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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.

Kevin Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xv + 350pp. ISBN 978-0-19870-931-2; £71.99 (hb).

THOSE SEEKING SOME LIGHT READING on one of the early nineteenth-century's foremost commentators on British literature and culture, or a gentle introduction to Hazlitt's radical political writing, will not be reaching for this book. Gilmartin's study requires full commitment to reap rewards, and hardcore Hazlitt scholars and enthusiasts will doubtless regard this publication, replete with comprehensive notes, as an indispensable one-stop guide to the political dimension of Hazlitt's work.

Interesting aspects of Hazlitt's seeming contradictions emerge. Knowing of his noted ability, as a seasoned essayist and journalist, to merge into different social milieus, it is fascinating to see this quality extended in the image of a political chameleon, yet Gilmartin effectively conveys Hazlitt's consistency in ideology—'an inflexible commitment to political liberty and radical reform' (p. 33). It is argued that 'their rhetorical complexity and rich emotional range' elevates the writer's political outpourings far beyond 'mere journalism' (p. 21); these are not the scribbles of a prejudiced hack. Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* comes to the fore early, together with his 'relentless campaign against Lake School 'apostasy' as a cynical desertion of the cause of liberty' (p. 2). Hazlitt's scepticism, or amusement, at the thought that 'English cultural renovation' could be founded on the same principles as 'French revolutionizing' is emphasised, as well as his discomfort at Byron's 'preposterous liberalism' (p. 7).

Similarly, Hazlitt wrestles with, or perhaps that should be skilfully juggles, opinions on the liberal politics but frustrating 'endless disputation' of Francis Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review* alongside William Gifford's conservative *Quarterly Review* (p. 5), while the ultra-Toryism of *Blackwood's* with its barbed 'nick-names and anonymous criticism' is contemptuously dismissed in his 'On Public Opinion' essay (p. 213). Hazlitt is seen to be equally comfortable flipping between defending the Quakers from William Cobbett's 'wholesale attacks' (p. 9) or mitigating Cobbett's 'egotism' as having no vanity about it (p. 109). Although Gilmartin observes that Hazlitt, perhaps, only managed to avoid Cobbett's brand of 'outsized self promotion' because he 'projected political genius onto the figure of Napoleon' (p. 109).

Hazlitt's 'critical disinterestedness' and 'ability to explore competing ideas and inhabit multiple perspectives' is a salient feature throughout (pp. 159–60). Gilmartin probes Hazlitt the radical essayist, looking at form and style, before offering the 1817 essay 'What Is the People?' as a prime instance of the writer's 'most compelling versions of a radical insistence on limited economic resources as a way of distinguishing the interests of the people from the voracious appetite of state corruption' (p. 70). The notion that, although government and people should share and pursue common goals, 'political corruption institutionalizes the divergence of these interests', is a persuasive one. Legitimised corruption rears its head again in the chapter on 'Radical Argument'. Hazlitt's attacks on




'radical speculation' alternate with a 'dismissal of Whig opposition', before castigating 'Tory hypocrisy and personal venality' (p. 107). Gilmartin later posits that Hazlitt 'had recourse to Napoleon as an enabling double' in an effort to 'find a way out of the nightmare of legitimacy' by 'proposing the emperor of France as a figure of political redemption' (p. 113).

Contradiction is again present in the succeeding chapter 'Being Critical' and Hazlitt's use of 'a dialectic of political expectation' present in the period's reform movement: 'dividing radical apocalypse between nightmares of the catastrophic fulfilment of a grotesque system of corruption and exploitation, and more ecstatic visions of a sudden popular release from tyranny and dispossession' (p. 136). Later, Hazlitt's depiction of George Canning as 'the embodiment of paradoxical Tory commonplace' is itself flagged as a paradox as Canning is used as 'a tool or instrument for systematic purposes' (p. 155). In the 'Dissenting Memory' chapter, Hazlitt's declaration (when pressed about his political 'faith') of himself as a 'Revolutionist' is discussed as well as his heritage and relationship with father (pp. 186–87).

The final chapter intriguingly examines 'Representing Metropolitan Liberty', and there is Hazlitt's droll refutation of *Blackwood's* definition of 'Cockney' in their magazine series 'On the Cockney School of Poetry' and his playing with the concept of being 'not a Tory' (p. 238). Critically, 'democratic possibility is systematically diminished' by Hazlitt's portrayal of each Cockney faculty being 'reduced to a trivial response to urban spectacle' where, returning to a social theme, Hazlitt mockingly states that the true Cockney is 'a great man by proxy' (p. 276), for example: 'He is a politician; for he has seen the Parliament House' (p. 238). Hazlitt's engagement with the politics of the sublime is considered as Rousseau replaces Napoleon 'as the embodiment of revolutionary genius', before a section 'The King and the People' revolves around the 1821 coronation of George IV (p. 255). We see Hazlitt deploying a powerful rhetorical method in the essay 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' as several 'conventional figures' are employed to 'portray an impaired human intellect that cannot help but admire Royal power—the madman, the child, the savage, the infatuated lover' (p. 285). Yet, a distinct point is rendered about Hazlitt's 'reluctance to treat the coronation as evidence of the weakness of corrupt government' and how this could be 'consistent with popular radical discourse', splitting the perception of the urban spectators—'at once enfranchised and servile, exalted and vulgar' (p. 286).

Concluding thoughts underscore the perceived omnipresent ambiguities and contradictions; the sense that Hazlitt's work 'betrays a tension between democratic politics and elite principles of artistic production and appreciation' (p. 315). Conversely, it is argued (convincingly) that 'in wrestling with those tensions, and expressing his own pride [...] Hazlitt worked with as well as against the terms of the contemporary radical press'. Overall, the comprehensiveness of the discussion, the writing style and convoluted nature of the material can be overwhelming and, in patches, opaque (in short, not readily lucid or accessible). However, the book represents a heavyweight entry into the field of Hazlitt

studies, as well as early nineteenth-century political literature. For its intended readership, the book will find a rapt and appreciative audience. 

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Devin Griffiths, *The Age of Analogy: Science and Literature between the Darwins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), xii + 339pp. ISBN 978-1-4214-2076-9; \$55 (hb).

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING, with the first line of the 'Introduction' to Devin Griffiths's *The Age of Analogy: Literature between the Darwins*: 'In the summer of 1857, Charles Darwin unlocked the clasp of a new brown-backed journal, the first of a series of notebooks in which he scratched away at a radical new approach to the mutability of species' (p. 1). A season and year, a person, a medium, an act of writing and a novel theory of life all rendered imaginatively; not only are these concerns present in the opening sentence, but they animate every page as Griffiths highlights how writing about theories of life, that is writing about change over time, changed over time by shining light on the powers of analogy. In Griffiths's hands, analogy comes alive for its ability to underline similarities. What's more, Griffiths brings his own experiences as an evolutionary biologist and writer about writing to a book that is itself an extended analogy. A book about how new knowledge is produced itself produces a lot of new knowledge that enlivens our understanding of the role imaginative literature plays in that making.

To say that Griffiths begins with Erasmus Darwin is not quite right. But it's also not wrong. He begins with the grandson, Charles, but the end of the paragraph turns to Erasmus. Foregrounding and receding, the elder Darwin is a crucial feature of the argument and the way it's carried. The first chapter, after an intro and after a prelude, is Erasmus's. The 'Introduction' limns the contours and stakes of the book—'I understand comparative historicism as the exploration of how different literary modes and social sensibilities intersect in time, its defining feature being the rapprochement of historical accounts through explicit instances of analogy and comparison' (p. 14)—while the 'Prelude' zeroes in on analogy itself, in particular, 'why the so-called literary features of analogy are precisely what afford its ability to capture natural patterns' (pp. 29–30). The grandfather, in Griffiths' treatment, is a writer and thinker who uses analogy in a full and complex way in his own moment, but in a restricted way by later lights.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



**Angela Aliff** is an independent researcher with interests in epistemology, English reformist writing, women's writing and the digital humanities. Her doctoral thesis finds that early modern women writers justify their ideological authority using the instability in epistemic shifts within religious belief and practice. Formerly a Livingstone Online research assistant with contributions to design and user experience, Angela is now a commercial project manager and mother of an endlessly curious toddler.

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**Carmen Casaliggi** is Reader in English at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Her research interests include Romantic literature and art, the relationship between British and European Romanticism, and Romantic sociability culture. She has published widely on the long nineteenth century and her books include: *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays* (Cambridge Scholars, 2007) and *Legacies of Romanticism: Literature, Culture, Aesthetics* (Routledge, 2012), both co-edited with Paul March-Russell; and *Romanticism: A Literary and Cultural History* (Routledge, 2016), with Porscha Fermanis). She is currently working on a new book-length study entitled *Romantic Networks in Europe: Transnational Encounters, 1786–1850* for EUP and she is guest editor for a special issue on 'Housing Romanticism' for the *European Romantic Review*. She was a Visiting Fellow in the Arts and Humanities Institute at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (2019–20) and is recipient of a fully funded Visiting

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**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.

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