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Aims and Scope: Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

William Lane and the Minerva Press in the Review Periodical, 1790–1820

Megan Peiser

If all press is good press, then William Lane and his Minerva Press could be said to have received more good press than any publisher of the Romantic period. Indeed, data show that one in three new novels published from 1790 to 1820 was put out by Lane, and one in ten novels reviewed during this thirty-year period (the years when the press flourished) were of Minerva productions.[1] Lane's reputation and the infamy of his press reached beyond his shop in Leadenhall Street—it extended across Britain through circulating libraries, publishing advertisements and book reviews. It is the latter that this article considers as building Lane's contemporary reputation and popularity, and in influencing the far-ranging rhetoric that has since placed Lane's publications on the periphery of novel-canonicity.

Minerva published works by a diversity of authors: men, women, those of various backgrounds and levels of authorial experience. The volume of works it published, however, combined with Lane's liberal business practices, meant that many novelists who might otherwise have found it difficult to secure a relationship with a publisher wary to take risks on novice writers, for the first time had an accessible avenue to publication.[2] By 1790, Lane was advertising his works 'at the Minerva, Leadenhall Street' and for the next thirty years enabled writers without the finances or patronage of the genteel class to contribute to the novel's establishment as a literary genre.[3] Women novelists, and Lane's press, which championed so many of them, made their work *available* in the Romantic period, establishing the novel's rising dominance in the market. Because 'books, like servants, need recommendations', the 'Review [was] in a mediating position between the booksellers and the reading public'—both in the Romantic period and for scholars today.[4] Tracing the criticisms that Lane, Minerva and their authors received at the hands of the book review periodical is foundational to interpreting the contemporary critical reception of the novel during this period. Uncovering this narrative is essential to understanding the place of women writers (particularly those whose work quickly faded from popular reading) and trade publishers in our modern canon. This problem is exemplified by the fact that current scholars need continually to push back against Minerva's reputation, and specific unrelenting assumptions about the press and its authors. These assumptions come to us and were transmitted to eighteenth-century readers through book reviews. By categorising Review

rhetoric, then tracking how much space (by page fraction) reviews of Lane's novels took up in the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*, and with what regularity reviews of Lane's works were before the eyes of the reading public, I pinpoint how the constant attention that Lane and his Minerva Press received from literary critics heightened their visibility in the Romantic book market, while adversely determining their place in the literary canon.[5]

I use the *Novels Reviewed Database, 1790–1820* (*NRD*) to show both how reviews aided in Lane's contemporary success, and his long-term infamous reputation—mirroring the very ebb and flow of Review periodical reception and canonicity. The *NRD* records are drawn from two rival periodicals that took on as their singular objective the review of recent publications: the *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review* from January 1790 to December 1820. The *Monthly* and the *Critical* reviewed roughly one-third of all Minerva productions across the period when the press flourished, totalling 309 review articles of 268 novels.[6] I include only novels that are identified as such by the Reviews, a method that impacts the data herein considered in two ways: first, it eschews a modern scholar's backward-looking definition of the genre; second, it creates a corpus of the genre as it was viewed by contemporary critics and presented to the contemporary reading public.

A Short History of Review Periodicals

As the first-established and longest-running Reviews by the Romantic period, the *Monthly* and the *Critical* were together simply referred to as 'the Reviews'. They circulated widely and readers depended on them to help navigate the volume of publications flooding the book market. By the end of the eighteenth century the Review periodical had a large reading audience: C. H. Timperley put the *Monthly*'s 1797 year's sales figures at 5000, the *Critical*'s at 3500.[7] Sales figures, however, do not accurately represent readership since individual copies were often shared among a purchaser's family, or in libraries, coffee houses and other places of community reading.[8] Further, the Reviews circulated outside of London, reaching readers and libraries far removed from the metropolis.[9] Considering this circulation, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the average reader would regularly come into contact with a Review, and would consider the trends in reviewing as part of their knowledge of the printed word.[10] Additionally, the reviews published by the *Monthly* and the *Critical* were frequently reprinted verbatim in other periodicals, so even individuals who sought reviews of recent literature elsewhere found themselves consuming the rhetoric and criticism of these papers. The Reviews emerged as authoritative judges of literary merit,[11] and the way they treated Minerva novels had a widespread influence on conceptions of that press.

The *Monthly* and the *Critical* were the first two periodicals devoted exclusively to reviewing recent publications in England. Articles in the *Monthly Review* (began in 1749) read like book reports, listing publication information, outlining plots and excerpting important passages. The *Critical Review* surfaced in 1756

and aligned itself with Tory politics, in opposition to the Whiggish *Monthly*.[12] Like its competitor, the *Critical* offered excerpts and short commentary on recent literature, giving a holistic account of the book market. Both Reviews eventually ceased trying to review everything objectively: their original intent had been to supply excerpts from the text indicative of its whole character, but slowly their articles passed judgment on texts, using excerpts to support this criticism.[13] The very structure of the Review periodical advocates for a high versus low literary divide: longer essay-style review articles with excerpts feature in the first sixty to eighty pages of the periodical, while short reviews (often only a few lines) that rarely have room for summary (much less excerpts), are printed in the back pages of the Monthly Catalogue, organised under genre headings.[14] While for other literary genres, such as poetry, the Reviews largely evaluated collections by established authors, for novels they reviewed the celebrity and anonymously authored fictions side by side, though most often in the Monthly Catalogue.[15] Examining the *Monthly* and the *Critical* together balances politically bent bias in articles, while enabling us to study the contemporary critical reception of now canonical authors alongside those never identified or long forgotten. Unique to their evaluation of novels, the Reviews, while unable to evaluate *all* new productions, do not turn a blind eye to the productions they deem 'low'. It is this convention that provides an opportunity for a macro-study of these reviews as a rich source through which to expose the history and practices of literary critics' high-versus-low, front-section-versus-Monthly-Catalogue dichotomy in evaluating fiction, especially that published by Lane.

When critiquing Thomas Carlyle's 1828 comparison of Minerva Press novels to 'copper currency' legally able to circulate amongst gold, Elizabeth Neiman reminds scholars that Lane's reputation was 'crystallized [...] largely [...] by Romantic era writers' who represented Minerva as 'reflect[ing] and up[holding] the dissipated taste of the nation'.[16] Neiman states that 'even those [modern scholars] interested in individual novels do not go so far as to counter nineteenth-century commonplaces about the novels *en masse* and many inadvertently perpetuate them'.[17] Acknowledging formulaic plot elements, one of the categories by which I later show the Reviews evaluated Minerva novels, Neiman finds a community of Minerva authors, speaking to one another through their works. She argues that 'Novelists' adaptive reuse of [...] formulas suggests that when Minerva novels are read both collectively and in relation to other Romantic-era texts, their revisions of value-laden conventions become more visible—thus bringing Minerva's authorial community into view'.[18] This authorial community should have been evident to Romantic reviewers. However, there are two invisible elements at play which prevented that. First, the elements Neiman tracks as guides and subversions of formulaic elements are a message to novel *writers*, not novel *critics*; their message lies in nuances that reviewers did not or could not detect in their determination to dislike anything but 'original' characteristics. Second, the Reviews were too busy enforcing the parameters of the genre to allow their criticisms to expand into how or why a novel might include discussions of poli-

tics or class, since their articles argued that this was *not what a novel should do*. Neiman notes that these reviewers strive to reinforce their role as guardians of high literary culture and, as Laura Runge explains, by representing themselves as 'gentleman' reviewers who chastise and advise 'lady' novelists.[19] Women novelists, however, increasingly did not see themselves as oscillating dangerously between the domestic and public spheres. They took up the mantel of authorship as a labour that met their financial needs, was intellectually stimulating, and that brought pleasure to readers.[20] The Review periodical, though, took a hard line in emphasising the division of domestic and public work, and as a leading critical voice, it solidified the division that women writers themselves were contesting with every review, not to mention all those that were reprinted, excerpted and reread. The intersections of gender, genre and work are especially fraught because Reviews enforced the idea that, as Jennie Batchelor argues, 'novel writing was [...] a degradingly feminized, financially expedient and inferior mode of textual work, while poetry was supposed to be the offspring of disinterested genius and thus a higher art form'.[21] Batchelor traces review criticism of authors, such as Charlotte Smith, who make transparent their labour of writing and financial need, and highlights the Minerva authors who did write for the income. The Reviews, she notes, let neither of these instances pass without sharp judgement and often denigration of the female novelists.

Slowly these Minerva novels and authors are gaining more attention, as this special issue attests. Dorothy Blakey in her 1939 monograph, *The Minerva Press 1790–1820*, declares that she is pushing back against contemptuous quips about the press, including comments from Sir Walter Scott, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Charles Reade and those printed in periodicals, all of which heavily influenced how readers, the academy and the canon treated such popular literature in twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship.[22] Scholarship on the Minerva Press, its novels and authors often reference how they have been lost to a sea of disdain, doomed by their base reputation. Contemporary reviews of the novels are cited as examples of how plagued the novels and authors of Lane's press were by contemporary critics—placing the blame for the Minerva's reputation at the feet of the Reviews, dragging out the most pointed reviews as evidence, but without examining the larger arguments the Reviews made about the press and how those criticisms have remained attached to Lane's novels. Many of Lane's novels were 'consigned to the catalogue'—the short sentences of recognition and the sharp criticism they received there provide pointed sound bites for citing their abuse. And while Batchelor and Neiman have found evidence of our perpetuating popular assumptions about the Minerva Press, I herein examine more deeply the categories of Minerva criticism printed in the Reviews, the space given to them, and trace them across centuries of common turns of phrase, illustrating *how* those nineteenth-century commonplaces came to be, and *why* they persist even in our modern and increasingly more favourable critical reception of the press.

Review Rhetoric and William Lane's Press

> [I]f it does not belong to the highest class of novels, [it] is yet removed at an equal distance from the common rank.[23]

Replacing Minerva novels within the format and rhetoric of Reviews reveals how the press's contemporary critical reception emerged and the traditions of evaluation it instigated. This method of analysis uncovers a series of critical binaries that have detrimentally defined the Minerva Press since the early nineteenth century. This is the first quantitative study of these reviews—scholarship until now has depended on relative generalisations about Review ire toward the press. Though these generalisations are not incorrect or uninformed, they are only partial, and this article traces which issues the Reviews continually raised in their evaluation of Minerva novels. These Reviews deserve a closer look because the issues they raise have influenced over two hundred years of criticism and have only recently begun to see resistance through scholars' increased attention to Minerva, its works and its authors.

Using the *NRD*, I have identified four primary issues of concern in the *Monthly* and the *Critical*'s reviews of Minervas: 1) Minerva Novel(s)/Press Reputation; 2) Genre Evaluation; 3) The Novels Themselves as Material Objects; and 4) The Activity of Reading or Writing Minerva Novels. Each of these larger topics can be divided into further subcategories, all of which I have tracked across 309 reviews of 289 Minerva novels from 1790 to 1820 (see Table 1, overleaf). Despite scholarship aligning 'Lane' and 'Minerva' with low, amateur-authored, hastily produced novels, the reviews themselves use these names rather seldomly: only 2 per cent of articles directly name the press, either referencing 'Lane', 'Minerva', or 'Leadenhall Street'. References to circulating libraries (cited in 20 per cent of reviews of Minerva novels) may also be signalling Lane's business and reputation. Lane's name appears more prominently than his press's in the reviews, likely because his earliest publications did not feature the striking gothic imprint of his later title pages. The earliest mention of Lane's name in either periodical, however, identifies Lane as only one of several purveyors of bad novels. In 1793, the *Critical* complains of *Belville Lodge* that '[s]ome ingenuity seems to be exerted in filling two volumes with a meagre story—but what is impossible to a mind fraught with the rich treasures, dispensed by Lane, Hookham, and Co.'[24] As Hookham & Co. decreased their publishing of novels significantly in 1796, this comparison did not hold for long.

The Minerva Press is first directly referenced in the *Critical*'s 1795 review of *Ellen Rushford*, which the critics argue has 'no want of [...] distinguishing characteristic[s] of the productions from the "Minerva press"', characteristics they go on to identify as 'the frivolous and the improbable'.[25] The Reviews are only later induced to mention the Minerva by name when a novel under their scrutiny calls them to it. A character in Catherina Harris's *Edwardina* (1800) declares:

TABLE 1. REVIEWS OF MINERVA PRESS NOVELS BY THE *MONTHLY* AND *CRITICAL REVIEWS*, 1790–1820

	OF 309 REVIEWS	PERCENTAGE
REPUTATION ISSUES		
Names Lane/Minerva in review	7	2%
Identifies class of novels	61	20%
Mentions circulating library	13	4%
Compares to other novel(s)	45	15%
GENRE EVALUATION		
Probability	71	23%
Originality	129	42%
Sentimentality	50	16%
MATERIAL ISSUES		
Length	45	15%
Printing quality	32	10%
CONSUMING / PRODUCING MINERVA PRESS NOVELS		
Female readers	24	8%
Authorship	177	57%

Data taken from *Novels Reviewed Database, 1790–1820*

> but I think I will turn novel writer! [...] Nature gives me imagination, you bless me with a friend, and the Minerva offers liberal encouragement: and I repeat, when I have too much time, and too little money, why beshrew me, but I will turn novel writer.[26]

By quoting this passage in their short, Monthly Catalogue review, the *Critical* scoffs at the novel, the author and the Minerva's business practices:

> How shall a word, issuing from the sequestered conclave of the Critical Reviewers, set aside a resolution so determinately bent on writing? We have not the vanity to expect such a power: but yet we will be bold, and speak our thoughts upon the subject. The fair author must write her next work better, or we shall not be disposed to praise it, however liberally the Minerva may think fit to pay for the copy.[27]

Though Harris's novel itself perpetuates the 'Minerva authors as novice writers seeking easy money' narrative, the *Critical* is keen to jump into a dialogue with the text, commenting on the Minerva's 'liberal encouragement' of such authors, and pretending as if their very review does not smack of the 'vanity of power' they disavow. This instance of open discussion about the Minerva Press is unique, however, and the Reviews instead largely refer to the press by its location or circulating libraries. Leadenhall Street itself represents to Reviews

a factory of novel production: they declare in 1804 that '[a]mong the numerous works which issue from the prolific brains of those who seek their almost daily bread at the great manufacture in Leadenhall-street' that occasionally one 'author rises above the vulgar herd'—refusing to align a positive statement with the press's name.[28] They even slander authors directly, accusing Regina Maria Roche of being 'one of those ladies who assiduously feed the pig-stye of literature in Leadenhall-street'.[29]

A larger study of the Reviews' treatment of Minerva novels shows that it is not direct references to the press, but rather the issue of 'novel classes' that distinguishes Minerva from other novels.[30] As Table 1 demonstrates, one-fifth of the reviews identify the novel in question as part of a distinct group. For example, the *Critical* declares in 1790 that *Semphronia* is 'the worst of [its] tribe', suggesting a familial connection between the novel and others issuing from Leadenhall Street—a vein that continues across the lifetime of the press, stating of a novel published twenty-four years later that it should 'not to be meanly appreciated amongst the fraternity to which it belongs'.[31] Minervas are identified as a larger, more solidly subpar group when the same journal remarks a year later that 'perhaps, among the wretched productions that have lately *issued from the press in this department*, it is no very great honour to be in the first line'.[32] Once the 'tribe' has grown to a 'department', the reviews begin to diagram its identifying features, reflecting, for example, a month later of *Lady Jane Grey* (1791) that '[t]he language and sentiments of this novel greatly excel the merits of the usual sale-work in this department'.[33] Language like the aforementioned 'tribe' and 'department' as well as 'class', 'rank', 'station', 'species' and 'scale' establish a hierarchical boundary, calling on divisive rhetoric to position Minerva productions as a class apart from other novels. While the Reviews already established a dichotomy of the novel, as described above (for example, reviewing a select few in the longer front section, and in contrast to one or two often negatives sentences on the lower ranks in the Monthly Catalogue), in the early 1790s the *Critical* established Lane's Minerva novels as separate even from other 'low' novels of the Monthly Catalogue through a rhetoric that pushed them to the furthest periphery of the genre. The *Critical* notes in 1791 that Minerva Press novels have turned up 'to fill up the vacuum which the secession of our best novel-writers had occasioned'—by this the *Critical* is likely referring to the lack of new novels by Charlotte Smith, who, after publishing a novel each in 1788 and 1789 (*Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, respectively) had no new novel in 1790, and whose *Celestina* would not appear until July of 1791. Together with Frances Burney and Ann Radcliffe, Smith made up one of the 'sister-queen' novelists on whom the Reviews doted, clearly noting that they could admire *some* novels and praise them highly. Had the Reviews' tradition been to provide reviews only of texts they endorsed, we might not have seen reviews of many Minervas. However, the Reviews advertise early on that their purpose in reviewing was so readers could 'choose to have some idea of a book before they lay out their money or time on it'—their very structure required that they evaluate Minervas even

when they found nothing positive to say.[34] Perhaps readers whose taste differed from those of review critics may have found the periodicals' crushing dismissal of Lane's novels a kind of recommendation in its own right.

Early reviews of Minerva Press novels provide summary and critique those novels' 'pathetic' plots and bland characters, but generally 'recommend [them] to the attention of women of every degree'.[35] By the early 1800s few provide plot summary; rather, the content of Minerva novels is measurably evaluated by three categories: 1) their events' probability (23 per cent of reviews); 2) their story's originality (42 per cent); and 3) their sentimental style (16 per cent) (see Table 1, above). Sentimentality was connected with issues of plot and it dies out as a traceable feature after 1801, but reviews continue to focus on probability of plot events and originality in Minervas (see Figure 1, opposite). The Reviews declare improbability of plot as a leading defect in Minerva novels, often citing it in a list of other transgressions. This listing format of vague defects suggests that Minerva novels do not have more substantive qualities on which the Reviews could possibly comment. Therefore, the very form of the review articles ironically mirrors their argument about the content of Minerva novels themselves—a series of unfortunate ingredients. Reviews rave that Minervas in particular stand out as 'a heterogeneous mass of improbability, inconsistency, and stupidity', placing at their door the fault of introducing improbability into the circulation of the novel's production in general.[36] And perhaps reviewers would have been willing to stand for improbability alone as a novel's flaw; however, they viewed it as intertwined with another characteristic: near half, 42 per cent of reviews, make statements about a Minerva novel's lack of originality (Table 1, above). When the *Critical* declares in 1790 that '[u]ncommon and unexpected incidents please by their novelty', they present originality as 'uncommon' in the Reviews' evaluation formulae.[37] Much as novels reviewed in the Monthly Catalogue were dismissed as 'low', or as part of Lane's 'tribe', Review rhetoric assigned Minervas a status based on the concept of originality—they are represented as 'common rank' novels, with common events, characters or plots.[38] This rhetorical strategy uses 'common' as both a unifier of the Minerva 'rank' and a sign of multiplicity.

Presenting novels as unoriginal and thus at the bottom of the literary hierarchy reinforced the Reviews' role of providing guidance for authors and readers. Noting that Minervas contain elements 'in common with all productions of the same class' serves as a sorting mechanism that evaluates both the work's content and literary merit.[39] By privileging originality in novels, the Reviews were able to represent novels by anonymous authors of various levels of writing experience as low or 'common'. 'Common' as a discursive term used to evaluate genre, or originality, also points to repetitive or familiar patterns traced across novels from the period. If a novel has 'scarcely any event which we have not before witnessed, nor an escape which has not had a hundred prototypes', then reviews of Minervas specifically singled those works out as 'too much in the common strain to interest greatly'.[40] Indeed, reviews exclaim that

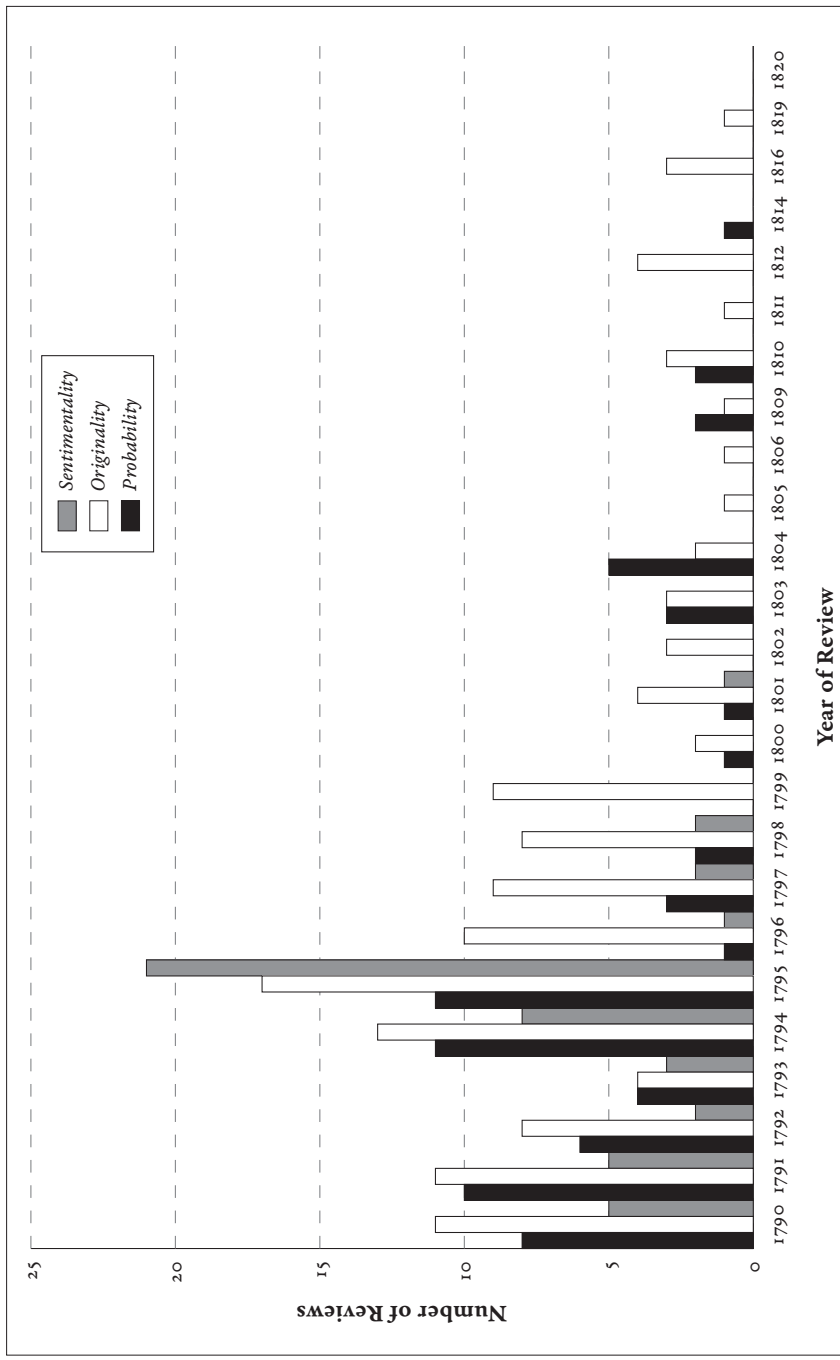

FIG. 1. TOPIC OF GENRE EVALUATION: MINERVA NOVELS REVIEWED IN *MONTHLY* AND *CRITICAL REVIEWS*, 1790–1820. ALL DATA FROM *NRD*.

> so numerous are the novels which have been published of late years, that it requires no common abilities to invent one at present, in which either the plot or many of the incidents should not bear a striking resemblance to those that are to be found in others, already published.[41]

All of this is ironic considering the listing format and 'repetitive nature' of the reviews themselves had become a staple format for *that* genre.[42] The Reviews also criticise novels for their combination of elements from other works. Fifteen per cent of Minerva reviews make direct comparison to other named novels (see Table 1, above), building a canon against which to evaluate this lower rank of publications. Reviews frequently refer to Defoe, Richardson and Fielding as foundational works of the genre. When comparing Minerva's to recent publications, Radcliffe, Burney and Smith are held up as both examples of successful female novelists and pinnacles of their subgenres (gothic, comic and sentimental respectively).

Though the Reviews acknowledge these female authors as masters of their trade, articles continued to gender the labour of novel writing in denigrating ways. When criticising Minerva novels' combination of 'common' genre elements, the Reviews deploy a metaphor that highlights the Minerva's largely female authorship: sewing, more specifically, darning or patching. As if smiling on the quaint attempt of lower class women to mend worn clothing, one review declares *The Fair Cambrians* (1790) 'a pleasing interesting story, made up, however, of shreds and patches from other works of this kind'.[43] Batchelor shows that women writers used various methods to think about and present their labour in ways that often complicate our assumptions about separate private and public spheres and that the Reviews' focus on women novelists' work of writing reinforces such a narrative.

During the Romantic period, the Reviews forced the needle and the pen first into a contrast, and then an eventual companionship, a relationship that deprecated the labour of Minerva authors' professional work. The Reviews' repeated use of the patchwork analogy represented Minerva novels as threadbare quilts stitched together with the rag remains of more brilliant ideas. 'This is a cento, a patchwork from different novels', one review says of *Matilda Fitz-Aubin, a Sketch* (1792): 'we always trace the author in the steps of Miss Burney or Mrs Smith—even her characters are in no instance original'.[44] This use of a short Monthly Catalogue review to list canonical authors alongside stitching metaphors illustrates the Reviews' practised and strategic deployment of criticisms, cementing our evaluation systems for Minerva novels for centuries (for example, the erroneous argument that Minerva's formulaic novels required no labour and were thus written by and for the working classes). The patchwork analogy both denigrates the labour (feminine, domestic, non-challenging) and intellect (novels already sitting at the bottom of literary rigour), an emphasis that 'holds intellectual and manual labour to be at odds with one another'—an idea perpetuated in continued criticism of Minervas, even with the rising commitment from the 1970s onward to studying non-canonical works and those

by women writers.[45] For instance, the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* says of the press in 1995, 'Minerva fiction was throwaway literature—quickly written, read, and forgotten. Reviewers gleefully condemned it'.[46] Indeed, modern scholars' neglect of Minerva novels for so long in the study of the genre mirrors the Reviews' declaration that those works '[deserve] not even the labour of pointing out [their] faults. The gulph of oblivion is already open to receive [them]'.[47] This special issue does the cultural work of refusing to accept biased eighteenth-century reviews of these works at face value.

That the Reviews took time to critique Minervas thus attests to their anxieties about readers consuming novels without guidance, yet issues of readership are represented in a mere 8 per cent of reviews of Minervas. Mentions of circulating libraries (4 per cent) and even length of novels—citing which volumes are good and which could be skipped (15 per cent)—could be said to consider readers. However, over half (57 per cent) of reviews of Minervas reference authorship (Table 1), and likely the reputation Lane had for recruiting authors from among novel readers influenced this trend. Whether critics addressed the author's intention for writing: 'We are sorry to find, by the preface of this novel, that gain is the author's chief motive for writing, not because we think that motive is an improper one, but because we are convinced the end cannot be answered by such productions as the Haunted Castle'; their *oeuvre*: 'We have formerly acknowledged the pleasure which we received in perusing the works of Mrs. Bennet'; or offered advice: 'we would advise the writer to cultivate, in future, a more correct taste'; the guardians of literary evaluation were keen to build a rhetoric around critiquing Minerva authors.[48] Authors' social status features in this rhetoric, often as conjecture. For example, 'Belleville Lodge appears to be the production of some milliner's apprentice, whose mind, wonderfully rich in expedients, provides fathers, brothers, and husbands, rich and handsome, suddenly and unexpectedly for all her young ladies'.[49] At times, bibliographical information is taken from a novel's prefatory material or combined with suppositions, as in the case of a December 1793 review of Sarah Green's *Mental Improvement for a Young Lady, on her Entrance to the World, Addressed to a Favourite Niece* (1793), where the dedication and title reveal that Green is a 'maiden aunt' to one Charlotte. The review slanders the work (and Green herself) as the 'maudlin production' of one 'who writes much, as she might be expected to talk, whilst under the operation of a dose of ratafie'.[50] Green's style is no less verbose or sentimental than similar productions, but the review accuses her of excessive drink and wild ramblings. The *Critical* excerpts her preface, sharing it with more readers than her novel itself would likely have found. These wild accusations speak to continued assumptions that Minerva novelists were unqualified women who did not take their work seriously—that is, hacks to be despised. The Reviews' prejudice against possible lower-class and female authorship is specifically attached to Minerva novels. That these works uniquely received this pointed criticism about genre and authorship is made clear by a slip in the *Critical*'s reviewing practices. The *Critical* also reviewed Green's

Mental Improvement earlier that same year, in April 1793—under the Monthly Catalogue genre heading of 'miscellaneous' rather than 'Novels'. They list the chapter headings and conclude with this evaluation: '[the letters] contain many salutary advices, as well as just remarks, adapted to the female character, and are written with perspicuity'.[51] The Reviews' rhetoric when reviewing Green's work as a conduct book evaluates its style as clear and lucid: a direct contradiction to their later suggestion that the work is a 'maudlin' production, rife with ramblings composed under the influence of liqueur.

Other periodicals that printed book reviews did not have the same commitment as the *Critical* and the *Monthly* to notice *all* publications, regardless of their quality, so we find fewer reviews of Minerva novels in the *Analytical Review* (1788–98), the *Edinburgh Review* (1802–1929), the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (1798–1821) or the *British Critic* (1793–1826).[52] However, the *British Critic* uses many of the same categories tracked in the *Critical* and the *Monthly*, noting of Minerva novels that the 'species' contains elements 'improbable', 'extravagantly caricatured' and 'quite out of nature'. The *British Critic* even goes on to advise an author, citing another female novelist whom she might emulate: 'If Mrs. H. should continue to cultivate this species of composition, we recommend her to study attentively (as her best model) the simple and unaffected, yet forcible and elegant, style of Mrs. Inchbald'.[53] Other periodical reviews pick up the use of Minervas as a designated group of the genre, but were more likely to deploy its name (and all that was assumed with it) in a *positive* review by identifying a novel as *not* a part of the Minerva family.

Visibility of the Minerva Press in the Reviews

By choosing the *Monthly* or the *Critical* as their source for evaluations of recently published literature, readers were actively seeking out reviews and not simply encountering them amid the various other articles in magazines or newspapers.[54] A quantitative examination of Lane's presence within the pages of the Reviews highlights how 'loud' the press likely seemed to Romantic readers. In addition to the number of review articles, the *NRD* catalogues page space (to a 1/16 fraction) allotted in each review devoted to two categories: criticism and excerpt from the original work. Novels in our modern canon, like those of Frances Burney or Jane Austen, received more pages of review, often in the prominent front section of the periodical; placement and length often correlate to longevity of popularity. Lane's productions however, were the most visible in terms of volume. The Reviews' mission to review all recent publications forced them to include even those of which they disapproved, and this practice worked in Lane's favour.[55] Lane's Minerva Press (later listed under Newman) is the most-reviewed novel publishing house from 1790 to 1820 (see Figure 2, opposite).[56] With 309 reviews, Lane/Newman far outstrip their closest competitor for review articles, Longmans, whose works appeared in 192 articles during this period. Other well-known publishers, such as Robinsons, who famously paid £500 for Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), or Cadell, who published Burney's *Cecilia*

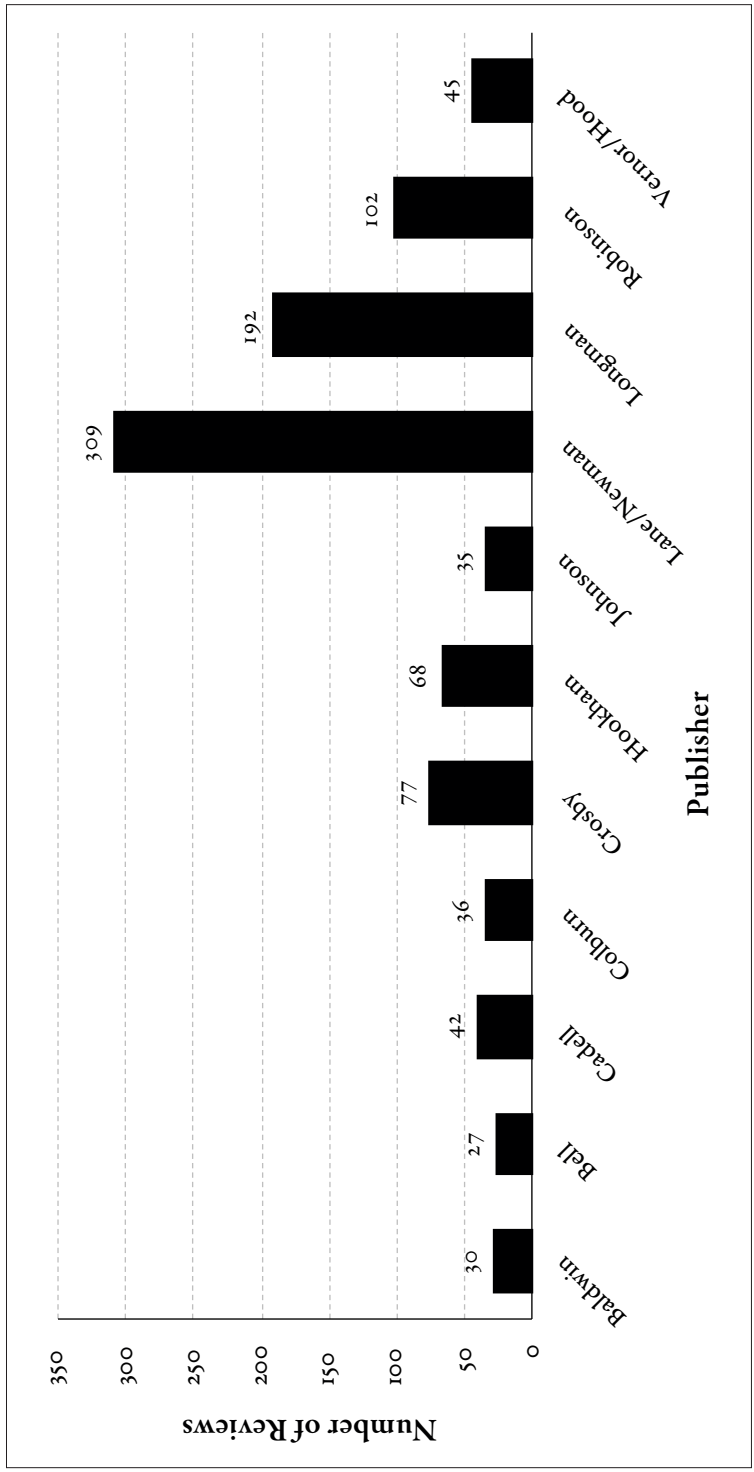

FIG. 2. REVIEW ARTICLES OF NOVELS IN THE *MONTHLY* AND *CRITICAL REVIEWS*, 1790–1820. ALL DATA FROM *NRD*.

(1792), pale in comparison. In sheer volume, a Review reader was more likely to see reviews of Lane's works than of any other publisher—thus, the popular observation that the market was 'flooded' with Minervas.

In addition to representing the highest volume of reviews, Lane was also most visible in the Monthly Catalogue section. Only 11 per cent of *all* novels reviewed in the *Monthly* and *Critical* during this period were featured in the front section of the periodical in multi-page reviews. As Figure 3 (opposite) shows, between 1790 and 1820, Lane had a mere seven novels reviewed in the prestigious front section, whereas Longmans' novels received the most front-section reviews with thirty-seven (approximately one novel per year). Cadell is the only publisher whose novels are reviewed equally in both sections. Therefore, if a reader were flipping to the genre-divided Monthly Catalogue section and looking specifically under the heading 'Novels', they were more likely to see a series of Minervas reviewed each month, presenting the overwhelming notion that most recent novels *were* from Lane—like the full page of Minervas reviewed in Figure 4 (overleaf). Only in the make-up of review articles are Minervas less visible than novels by Lane's competitors. Figure 5 (oveleaf) shows the total number of pages of criticism devoted to each publisher, broken down by the content of those articles. Excerpts from a novel featured in the front section almost exclusively. This explains Longmans outstripping other publishers by more than two hundred pages of total review coverage, with over four hundred pages devoted to his novels.[57] Novels reviewed in the Monthly Catalogue could expect a few lines of criticism at best. Because Lane has the most novels reviewed in the Monthly Catalogue (see Figure 2, above), his sheer volume of reviews calculates a page space in excess to that of Cadell (Figure 5), though Cadell's novels are more frequently reviewed in the front section, and have a balanced excerpt-to-criticism content. Though reviews of Minervas are not prominently placed, or as lengthy as Longman's, Lane maintains a strong visibility in two of the three categories the *NRD* helps us visualise, so as to imagine how Romantic Review readers saw them depicted. Review readers of the period, then, had constant exposure to the rhetoric these periodicals deployed in critiquing Lane's novels, and it is this exposure that explains how that rhetoric continues in reflections on the Minerva Press, its novels and authors into the next two centuries.

Perpetuating Review Rhetoric

After the Minerva Press passed from Newman to Robert S. Parry in 1848 until 1854, it froze in time—solidifying its place in history through its contemporary reputation. This reputation was founded by Review rhetoric and introduced to Romantic readers when the novels were newly published. The Reviews had longer lives than other journals: they were often bound and kept in public and private libraries as references for criticism and as a record of England's literary production.[58] A mere ten years after the closure of the press, the Minerva is caricaturised in Charles Selby's play *Boots at the Swan: A Farce in One Act*, performed at the Strand Theatre in 1842. When Henry Higgins tells a friend

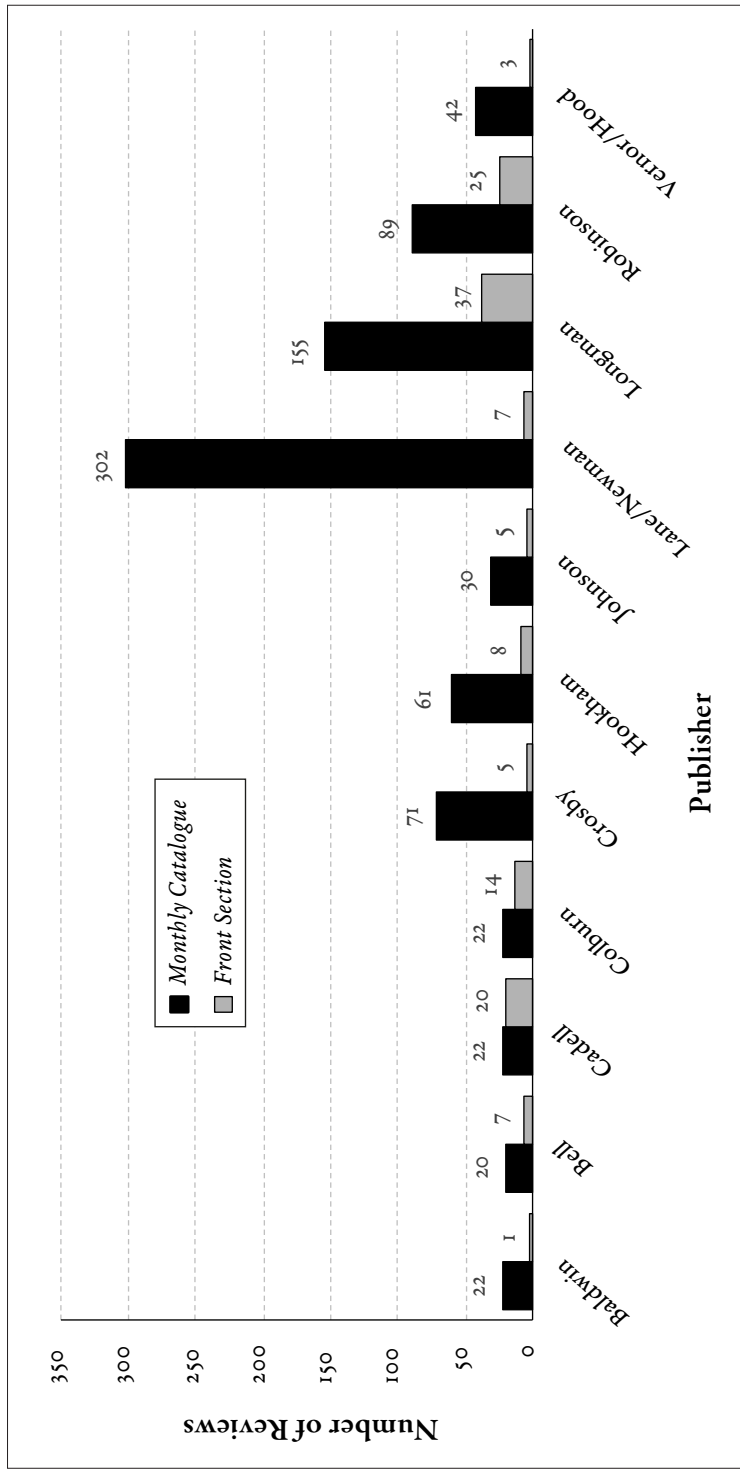

FIG. 3. PLACEMENT OF REVIEW ARTICLES BY PUBLISHER IN THE *MONTHLY* AND *CRITICAL REVIEWS*, 1790–1820. DATA FROM *NRD*.

Extracts from the Works of the moſt celebrated Italian Poets. With Tranſlations by admired Engliſh Authors. 8vo. 8*s. Boards.* Rivingtons. 1798.

This volume will be uſeful to thoſe who are ſtudying the Italian language. The ſelections are, in general, ſuch as may be approved.

NOVELS, &c.

More Ghoſts! By the Wife of an Officer, Author of the Iriſh Heireſs. 3 *Vols.* 12*mo.* 10*s.* 6*d. ſewed.* Lane. 1798.

More Ghoſts would have been ſuperfluous in the preſent ſtate of novel-writing, had not the author of this work conjured up *her* ghoſts with a view of diſſipating the horrors, lately excited in the tender breaſt of many a boarding-ſchool miſs, by the more artful and terrific dealers in the article. The ghoſts in this piece are rather cunning than terrible; and they add conſiderably to our entertainment. The characters are more analogous to thoſe of real life, than the faultleſs monſters which are indebted to imagination only for a temporary exiſtence; and their adventures lead, by eaſy and natural means, to many juſt reflections on the errors of education and the irregularity of the paſſions. As this production is offered to the public by a widow, who hopes to render her pen ſubſervient to the ſupport of herſelf and her offspring, thoſe who are in queſt of the amuſement which novels afford, will not, we hope, be inattentive to a claim that will yield them a gratification of a ſuperior kind.

Duſſeldorf; or, the Fratricide. A Romance. By Anna Maria Mackenzie. 3 *Vols.* 12*mo.* 10*s.* 6*d. ſewed.* Lane. 1798.

With regard to the incidents of this romance, the writer imitates thoſe of Mrs. Radcliffe; but ſhe is far from being equal to that lady in this branch of compoſition. It ſeems to be agreed that thoſe who write on the horrific plan muſt employ the ſame inſtruments—cruel German counts, each with two wives—old caſtles—private doors—ſliding pannels—banditti—aſſaſſins—ghoſts, &c.

We have often had occaſion to cenſure the abſurd and incorrect language of novels in general; and from ſuch cenſure this romance is not exempt.

Palmira and Ermance. A Novel. By Mrs. Meeke, Author of Count St. Blancard. 3 *Vols.* 12*mo.* 10*s.* 6*d. ſewed.* Lane. 1797.

Innocent entertainment, without any fixed purpoſe of the moral kind, appears to be the object of this novel. The characters, principally thoſe of France under the old government, are drawn with ſpirit. The dialogue is lively; and the incidents of the firſt and ſecond volumes are intereſting. The character of a fop, partly on the Engliſh and partly on the French plan, is well ſuſtained, and is expoſed to juſt contempt. In the third volume, the ſtory is unne-

FIG. 4. A FULL PAGE OF MINERVAS. *CRITICAL REVIEW*, 2ND SER. 24 (OCT 1798), 236.

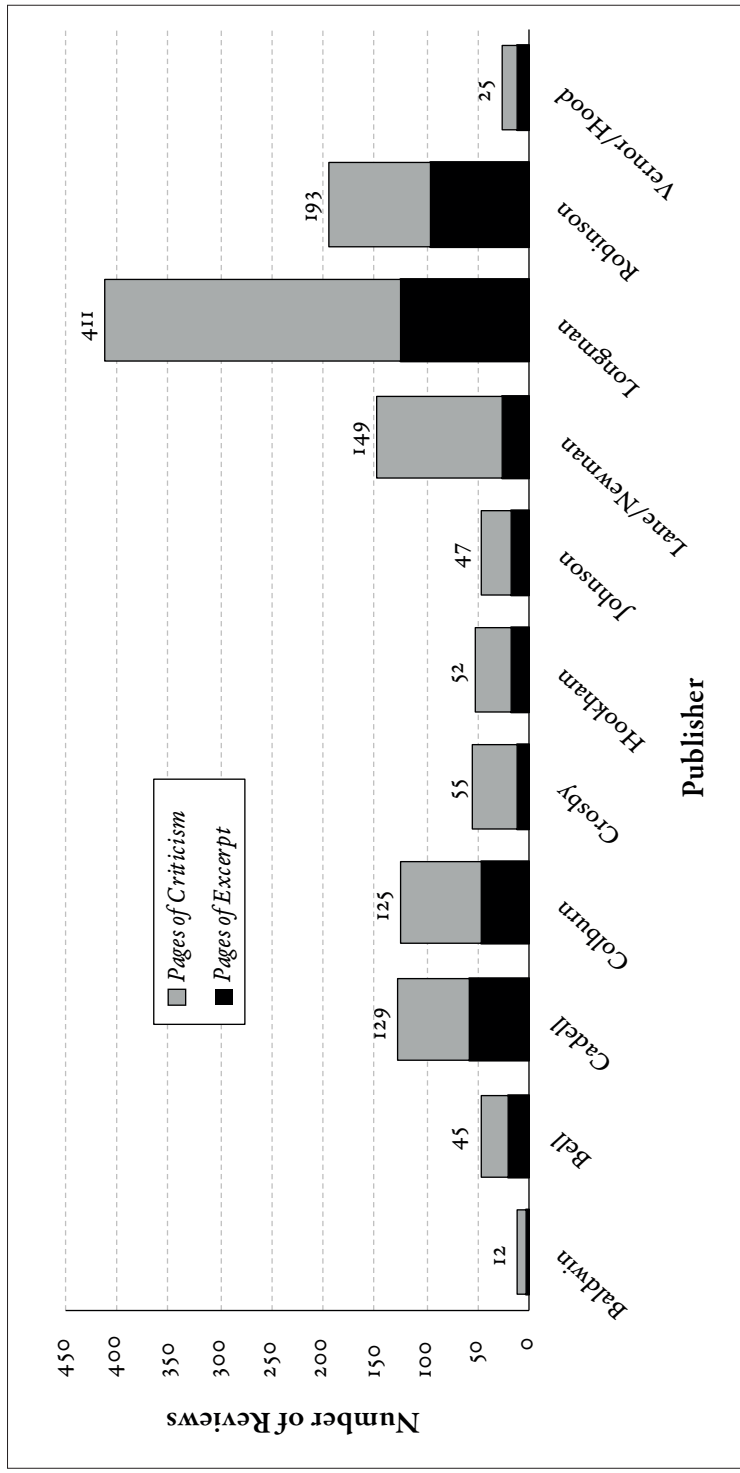

FIG. 5. NUMBER OF PAGES OF REVIEW CRITICISM AND EXCERPT BY PUBLISHER IN THE *MONTHLY* AND *CRITICAL REVIEWS*, 1790–1820. DATA FROM *NRD*.

about the women he is courting, he disarms an assumption that she is a 'snuffy old girl', by declaring that she is the opposite: 'a romantic lady, whose head is turned by novels and romances, gleaned from the Minerva press'.[59] Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflections on the novel's development and authorship and of the Romantic literary marketplace perpetuate the areas of Review criticism tracked in Table 1. Scholars comment on 'romantic lady' readers and feminine authorship, the lengthy yet cheaply printed quality of Minervas, genre evaluations focused on probability, originality and sentimentality, and the circulating library. By doing so, these critics ensure that the scurrilous reputation of Lane is not forgotten as his press's individual publications are, but rather is repeated until its origin in Reviews is forgotten, and these ideas are instead spouted as truths.

In *A Letter to the Right Hon. & Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London: In Reply to the Article in No. CLXXII of the Quarterly Review* (1850), the author responds to advice on hiring a governess and is concerned about her lack of formal education. 'Let not the reviewer imagine that because he has taken this precaution', the text warns, of selecting a less scholarly governess, that 'her imagination and intellect will not seek to cultivate themselves, and that in the most morbid and dangerous manner [...] by reading "Books of Beauty," and all the wretched stuff of the English or the French Minerva press'.[60] Peter Bayne's *Essays in Biography and Criticism* (1857) perpetuates almost every vein of rhetoric concerning Minervas produced by the Reviews. He declares 'this class of novels' to have plots representing 'a hurly-burly of passionate excitement', signalling that Minervas have always been of a lower status of literature. He goes on to cite evaluations connected to originality, probability and sentimentality. In Minerva novels, Bayne tells us 'we shall find that its absurdities are, on the whole, traceable to an absence of that sound, basing realism which we have praised so highly [in modern novels]', and that they are all alike: 'this class of novels appears to belong the whole series bearing the title of Mysteries, whether of Paris, of London, or Udolpho'. Bayne also turns his attention to literary critics of earlier periods (counting himself among the Victorian sufferers of such labour):

> [The press] rendered an invaluable service to criticism, by furnishing an incomparable example of those false sources of popularity, those exaggerated descriptions of passion, those morbid excitements, those modish ideals,—of honor, of beauty, of picturesqueness, of sublimity,—which may, for a time, secure unbounded success, but which, having no root in nature, are fleeting as the whims they pamper. No critic can henceforward be at a loss for specimens of sentimentality, theatricality, fustian, and the mock sublime. Since nature alone affords exhaustible variety, the Minerva Press novel becomes soon recognisable, by the recurring circle of its plots and characters.[61]

Bayne's characterisation of the Minerva Press is plucked from the pages of the *Monthly*'s and *Critical*'s articles—he bemoans the volume of 'specimens' and their 'recurring circle of plots and characters', and, like the Reviews' premoni-

tion that a Minerva novel would have a short life on a circulating-library shelf, he calls them 'false sources of popularity'.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century reflections on great literary and cultural figures reiterate Review rhetoric, stating a work was 'dubbed by the literary critics of a past era as the Minerva Press School of Fiction, a school of whose writers dealt in the marvellous, used high-sounding adjectives, defied the unities of time and place, dismissed probability as an item of no importance'.[62] A new readership was exposed to the Reviews' slanders of Lane's press through biographical works on figures like Scott, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Lamb. In one story about Lamb's removal from society after she was declared insane, it is noted that Lamb 'for her part, chiefly restricted her reading to William Lane's Minerva Press Novels, which she borrowed from the famous library in Leadenhall Street'—and goes on to list those works, including those of Mary Meeke (now known to be Elizabeth Meeke) and Ann Radcliffe, the latter of whom had *not* published with Lane.[63] This account of Lamb as a weak-minded woman *and* Minerva-novel reader alludes to Review assumptions about the audience for Minerva works, and cites the novels' relatively simple storylines. Percy Shelley, on the other hand, read Minerva novels as a boy—'supped somewhat heartily of the garbage which they purveyed', which influenced his *Zastrozzi, a Romance* (1810).[64] His biographers state, with mocking tone, that the young Shelley would 'haunt the circulating library' for Minervas, and refer to this clandestine pastime to show how far Shelley's genius developed across his career.[65] Such statements perpetuated a narrative of Minervas as low, trashy and transitory.

The Romantic novel was often said to have been brought to fruition with the 1814 publication of Scott's *Waverley; or, 'tis Sixty Years Since*. Biographers declared that he '[pioneered] a new epoch of Literature' and to bolster this claim all novels that came before his debut were discredited.[66] So, although the genre was already wildly popular by the early nineteenth century, largely authored by women, Scott's biographers grouped all low novels together as one species, and declared that 'the namby-pamby productions of the Minerva Press had brought novels into such disrepute that they were forbidden articles, and their perusal was not only held as pernicious, but their readers were actually objects of ridicule'.[67] Other biographers admit sheepishly that 'there [was] another phalanx of novelists who lived, but can scarcely be said to have flourished, early in the present century. Their works, from the source of their publication in Leadenhall Street, London, were known as "Minerva-press Novels"'.[68] Discrediting these 'scarcely flourishing' novels was performed with practised and familiar rhetoric. In his *Sir Walter Scott: The Story of his Life* (1871), R. Shelton Mackenzie declares that the Minerva authors 'dealt largely in common-place [topics], [were] very deficient in constructive skill, usually extended each of her romances to four and even five volumes, [...] [and were] in eager request at all the circulating-libraries in town and country'.[69] Other biographers went so far as to lament the very existence of 'the illiterate productions of the Minerva Press': 'Why [Scott] was so late in coming into his own kingdom [novel writing] is perhaps easier to explain [...]

during his early manhood the novel had fallen into disrepute, and was associated with the discredited Minerva Press'.[70] In characterising the very novel market of the period William Connor Sydney's *The Early Days of Nineteenth-Century England* (1898) declared:

> the tacit condemnation under which fiction of all kinds lay at that time, [was] undoubtedly due to the existence of a colossal weight of indecorous and immoral trash dignified with the titles of novels and romances with which the shelves of the circulating libraries in town and country alike were plentifully stocked [...] turned out by the scores from what was known as 'The Minerva Press'.[71]

He claimed that 'these novels enjoyed a surreptitious circulation in high life [...] through the medium of the hair-dresser or the mantua-maker' who snuck them to clients who would not be seen at the circulating library, and that they were 'crammed from beginning to end with the wildest improbabilities'.[72] Repeating the Reviews' criticisms of the Minerva novels then, served to strengthen Scott's contribution to the genre and his merit as a writer in general.

By the early twentieth century, the Minerva's reputation and Review rhetoric surrounding it had woven itself into the very fabric of the English language —oxymoronic and hyperbolic. Peter Francisco Smith's 1902 language primer *The Use of Words and Phrases: Designed for the Use of Schools, Colleges, Writers and Public Speakers* uses the Minerva Press as an example of an oxymoron—for how can a press that produces such ill-reputed novels claim to be under the protection of the goddess of wisdom? One section gives the sample sentence as follows: 'The Minerva press sends forth, daily, in the most abundant profusion, multitudinous books of **amusing nonsense**. By the holocaust of four-fifths of the books which find a place in public and private libraries, the world would reap a harvest of blessings'.[73] Early scholarly interest in the press in *Notes & Queries* wondered about the Minerva's role in the history of the novel, while also repeating the Reviews' criticisms. Jonathan Bouchier asked in January 1887:

> Where was the Minerva Press, and who was the publisher? At what period did it most flourish, and when did it begin and when cease? Were its publications all novels of the 'trashy' description; are any of them remembered now? who were the chief writers? Did any of the authors who were eminent in other respects write for the Minerva Press? Were 'Lane's novels [...] those scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public', mentioned by Charles Lamb in his 'Elia' essay, 'Sanity of True Genius,' connected with the Minerva Press?[74]

While Bouchier received responses directing him to its premises in Leadenhall Street, others wrote that 'the specialty of the Minerva Press was novels and romances of the Mrs. Radclyffe [*sic*] and the Anna Matilda school of sentiment and sensation, that went down, with the circulating libraries'.[75] Of the quality of their productions, relating to length and printing style (see Table 1) another respondent reported: 'The Minerva Press Novels were in three, four, or five highly-spiced volumes, and up to about 1828 were generally printed on a harsh

textured paper of a dirty straw colour'.[76] These late nineteenth-century scholars reported from memory or from friends their 'first-hand' accounts of William Lane and the Minerva Press, and yet their assessments repeat criticisms and rhetoric from Romantic Review periodicals.

Understanding *how* that rhetoric has come to us from such highly critical and problematic sources as the *Monthly* and *Critical* further emphasises the need for a fairer, more balanced study of Minerva novels and authors in the Romantic marketplace. That such a prolific business, which represented so many and diverse authors of the Romantic novel, carries contemporary rhetoric into modern scholarship should remind us that perpetuating such echoes does injustice to the very voices we seek to revive. As we welcome Minerva authors and novels back into the fold of literary scholarship, we must recognise the rhetorical inheritance that comes with them, and build new systems for evaluating and studying them that are not rooted in historic and gendered prejudices.

Notes

Many thanks to Jennie Batchelor for her feedback.

1. *Novels Reviewed Database, 1790–1820* (*NRD*); William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), p. 244. The *NRD* is a digital database of reviews of novels from the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review* published from January 1790 to December 1820, along with other bibliographical and publishing data.
2. See Jennie Batchelor's 'The Claims of Literature: Women Applicants to the Royal Literary Fund, 1790–1810', *Women's Writing*, 12 (2005), 505–21 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699080500200266>. Batchelor examines women novelists who supported their families by their work, and later applied to the fund for assistance—most notable is the prolific Eliza Parsons (1739–1811).
3. By 1814, the novel was well-enough established that Sir Walter Scott had not only left aside his poetry to pen the outrageously popular *Waverley* series, he was also editing and writing introductions for *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (1821–24). This anthology series and Anna Letitia Barbauld's *British Novelists* (1810) were produced cheaply under the assumption that the novel was so important and popular by this time that readers of even the lowest orders, like 'some milliner's apprentice' would desire a collection of their own—'Belleville Lodge, a novel', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 7 (Mar 1793), 357.
4. Antonia Forster, 'Book Reviewing', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V: 1695–1830*, ed. by Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp. 631–48 (p. 633).
5. I adopt Derek Roper's practice of referring to periodicals as 'Reviews', and individual articles within the periodicals as 'reviews'—see *Reviewing before the Edinburgh, 1788–1802* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1978).
6. Review data from the *NRD*. Minerva production numbers from Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling, *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 2000), I, 855 and II, 8–84. I have here removed any duplicates where Garside, Raven and Schöwerling counted a novel more than once because of Lane's early imprints that included both his name and the name of the Minerva Press. The

total number of Lane/Minerva/Newman & Co. imprints recorded by Garside, Raven and Schöwerling from 1790 to 1820 is 601.

7. C. H. Timperley, *Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdotes*, 2nd edn (London: Bohn, 1842), p. 795.
8. Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh,* pp. 23–24.
9. Ibid., pp. 24–25.
10. Joseph F. Bartolomeo argues that the Reviews' intended audience was 'the privileged, tasteful few' in *A New Species of Criticism: Eighteenth-Century Discourse on the Novel* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1994), p. 118.
11. For an extensive history of book reviewing in England, see Antonia Forster, *Index to Book Reviews 1749–1774* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994) and *Index to Book Reviews 1775–1800* (London: British Library, 1997); 'Review Journals and the Reading Public', in *The History of the Book in the West, Volume III: 1700–1800*, ed. by Eleanor S. Shevlin and Alexis Weedon (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 379–98.
12. The *Monthly* and the *Critical* would later be joined by the *Analytical Review*, the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. By the 1830s, Review periodicals would move away from the 'criticism and excerpt' style and toward the essay evaluations that are the foundations of modern book-reviewing practices—see Forster, 'Book Reviewing', p. 632.
13. The Reviews' choice to continue in the style and tradition set out by essay periodicals indicates their intention to influence popular taste—see J. A. Downie and Thomas Corn, *Telling People What to Think: Early Eighteenth-Century Periodicals from The Review to the Rambler* (London: Cass, 1993).
14. For a more extended discussion of this system and format in book review periodicals, see Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, 'Aversion to Imitation: The Rise of Literary Hierarchies in Eighteenth-Century Novel Reviews', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 51 (2015), 171–85 <https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cqv005>.
15. Occasionally, these reviews provide our only record of a work's existence when no copy is extant; see Antonia Forster, 'Reviewing the Novel', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by J. A. Downie (Oxford: OUP, 2016), pp. 372–87.
16. Elizabeth Neiman, 'The Female Authors of the Minerva Press and "Copper Currency": Revaluing the Reproduction of "Immaculate-Born Minervas"', in *Global Economies, Cultural Currencies of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Michael Rotenberg-Schwartz and Tara Czechowski (New York: AMS, 2012), pp. 275–94 (p. 275).
17. Elizabeth A. Neiman, 'A New Perspective on the Minerva Press's "Derivative" Novels: Authorizing Borrowed Material', *ERR*, 26.5 (2015), 633–58 (pp. 634–35) <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2015.1070344>.
18. Neiman, 'New Perspective', p. 634.
19. Laura Runge, 'Churls and Graybeards and Novels Written by a Lady: Gender in Eighteenth-Century Book Reviews', *CW3: Corvey Women Writers 1796–1834 on the Web*, 1 (2004) <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/corvey/cw3journal/issues/runge.html> [accessed 21 Oct 2018].
20. Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 2009).
21. Jennie Batchelor, *Women's Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750–1830* (Manchester: MUP, 2010), p. 69.

22. Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790–1820* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1939).
23. 'The House of Tynian. A Novel' *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 15 (Nov 1795), 342.
24. 'Belleville Lodge', p. 357.
25. 'Ellen Rushford, a Novel', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 14 (June 1795), 226.
26. 'Edwardina, a Novel', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 31 (Mar 1801), 354.
27. Ibid., p. 354.
28. 'The Aunt and the Niece', *Critical Review*, 3rd ser. 3 (Dec 1804), 470–71,
29. 'Trecothick Bower, or the Lady of the West Country, a Tale', *Critical Review*, 4th ser. 5 (Jan 1814), 99.
30. See Batchelor, *Women's Work,* pp. 5–9 for an extended discussion on the interchangeable nature of the words 'class' and 'status' to refer to both qualities of literature and the economic status of women, particularly women writers during this period.
31. 'Semphronia', *Critical Review*, 70 (Dec 1790), 699; 'The Borderers', *Critical Review*, 4th ser. 1 (June 1812), 665.
32. 'Persiana; or, the Nymph of the Sea. A Novel', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 2 (July 1791), 356 [emphasis mine].
33. 'Lady Jane Grey, a Historical Tale', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 3 (Sept 1791), 234.
34. 'Advertisement', *Monthly Review*, 1 (May 1749), 9.
35. 'Darnley Vale', *Monthly Review*, 2nd ser. 1 (Feb 1790), 234.
36. 'Trecothick Bower', p. 99.
37. 'Edmund', p. 454.
38. 'The Butler's Diary; or, the History of Miss Eggerton', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 4 (Feb 1792), 235.
39. 'Edward de Courcy, an Ancient Fragment', *Monthly Review*, 2nd ser. 15 (Dec 1794), 466.
40. 'Ariana and Maud', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 37 (Mar 1803), 356.
41. 'The Pavilion', *Monthly Review*, 2nd ser. 20 (July 1796), 345.
42. Rachel Scarborough King, '"[L]et a Girl Read": Periodicals and Women's Literary Canon Formation', in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690–1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (Edinburgh: EUP, 2018), pp. 221–35 (p. 227).
43. 'The Fair Cambrians, a Novel', *Critical Review*, 69 (June 1790), 712.
44. 'Matilda St Aubin, a Sketch', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 9 (Sept 1793), 117. For more on the Minerva novel by Jane Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723) and its use of that metaphor to disrupt narrative traditions, see Ioana Patuleanu, 'Deep Readings and Thin Screens: Narrative Kenosis in Jane Barker's *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 44.2 (2014), 159–82 <http://doi.org/10.1353/jnt.2014.0012>.
45. Batchelor, *Women's Work*, p. 25. Even though Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818) is produced using this same patchwork method, albeit in parody, she also deploys Review rhetoric in her manifesto to both define what makes a good novel and to shame those who criticise the genre.
46. Ann W. Engar, 'The Minerva Press', in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1700–1820*, ed. by James Bracken and Joel Silver, The Dictionary of Literary Biography, CLIV (Detroit: Gale, 1995), p. 195.

47. 'Sidney Castle: or, the Sorrows of De Courci, a Novel' *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 6 (Dec 1792), 561.
48. 'The Haunted Castle, a Norman Romance', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 13 (Feb 1795), 229; 'Ellen, Countess of Castle-Howel; a Novel', *Monthly Review*, 2nd ser. 14 (May 1794), 75; 'The Duke of Clarence. An Historical Novel', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 13 (Apr 1795), 469.
49. 'Belleville Lodge', p. 357.
50. 'Mental Improvement for a Young Lady, on her Entrance to the World, Addressed to a Favourite Niece', *Critical Review*, 2nd ser. 9 (Dec 1793), 477. Ratafia is a liqueur (*OED:* 'ratafia' n. sense 1a).
51. 'Mental Improvements', p. 360.
52. Also, these periodicals ran for shorter periods, had more specified audiences and do not often encompass the period when Lane's press operated.
53. 'Andrew Stuart, or the Northern Wanderer', *British Critic*, 16 (Nov 1800), 556.
54. For more on how Review periodicals were consumed by readers, see Megan Peiser, 'Reviews as Database: Reading the Review Periodical in Eighteenth-Century England', *PBSA*, 111.4 (2017), 491–511 <https://doi.org/10.1086/694572>. Visibility of Lane's press may differ significantly in other periodicals where reading practices varied from that of Review readers.
55. Portions from this were first published in Megan Peiser, 'Review Periodicals and the Visibility of William Lane's Minerva Press', *Research Society for Victorian Periodicals*, 4 Mar 2016 <http://rs4vp.org/review-periodicals-visibility-william-lanes-minerva-press-megan-peiser-university-missouri/> [Accessed 13 Mar 2019].
56. This chart features any publisher with more than twenty-five review articles in the *NRD*.
57. Unlike Lane, most of these publishers did not specialise in one genre, but rather spread their business throughout the literary marketplace by publishing a variety of works.
58. Peiser, 'Reviews as Database', p. 495.
59. Charles Selby, *Boots at the Swan: A Farce in One Act* (New York: French, 1847), p. 11.
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61. Peter Bayne, *Essays in Biography and Criticism* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1857), pp. 381–83.
62. Dorothy Nevill, *My Own Times* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. 17.
63. C. S. Peel, *The Stream of Time; Social and Domestic Life in England, 1805–1861* (New York: Scribner, 1932), pp. 82–83.
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65. Roger Ingpen, *Shelley in England; New Facts and Letters from the Shelley–Whitton Papers* (London: Kegan Paul, 1917), p. 46.
66. Charles James Mathews and Charles Dickens, *The Life of Charles James Mathews, Chiefly Autobiographical, with Selections from his Correspondence and Speeches* (London: Macmillan, 1879), pp. 9–10.
67. Ibid., pp. 9–10.

68. R. Shelton Mackenzie, *Sir Walter Scott: The Story of his Life* (Boston: Osgood, 1871), p. 207.
69. Ibid.
70. Charles Alexander Young, *The Waverley Novels, an Appreciation* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1907), pp. 47 and 22.
71. Sydney, *Early Days of the Nineteenth Century,* p. 231
72. Ibid., p. 231.
73. Peter Francisco Smith, *Smith on the Use of Words and Phrases: Designed for the Use of Schools, Colleges, Writers and Public Speakers* (Atlanta: Foote & Davies, 1902), p. 12 [emphasis in original]. 'Minerva press' is later given under the 'M' heading for words and phrases to practise putting into sentences (p. 18).
74. Jonathan Bouchier, 'The Minerva Press', *N&Q,* 7th ser. 3.55 (1887), 48–49.
75. A. Hall, 'Minerva Press', *N&Q,* 7th ser. 3.60 (1887), 155.
76. *The Bookworm: An Illustrated Treasury of Old-Time Literature*, 7 vols (New York: Armstrong, 1888), I, 388.

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Eric Daffron is Professor of Literature at Ramapo College of New Jersey, where he teaches gothic literature and literary theory. He has published widely on those and other topics.

Colette Davies is an AHRC M4C PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham. Her research explores novels published by the Minerva Press written by a range of neglected professional women writers. These works shed light on how women writers responded to an era of transformation in the literary marketplace and to a socially turbulent context through their works of fiction. Colette is one of two Postgraduate Representatives for the British Association for Romantic Studies and co-organised the BARS 2019 International Conference, 'Romantic Facts and Fantasies' and the BARS 2020 ECR/PGR Conference, 'Romantic Futurities'. She is a co-contributor for the 'Romantic Novel' section of the *Year's Work in English Studies* and has published blogs with *Romantic Textualities* and the British Association for Romantic Studies.

JoEllen DeLucia is Professor of English at Central Michigan University and the author of *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759–1820* (EUP, 2015). Recently, she co-edited an essay collection with Juliet Shields entitled *Migration and Modernities: the State of Being Stateless, 1750–1850* (EUP, 2019). Portions of her current research project on George Robinson's media network and Romantic-era literature have appeared in *European Romantic Review* and Jennie Batchelor and Manushag Powell's *Women's Magazines and Print Culture 1690–1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century* (2018).

Michael Falk is Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Kent, and an Adjunct Fellow in Digital Humanities at Western Sydney University. His key interests include digital methods, the global aspects of Romanticism and the Enlightenment, and the literary history of the self. He has published on Maria Edgeworth, Charlotte Smith, John Clare and Charles Harpur; co-edits the Romantic Poetry section of *Year's Work in English Studies*; and has work forthcoming on the problem of Artificial Stupidity and on eighteenth-century Swiss book history. He is a keen digital humanities educator, and has run workshops on coding and other skills across the UK and Australia. He is currently at work on his monograph, *Frankenstein's Siblings*, a digital study of contingent selfhood in Romantic literature.

Peter Garside taught English Literature for more than thirty years at Cardiff University, where he became founding Director of the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research. Subsequently, he was appointed Professor of Bibliography and Textual Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He served on the Boards of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels and the Stirling/South Carolina Collected Edition of the Works of James Hogg, and has produced three volumes apiece for each of these scholarly editions. He was one of the general editors of the bibliographical survey *The English Novel, 1770–1829*, 2 vols (OUP, 2000), and directed the AHRC-funded *British Fiction, 1800–1829* database (2004). More recently, he has co-edited *English and British Fiction 1750–1820* (2015), Volume 2 of the Oxford History of the Novel in English; and forthcoming publications include an edition of Scott's *Shorter Poems*, along with Gillian Hughes, for the Edinburgh Edition of Walter Scott's Poetry.

Michael John Goodman is a postdoctoral researcher based at Cardiff University's Centre of Editorial and Intertextual Research. He is the director of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, an online open-access resource that contains over 3000 illustrations taken from Victorian editions of Shakespeare's plays. He is currently writing his first monograph, *Shakespeare in Bits and Bytes*, which explores how the digital can help students and the general public engage meaningfully with the humanities.

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Kurt Edward Milberger serves as Coordinating Editor in the College of Arts & Letters at Michigan State University. His work has appeared in *Jonathan Swift and Philosophy*, edited by Janelle Pötzsch (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), and in *From Enlightenment to Rebellion: Essays in Honor of Christopher Fox*, edited by James G Buickerood (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). With Margaret Doody, he has edited Susannah Gunning's *Barford Abbey*, which is forthcoming from Broadview Press.

Amy Milka is a researcher in eighteenth-century history, literature and culture at the University of Adelaide. She is the author of several articles on law and emotions, including: (with David Lemmings) 'Narratives of Feeling and

Majesty: Mediated Emotions in the Eighteenth-Century Criminal Courtroom', *Journal of Legal History*, 38.2 (2017), 155–78; 'Feeling for Forgers: Character, Sympathy and Financial Crime in London during the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42.1 (2019), 7–25; and '"Preferring Death": Love, Crime, and Suicide in Eighteenth-Century England', which is forthcoming in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* in summer 2020.

Christina Morin lectures in English literature at the University of Limerick, where she is also course director of the MA in Global Irish Studies. She is the author of *The Gothic Novel in Ireland, c. 1760–1829* (MUP, 2018), which won the prestigious Robert Rhodes prize in 2019, and *Charles Robert Maturin and the Haunting of Irish Romantic Fiction* (MUP, 2011). She has also edited, with Marguérite Corporaal, *Traveling Irishness in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2017) and, with Niall Gillespie, *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes and Traditions* (2014), both published by Palgrave Macmillan. Current projects include a monograph on Irish writers and the Minerva Press and a 200th anniversary celebration of the publication of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) in collaboration with Marsh's Library, Dublin.

Elizabeth Neiman is an Associate Professor of English and also Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maine. Her monograph, *Minerva's Gothics: The Politics and Poetics of Romantic Exchange, 1780–1820* (UWP, 2019) shows that popular literary conventions connect now canonical male poets to their lesser-known female colleagues, drawing them into a dynamic if unequal set of exchanges that influences all of their work. A second book project explores what Minerva and other popular women's novels reveal when read for glimpses of the personal. Deathbed scenes are a convention in women's Romantic-era novels, but does this make the heroine's expression of grief impersonal, generic—her lamentations the language of cliché? Neiman is also currently writing a memoir that explores grief, love and loss, though from the distance of sister.

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Yael Shapira is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Literature and Linguistics at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and the author of *Inventing the Gothic Corpse: The Thrill of Human Remains in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). Her work has appeared in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, *Narrative*, *Women's Writing* and elsewhere. Her current research focuses on forgotten Romantic-era gothic fiction and the challenge it presents to established narratives of gothic literary history. Essays from this project are forthcoming in the first volume of CUP's *The Cambridge History of the Gothic*, edited by Angela Wright and Dale Townshend, and *Lost Legacies: Women's Authorship and the Early Gothic* (UWP), edited by Kathleen Hudson.

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Cheyne, Peter. *Coleridge's Contemplative Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 400pp. ISBN 978-0-1988-5180-6; £70 (e-book).

*Ghosh, Hrileena. *John Keats' Medical Notebook: Text, Context, and Poems*, English Association Monographs: English at the Inteface, 6 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 320pp. ISBN 978-1-7896-2472-4; £102 (e-book).

Gill, Stephen. *William Wordsworth: A Life*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 688pp. ISBN 978-0-1988-1711-6; £25 (e-book).

Hunnekuhl, Philipp. *Henry Crabb Robinson: Romantic Comparatist, 1790–1811*, Romantic Reconfigurations: Studies in Literature and Culture 1780–1850, 13 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 304pp. ISBN 978-1-7896-2758-9; £108 (e-book).

*Leask, Nigel. *Stepping Westward: Writing the Highland Tour c. 1720–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 368pp. ISBN 978-0-1988-5002-1; £65 (e-book).

2019

*Carretta, Vincent (ed.). *The Writings of Phillis Wheatley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 288pp. ISBN 978-0-1988-3499-1; £95 (e-book).

Chao, Shun-Liang; Corrigan, John Michael (eds). *Romantic Legacies: Transnational and Transdisciplinary Contexts*, Routledge Studies in Comparative Literature (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 336pp. ISBN 978-0-3670-7672-6; £44.99 (e-book).

Hay, Daisy. *The Making of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2019), 128pp. ISBN 978-1-8512-4486-7; £12.99 (pb).

McLean, Thomas; Knezevich, Ruth (eds). *Jane Porter, Thaddeus of Warsaw: A Novel*, Edinburgh Critical Editions of Nineteenth-Century Texts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 440pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-4348-7; £29.99 (e-book).

*Mercer, Anna. *The Collaborative Literary Relationship of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, Routledge New Textual Studies in Literature (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 210pp. ISBN 978-0-4292-9789-2; £44.99 (e-book).

Neimann, Elizabeth. *Minerva's Gothics: The Politics and Poetics of Romantic Exchange, 1780–1820*, Gothic Literary Studies (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), 304pp. ISBN 978-1-7868-3369-3; £35 (e-book)

*Robinson, Jeffrey C. *Poetic Innovation in Wordsworth 1825–1833: Fibres of These Thoughts*, Anthem Nineteenth Century (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2019), 368pp. ISBN 978-1-7830-8941-3; £35 (e-book).

*Saggini, Francesca; Soccio, Ana Enrichetta (eds). *Transmedia Creatures:* Frankenstein*'s Afterlives* (Lewisburg, pa: Bucknell University Press, 2019), 283pp. ISBN 978-1-6844-8060-9; £24.95 (pb).

Winckles, Andrew O. *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing and the Methodist Media Revolution: 'Consider the Lord as Ever Present Reader'* , Romantic Reconfigurations: Studies in Literature and Culture 1780–1850, 10 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 288pp. ISBN 978-1-7896-2435-9; £90 (e-book).

2018

Sutherland, Kathryn (ed.). *Jane Austen: The Chawton Letters* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), 128pp. ISBN 978-1-8512-4474-4; £14.99 (hb).

Yen, Brandon C. The Excursion *and Wordsworth's Iconography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 336pp. ISBN 978-1-7869-4133-6; £95 (hb).

2017

Chander, Manu Samriti. *Brown Romantics: Poetry and Nationalism in the Global Nineteenth Century*, Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture 1650–1850 (Lewisburg, pa: Bucknell University Press, 2017), 144pp. ISBN 978-1-6114-8821-0; £65 (hb).

2016

Beenstock, Zoe. *The Politics of Romanticism: The Social Contract and Literature*, Edinburgh Critical Studies in Romanticism (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 256pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-0103-6; £70 (hb).

*Offord, Mark. *Wordsworth and the Art of Philosophical Travel*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism, 113 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 264pp. ISBN 978-1-1071-5558-9; £75 (hb).

*Wright, Angela; Townshend, Dale (eds). *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, Edinburgh Companions to the Gothic (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 272pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-9674-1; £80 (hb).

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