

ROMANTIC TEXTUALITIES
LITERATURE AND PRINT CULTURE, 1780–1840



Issue 19
(Winter 2009)

Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research
Cardiff University

Romantic Textualities is available on the web @ www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext

ISSN 1748-0116

Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840, 19 (Winter 2009). Online: Internet (date accessed): <www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext/issues/rt19.pdf>.

© 2009 Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research

Published by the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, Cardiff University.
Typeset in Adobe Garamond Pro 11 / 12.5, using Adobe InDesign CS4; images and illustrations prepared using Adobe Illustrator CS4 and Adobe PhotoShop CS4; final output rendered with Adobe Acrobat 9 Professional.

Editor: Anthony Mandal, *Cardiff University, UK*

Associate Editor: Tim Killick, *Independent Scholar*

Reviews Editor: Nicola Lloyd, *Cardiff University, UK*

Advisory Board

Peter Garside (Chair), *University of Edinburgh, UK*
Jane Aaron, *University of Glamorgan, UK*
Stephen Behrendt, *University of Nebraska, USA*
Emma Clery, *University of Southampton, UK*
Benjamin Colbert, *University of Wolverhampton, UK*
Edward Copeland, *Pomona College, USA*
Gavin Edwards, *University of Glamorgan, UK*
Gillian Dow, *University of Southampton / Chawton House Library, UK*
Caroline Franklin, *University of Swansea, UK*
Isobel Grundy, *University of Alberta, Canada*
David Hewitt, *University of Aberdeen, UK*
Gillian Hughes, *Independent Scholar*
Claire Lamont, *University of Newcastle, UK*
Robert Miles, *University of Victoria, Canada*
Rainer Schöwerling, *University of Paderborn, Germany*
Christopher Skelton-Foord, *University of Durham, UK*
Kathryn Sutherland, *University of Oxford, UK*

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. As of Issue 15 (Winter 2005), *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.

REVIEWS



Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy (eds), *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), xi + 237pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-5788-0; £55 (hb).

THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAYS, which takes as its unifying theme the cultural traffic between Romanticism and Victorianism, is a recent addition to Ashgate's *The Nineteenth Century*, a series which in itself challenges established patterns of periodisation by including studies of both Romantic and Victorian writers. As the editors of the volume acknowledge, the central premise of the collection breaks little new ground: it seems to take its critical cue from Francis O'Gorman and Katherine Turner's collection on the Victorians and the eighteenth century, which examines the complexity of Victorian attitudes towards Augustanism and is also published by Ashgate.¹ If the kinship of these two collections goes unremarked, Sandy and Radford do make clear their debt to existing criticism of Victorian responses to Romanticism, including Andrew Elfenbein on Byron and the Victorians, Stephen Gill on Wordsworth and the Victorians, and Richard Cronin on the twilight years 1824–40. That said, the merit of a collection is not always measurable by the sum of its parts. The strength of this volume lies in the individual essays, often fresh and stimulating insights from established scholars in the field, to the readjustment of our assumptions about the inspiration and reception of nineteenth-century writers and artists, well-known and less well-known.


The editors' definition of the relationship between Romanticism and Victorianism has ambitious and compelling implications for the practice of literary criticism. The Victorians, obsessed with developing taxonomies of knowledge, struggled to create a single definition of Romanticism. Frustrated by their inability to define a unified Romanticism, they unintentionally drew attention to its contradictions and inconsistencies: revolution and reaction, democracy and aristocracy, parochialism and cosmopolitanism, realism and idealism. In doing so, Radford and Sandy argue, the Victorians 'contributed to the serious semantic and historical instability of Romanticism, which has wider and far-reaching implications for literary classification and historiography', and which today still influences Romantic scholarship (p. 14). Ironically, given the volume's wariness of reductive definitions, this core argument relies on a stereotype of the Victorian writer as a Mr Casaubon driven to distraction by the fruitless struggle to file and index his Romantic literary and cultural inheritance. He sets

out to conquer the Romantic legacy with all the chutzpah of the imperial age, determined to 'possess, master and discipline'. The unruliness of his material drives the 'neurotic fear that the potentially subversive, ungovernable essence of Romanticism will begin to work independently and possess the Victorian possessor' (p. 3). Elaborating on the metaphor of haunting, the editors describe Victorian responses to Romanticism as 'exorcisms and invocations' (p. 7). The metaphor is an apt one which calls to mind the Victorian remembrance of Romantic writers and artists through biographies and memorials, as well evoking the distinctively Victorian themes of grief and ghostliness. It is surprising that it has not been articulated more strongly in the collection's title.

Between them, and sometimes within them, the essays cover the gamut of genres, including poetry, fiction, prose, autobiography, art and mythology. The principle behind the order in which they appear is not immediately obvious but seems to have been influenced by the idea of haunting and embodied memory. The opening essays address the Victorian afterlives of Romantic writers. Lisa Vargo explores how and why the writing careers of Anna Lætitia Aikin Barbauld and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley were refashioned by their biographers to fit a very Victorian template of propriety. Julie Crane homes in on a reference made to Chatterton by Wilkie Collins's grotesque villain Count Fosco, arguing that Chatterton's allusive and elusive presence in the nineteenth-century novel reveals the extent to which the Victorians were disconcerted by the multiple faces of the Romantic icon they had inherited. Two essays, by Andrew Bennett and Sarah Wootton, consider the Victorian reception of Keats. Bennett uses the inscription of Keats's name on Joseph Severn's gravestone as the starting point for reflection on Severn's role in mediating the poet's ghostly presence in Victorian culture.² Wootton, whose essay is revised from her interdisciplinary study of Keats's influence on authors and artists during the long nineteenth century, reflects on how Dante Gabriel Rossetti used the Victorian image of Keats as sensitive poet to help construct his own reclusive artistic identity.³

From this point, the collection begins to address the broader question of exchange between Romantic and Victorian literary aesthetics, through a sequence of essays that makes fresh connections between Victorian fiction and Romantic poetry. Vincent Newey's contribution on Charles Dickens and the Byronic legacy, an expansion of an article published in *The Byron Journal*, draws an analogy between the apparently oppositional Byronic social detachment and Dickensian social engagement by considering the different ways both writers create and engage with the idea of a fallen society.⁴ James Najarian counters the received view of Elizabeth Gaskell as an exclusively social novelist by his reading of allusions to romantic poetry in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*. Andrew Radford lays out the contradictions in Hardy's response to the figure of the Shelleyan poet, which culminate in the black comedy of Jocelyn Pierston's quest for his ideal woman in *The Well-Beloved*.

The essays based on Victorian fiction are followed by those which address Victorian poetry. Marjorie Stone draws on cognitive psychology to argue that *Aurora Leigh* was influenced by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's self-defining memory of reading Byron's poetry and Wollstonecraft's prose as a girl. J. R. Watson explores how Gerard Manley Hopkins's thinking was profoundly influenced, aesthetically and politically, by his appreciation of Wordsworth. Mark Sandy's essay focuses on ornithological poetry to question the binary between the supposedly idealistic Romantics versus the more coldly pragmatic Victorians. Michael O'Neill scrutinises how Victorian poets absorb and modify Romantic constructions of passion. The more generically anomalous essays, Ve-Yin Tee on the painter Henry Tuke's young male nudes, and John Holmes on how the use of Romantic constructions of Prometheus changed throughout the century, are reserved for the volume's end.

The most stimulating essays are those which seek to provoke dialogue not just across periods but also between different literary and artistic forms. With research interests primarily in fiction, this reviewer was struck by the genealogies of the Victorian novel created by Newey, Najarian, and Radford's essays, which mark out the Romantic poets as its forebears. However, there are essays to appeal to readers with different interests in this eclectic collection, the diversity of which is both its strength and its flaw. The deconstruction of existing taxonomies of both chronology and genre makes for a demanding read cover-to-cover and the book will most likely be plundered for insights on individual authors. The volume also, perhaps inevitably, allows the balance of critical interest to tip in favour of one period. In tracing the 'relational struggle between the Victorians and so-called Romantics' (p. 7), both the editors and contributors occasionally deploy the label of Victorianism with a lack of guard that they would rightly consider to be injudicious when discussing Romanticism. There is also a slight tendency to pigeon-hole as anomalies or anxieties those attitudes and responses that don't fit with the received view of Victorianism. While the collection is attuned to the polyvalence of Victorian responses to Romanticism, it poses but leaves unanswered the intriguing question of what that polyvalence has to say about the usefulness of Victorianism itself as a critical concept. 

NOTES

1. *The Victorians and the Eighteenth-Century: Reassessing the Tradition*, edited by Francis O'Gorman and Katherine Turner (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).
2. Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
3. Sarah Wootton, *Consuming Keats: Nineteenth-Century Representations in Art and Literature* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

4. Vincent Newey, 'Rival Cultures: Charles Dickens and the Byronic Legacy', *Byron Journal*, 32 (2004), 85–100.

Ceri Hunter
University of Oxford

Walter Scott, *Peveiril of the Peak*, edited by Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: EUP; New York: Columbia University Press, 2007; Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, 14), xvi + 744pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-0578-1; £50 (hb).

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK has never been regarded as one of Walter Scott's greatest novels and its relative failure to achieve critical success is often attributed to the 'over-production and money-spinning' that many see as characteristic of his writing in the 1820s. In the 'Historical Note' to the current edition, Alison Lumsden puts this judgement in context: while 1821–23 marked a period of phenomenal output for Scott, she emphasises the extent to which he was in command of his historical material, despite his denial of any attempt at strict historical veracity in the 'Prefatory Letter' to the work. Scott's novels may have been written quickly and under commercial pressure, but their characters, themes, and contexts usually evolved more slowly over extended periods of time. As Lumsden points out, Scott had long been interested in the seventeenth century, and had already treated the Civil War in a Scottish context in *Old Mortality* (1816) and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818), as well as coming across relevant material in his editions of Dryden (1808), *Somers' Tracts* (1809–14), and Anthony Hamilton's *Memoirs of Count Grammont* (1811). It was, or so it seems, only a matter of time before he turned his attention to the period in an English context.

The result was a finer and more complicated work than contemporary and later critics have acknowledged. The first volume of *Peveiril of the Peak* deals with the Civil War, Commonwealth, and early part of the Restoration. The remaining three volumes consider the series of accusations and counter-accusations that characterised the Popish Plot against Charles II. Lumsden's edition of the novel carefully and judiciously surveys the manuscript, author's proofs, first edition, later and collected editions, and the relevant parts of the Interleaved Set and Magnum Opus in order to present 'an ideal first-edition of the text', incorporating 'manuscript and proof readings which were lost through misreading, misunderstanding, or straightforward transcription error during the complex process of converting Scott's holograph into the four volumes which constitute the novel as published'. There are over 2,000 emendations to the base-text of this edition, of which approximately 1,900 come from the manuscript; twenty-five from the proofs; forty from the collected *Novels and Romances* edition; and nineteen from the Interleaved Set and Magnum Opus. A further twenty-four have been made editorially. As the aim of the volume is

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



Benjamin Colbert is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Wolverhampton. His main areas of interest are travel writing and satire, and his publications include vol. 3 of Pickering & Chatto's 'British Satire, 1785–1840' series: *Complete Longer Satires* (2003) and *Shelley's Eye: Travel-Writing and Aesthetic Vision* (2005). He is also the Reviews Editor for the *European Romantic Review* and has co-edited with Glyn Hambrook a special issue of *Comparative Critical Studies*, entitled 'Literature Travels' (2007).

Gavin Edwards is Professor of English Studies at the University of Glamorgan, Wales. His research focuses on Romantic literature and society, and historical applications of narrative theory and semantics. He is the editor of *George Crabbe: Selected Poems* (1991) and *Watkin Tench: Letters from Revolutionary France* (2001), and the author of *Narrative Order, 1789–1819: Life and Story in an Age of Revolution* (2005). He is currently working on capital letters in the novels of Dickens.

Porscha Fermanis is a lecturer in Romantic and eighteenth-century literature at University College Dublin. Her research interests include Enlightenment history and philosophy, as well as Romantic-era poetry, historical fiction, and historiography. Her book, *John Keats and the Ideas of the Enlightenment*, will appear with Edinburgh University Press in late 2009.

Peter Garside is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. He has recently edited Walter Scott's *Waverley* (2007) for the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, and was the Project Director of the online database *Illustrating Scott* (2009).

Richard Hill completed his PhD at Edinburgh University in 2006, and is now teaching English at the University of Hawaii, Maui Community College. His thesis was entitled 'The Illustration of the Waverley Novels in Scotland: Walter Scott's Contribution to the Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Novel'. He has written articles on Scott, Hogg, and book illustration, and is currently working on the lifetime illustrations of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Ceri Hunter is a DPhil student at Oxford University. Her thesis examines the literary and cultural meanings of cousin love in the nineteenth-century novel. She teaches in the field of Victorian literature and has previously published in the *George Eliot Review*. Ceri completed her MA in English at Cardiff University in 2005, where she also developed interests in women's fiction and Welsh writing in English.

Markus Poetzsch is Assistant Professor of English at Wilfrid Laurier University, in Waterloo, Canada, where he specialises in British Romantic literature. His recent publications include *'Visionary Dreariness': Readings in Romanticism's Quotidian Sublime* (2006) and his current research is focused on the intersections of pedestrianism, imagination, and memory in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

John Pruitt is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Rock County. His publications on literature and on teaching and learning have appeared most recently in *Currents in Teaching and Learning*, *Library Quarterly*, and *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research*.

Don Shelton is a collector, researcher, and writer on miniature portraits from Auckland, New Zealand. His collection includes over 800 miniature portraits which, together with his research notes, can be viewed at <http://portrait-miniature.blogspot.com>. He finds research into sitters such as Sir Anthony Carlisle fascinating, and is frequently surprised at how much information can be gleaned via dedicated Internet research.

Maria Paola Svampa is a PhD Student at Columbia University. She specialises in nineteenth-century and Romantic poetry, and her chief interests are stylistics, prosody, and comparative approaches to literature. She has written about Letitia Landon and Arthur Hugh Clough. Her recent research has focused on intertextuality and the bourgeois culture of tourism in the literary annuals.

