb)

HUMANITIES SCHOLARS WHO ARE PERSISTENTLY REMINDED about the necessity of making their research interdisciplinary should definitely turn to Maureen McCue's *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840* for an object lesson on how to combine disciplines not simply for the sake of 'interdisciplinarity' as a catch-all idea, but rather in order to broadly contextualise a given topic and represent it in a fair and comprehensive manner. Very much to the advantage of her book, McCue understands the Romantic reception of Italian Old Masters not merely as the popularity of ekphrastic passages in the period's verse, but as a far-reaching phenomenon that left its imprint not only on literature and art but also on the contemporary book market as well as social habits and institutions. As McCue puts it when stating her thesis, Italian art was 'a key force in shaping Romantic-period culture and aesthetic thought' and 'an avenue through which Romantic writers could address aesthetic, political and social issues, often simultaneously' (p. 23). Thanks to her clear argument, successfully applied methodologies and vivid exemplification, McCue certainly leaves her readers with the impression that this was really the case.

The book opens with a fairly extensive Introduction which, apart from defining the study's goals and outlining its contents, provides insight into those aspects of the Romantic period which help properly contextualise the reception of Old Masters in British Romanticism. Central here is Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital', which sheds light on the way the appreciation of Old Master art transcended class boundaries (especially in comparison with the traditionally aristocratic Grand Tour of the previous century) and became a democratic experience enabling 'a variety of Britons [...] to shape their own personal, social and national identities' (p. 9). McCue further illustrates the differences between the Romantic and the eighteenth-century approaches to Italian art by what she calls a 'shift in focus from Rome to Florence' (p. 14), that is, from (neo)classical fascinations epitomised by what Rome offered to a heightened interest in Renaissance Tuscany. Though the juxtaposition serves the purpose of highlighting the role of Florence in the Romantic imagination, one might have doubts about it doing so at the cost of the Eternal City, especially given the fact that it was Rome that displayed the magnificence of the High Renaissance (including Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement* and Raphael's *Stanzas* which are discussed in some detail by McCue). To paint a multifaceted background for the subsequent analyses, McCue also touches upon some characteristics of post-1815 travel writing, the specificity of Romantic responses to visual arts as well as changes in the circulation of art, both in print and through cultural institutions. The Introduction articulates a number of objectives the study will pursue, some of which foreshadow the innovative findings the work indeed offers as it develops. What may raise doubts is the author's aim to 'challenge [...] the unspoken assumption that the art of the



Renaissance was uncontroversial simply because it was, and has remained, at the centre of the Western canon' (p. 5). Is there anything to substantiate the limits of 'our present-day understanding' (p. 6), as McCue puts it, of Old Masters? Is being part of the canon tantamount to being 'uncontroversial'? Fortunately, such minor issues do not in any way undermine the impressive task undertaken by the author.

In the first chapter, McCue proceeds to account for the impact of Italian Old Master art on the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century national discourse in Britain, and on its tangible manifestations in the form of public art galleries in major British cities. McCue argues that acquiring artworks was at times represented as a way of protecting them from perishing and thus helped the British to fashion themselves as a highly cultured people. Central here is the notion of class, as the democratic experience of Italian masterpieces at the beginning of the nineteenth century contributed to the formation of 'a new generation of connoisseurs', no longer limited to the aristocracy. McCue also addresses the French-British rivalry during the Napoleonic wars, highlighting the role of art market in the attempts to prove Britain's superiority. Arguably, the most intriguing part of the chapter is the one which concerns the attempts to 'engraft Italian art on English nature', as William Hazlitt put it (qtd p. 25). McCue refers to de Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807) to illustrate the difficulty in reconciling the Catholic aesthetic of suffering and physical pain with Protestant detached sensibility, thus situating the debate over the arts in the context of the North-South dialectic. As McCue argues, the Romantics attempted to separate the religious content from the artistic form that was an expression of genius, traces of which can be found in contemporary travel writing and correspondence. The appropriation of the social and mercantile context surrounding Old Masters did not pose such difficulties. Through a closer look at the Liverpool-located patron and philanthropist William Roscoe, the author of *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (1796), McCue points to the ways in which Tuscan 'commercial humanism' could be transposed onto British soil. The chapter closes with a discussion of the intricacies of the so-called 'Anglo-Italian identity', showing how the appreciation of Italian heritage helped 'construct a definition of the self' (p. 62).


Chapter 2 is a concise, coherent and convincing discussion of the phenomenon of connoisseurship in the 'new museum culture' of the nineteenth century. McCue follows a clear trajectory of argument to demonstrate the shift from the eighteenth-century idea that only the representatives of the highest stratum of society were capable of accurate aesthetic judgment to the belief that both the experience and criticism of the arts transcend traditional class boundaries. The democratisation of art experience was a consequence of the emergence of mass tourism in the aftermath of Napoleonic wars, which appeared to be interrelated with the development of exhibition culture in the contemporary metropolis. These phenomena, as McCue points out, were reflected in contemporary travel writing and gallery guidebooks respectively. The chapter closes with a discussion of the 'poetic connoisseur', that is, a member of 'an aristocracy of taste, based on a refined sensibility and an innate ability to perceive and respond to beauty and

genius' (p. 77). Focusing on art commentaries of P. B. Shelley, Byron and Hazlitt, McCue argues that 'poetic connoisseurs' created a widely emulated model for art appreciation.

The final two chapters of McCue's book are literature oriented and offer a wide panorama of art-oriented themes in Romantic-period prose and verse (Chapter 3) and a focused study of a text which is arguably very much illustrative of the Romantic ideal of arts symbiosis—namely, Samuel Rogers's *Italy* (Chapter 4). The third chapter, in a way, provides a background for the following reading of *Italy*, as it sheds light on the various ways of marrying, as it were, the art of painting with Romantic literature. McCue successfully exemplifies the development of an inter-artistic language which coined and elaborated on such notions as 'genius', 'expression' and 'gusto', as well as discussing attempts to 'novelise' artworks through engaging with the biographical content behind them. All this serves to prove the point that while the eighteenth-century debate over the sister arts was 'a simple contest as to whether the visual or verbal arts could claim superiority' (p. 89), the Romantics developed a deeper understanding of the relationship as 'a dynamic and mutually creative symbiosis' (p. 89). Although the latter part of the comparison does not raise doubts in the light of the presented evidence, McCue apparently cannot resist the temptation to vindicate Romantic-period literary achievements at the cost of those of the eighteenth century. Even if the gradation of the arts was indeed a vital component of the sister arts debate in the Enlightenment, it did not 'overwhelmingly reduce' the debate itself. As a matter of fact, it was also concerned with the ideas that proved immensely powerful in Romanticism, such as imagination and expression, whereas the belief that the arts complement each other and operate most forcibly when united paved the way to the poetics of synaesthesia and the ideal of a total work of art.

Though not necessarily a 'close reading', as McCue labels it, the analysis of Samuel Rogers's *Italy* is an illuminating display of the potential of a case study to paint the multifaceted background out of which the text in question emerged. McCue's insightful and persuasively argued discussion not only points to *Italy* as a successful example of the marriage between the sister arts, but also situates the work in the context of the dominant trends in the publishing market. Rogers's *Italy* is here presented as an apt illustration of 'how interconnected were the literary market and the market for fine art, specifically Italian art, in that period' (p. 159). The book, McCue argues, is also illustrative of the Romantic trend to 'imagine' Italy, predominantly through an engagement with Old Master art; a trend that was characteristic of 'a variety of forms and media' (p. 159). The *Italy* of McCue's analysis is a text which merits close critical attention, as it accurately renders the impact of Italianate fashions on nineteenth-century British culture. The popularity of the various editions of the book throughout the century indicates that Rogers in particular, and the Romantics in general, left an imprint on the ways 'successive generations' (p. 159) responded to Italian Renaissance art.

Despite some very minor inaccuracies, Maureen McCue's *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840* presents its readers with

a rich and nuanced picture of the phenomenon in question. McCue successfully creates a multidimensional context for her focused readings and moves between disciplines with exceptional ease. Her book makes a valuable contribution to interdisciplinary research into the Romantic period. 

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Chase Pielak, *Memorializing Animals during the Romantic Period* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 178pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-4146-1; £60 (hb).

CHASE PIELAK'S *MEMORIALIZING ANIMALS DURING THE ROMANTIC PERIOD* explores the disruptive potential of animals in British Romantic literature and the surprising encounters that they induce, both in life and from beyond the grave. For this book, 'beasts matter because they appear in Romantic literature at points when its authors figure moments of ontological category rupture—when being itself is challenged' (p. 3). Poetry has a privileged role in such crises, since it 'is the ideal medium to convey the linguistic disturbances that accompany ontological disturbance' (p. 3). *Memorializing Animals* is a philosophically ambitious attempt to juxtapose materials from literary theory and animal studies with Romantic literature. It wants to unearth 'the beasts that reside within us as well as those buried during the Romantic Period' and to explore 'the spaces in which we can encounter [the] animals whose corpses litter our literary landscape' (p. 12). In the process, Pielak covers a number of well-trodden areas from a fresh perspective and also focusses on some comparatively neglected texts from the period, such as Wordsworth's *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815).

The opening half of *Memorializing Animals* might be seen as primarily looking at different modes of relation between humans and nonhumans. The first chapter traces literal and figurative animals in Charles Lamb's writing, attempting to demonstrate an aspiration to sociability in Lamb's encounters with nonhuman animals. However, since many of these encounters occur at the dining table, Pielak argues that the desire for communion often masks the impossibility of assimilating, processing or remembering individual animals. The second and third chapters argue for more successful connections between human and animal lives in John Clare's poetry. Nonetheless, these more productive meetings are also accompanied by psychological difficulties: Pielak claims that Clare's cascading reflections on nature are frequently disturbing and create a sense of melancholia that 'threatens to do away with the coherent self' (p. 55).

In its second part, *Memorializing Animals* is more explicitly concerned with death and absence in poetry's confrontations with the nonhuman. The fourth chapter considers the proximity of death to life in Coleridge's poetry, tracing ideas of putrefaction and exhumation through 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', 'The Raven', 'To a Young Ass' and 'Christabel' by placing them alongside a discussion of contemporary burial reform. Pielak then focusses on Byron as pet-keeper via the ubiquitous elegy for Boatswain, before returning to animal consumption in his discussion of scenes of dog-eating and cannibalism in *Don Juan*. Finally, and perhaps most successfully, the book looks at the productive connections between place, memorialisation and animals in Wordsworth's verse. In particular, Pielak explores how what he calls 'animemorials' are also frequently 'antimemorials' that frustrate or displace adequate memorialisation (p. 136).

*Memorializing Animals during the Romantic Period* is part of a growing and welcome number of critical works that take seriously the role of animals in Romantic writing and, in the process, offer new ways to think about conceptions of nature in the period and the centrality of the nonhuman to Romanticism's most philosophic concerns. However, despite rich material and a dynamic range of stimulating interests, the experience of reading this book is often frustrating. There are many references to disparate examples of theory without discussion of a single approach or idea in adequate depth. Many of the chapters depend on complex expression and theoretical jargon, but there are few pointers to help readers understand the broader moves that are being made. Furthermore, Pielak's arguments occasionally boil down simply to chains of metaphorical association, sometimes expressed in jarringly informal language.

Part of the problem arguably lies in what might have been one of the book's strengths: its breadth. Alongside questions of the animal, Pielak introduces a wide-ranging conceptual framework, involving—among others—constellating questions of exhumation and memorialisation, diet, community and friendship. These concepts are more or less persuasively deployed in different parts of the book and it is undoubtedly impressive to see such a variety of questions opened up by considering animals in Romantic texts. Nevertheless, I wonder if many of Pielak's arguments might have been expressed more directly and elegantly if they had been developed with single-minded attention to a more coherent and delimited set of interests. 

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**Fiona Price, *Reinventing Liberty: Nation, Commerce and the Historical Novel from Walpole to Scott* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 241pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-0296-5; £70.00 (hb).**

I BEGAN READING *REINVENTING LIBERTY* in the weeks leading up to Britain's Brexit vote in June 2016: the timing was uncanny. Price's impressive monograph focuses on the concept of national identity as it relates to commerce and liberty within the late eighteenth-century historical novel. The anxieties surrounding twenty-first-century Britain and the referendum shaped my reading in a way that brought forward Price's discussion of the early historical novel and its roots in the politics of national identity with an increased clarity and modern relevance.

The thrust of Price's argument at first seems unsurprising: she adopts a now-common stand against Georg Lukács's influential *The Historical Novel* (1937) and asserts that there is a wealth of British early historical novels, both well and lesser known, written prior to Walter Scott's monopoly on the form. Such novels bear reading, Price suggests, because they represent an important moment in the development of modern British national identity (p. 3), and because they provide readers and writers alike with a narrative space to reimagine the past as a way of reshaping the present (p. 11). But then, after laying out a thorough introduction of eighteenth-century discourses in political development, models of historiography and the resonances of these in an array of novels, Price takes a much more nuanced and original approach: 'the historical novel emerged [...] as a form which at once employed and interrogated the dominant political narrative', which 'allowed proposals for reform or for limits on monarchical power to be seen as attempts to ensure stability or, at most [...] to return to political origin' (p. 17).

Bolstering this new approach to the early historical novel, the work's five chapters are organised thematically and roughly chronologically, placing novels in conversation with each other and alongside contemporary works in order to theorise the novels' political perspectives. Chapter 1 focuses primarily on Thomas Leland's *Longsword* (1762), Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778), Anne Fuller's *Son of Ethelwolf* (1789) and Ann Radcliffe's *Gaston de Blondville* (1826) alongside the writings of Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft. Price teases out the common threads of these works' interrogation of ancient constitutionalism and the rhetoric of leadership and transition, showing how each addresses these anxieties through narratives of historical continuity with the present rather than rupture as 'the best chance of preserving freedom' (p. 24), particularly 'in relation to the political present' (p. 53).

Price's second chapter probes how historical novelists engage with stadial history and the questions/problems of sympathy and sentiment, especially in relation to questions of government's purpose. She again juxtaposes an array of novels—including Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783–85), Charlotte Smith's *Ethelinde* (1789), *Desmond* (1792) and *The Old Manor House* (1793) and William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799)—with the philosophical treatises of William Robertson and David

Hume, among others. Reading the ways that writers explore concepts of work, the worker and historical hardships, Price argues that in questioning the trappings of chivalry and acceptable forms of nostalgia versus eighteenth-century sensibility, these historical novels 'probe whether economic and sympathetic circulation can bind the classes together' (p. 62); as such, this genre 'becomes a key mechanism in the construction of social rationality' (p. 84) through depictions of the labouring classes.

In Chapter 3, Price inverts the common argument that the national tale anticipates the historical novel, reading instead the historical novel—which she here classifies as 'a cautious and sometimes imperial form' (p. 102)—as foreshadowing the national tale. Through readings of Anna Maria Mackenzie's *Monmouth* (1790), Henry Siddons's *William Wallace: or, The Highland Hero* (1791), Sydney Owen's *O'Donnel* (1814), James White's *Earl Strongbow* (1789), Anna Millikin's *Eva, an Old Irish Story* (1795), Ellis Cornelia Knight's *Marcus Flaminius* (1792), the anonymous *Arville Castle* (1795) and Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), Price distinguishes the historical novel from national romance through its use of stadial history to open up a space for 'the novelistic consideration of nationalism' (126) and for questioning the balance of governmental power between the nation and the individual.


Price returns to the notion of chivalry in Chapter 4, addressing how historical novelists of the 1790s and 1800s redefined chivalry alongside the emerging scientific discourses of Joseph Priestley. Illustrating the associations of chivalry with humanitarian and medicinal pursuits, Price reads Anna Maria Porter's *The Hungarian Brothers* (1807) and *Don Sebastian* (1809), Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina* (1804) and Jane West's *The Loyalists* (1812) and *Letters Addressed to a Young Man* (1801). These novels, Price argues, purge chivalry 'of its warlike excess' (p. 136), thereby offering readers ways of seeing a relationship between 'Christianity, science, and the interpretation of the past' (p. 165)—to adapt the chivalric through stadial narratives of national healing. Rather than viewing life through gallantry and romance, such novels brought political actors and processes and the materialities of nationalism into sharper focus.

Lastly, Chapter 5 underscores Price's overarching argument that Scott was working 'in dialogue with other historical fictions', now largely 'forgotten': 'the role of earlier historical fiction in shaping Scott's fiction remains obscure' (pp. 170–71). In response, Price attends to the literary conversations between Scott and his precursors (particularly Jane West, Charlotte Smith and the Porter sisters, Jane and Anna Maria), and identifies various resonances, as well as disparities, of plot and theme across texts: tensions between epistemological values of and approaches to history, the romance of restoration versus revolution, the progress of chivalry and debates of individual liberties. Price focuses her discussion on Scott's *The Antiquary* (1816), *Ivanhoe* (1819) and *St Roman's Well* (1824) to stage the conflict between 'the novel of ancient liberties and that of chivalry and nation, combining



the radical trope of the alternative community on one hand and the recuperated and adjusted conservative narrative of history as science on the other' (p. 183).

Price convincingly concludes that 'chivalry allowed for the relationship between property, wealth and political power to be re-examined' (p. 208). By calling into question 'the association between property and power' (p. 209), the early British historical novel recasts the stages of chivalry from their aristocratic associations to consider commercial ones: sentiment and the materialities of history alike must be redistributed and redirected from the nation to the individual as a means of attaining and preserving liberty.

*Reinventing Liberty* engages with so many primary texts that Price's discussion cannot delve deeply into each work; the textual analyses she provides are relatively cursory, remaining, for the most part, at the level of the novels' plots and general themes. But, since Price's aim is to provide a panorama of and justification for the late-eighteenth-century historical novel genre and its emergence from the economic and political environment of this period in Britain, this cursory approach is effective and useful. By wading through a wide range of works—rather than diving into a select few—Price is able to establish a broader foundation for future studies in the early British historical novel. I finished reading this work energised and with scores of ideas dancing through my mind for approaches to future research on the primary works with which Price engages—and ready to debate the Brexit vote through the lens of cultural history. In sum, the work's merit lies less in literary criticism and more in the cogent contextualisation of eighteenth-century philosophies on display in the stories told about Britain's national identity. 

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Martin Priestman, *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin: Enlightened Spaces, Romantic Times* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 324pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-1954-5; £70 (hb).

*THE POETRY OF ERASMUS DARWIN: ENLIGHTENED SPACES, ROMANTIC TIMES* aims to recover the poetry and poetics of Erasmus Darwin from behind the rock of Wordsworthian Romanticism by challenging anew its assumptions about poetic diction and the role of metaphor or analogy. Priestman is working against the grain of 'the Romantic Movement, with Erasmus Darwin's absurd efforts the prime specimen of the artificial lumber of "poetic diction" mercifully cleared away

for good by Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* and its Preface' (p. 3). While I disagree with Priestman that Wordsworth's reconceptualised 'poetic diction' engenders 'easy assumptions' about artificial ornamentation—rather, it remains a hard-won innovation in the development of English poetry—it is easy to be persuaded by Priestman's argument that the poetry of Erasmus Darwin has been given short shrift to the degree that his more famous grandson could declare that, in his own time, the poetry was barely read.


As Priestman's enquiry proceeds, however, its ambitious scope becomes more evident and a paradox emerges in relation to his aim of recovering the poetics while at the same time giving due attention to Darwin's use of myth in the context of a Foucauldian epistemic shift from a static Linnaean taxonomy to an early, dynamic evolutionary model. Similarly, Priestman's outline of Darwin's theories of mythology, while pertinent to the project of recovering neglected aspects of the three major poems under discussion, extends into a detailed yet somewhat distracting narrative exploring those fascinating secret societies, the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons. Priestman's lively and informed treatment of these contextual phenomena is so interesting that the reader may be apt to lose sight of the focus on poetics and poetry, *per se*. Ironically, Darwin's poems recede slightly into the background at these stages of the work (Chapters 6 through to 8) despite the worthy objective of providing a fresh treatment of *The Loves of the Plants*, *The Economy of Vegetation* and *The Temple of Nature*.

Chapter 11, 'Romantic Times (1): Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth', ought to be of particular interest to Romanticism scholars, with its nuanced and astute reading of Coleridge's complex relationship to Erasmus Darwin. That relationship is more frequently elided or treated reductively through the brief decontextualised quotation of Coleridge's sometimes damning views of Darwin's poetics. Priestman, on the other hand, is alive to the complexity of tone in Coleridge's letters and applies judicious interpretative attention to the links between the purpose and the recipients of the letters in question before making any assertions about Coleridge's assessment of Erasmus Darwin's poetry.

The genuine strength of Priestman's study of the poetics of Erasmus Darwin is his exploration of a distinctively spatial orientation to the poetry, an 'Enlightenment spatialism' that can be obscured if the poetry itself is evaluated using a Romanticist lens that prioritises time, or 'spots of time', over spatial arrangement. While conceding that Coleridge needs more empty spaces than Darwin provides for the kind of contemplation that recognises genuine pathos, Priestman presses home his point that a writer's poetics ought to be evaluated on its own terms. Such evaluation rightly entails using the aesthetic principles of a poet's precisely historicised context, regardless of whether these principles have been disparaged by Romanticists, then and since. At the very least, it is of legitimate concern that the principles of Erasmus Darwin's poetry are simply ignored by post-Enlightenment readers steeped in the legacy of Romanticism.

Priestman carefully considers the role that Darwin's poetry played in contemporary debates about female education, offering a particularly interesting survey of

the legacy of his poetics as it was taken up and transformed by women. In Chapter 12, 'Romantic Times (2): Later Romantics and Women Poets', Priestman considers women writing poetry influenced by Darwin's didacticism but with an eye to the domestic aspect of flowers and life. Such poetry takes on a less sexual but equally intriguing re-interpretation of 'vegetable love'. Priestman is alert to the problematic category of 'Romantic women writers' and sensitively applies an historicised understanding of the stages of life of the women discussed and their contextual experiences, particularly Anna Laetitia Barbauld (as a poet born in the 1740s).

Overall, the work is clearly and cogently written and fills a gap in the existing literature on the literary aspects of the polymath that was Erasmus Darwin, while simultaneously pointing the way towards further enquiry into his more often obscured role as a 'man of letters'. Priestman succeeds in salvaging the reputation of Erasmus Darwin as the writer of *The Loves of the Plants* from the dismissive satire, *The Loves of the Triangles*, which rendered him a poetic absurdity and buried his poetry as the object of serious study for so long. Re-reading *The Loves of the Plants*, in particular, is a heightened experience as a result of Priestman's effectiveness in opening up fresh ways of discussing the poetry of Erasmus Darwin. Ultimately, Coleridge's observation that Darwin displayed the 'most original mind in Europe' informs Priestman's analysis of Darwin's self-conscious textuality and 'magpie intertextuality' (p. 67). *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin: Enlightened Spaces, Romantic Times* is a provocative study of a poetic thinker worthy of recovery in light of our current theoretical concerns and abiding appreciation of English poetry. 

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**Mark Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 188pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-0593-1; £60 (hb).**

MARK SANDY'S LATEST MONOGRAPH, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning*, builds upon his previous work on Romantic subjectivities, legacies and constructions of place. This study unites these previous interests in an exploration of how the language of grief in Romantic poetry is used to articulate the connection between a personal sense of loss and the subject's position within social and literary communities. At the same time, Sandy challenges definitions of 'Romanticism', and demonstrates how writers throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries used similar expressions of grief to maintain imaginative conversations with their Romantic precursors.


Sandy identifies ways in which Romantic poetry about grief ‘acts as a defence against, and encounter with, the final silence of death’ (p. 1). This ‘silence of death’ is one discovered in losses of various kinds; it is located in personal grief and in sites of mourning for lost ideals. What unites these diverse experiences of grief and mourning is a focus on ‘irreplaceable loss’ (p. 2). Sandy reveals a unity in the mourning experiences of Romantic writers across nine chapters: each of the ‘Big Six’ is the focus of a chapter, as is John Clare. Charlotte Smith and Felicia Hemans are explored in a joint chapter, and the study concludes with a brief survey of the lasting effects of Romantic memory and mourning on Victorian poetry. Sandy’s attention to detail is impressively in evidence throughout the work; through sustained close reading, he seeks to demonstrate how multiple poetic forms were utilised by the Romantics and their successors to articulate their speculations on grief and loss. Indeed, he suggests that ‘[i]ndividual and communal consolation depend upon the successful communication of suffering’ (p. 46), and his analyses indicate the multifarious ways in which these poets might be said to have offered such ‘consolation’.

Sandy’s careful reading of textual detail is echoed in the themes he discovers in the poems. He reveals how the Romantics’ experiences of grief provided a means through which to articulate their concerns with the personal and quotidian. Sandy identifies in Blake’s works an exploration of the subject’s ability to ‘envisage our experience of life in the tragic and miraculous modes of perception’ (p. 17). The way in which the poet or speaker sees the world is made manifest through the form of the poem; in Blake’s poetry, as in Wordsworth’s, Sandy suggests that the individual’s perception of the world is dependent upon ‘shifting relational dynamics governed by [...] contingent factors’ (p. 22). Sandy finds these dynamics in diverse relations: they operate between life and death, gain and loss, memory and forgetting, love and mourning, as well as between the poet and poem, poem and reader. These interactions are, furthermore, governed by social, economic and geographical factors. Sandy expands upon these ‘interplay[s]’ in his reading of Wordsworth who, he suggests, is ‘always alert to the forces that shape and disrupt’ such interactions (p. 35). Nevertheless, the Wordsworthian quest is one which ‘aspire[s] towards the reassurance of a shared compensatory vision and communal memory’ (p. 46). As Sandy writes of Clare, these poetics of memory and mourning are ‘achieved by compressing together simplicity with sublimity’ (p. 139); that is, the interspaces between these types of contrasting ideas are where such poetics might be found.

Sandy shapes a particularly intriguing argument around ideas of enclosure. Of Blake’s ‘Garden of Love’, he suggests that ‘ever-tightening and suffocating “binding” rules prescribe an ever-diminishing arena of human action, energy, and desire’ (p. 30). This constricted creative area nevertheless leads to an imaginative expansion revealed by several of these authors’ outputs; in a productive development of M. H. Abrams’s definition of the Greater Romantic Lyric, Sandy suggests that in

Coleridge's conversation poems, a 'poetical inward turn, as well as the speaker's invocation of an absent or absented addressee [...] constitutes Coleridge's preoccupation with poetic memory' (p. 47). For Coleridge, as well as Byron, Shelley, Smith and Clare, memory is reflected in the poet's perception of the landscapes around them: in particular, Coleridge's and Clare's English countrysides and Byron's and Shelley's Italian cities prove to be creatively productive public sites for the poet's consideration of his private woes. The affinities between the sea and sky, indicated by their mutual reflections and drawn out in several of Sandy's chapters, act as a metaphor for the kinds of continuous discontinuities which make up the Romantic experience of mourning. The poems themselves are the means of '(re-) inscrib[ing]' the poets' 'deceased, once living, authorial presences into the future historical present of reading' (p. 94). In other words, the poet's memories become the stuff of their readers' experience, which in turn become their memories, too.

This cycle of remembrances bestowed and lost is, Sandy argues, continued in the works of such Victorian poets as Tennyson, Hardy and Yeats. This study suggests that a poetry of mourning—which is also one of community and continuity—reveals a 'genuine dialogue' between Victorian and Romantic poetry (p. 154). As Sandy implicitly recognises, this study suggests tantalising pathways for further research, particularly on the effect of mourning and memory in the works of those whom Michael Bradshaw has termed 'third-generation Romantics' (a phrase which proves especially useful in Sandy's final two chapters).<sup>1</sup> In particular, the careers of Letitia Elizabeth Landon and Thomas Beddoes might allow for a fascinating extension of Sandy's study, as would more detailed readings of Smith's and Hemans's poetry. Further work might include a more in-depth interrogation of the poetess figure's interpretation of a masculine Romantic poetics of mourning.

Nevertheless, Sandy provides a sustained and well-constructed argument for the importance of grief, loss and remembrance in Romantic poetry. Furthermore, his recognition that the boundaries between Romantic and Victorian poetry might be 'porous' (p. 149) indicates the potential to expand this study beyond the disciplinary boundaries indicated by his title. In this case, too, a constricted intellectual space suggests the possibilities for expansion which exist beyond it. 

## NOTES

1. Michael Bradshaw, 'Third-Generation Romantic Poetry: Beddoes, Clare, Darley, Hemans, Landon', in *The Cambridge History of English Poetry*, ed. by Michael O'Neill (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 542–60.

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Susan Valladares, *Staging the Peninsular War: English Theatres 1807–1815* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), x + 459pp. ISBN 9781472418630; £80 (hb).

HOW DID THE STAGE help shape Britons' understanding of the Napoleonic Wars? Susan Valladares' *Staging the Peninsular War: English Theatres 1807–1815* is a case study in this question. Focusing on the Peninsular War specifically, Valladares argues that 'the nation's crowded and excitable theatre auditoriums functioned as spaces of political discovery, assertion and confrontation' (p. 201). While the span of years that her work covers is intentionally narrow, her spatial coverage is broad, as she examines drama and spectacle not only in London's patent theatres, but also in the minor theatres and Bristol's Theatre Royal and Regency Theatre. The result is that she creates an image of British theatre and performance that is truly national, rather than exclusively metropolitan. As Valladares argues, 'English theatre cannot [...] be confined to the cultural life of Westminster and its immediate vicinity. By the early nineteenth century theatrical activity was also flourishing in the provinces, where the nation's many Theatre Royals played a key role in promoting the related feelings of civic amelioration and patriotism' (p. 153). Such a broad approach to theatre is particularly important for a project that is tied up in concepts of nation, patriotism and 'the articulation of national identities' (p. 8).

Valladares' temporal focus allows her to examine a precise political moment: the Peninsular War. As Valladares points out, this piece of the Napoleonic Wars has only recently begun to receive attention from literary scholars. Yet even for those without a specific interest in the Peninsular War, this work's temporal focus is valuable: as Valladares notes, she writes about a set of years 'often overlooked as a "black hole" in the nation's theatre history' (p. 2). With some recent exceptions, Romantic-era drama continues to be regarded as 'mental' theatre, ignoring the rich, spectacular productions that attracted audiences.

Yet the temporal limits of Valladares' title are deceptive in that much of the work focuses on plays from the eighteenth-century repertory that were reworked for this particular political moment. In Chapter 1, 'Pizarro, "Political Proteus"', Valladares reads performances of R. B. Sheridan's 1799 *Pizarro*, a play that she argues 'became one of the defining narratives of early nineteenth-century Britain', across a changing political landscape (p. 15). Insisting on the need to read both 'synchronically and diachronically', Valladares convincingly demonstrates that *Pizarro* was returned to throughout the early nineteenth century to reimagine and renegotiate Britain's relationship with Spain. *Pizarro* was performed and interpreted as everything from a literal critique of Spanish conquest in the Americas to an allegorical critique of the French invasion of Spain. Similarly, Chapter 2, 'Performing Shakespeare', focuses on appropriations and performances of Shakespeare during the Peninsular War. While this chapter includes fascinating examples of the ways early nineteenth-century theatres reworked Shakespeare (including William Barrymore's decision to perform *Macbeth* in 'Spanish habit'



following a British victory in 1809), the chapter as a whole feels disjointed and lacks a unifying narrative.

While the first two chapters focus on a play or set of plays, Chapters 3 and 4 examine the theatrical cultures that emerged in particular spaces. In these chapters Valladares' work comes alive and most fully creates a picture of England's diverse theatrical culture. Chapter 3, 'Spectacular Stages', focuses on London's minor theatres, examining the popularity of 'illegitimate dramaturgy' (p. 107). Valladares demonstrates the ways in which various minor theatres developed distinct specialties, from the aqua-dramas at Sadler's Wells to the equestrian entertainments at Astley's Amphitheatre, which they used not only to attract audiences, but also to represent contemporary politics and military campaigns. Her conclusion that 'the managers of the minor theatres were arguably more ambitious, experimental and innovative than their legitimate counterparts', proves convincing, particularly coming at the end of a chapter that paints such a lively image of onstage water tanks, recreated battlefields and non-verbal adaptations of Shakespeare.

In her final chapter, 'Playing to the Provinces', Valladares examines theatre in Bristol, choosing this location (of the many provincial theatres) because 'as a busy port city, it brings together the discourses of war, trade and politics' (p. 153). Bristol's national importance as a port city and the trading gateway with the Americas makes it a perfect choice for this book. This is her most successful chapter: not only does it weave together the previous three, as she analyzes performances of *Pizarro*, Shakespeare and illegitimate entertainments in Bristol, but it enriches our understanding of theatre outside of London—a subject that needs much more attention. By connecting her earlier arguments with an examination of Bristol's Theatre Royal and Regency Theatre, Valladares makes the complex argument that the previous chapters strive towards about theatre's role in shaping international politics and national identity. By demonstrating, for instance, that performances of Shakespeare's plays at the Bristol Theatre Royal were generally limited to benefit nights and nights when star actors were visiting, she convincingly argues that 'the Theatre Royal was able to promote the cultural exclusivity associated with the national bard, and to impart the impression that Shakespeare belonged to a larger, national project, dependent upon the mobility of actors and the beneficence of the local community to support its favourite plays and players' (p. 186). By analyzing Shakespeare's place in the Bristol repertory, she creates a brief section more intriguing than the earlier chapter on Shakespeare, for it weaves together the role of theatre in nation-formation with the attempts to make theatre itself a national project.

Valladares creates a rich picture of cultural engagement with the Peninsular War that goes beyond what we think of as traditional 'drama'. She connects her analysis of major works, like those by Sheridan and Shakespeare, to lecturing, graphic satire and illegitimate drama. By focusing on repurposed stock plays and illegitimate drama, Valladares deals primarily with 'innovative modes of delivering topical addresses' that worked around the strictures of the 1737 Stage Licensing Act (p. 12). Greater discussion of the legitimate plays that were produced in direct

response to the War, however, would have been a welcome addition. Moreover, by framing her project in relation to the Licensing Act, without directly addressing governmental censorship or suppression, she leaves her reader curious about when or how the government intervened in the staging of political plays or entertainments. What was perhaps most wanting in this work was a succinct overview of the Peninsular War. Valladares weaves political and military information into her chapters; yet the absence of even a short history in the introduction is a problem, especially for readers coming from theatre and literary rather than historical backgrounds. Such a history would also go a long way in making clear why an analysis of this war in particular is so necessary.

Nearly half of *Staging the Peninsular War* is made up of a calendar of performances at Covent Garden, Drury Lane and Bristol Theatre Royal between 1807 and 1815. This calendar, which surely took an immense amount of time and research to compile, is a very welcome addition to documentary works like *The London Stage* and *Theatre in Dublin*. Valladares' calendar covers a period that has not yet been documented in this form. She puts the plays with a Spanish or Portuguese theme in boldface, allowing us to visualise the argument she makes throughout about the wartime repertory. As Valladares herself acknowledges, the calendar is limited: it does not include casting information or comments made on the playbills. This is the sort of information that (to quote Valladares quoting Jacky Bratton) provides evidence for 'those most difficult and evanescent aspects of theatre history—the expectations and dispositions of the audience, their personal experience of the theatre' (p. 212). In spite of these limitations, these calendars will make possible a great deal of future research. Like the book as a whole, they enrich our understanding of early nineteenth-century theatrical culture and its intersections with politics, on both a national and global scale.



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**Alison Cardinale** is the Assistant Head of Learning and Curriculum English at MLC School where she teaches the International Baccalaureate alongside senior English courses. Alison is commencing the third year of research for a PhD at the University of Sydney in 2015, focusing on the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge under the supervision of Professor Will Christie. Recently, Alison has worked as an undergraduate English tutor at the University of Sydney and has ten years' experience teaching English in independent Sydney secondary schools.

**James Castell** is a Lecturer in English Literature at Cardiff University, where he teaches courses on Romantic and twentieth-century poetry and poetics. He has articles on Wordsworth in *The Oxford Handbook to William Wordsworth* and *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, and is currently completing a monograph on Wordsworth and animal life.

**Mary Chadwick** is an Associate Research Fellow in the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Huddersfield where she worked on *The Anne Clifford Project*. Mary's research interests include women's writing, manuscript cultures, book history and Welsh writing in English from the very long eighteenth century.

**Koenraad Claes** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Ghent University (Belgium), where he is employed on the three-year individual research project *Narratives of Continuity: Form and Function of the British Conservative Novel in the Long Nineteenth*

*Century*, funded by the Research Foundation, Flanders (FWO). Before that, he was a Leverhulme Postdoctoral Research Associate on the project *The Lady's Magazine: Understanding the Emergence of a Genre*, led by Prof. Jennie Batchelor at the University of Kent. His first monograph, a history of the late-Victorian little magazine, is under contract with Edinburgh University Press. He is the managing editor of the open-access journal *Authorship* <[www.authorship.ugent.be](http://www.authorship.ugent.be)>.

**Mary-Ann Constantine** is Reader at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. She works on Welsh and British literature of the long eighteenth century and has also written on travel writing, folk song, authenticity debates and the Romantic movement in Brittany. Her book on the Welsh stonemason poet Edward Williams, *The Truth against the World: Iolo Morganwg and Romantic Forgery*, appeared in 2007. With Dafydd Johnston, she is general editor of the multivolume *Wales and the French Revolution* series. She is currently leading an AHRC-funded research project, *Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour 1760–1820*.

**Richard De Ritter** is a lecturer at the University of Leeds and the author of *Imagining Women Readers, 1789–1820: Well-Regulated Minds*.

**Diane Duffy** was awarded a PhD from the University of Manchester in 2011 on the subject of history, gender and identity in the writings of Anna Eliza Bray (1790–1883). She has presented a number of conference papers on how Bray's regional romances, set in the south-west of England, might be viewed as instrumental in shaping a sense of English national identity in the form of an English national tale. She is currently working as a researcher at the Elizabeth Gaskell House in Manchester.

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**Ruth Knezevich** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand) where she is working on a Marsden-funded project on the nineteenth-century Porter family—novelists Jane and Anna Maria Porter and their brother, the artist and traveller Robert Ker Porter. She received her PhD in 2015 from the University of Missouri for her research on footnotes in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literary works; she continues this research with a distant reading of the footnote in women's writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**Jakub Lipski** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland. Before obtaining his PhD in English literature, he studied English, Art History and Cultural Studies. He is the author of *In Quest of the Self: Masquerade and Travel in the Eighteenth-Century Novel—Fielding, Smollett, Sterne* (2014) and co-editor (with Jacek Mydla) of *The Enchantress of Words, Sounds and Images: Anniversary Essays on Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823)* (2015). He is currently working on a monograph on the correspondences between the eighteenth-century English novel and the fine arts.

**Nicola Lloyd** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University. She specializes in fiction of the Romantic period, with a particular focus on the Irish national tale and the interactions between Romanticism and Enlightenment. Her doctoral thesis, which she is currently preparing for publication, considered the influence of Enlightenment discourses of moral philosophy and perception on Romantic-period fiction. Nicky has published articles on the Irish novelist Lady Morgan and is one of the authors of *The Palgrave History Gothic Publishing: The Business of Gothic Fiction, 1764–1835*, due for completion in 2017. She is currently preparing a scholarly edition of Mary Julia Young's gothic-national tale *Donald; or, the Witches of Glenshiel* (1805).

**Andrew McInnes** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Edge Hill University. He has recently published his first monograph, *Wollstonecraft's Ghost: The Fate of the Female Philosopher in the Romantic Period* (Routledge, 2016). His research interests include women's writing of the long eighteenth century, the geographies of gothic fiction and children's literature.

**Amy Prendergast** is currently based in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin. She completed her doctoral studies there in 2012 after being awarded a four-year PRTL Government of Ireland scholarship. She was subsequently the recipient of an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship, which allowed her to work on her first monograph. This work, *Literary Salons across Britain and Ireland in the Long Eighteenth Century*, is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan.

**Corrina Readioff** is studying for a PhD at the University of Liverpool on the history and function of pre-chapter epigraphs in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels. She manages the social media pages for *Digital Defoe: Studies in Defoe and his Contemporaries* and maintains a personal blog, *The Age of Oddities: Reading the Eighteenth Century* <<http://ageofoddities.blogspot.co.uk>>, to encourage readers of all tastes and backgrounds to enjoy the delights of eighteenth-century literature. She has written for the *Johnsonian Newsletter* and the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies *Criticks* website.

**Joanna E. Taylor** is Research Associate in Geospatial Innovation in the Digital Humanities at the University of Lancaster. She recently completed her PhD at

Keele University: her thesis, entitled ‘Writing spaces: the Coleridge Family’s Interactive Poetics 1798–1898’, explored the use of poetic spaces in negotiating influence anxieties in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s children and grandchildren. She is the Cartography Curator for the *Gravestone Project* and is the Editorial Assistant for the *Byron Journal*. She can be found on Twitter @JoTayl0r0.

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**Jane Wessel** is an Assistant Professor of British Drama at Austin Peay State University. She has published articles in *Theatre Survey* and *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660–1700* and is currently working on a book project on literary property and dramatic authorship in eighteenth-century England. She tweets about theatre history, pedagogy and eighteenth-century culture @Jane\_D\_Wessel.





## BOOKS RECEIVED



We have received review copies of the following books. Items that have been already assigned to reviewers are marked with an asterisk: if you are interested in reviewing one of the unassigned books, or if you would like to suggest a different book for review, please contact the Reviews Editor ([Reviews@romtext.org.uk](mailto:Reviews@romtext.org.uk)).

### 2016

- BEENSTOCK, ZOE, *The Politics of Romanticism: The Social Contract and Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 256pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-0103-6; £70 (hb).
- CASALIGGI, CARMEN; FERMANIS, PORSCHA. *Romanticism: A Literary and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2016), 260pp. ISBN 978-0-415-67908-4; £19.99 (pb).
- \*FORD, TALISSA J. *Radical Romantics: Prophets, Pirates and the Space Beyond Nation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 192pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-0942-1; £70 (hb).
- OFFORD, MARK. *Wordsworth and the Art of Philosophical Travel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 264pp. ISBN: 978-1-1071-5558-9; £64.99 (hb).
- \*HAMILTON, PAUL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 864pp. ISBN: 978-0-1996-9638-3; £95 (hb).
- \*WRIGHT, ANGELA; TOWNSHEND, DALE (eds), *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 272pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-9674-1; £80 (hb).

### 2015

- \*LEASK, NIGEL. *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 368pp. ISBN 978-0-1987-3242-6; £27.50 (pb).
- \*GARSIDE, PETER; O'VRIEN, KAREN (eds). *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: English and British Fiction, 1750–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 704pp. ISBN 978-0-1995-7480-3 £95 (hb).
- \*GILMARTIN, KEVIN. *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 368pp. ISBN 9-780-1987-0931-2; £55 (hb).
- \*KEIGHREN, INNES M.; WITHERS, CHARLES W. J.; BELL, BILL. *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773–1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 392pp. ISBN 978-0-2264-2953-3; \$45 (hb).

\*WILSON, ROSS. *Shelley and the Apprehension of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 244pp. ISBN 978-1-1076-2862-5; £19.99 (pb).

2014

\*DE RITTER, RICHARD. *Imagining Women Readers, 1789–1820: Well-Regulated Minds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 224pp. ISBN 978-0-7190-9033-2; £70 (hb).

HALL, DEWEY W. *Romantic Naturalists, Early Environmentalists: An Ecocritical Study, 1789–1912* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 240pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-2264-8; £60 (hb).

\*YOSHIKAWA, SAEKO. *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism, 1820–1900* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 280pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-2013-8; £65 (hb).

2013

COOPER, ANDREW M. (ed.). *William Blake and the Productions of Time* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 362pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-4441-1; £70 (hb).

GRANDE, JAMES; STEVENSON, JOHN; THOMAS, RICHARD (eds). *The Opinions of William Cobbett* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 224pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-6432-7; £25 (pb).

JARVIS, ROBIN. *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel: Expeditions in North America, 1760–1840* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 218pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6860-2; £60 (hb).

LANTENÉ, DAVID E. *William Maginn and the British Press: A Critical Biography* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), xiii + 362pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-4941-6; £65 (hb).

MURRAY, CHRIS. *Tragic Coleridge* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), ix + 184p. ISBN 978-1-4094-4754-2; £55 (hb).

\*POMARÉ, CARLA. *Byron and the Discourses of History* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), ix + 192pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-4356-8; £55 (hb).

SHAW, PHILIP. *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), xii + 248pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6492-5; £60 (hb).

WRIGHT, ANGELA. *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764–1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 234pp. ISBN 978-1-1075-6674-3; £19.99 (pb).



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS



*Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is only as substantial as the material it attracts: therefore, we more than welcome any contributions that members of the academic community might wish to make. Articles and reports we would be most interested in publishing include those addressing Romantic literary studies with an especial slant on book history, textual and bibliographical studies, the literary marketplace and the publishing world, and so forth.

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